In 2008 we’re delivering a brand new Boys Education seminar program. You can choose from the topics below or sign up to attend the whole series. No matter how far along you are in your work with boys, there’ll be something for you.

Each seminar will be delivered by an experienced practitioner in boys’ education and will include practical resources for you to take back to your classrooms. For more details on each of the workshops see our website: www.newcastle.edu.au/centre/fac/binsp/seminars.html

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Boys, literacy and the 3 Rs: real, relevant and radical

Getting the best from boys

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Increasing the involvement of fathers and father-figures in schools

Stronger and happier: increasing student resilience

For seminar venues, prices and dates see our website
www.newcastle.edu.au/centre/fac/binsp
or contact Victoria Clay
phone 02 4921 7737
e-mail victoria.clay@newcastle.edu.au
Editorial

Well, this is it for paper versions of the Bulletin. It’s been an amazing ten-year journey of raising issues, hearing stories, collaborating with writers and design and always, always being inspired by the boys and the teachers out there in schools. Our electronic version will continue getting the word out about this great work, so don’t forget to fax back your re-subscription form so you can have it emailed directly to you for free in 2008.

To cap off our paper journal we’ve got a great collection of stories from the conference held in July for those of you who missed out. The most inspiring thing about all of these stories is the incredible innovation and collaboration between teachers and boys and—in some cases—the community to engage boys in real tasks. Literacy can be enhanced through technology or rap music; mentoring can happen with older boys or dads, or older men at work; learning can happen in the classroom, the shed, or the building site. There’s no end to the opportunities that teachers who care can provide, and boys who are interested will engage in. If these stories inspire you, there’s more on the Boys in Schools website too, including video clips and PowerPoint slides.

Our research article this time is a fascinating case study from Armenia. The author had the opportunity to do this study while working in Armenia and studying by distance mode in the Master’s Program in educating boys, at the University of Newcastle.

Our Bulletin Board showcases our new resources, research and professional development programs. Don’t miss the new Being A Man Photopak. And for the many of you who saw Michael Gurian at the conference and begged us for his DVD for your staff development day, we’ve made a special arrangement with the Gurian Institute to distribute his training material in Australia.

While it’s not goodbye from us, the end of the paper version does mark a huge change, so thanks to all of you who’ve made it a great success by contributing and purchasing it year after year—and to all the editors, designers, artists, distributors who made it possible—give yourselves a huge clack on the back. The future’s digital and we’ll be there—with the boys. So catch us on your computer or our website www.newcastle.edu.au/centre/fac see you in cyberspace in 2008.

Deborah Hartman
for the editorial committee

Editor’s Note

In our last issue some information was misprinted about the Being a Man Photopak so we are running the information again on page 48. Our apologies.

Boys in Schools Program resources ORDER FORM

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<td>Strength Cards for Kids — strengths-based resources for primary school-aged children</td>
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Boys in Schools Program Resources ORDER FORM

The Family Action Centre is a not-for-profit organisation. Supporting us by purchasing our resources helps us to develop further resources and continue our research and development in many programs. Thank you.

Contact information above will be added to the RSP database that is sent out promoting material relevant to resources and events. If you do not wish to be added to this database please tick here.

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As one era ends...

This is the last paper edition of the Boys in Schools Bulletin, as we’re going electronic in 2008.

How it all began
The Boys in Schools Bulletin was first produced in 1997 in response to your requests to hear about what schools were doing to address boys’ educational issues.

It was a new and exciting field in Australia. Richard Fletcher and Rollo Browne travelled the country raising awareness and hunting down stories from you on what was happening in schools. Occasionally they added information from overseas, such as those from the UK and the Netherlands.

The Bulletin was the only source of information for schools attempting to run innovative programs for boys and to change boys’ outcomes for the better. And Richard and Rollo did it all, from sourcing and taping stories, to writing, editing, copy editing, finding photos and working with the design team at the University of Newcastle to produce the final copies.

Bigger and better
Deborah Hartman joined the team in 2000, and in 2003 she became the principal editor. As the issue of boys’ education became more established, so did we. The journal became bigger and we added research articles to the practice-based ones, deliberately going for a spread of articles covering primary and secondary school initiatives. We added book reviews and promoted resources, conferences and other great professional development opportunities.

A new look
In 2003 we revamped the design for a more visual look. In an inspired move to have more content from boys, Lindee Hahn called on you to send in boys’ artwork, which she curated and used to create the fabulous covers we’ve had in recent years. We also employed Maureen ‘Madam Lash’ Beckett as coordinating editor to keep us on schedule so that the Bulletin got to you on time. Maureen continued to play a big role in editing the articles so that the writing captured your passion and did justice to the work you were doing with boys.

One of a kind
The Boys in Schools Bulletin started because you wanted it—there was an urgent need for quality practical information for teachers that was not being met. And it is still unique. It is the only journal in the Libraries Australia Catalogue categorised as ‘Boys Education-Australia-Periodicals’.

Over the years, we’ve kept the issues on the boil by reporting what you are doing and what is of concern to you in schools. We’ve always taken a strengths perspective, reporting on the great programs and initiatives out there and on the ways boys respond to these.

The issues we’ve raised are the ones you are addressing: from literacy to welfare, from boys’ emotional needs to their academic needs. We’ve canvassed boys’ talents from music, art and drama to sport and building. We’ve had stories from some far-flung and unusual places—remote Indigenous communities in the NT and WA and from the heart of the city.

We’ve sold 5370 subscriptions and you’ve been happy with what you’ve got, judging by our reader surveys.
The Bulletin goes digital
This is the end of one era and the beginning of another. You’re holding the very last hard-copy version to hit your staffroom table or desk. But don’t despair! We’re going digital so that you can keep up to date with all the latest research and practice in boys’ education—delivered straight to your computer.

From 2008 the Boys in Schools Bulletin will only be produced in electronic form. We’re catching up with the new digital era of publishing; we’re doing our bit for the environment and taking a lesson from the boys in how to access media when and where we want it. From now on the Bulletin, in a more compact form, will be sent straight to the computer of subscribers so that you can browse it and select the articles you want to print.

It will still have your favourite sections—there will be both research and practice articles and a bulletin board alerting you to great resources and professional development opportunities. You’ll be able to print out specific articles, send individual articles or the whole journal on to a friend or put a notice from the bulletin board on your school notice board. You’ll be able to print out the professional development calendar and wave it in front of the principal’s nose (or under their pen) for sign off.

Best of all—it’s free!
And here’s the really good news. In 2008 it will be free! Yes, you heard it. There will be two electronic editions in 2008, and if you subscribe by faxing back the separate subscription form in this edition you will receive it free to up to five email addresses at your school. Now that’s an offer too good to refuse.

Organise your eBulletin now
The new electronic version of the Boys in Schools Bulletin will be just as enjoyable and informative as the hard copy one. Most importantly, we want you to keep submitting your stories. A template has been created for you to structure your articles, and this template is available on the Family Action Centre website.

The Boys in Schools Program’s Leah Pringle (a familiar face to our postgraduate students) is coordinating the submission of articles, so to find out about author guidelines and styles, contact her at: Leah.Pringle@newcastle.edu.au

Alison Carter will handle all subscriptions to the eBulletin, and she can be contacted at: Alison.Carter@newcastle.edu.au

Don’t forget to fax back your re-subscription form for 2008 so we can register up to five email addresses from your school to directly receive the Bulletin.

What you’ve said about the Bulletin over the years . . .
- The Boys in Schools Bulletin continues to serve a very important purpose and is probably the most respected publication in Australia on boys’ issues.
- Informative reading—often thought provoking.
- A worthwhile publication for both teachers and parents.
- Always look forward to the new issues and continually point people in the direction of the old issues.
- Getting better every year!
- I find this an interesting publication to keep my knowledge and my interest level high.
- Thanks for all you are doing; keep up the great work!
- Have found it extremely useful, and so have teachers I work with in schools.
- Great publication. Source of good ideas that we have implemented at our school.
- Keep it up, it’s good stuff.
- Very informative and practical. There is great work being done by you all!
- Thanks for all your work and enthusiasm.
- A fantastic project that needs to keep growing and developing.
- I look forward to reading and learning from the articles. Thanks.
- A great resource for my Masters course—keep up the good work.
The fifth Working with Boys, Building Fine Men Conference is now history. The prickly cactus flower logo is familiar to many of you now; some have been to all five conferences. Four hundred and fifty-one teachers and school leaders from Australia, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea were able to make it to Newcastle this year.

Judging by the evaluations, the conference itself was a great success. There were many highlights for the delegates: new research information from the keynote speakers (see page 48 for details of Michael Gurian’s DVDs); the linking of research to practice through some of the panel speakers’ presentations; boys’ contributions through performance and workshop presentations; and practical ideas for implementation from the school workshop presentations.

Check out some of the conference presentations available on www.newcastle.edu.au.centre/fac/conferences/storiesofsuccess.html. The materials include papers, PowerPoint slides, videos, and handouts. And stay tuned for the second edition 2008 of Thymos, a journal of boyhood studies published by Men’s Studies Press, Radford University, New York USA, where some conference papers will appear.

Substantial sponsorship was received from Australian Government’s Department of Education, Science and Training and the NSW Government’s Department of Education. The conference would not be financially viable or possible at all without this sponsorship. Thank you!
**What you liked: comments from the Big Orange Balls**

Rather than hand out reams of boring evaluation sheets, we used huge, inflatable orange balls and marker pens to gather your feedback. And what a success they were!

- Thanks FAC for another inspiring Boys Ed conference.
- Wonderful conference celebrating fantastic work in education throughout Australia.
- This conference Rocks! Really glad I came and already (Day 2) feeling fully inspired.
- Speeches by Deb Hartman and Jenny Gore were exceptional. Deb Hartman was excellent value, Jenny Gore—grounded, offered many practical and relevant ideas, outstanding!
- This conference has been inspirational and practical. Also very creative! Really impressed with the conference organisation and resources available, the pace and content and variety.
- Excellent conference! Well balanced, superb organisation. You’ve thought of everything!
- Well organised, great food, great people, fantastic ideas, great city.
- Loved the opening, especially Daniel Gordon. Boys ensemble on day 1 was brilliant.
- The most professional conference I have ever attended—thank you.
- Boys don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care—Yeah!
- Boys love less talk and more action—ladies!
- Rich tasks—student directed—high expectations—develop empathy—promote talking and listening—confidence and persistence.
- Quality teaching and boys—further research needed.
- Always great to reconsider the nature and nurture debate!

**The Keynotes**

- The Keynote speakers were fantastic.
- **Melvyn Davis, boys2MEN Project, UK**
  - Melvyn Davis was an inspiration to us guys.
  - Melvyn Davis—important messages, very helpful, personally as a parent and professionally as a leader. Melvyn’s the MAN!
- **Dr Michael Gurian, Gurian Institute, USA**
  - Michael Gurian—brilliant! He gave me a new awareness of why boys behave the way they do! I liked the Michael Gurian approach—let’s work with the brain!
- **Andrew Fuller, Inyaahead, Australia**
  - Andrew Fuller—in a word he was brilliant!

**Breakout sessions**

- Suzan Hirsch was spectacular!
- I really enjoyed the ‘Fathers in Schools’ workshop.
- Mucking about with clay—Toukley PS—fantastic! Can’t wait to try this unit!
- Ian Ross, Waratah—EXCELLENT practical and valuable information—a passionate educator. Thanks!
- POSM and Menslink were amazing and actually showed how you are doing real work with boys. Thank you, it was inspirational.
- Rap and Rock was my favourite session.
- My highlight was Broulee public school and their POSM project.
- Hunter Sports High has a great system for boys.
Boys: moving, reading, writing, thinking, learning
Using interactive whiteboards in the classroom

Heather Evans and Di McDonald show how the interactive whiteboard (IWB) can be a powerful interactive tool for motivating boys to participate in learning.

We teach at Trinity Grammar School, an independent Anglican P–12 school for 1200 boys in the leafy, eastern suburbs of Melbourne. We have an open entry policy, a commitment to academic success across a wide spectrum of ability, a strong co-curricular program and a belief in helping all our boys achieve their ‘personal best’. All boys from Years 5–12 have a notebook computer. ICT at Trinity is focused on ‘enhancing the process of learning’ (Trinity Grammar School 2005, p. 26). In the last three years Trinity has begun to roll out IWBs in the school—from Prep to Year 12.

Jon Williams, a teacher at Melbourne High School, wrote that ‘Boys like competition, information technology, movement, discussions and relevant ideas’ (Williams 2005, p. 62).

His comments echo our beliefs about the teaching and learning of boys. As a Science and Mathematics teacher and a History and English teacher, these elements have come together in our classrooms during the last three years. Our project has been twofold. We have been using interactive whiteboards (IWBs) as ‘information technology’ to build on the particular learning styles of boys, using ‘movement’ and ‘competition’. We have also been concerned with developing the literacy skills of boys by using IWBs. We are not offering academic research, but we are offering reflections about our practice. We believe that we have had some successes but we are still ‘a work in progress’.

Movement helps break the monotony [and] is a positive facilitator of engaging boys in new learning.

ICT in our school
Trinity Grammar uses Promethean IWBs, which include a large touch screen and a digital projector. We use ActivStudio software. We started with a few IWBs in the Junior School and the Mathematics and Science Faculty. Teachers demonstrated their use for other teachers as part of the Professional Learning program. As the IWBs have been rolled out teachers have also been in-serviced on an individual ‘in-time’ ICT-training basis. We have modelled activities for each other on a faculty basis. Part of our 2006 Australian Government ‘Success for Boys’ grant included developing activities using IWBs. Most importantly, we talk and share ideas.

Our theoretical background
Our thinking about using IWBs in the teaching and learning of boys is founded in three theoretical strands: the particular learning styles of boys; the concerns about boys’ literacy skills; and the use of ICT in teaching boys. Our thinking was also informed by the recent work of Nagel (2006) in Boys stir us: working with the hidden nature of boys. Nagel explores the ways in which the neurological and physiological development of boys is often at odds with their educational context. We also found the writing of Schmoker’s...
2006 publication Results now: how we can achieve unprecedented improvements in teaching and learning valuable, particularly his emphasis on the need for literacy instruction.

Learning styles of boys
The 2002 report from the Commonwealth inquiry into the education of boys, Boys: getting it right, clearly indicated that:

In many schools insufficient attention is paid to the differing needs of boys and girls and their tendencies to favour different learning styles . . . The way forward is to identify their common and separate educational needs and to implement a policy framework and positive strategies to address these needs (House of Representatives 2002, p. xviii).

The report also summarised the preferred teaching methods for boys, which include ‘active, hands-on methods of instruction’ (HoR 2002, p. 78) and ‘highly structured instructions and lessons with an emphasis on structured challenge and frequent changes of activity, verbal for girls and visual for boys’ (HoR 2002, p. 80). The Report also indicated that there should be a focus on literacy across the curriculum (HoR 2002, p. 80).

Interestingly for our purposes the report also stressed the use of competition in teaching boys and the need for boys to move around (HoR 2002, p. 82).

Nagel’s work, using neuroscientific research, also indicated that:

Movement helps break the monotony. Boys tend to take longer to pay attention to new stimuli and need greater stimulation to engage the cerebral cortex and, as such, often appear bored. Movement is a positive facilitator of engaging boys in new learning (Nagel 2006, p. 114).

Further, his research also emphasised that ‘Learning for boys tends to be most productive when it allows for plenty of “doing” and elements of competition rather than passively listening and observing’ (Nagel 2006, p. 119). A study of 1800 Year 9–11 boys by Slade and Trent also indicated that a ‘good teacher’ is, among other things, one who ‘lets you talk and move around the classroom’ (Slade & Trent 2000, p. 218). All the boys in this study indicated that ‘they learn better when they are “doing things”’ (Slade & Trent 2000, p. 223). This element also became a ‘guiding principle’ for teaching in the Boys’ Education Lighthouse Schools initiative in which it was argued that ‘boys commonly respond more positively to learning experiences that have a . . . hands-on dimension’ (Commonwealth of Australia 2003).

Classroom activities
We have been able to use the IWBs in our classrooms to enable boys to move, compete and do—often in a visual way. For example:

- visual analysis of images in Year 10 History
- moving text in order to analyse historiography
- moving labels to help students review and reflect on learning geometry
- moving text to analyse characters in a novel
- moving objects in a game—‘Banana Hunt’.

Literacy and boys
A very serious concern with boys is their lower literacy levels compared to girls. Statistics show that boys also have lower average performance than girls in almost all subjects at school, and are less likely than girls to complete school and enrol in higher education.

Between 1975 and 1995 the proportion of 14-year-old male students who demonstrated mastery on reading tests declined from 70% to 66%, while the corresponding proportion of female students changed little, from 73% to 74%. In 2001, 88% of Year 5 boys (i.e. 10–11 year olds) achieved the national literacy benchmark, compared with 92% of girls (Cortis & Newmarch 2000, p. 7).

However, not all girls are doing well at literacy and not all boys are performing poorly. Factors such as socioeconomic status, culture, geographic location, language background and developmental factors interact with gender to impact on students’ development of literacy skills.

Research by Alloway and Gilbert (1997) suggests that the expectations placed upon students by some literacy practices may be at odds with the ways in which boys see themselves as masculine subjects. Ideas of masculinity as assertive, active and competitive may be at odds with passive activities such as reading and the types of literacy activities offered which require self-disclosure, introspection and personalised expression. Nagel argues that ‘Open-ended writing assignments . . . do not favour boys . . . having boys engage in the
analytical processes involved in deconstructing texts is far more useful and gender appropriate than writing an imaginative essay' (Nagel 2006, p. 120). Tim Hawkes also pointed out that 50% to 60% of marks in exams are given for literacy and 30% for memory (Hawkes in Lierse 2005, p. 36). Literacy is clearly a concern.

We are perhaps less concerned with low levels of literacy in our school because of its socioeconomic background, but we are concerned with whether or not our students engage in ‘generous amounts of close, purposeful reading, re-reading, writing and talking’ as suggested by Schmoker (2006, p. 53). We are also concerned about the extent to which our students are ‘synthesizing, analysing and evaluating information from multiple sources’ (Schmoker 2006, p. 54) across the curriculum. We also want our students to develop the habits of ‘a trained mind—a learning mind—in action’ (Schmoker 2006, p. 80). Schmoker lists abilities that form a ‘trained mind’ (Schmoker 2006, p. 56), including the ability to:

- critically examine evidence in a text
- see the world from multiple viewpoints
- make connections and detect patterns among ideas and perspectives
- imagine alternatives (What if? What else?)
- understand relevance (What difference does it make?).

We also want our students to have a mind which ‘can with increasing skill substantiate, connect and identify contradictions and can apply, synthesize, or build on the ideas of others’ (Schmoker 2006, p. 80).

Schmoker also argues that students need to be encouraged to become ‘strategic readers’ who ‘search for answers and information, weigh evidence or compare reading to what you already know—or to another text’. He gives the telling example of the way we, as adults read with a pen in hand. We highlight, underline and ‘look to detect patterns, gather evidence, evaluate, reconsider, or rebut’ (ibid., p. 59).

Schmoker asserts that ‘the very act of writing—and revising—teaches us to identify and correct contradictions, to refine and improve and clarify our thoughts—to think’ (Schmoker 2006, p. 63). When we help students to write ‘we are helping them to create and refine meaning itself, to make connections that are at the heart of sophisticated thought’ (Schmoker 2006, p. 64).

Classroom activities
We have experimented with our IWBs to help our boys, particularly via modeling, become more ‘purposeful’ and ‘strategic’ readers, writers and—hopefully—thinkers. For example:

- writing ‘model’ essays in Year 8 History
- analysing primary documents in Year 12 History
- teaching ‘note taking’ or ‘purposeful reading’ by modelling
- completing sentences as cloze exercises in Mathematics
- keeping notes on discussions in Mathematics.

This latter point involves having students use Hilda Taba’s inductive thinking process by brainstorming, grouping, making statements and working out what is and isn’t part of a pattern (Taba et al. 1971). Taba’s process encourages students to recall data, to classify data, to define cause-and-effect relationships, to develop generalisations, and to evaluate these generalisations.

Boys, ICT and IWBs
There is widespread agreement that boys are engaged by ICT in the classroom and in particular by ‘the
interactive nature of many new technologies' (CoA 2003). It is argued that the use of ICT ‘empowers students . . . establishes interactive connections with many diverse sources’ and allows ‘students to access an astounding array of data and human resources . . . which can transform learning into a dynamic process’ (Ruffles 2005, p. 121). McDonald, however, argues that not all boys are engaged by ICT. There may be, for example, the boy who finds a variety of ‘technical difficulties’ to disguise that fact that he cannot use a variety of ICTs in an on-line task although he may be able to play computer games (McDonald 2002).

IWBs are a relatively new tool in Australian classrooms. There is some emerging research in their use, mainly from research projects (rather than academic journals) and particularly in England (BECTA 2004a), and many positive anecdotes. The ‘pioneer’ users at Trinity Grammar School, Firbank Grammar and Brighton Primary School, ‘are convinced that [IWBs] offer three outcomes: utterly engaged students; effective catering to all learning styles; and the ability to reach students with learning difficulties’ (Mitchell 2007, p. 11).

Teachers claim that students are engaged as ‘there is an option for them to come and do something’ and even autistic students ‘are able to interact with [the IWB] in a meaningful way’ (Mitchell 2007, p. 11). Teachers can also share content with other teachers, as Heather Evans commented: ‘We have double the amount of content, you teach with one IWB [Flipchart] and revise with another’ (Mitchell 2007, p. 11).

Assessing our use of IWBs in the learning and teaching of boys

We have used IWBs in a variety of ways and believe that some of our experiences have improved the learning outcomes for the boys in our classrooms.

- We have accommodated different learning styles. Tactile learners can benefit from touching and marking at the board, audio learners can have the class discussion, visual learners can see what is taking place as it develops at the board.
- As a presentation tool the IWBs make the boys focus more on the classroom activity, especially on visual aspects.
- This focus is especially useful at the start of an activity; for example, when reviewing or pre-testing students.
- Even the boys sitting and watching are more focused.
- Boys are focusing on more detail when analysing visual images.
- Boys are very motivated to interact with the IWB. They line up to write on it and to volunteer to move objects around.
- They like to argue their choices when moving text and images and respond more readily to the question ‘Why do you think that?’
- The boys have been able to clarify concepts more readily.
- Some of our weaker students, in particular, have coped with tasks in a better way after seeing and using the IWB. For example, boys who found it difficult to determine a cartoonist’s view were able to write a more detailed and thoughtful response.
- They appreciate having access to classroom notes for review after the lesson (these can be saved and emailed to students).
- Some boys feel more confident with particular forms of writing, such as essays and short answers.
- Boys have made positive comments about ‘learning’ the skills of note taking and ‘purposeful’ reading.
- There are more varied activities in the lessons.

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Bell raises and answers the question: ‘is an interactive whiteboard more than a toy or gimmick? The answer is a resounding yes!’ (Bell 2002) We agree with her that ‘With proper planning, preparation, and training, it is a powerful instructional tool,
which can be adapted for use with a wide range of subjects and ages' (Bell 2002) and that it can work particularly well with boys.

References
Nagel, M 2006, Boys stir us: working with the hidden nature of boys, Hawker Brownlow Education, Victoria.
Schmoker, M 2006, Results now: how we can achieve unprecedented improvements in teaching and learning, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, Virginia, USA.
Established in 1995, Broulee Primary School is a K–6 school set in bushland about 25 km south of Batemans Bay on the south coast of NSW. The school caters for the learning needs of approximately 350 students from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds, including five percent Aboriginal students.

In 2005 the staff began some intensive research at school level on the relative performance of the boys in our school. This research looked at the social and academic performance of our boys compared to our girls. We then compared the data with the published information gathered from across Australia and the world.

We developed a project/program that had three major facets:

- Staff training and development in better ways to cater for boys in the classrooms and in the school in general.
- Parent/community training and development to increase the knowledge and understanding of the different needs of boys and girls.
- Direct intervention and support for boys who are struggling or seen as at risk.

Project-Oriented School Mentoring (POSM) is the most advanced mentoring boys project in Australia, combining best practices in engagement of boys in primary schools, detailed evaluation of effectiveness, appropriate screening and training of mentors, and is supported by a comprehensive package of modules. POSM is about boys getting their hands dirty and working outdoors while making a valuable contribution to their school community.

Mentors work with the kids to plan and carry out a range of projects, usually beginning with a school veggie garden. Schools choose activities that will make a real difference to the school infrastructure, thus they are highly valued and easy to notice and acknowledge. Some of the projects that have been undertaken in schools are veggie gardens, hen houses, compost systems, worm farms, ferneries, a native seedling nursery and murals.

Teachers worked with Menslink (a not-for-profit community association that provides a range of mentoring and counselling services for young men and boys in the ACT and the NSW south-coast region) to design and an early intervention tool that identifies boys ‘at risk’ in Grades 3–4. These boys are then recruited into POSM with other students who are doing well, the result is a dynamic ‘blitz team’ of children and mentors who build things for their school.
Getting POSM off the ground

Firstly, we looked at the published research from wherever we could find it. We searched for training and found some great local and wider training courses for people in our school.

From the research we developed a plan of action/change for our classroom practice, much of it from the recommendations from the Australian Government’s Standing Committee on Education and Training’s report into boys’ education: 52 recommendations in all.

We needed a key group to drive the changes and to keep them going. Some of the recommendations were simple and easily put into place, while others presented more of a challenge. Some require a minimal resource change, while others required teachers and parents to shift their attitudes and change long-term practices.

We now have two key groups: the Boys Education Advisory Team (BEAT) and the Boys Education Team (BET). BEAT consists of boys elected from each class to advise staff and act as a conduit between teachers and boys. Sometimes they get their hands dirty and do the work to follow an idea through, while at other times they make suggestions to staff for better ways of catering to the needs in the school. This group meets weekly for 30 minutes.

BET is made up of staff from across the school, including our General Assistant. This group is responsible for coordinating, developing and coordinating the boys’ education initiatives at the school.

Parent/community workshops

BET has developed a series of parent/community workshops to enhance the cause of boys in our community. These workshops have and continue to be an integral part of our boys’ education strategy. This group organises and conducts the parent/community forums on boys’ education and sources appropriate speakers for these. The group advises staff and shares ideas from research at regular staff meetings on boys’ matters as well as a regular snippet in the school newsletter regarding boys’ issues.

Direct intervention and support

Some boys require direct intervention and support. Many come from families that have no appropriate or significant male role model for the boys. These students are identified by the teachers or parents and recommended to join POSM. Our school runs POSM collaboratively with Menslink.

The identified students may present a range of behaviours at school:

- acting out
- poor attendance
- lack of confidence and/or self-esteem
- not engaged in classroom learning.

Parents may request for various reasons, including:

- family illness or bereavement
- imminent or recent family breakdown
- family violence or significant family event
- in discussion with teachers regarding the above school reasons.

Once the student becomes involved in the POSM program they are put into groups, which consist of:

- two identified boys
- one positive boy role model
- one positive girl role model.

These groups provide benefits for the boys, the volunteer mentors and the school.

The boys

- Are directly supported in their learning by using skills gained in
the classroom in practical, real-life and hands-on ways.
- Are directly supported to develop their self-esteem/confidence through achieving success and being supported in a range of tasks and being able to identify with an appropriate and significant male role model.
- Engage and increase ownership of the school by completing projects around the school that enhance the appearance of the school, for which they are recognised by the school community.
- Expand their friendship/peer group by working as part of a team and cooperating with students (and adults/mentors) with whom they would normally not associate.
- Develop knowledge and skills specific to a range of hands-on tasks.

**The volunteer mentors**
- Directly relate to students in our school.
- Share their knowledge and skills with young people.
- Develop new skills through training provided.
- Use their time in a worthwhile and widely appreciated endeavour for their local community.

**The school**
- Completes environmental/school beautification projects.
- Engages with families that are disconnected from the school community.
- Establishes links with the local community.

**POSM model**
The POSM model is based on five key points. It is:
- an early identification/early intervention model aimed at Year 3–4
- strengths based—setting up success-likely opportunities, drawing on boys' dormant skills and abilities
- non-stigmatising—voluntary involvement, participants 'apply'
- project oriented—mentors use the project activities to engage with boys
- community-development focused—bringing the local community (mentors), businesses and school together.

The POSM interactional model pairs together developmental skills and qualities such as:
- project success—acknowledgement
- skill mastery—success
- relationship development—caring and learning (social/academic)
- status development/collective efficacy—acceptance and respect.

**Students’ success**
There are tangible benefits for the students involved (and their families), the rest of the students, the mentors and the school. And, on a broader level, the capacity the local community is enhanced.

Post-POSM students’ average two to four detentions per year, with one in-school suspension and no out-of-school suspensions. The overall number of detentions across the school has dropped by 48% since beginning the POSM program in our school.

Participants in the POSM program also display improved self-confidence, and this has had a beneficial effect on these students across all areas of their schooling and home life. Students who have been challenging and on behaviour-support programs have been voted by their peers to be school leaders. They smile.

The targeted students are beginning to make unprecedented academic progress. As their self-esteem grows and they see school as a positive place the targeted boys are engaging in learning, some for the first time in their school life. While in the garden they see a practical purpose for learning and are associating learning with practical skills: measuring, writing, telling time, recording dates and numbers and a whole range of skills.

Changing the social structure of friends often has a positive reflection on the behaviours of students. Students also develop a rapport with their mentor. The mentor is not in a discipline role but one of a coach/advocate/sounding board/older friend. In this role students can develop a genuine trust. Generally speaking, POSM has engendered greater communication between school and home and...
benefited relationships more broadly within the family.

Students learn skills they may not have before. Boys need to be hands-on and many of the skills to do with building (hammering, using a drill, etc.) are passed on from father to son. Many of our boys are missing out on this because there is no one to pass on these skills. POSM provides a purpose to learn these skills and a safe environment for these skills to be learned.

Mentors’ success
Without exception all the volunteer mentors involved in this program say the thing that keeps them coming back is the students and the relationship they develop with them.

Many of the volunteer mentors are older people who have a lifetime of skills and knowledge to share. They love to have someone to share it with.

The volunteer mentors come from a wide range of backgrounds, and almost none in education or dealing with young people. The training provided in this area helps them broaden their skills and develop good practices for engaging boys. Younger mentors have used the POSM program to move into employment working with younger people with disabilities or as Teacher’s Aides in schools.

All the mentors said they are pleased to be using their time, some only one hour per week, to give something to the young people of our town. They know their efforts are appreciated by the positive response they get from the students and staff when they arrive.

School’s success
The school has a constant flow of beautification projects. Our school has become an attractive workplace with not only the POSM program but other groups working with the POSM crew to improve the look of the school.

The chickens and the compost used in the gardens are a large part of our environmental projects of the school and we now have no food waste leaving the site. All food waste is composted, put into the worm farm or given to the chickens—and all the by-products are used around the school. (The eggs are used in the canteen.)

POSM is essentially a good-practice model of how schools (education system) and community organisations can work collaboratively towards positive educational outcomes for boys. Menslink brought a very sound, evidence-based mentoring model, embedded in good practices for engaging boys, and implemented this in line with the school’s aims and objectives.

Many local businesses have supported the POSM program by supplying us with free or discounted materials. Community service organisations such as Rotary and Lions have also supported the program.
Parade College is a Catholic Boys Secondary College that runs from Year 7 to Year 12. It is located in the northern suburb of Bundoora (around 20 km north of the CBD). It has a school population of more than 1500 boys. These boys are from ethnically diverse backgrounds, and would predominantly be considered to come from a middle class socioeconomic group.

Designed to promote and encourage boys’ self-expression and creativity, the Rap and Rock event incorporates boys’ extra-curricular interests such as reading original poetry, beatboxing, rapping, dance and performing with their bands. It is simply a sharing of one another’s artforms.

We run the event over a lunchtime and P.5 (the period which follows lunchtime). This means that the event tends to run for around an hour and 10 minutes.

Anyone who pays the $2 entry fee can come along. We usually have an audience of 300 boys, although this year we had around 550. Quite a few staff come along too, sometimes popping in and out between their yard duties, to get a glimpse of what the boys have to offer and to enjoy the show. The money raised over the past five years has been donated to the Starlight Children’s Foundation, so it has an added benefit.

Who takes part?

Boys from Year 7 to Year 12 perform in the event. As well as the performers, there are the boys who work backstage on the organisational aspects. The boys work as a team on all facets of the production from the sound, lighting, PowerPoint presentation to anything else that needs to be attended to.

Our first event, in 2003, involved boys who were keen to recite their own poetry, and attracted a large number of boys who had a love of hip hop music. Boys came forward in the form of rappers, beatboxers, and breakdancers.

Since 2003 the event has steadily evolved to the point where there is now a significant ‘rock’ component. Consequently, there was a change in the name around two years ago—it went from being called the ‘Rap’ event, to the ‘Rap and Rock’ event.

We have held 10 events over the five years, which has translated into over 150 boys performing, with around 35 of these boys doing multiple performances (some performing in six different events).

Expanding and challenging the male identity of boys

In a school that—up until our first event—had been extremely sports orientated (as far as extracurricular interests went), it was an amazing feat to have six boys do a dance act. By doing this, they were expanding the possibilities of what being a male could be within Parade College. It sent out a message that as a Paradian it was not only okay to dance, but it could be regarded as a pretty cool thing to do. This was definitely highlighted by the tremendous applause the dance boys received following their act.

At that stage, ‘dance’ as an art form was a fairly new addition to Parade. I believe these first performers had the courage to get up and dance in front of their peers due to an opening that had been created earlier that year—Parade participating in the Rock Eisteddfod Challenge for the first time. In combination, these things began the initial shift in culture at our school.

In addition to the dancers, it was just as remarkable to have boys get up and read their poetry and prose, sharing part of their interior world, and therefore opening themselves up to be quite vulnerable in the process. These performers received just as much of an ovation as the dancers.

They have consequently engaged in a healthy form of risk-taking, receiving a huge buzz in being part of the event.

Vanessa Fox talks about the Rock and Rap Event at Parade College that allows boys to express themselves, challenge themselves, think about what they have to offer, and support other boys.

Boys are rapt
Using music to challenge boys
Outcomes for our boys
Boys who have been involved in the Rap and Rock event generally show:

- increased confidence
- increased resilience
- healthy risk-taking
- developing identity.

The spin-off for the boys in the audience is seeing boys on stage, inspiring and encouraging them to think about doing the same.

In talking to boys who have performed in the event, they will generally talk about how good they felt in getting up in front of their peers and ‘giving it a go’. This goes hand in hand with an increase in confidence, and the knowledge that they accomplished quite a lot in taking themselves out of their comfort zone and performing in front of such a large crowd (300+ boys and staff). They have consequently engaged in a healthy form of risk-taking, receiving a huge buzz in being part of the event.

While peers can sometimes be harsh critics, the performers generally seem to be in consensus when saying that the overwhelming feedback they receive is positive. When they are occasionally ‘bagged’, they have commented that they don’t tend to let it worry them, possibly choosing to focus more on the positive feedback and encouragement they receive. In turn, the experience then adds to their resilience.

A sense of ownership
Boys have a strong sense of ownership of the event. They see it as their event and, due to this, willingly and enthusiastically take on the organising of it.

They have engaged in designing posters to advertise the events, ticket sales, the designing of the banner, PA announcements, setting up/packing up, lighting/sound, other backstage jobs, designing the PowerPoint presentations for our...
shows, and taking on the role of MC.

**A unifying experience**
The event brings together boys from different year levels (both performers and backstage crew). All boys collaborate and there is a sense of excitement and fun in achieving a common goal.

It also:

- unites the audience with boys in the event
- bonds the teachers and boys (e.g. with boys respecting the efforts of teachers who perform)
- provides the opportunity for staff that have seen the show to congratulate (in their own time) those involved on their efforts.

**Praise and positive reinforcement**
We have been able to encourage and acknowledge boys in numerous ways over the years. On various occasions, we have provided them with awards at the school assemblies. We have set up a window of photos, taken during the events, that can be viewed by all those walking to and from their classes. This has affirmed boys’ participation and contribution. We have also provided them with ‘thank you’ cards, again praising and acknowledging their efforts.

**Links with the community**
We have been able to establish links with the community through:

- fundraising for Starlight Children’s Foundation
- running a Parents and Friends Night in 2004—‘The Best of Rhythm and Poetry’
- approaching local newspapers and having them write articles on our events
- presenting a workshop at the 2004 Victorian Association of Teachers of English conference
- having Morganics (an Australian hip-hop artist) run a workshop at our school.

All of these links with the broader community have been very beneficial. Fundraising for Starlight has given the event a bigger purpose, one where the audience can feel that they’re actively contributing to our fundraising efforts in paying their $2 entry fee. The Parents and Friends Night was a fantastic opportunity to have parents, family and friends gain an insight into the interior world of their sons/brothers/cousins/friends. There was a positive vibe, which could be felt during the whole event (which was attended by over 200 people), and a fantastic spirit of involvement throughout.

Having local newspapers report on our events always gives the boys a buzz. One of the boys who performed in this year’s event (and was captured in the photo that accompanied an article in the local newspaper) visited his dentist around the time of publication. He took great delight in telling me that

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**How do we staff the extra activities?**

**On the day of the event**
- Three key staff are required for Periods 2 to 6 to supervise the performers/backstage crew through the rehearsal time and the event—totaling around 35 boys.

**The event itself**
- A strong leadership presence is organised.
- A call is sent out to have other staff come, support the event, and make their presence felt.

**The rehearsal the week before**
- This year the rehearsal occurred the week before during our Curriculum Development Team meeting time after school (a two-hour rehearsal).
- Four staff were there to supervise and support boys in this rehearsal.

**What resources will you need?**
- A venue (a theatre space preferably).
- Sound equipment (speakers, microphones, amplifiers, etc.).
- Band equipment (drums, keyboard etc., though the boys bring their own guitars).
- CD players for the rehearsals.
They see it as their event and, due to this, willingly and enthusiastically take on the organising of it.

Vanessa Fox is a teacher at Parade College who initiated the RAP & Rock program, which has now been running five years. She has been a key teacher in the Rock and Water program and has involved herself in innovative drama events. Vanessa can be contacted on 02 9468 3300 or vfox@parade.vic.edu.au

they identified him as being in the article, and opened up the newspaper to show him. The article is now a permanent fixture within his dental file.

Having Morganics run a workshop at the school was a real privilege. Morganics is an Australian hip-hop artist who has been involved in teaching beatboxing and MCing to community centres, jails, schools, theatre companies and remote Aboriginal communities. He gave a group of around 30 boys an insight into the historical context that hip-hop came out of, and introduced boys to the important notion that you should acknowledge where hip-hop comes from, and then go beyond that to where you work on making it ‘your own’. Part of this is not feeling that you need to mimic Americans or the type of language/content that can tend to be included in mainstream American rap. When the day was over, the boys had produced their own group single. While this was only a starting point in getting boys to think critically about the type of rap they are often immersed in, it was nevertheless an experience they could think back to and build upon.

Summing up
It has been an absolute pleasure and privilege to have been involved in the Rap and Rock event. I feel that we have definitely exceeded the aims that we set out to achieve at the start. The event has evolved in its own way, which has contributed to its continued popularity.

In reading through all of the 10 Rap and Rock event boy lists, it has dawned on me just how many boys have been involved over the years (some participating in the event on an annual basis, obviously making it one of the highlights of their secondary schooling).

Along with all of the other wonderful initiatives open to boys at Parade College, it is clear that there really is a considerable range of opportunities for our boys to pick from, in helping them develop as they make their journey from adolescence to young men.
Brooks High School is located in the outer suburbs of Launceston and caters for students in Year 7 through to Year 10. Brooks High School has 630 students, most of whom come from low-income backgrounds. Seventy-two per cent of families have a family income below $22,000 and 64% of dwellings in the school's suburb are rented from the State Housing Commission. Among the school community, there is a high incidence of single-parent families, welfare dependency, inter-generational unemployment, high crime rates and drug and alcohol dependency.

There are no courses specifically for boys at Brooks, not even ‘Spanners’—the Traineeship and Apprenticeship (TAP) Program we run at ‘Birribi’, Brooks's off-campus centre. Yet our boys are improving all the time. We don't stream classes, but expect students to choose carefully, based on the learning outcome they need. Brooks has always included students with the widest range of backgrounds, needs, abilities and interests. With robust choices, Brooks offers a personalised education to all and there is plenty for boys to choose from. Curiously, growth areas in 2006 have been more demanding science-based choices, visual art choices, and fitness and weights.

The teachers at Brooks came to an understanding at the end of 2003 that change needed to be made to the curriculum being delivered and also to the way in which it was delivered. We also realised that, while it was our prime job to identify the needs and interests of all students, we also needed to work extra hard to meet the needs of a high ratio of our students who had become disengaged with a traditional high-school program. Our attendance rates were of great concern, particularly among our male student population.

The range of strategies and programs available to Brooks students was the first focus of change, as we identified the need to have the students' interests drive the curriculum that we were delivering. The result of this understanding was staff developing a wide range of new curricula. This initially placed great stress and increased workloads on many teaching staff whose entire teaching career had been based in traditional schools; however, in hindsight the benefits of the transition that Brooks undertook have far outweighed the initial concerns.

During the 1990s teams were set up consisting of teachers from a wide range of subject backgrounds, a move that was seen as a fairly big step because people were taken out of their area of expertise. This meant that there was one core teacher for each class of Years 7 and 8 and a maximum of four other teachers for each year. The basis of this was to build relationships with the students as this person was not only the principal teacher for their class but also responsible for the pastoral care of these students.

A major initiative to tackle the poor literacy and numeracy rates among our students (60% had reading ages of seven to eight) was the school using a significant percentage of its school resource package to employ teaching assistants whose main role was to deliver specialised literacy and numeracy programs such as First Steps. Around 90% of the students who accessed the Learning Support Centre were boys. The school used several testing methods in future years to chart the progress of students such as PAT (Progressive Achievement Test) vocab tests and South Australian Spelling Tests, both of which found an increased number of students achieving average and above average results.

The following is a description of the changes that were made at the end of 2003.

**Toolbox**

Here, students gain the ‘basics’: literacy, numeracy etc. Toolbox covers the same areas in each year: literacy, numeracy, ICT, learning support, personal responsibility, social responsibility, health and sport.

This is the class time where the primary pastoral care giver is also responsible for the teaching of each of these leaning areas. The major
benefit of this has been the improved relationships between students and the teachers responsible for teaching numeracy and literacy, which has naturally resulted in more positive learning outcomes.

**Personal interests**
Students choose from a range of PI subjects in each year. For Years 7 and 8, these PIs include: Craft Technology; Where to Now? (adventure pursuits); Animals and Us; You are What You Eat; Science for Life; Junior Dance; and Extreme Fitness.

In Years 7 and 8, PI classes are six blocks out of 15, or two days per week. The students choose four PIs for the year.

For Years 9 and 10, PI choices include: Basic Catering; Why Fish?; Forensic Science; How to get a Licence; and Weight Training. In Years 9 and 10, PI classes are nine blocks out of 15, or three days per week. The students choose five PIs for the year.

**Team personal interests**
These are available for Years 7 and 8 only and choices include: Enrichment classes; Literacy/ Numeracy; Science; Sport; and Concept Integrated units (see box below).

Accompanying these curriculum reforms is a suite of targeted programs in the area of welfare and work. These include welfare programs, Birribi and Spanners, a set of No Dole/Work Studies/Career and Transition programs and a range of off-campus work-experience programs, such as Student Works and the newly formed TAP program. All of these programs and initiatives are mentioned in further detail below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2004–07</th>
<th>Toolbox</th>
<th>PIs</th>
<th>Team PIs</th>
<th>Wellbeing/Futures (new 2006)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grade 7 &amp; 8</td>
<td>6 Blocks</td>
<td>2 x 3 Blocks</td>
<td>1 x 3 Blocks</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 9 &amp; 10</td>
<td>6 Blocks (Regrouped for numeracy then literacy from mid-2005)</td>
<td>3 x 3 Blocks Semester each Grade</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>3 Blocks per week x 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>Taught by Grade Team</td>
<td>Various Staff, depending on student choice</td>
<td>Taught by Grade Team</td>
<td>Taught by Grade Teams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combinations</td>
<td>Grades not combined</td>
<td>Grade 7 &amp; 8 combined Grade 9 &amp; 10 combined</td>
<td>Grades not combined</td>
<td>Grades not combined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calendar</td>
<td>Focus according to student need</td>
<td>Students choose. Two Semesters of equal length</td>
<td>Focus according to student need</td>
<td>Grade 9 Wellbeing Semester 2 Grade 10 Futures Semester 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Timetable Block = average 100 minutes i.e. 3 Block days
The assistant principals select from among the multitude of options offered by the school to develop individual education plans (IEPs) for at-risk students who might otherwise drop out of school. The assistant principal is responsible for IEPs, especially where they involve off-campus work or days away from school. Some examples of IEPs include:

- A Year 9 boy who was on a program of Biribi, Spanners and work placement
- A Year 8 boy who was on a program of Birribi, Spanners and two days of the week at home
- A Year 10 boy who attends the school for literacy and numeracy in Toolbox and spends the rest of his time on work placements.

Brooks High School runs a program in conjunction with its feeder primary schools for Grade 7 entrants. This program takes a proactive approach to individual students and prepares a program for them before they arrive. This means that on day one of Grade 7 the students hit the ground running with alternative programs in place for specific students. The school has moved from being reactive to being proactive with respect to the students' welfare and programs. A major component of this program has been working in conjunction with the primary school teachers to identify at-risk students and supporting these students through proving them with extra school visits and sample lessons on our campus while they are still attending their respective primary schools. The majority of these students are boys.

The nature of the relationships formed between the teaching staff and students at Brooks is pivotal to the success of the programs delivered. Although some staff are teaching out of area, our school believes that the challenges that this presents are minimal compared to the benefits of selecting staff that form strong and positive relationships with our students. Each grade team of teachers works together closely in relation to curriculum as well as the pastoral care of the entire grade, leading to strong relationships not only between teachers but also between each teacher and the entire grade population of students. Each grade team has 'expert teachers' in areas such a literacy and numeracy to provide support for teachers teaching out of area.

Visitors to the school are surprised at the relaxed attitude of the staff, particularly the way in which many of the staff interact with students. Many staff are comfortable being called by nicknames. This casualness, however, does not reflect a lack of respect as the same visitors to the school would also find that these teachers often have the best behaviour management strategies and most settled classes.

Staff feel that the major benefits of the new curriculum model are that students are more engaged when in PI lessons, as by the very nature of PIs they are choosing something of interest to them. This naturally leads to improved behaviour and attendance as staff often found that with the old model—in which students were forced to do each different option area—many boys displayed challenging behaviours in subjects such as drama and music as they had no interest in them.

Additional learning programs at Brooks

**Birribi Youth Centre**

Birribi is our off-campus centre in Tompkins Lane, easy walking distance from the school down ‘the Birribi path’. Programs range from group tasks addressing the development of social skills, communication or anger management and more, as well as leadership programs. Practical tasks, such as rebuilding bikes and cars, constructing work benches and vintage boat building, as well as art and crafts, sees lots of hand-on activity at Birribi.

Up to 100 students might attend one 100-minute session at Birribi in any one week. The value of this program is reflected in the fact that the Birribi teacher is part of the school's staffing quota.

**Spanners**

Students work in small groups in the on-site workshop for half a day each. Students are provided with hands-on experience in mechanical maintenance and repairs. Projects include rebuilding cars, motorbikes and beach buggies, often from the ground up.

As well as providing for those with a serious automotive bent, Spanners can be a respite for students. Funding provided by other schools has seen Spanners able to expand and cater for their students too.

**Support**

All students entering Grade 7 at Brooks are tested to find out about their learning needs. Help in the form of deliberately focused
The nature of the relationships formed between the teaching staff and students is pivotal to the success of the programs.

Programs may be given in class—and/or within the support area—by a team of teachers and teacher aides. There is plenty of evidence that literacy and numeracy levels at Brooks have significantly increased due to this provision. Up to one-third of students might be given specific support in any one year, including students with very high needs.

**Extension and enrichment**

Wherever the opportunity arises, students with a particular ability or interest will be included in extension programs, thus enriching their school experience. This includes additional opportunities in English and maths, with science-based projects also being a feature. The range of Personal Interest subjects, unique to our school, allows students to choose between a number of challenging options. Activities such as national maths competitions, Tournament of the Minds, drama competitions, debating and specific camps compliment our provision.

**Business and community links**

The work of our well-established Business Partnership Committee ensures that students benefit from continual interaction with business and the community. With links to over 250 businesses, we are able to manage work placements, ‘Girls Day Out’, ‘Men at Work’, ‘Adopt-a-Class’ programs and much more, to the mutual benefit of all. Without these links, we are just a school!

**Traineeship and Apprenticeship Pathways program**

TAP commenced on 1 August 2005. Seventeen Grade 10 students did Workplace Toolbox (basics) for two days per week, a further two days at TAFE Metals Workshops and one day of work placement each week, over 15 weeks.

Despite a more focused program, TAP students retain all their options beyond Grade 10. This is neither an academic nor an at-risk program, being offered to and chosen by students with diverse interests, abilities and aspirations.

This was a Brooks initiative, with strong support from employers, JobNet Tasmania providers and TAFE, not to mention parents and students. In 2006 TAP expanded to include 54 students mostly, from Brooks and Port Dalrymple, with a few each from Lilydale, Cressy and Riverside schools working in metals, building and construction or hospitality. The 2007 model is
similar to 2006. The Maintain and Retain Secondary Students at School (MARSSS) program funds the TAFE component.

Farm-based programs
A farm adjacent to the school is the site for a number of agriculture-based programs, being Personal Interest courses for Grades 7–10, VET courses in Grades 11 and 12, and the Farm Initiative Program. Our focus has been on working with cattle, horses and sheep, with students learning to care for, groom, handle and judge animals. This culminates in the showing of animals and participation in horse events at agricultural shows around the state. Horticulture facilities are under development in late 2006.

Riding horses and Riding for the Disabled
Students can learn to ride a horse at Brooks, and our Riding for the Disabled (RDA) program sees students with very high needs able to be included. A joint submission by the RDA Association, the East Tamar Pony Club and Brooks led to a community grant to construct an RDA facility for both school and community use. Staff are already qualified or working toward appropriate qualifications.

Paul Stevenson has taught at Brooks High School since 1998. He currently teaches maths, language, and PE classes, and has been Grade 8 Curriculum/Team leader since 2003. Paul originally trained as a primary teacher at the University of Tasmania, and taught in various primary schools in Launceston and Scotland.

James Price has been a member of the Grade 7 curriculum team at Brooks since June 2001. He has taught across various curriculum areas, including literacy, numeracy, science, health and PE, ICT and presentation skills. James is currently the Acting Team/Curriculum leader and Transition Coordinator.
Fun and reading aren’t usually found in the same sentence with boys, but at this school two committed librarians have shown that approaching books with passion can change boys’ attitudes to reading.

‘My son never used to read. Now he’s always got a book on the go.’

‘I just want to thank you for Boys and Books. My son loves it and is always asking us to buy him books.’

‘Can you tell me the next book in the CHERUB series? I want to get it for my son.’

‘How do you do it?’

‘You instil in all of us the love of reading.’

There’s no rocket science behind the immensely successful Boys and Books (B&B) program at Barker College. Not a bit of it. It runs on the simple idea that if you bring boys and books together with passion and enthusiasm you’ll get results. B&B is not about literacy in the first instance. It’s about fun and reading for pleasure. As for those quotes above—‘they’re only anecdotal’ you might say. However, our research findings into Boys and Books confirms the existence of a thriving reading culture within the school.

A few nuts and bolts help to make the program a reality. Firstly, Barker College is fortunate to have three teacher librarians that can devote their energy to the B&B program, and each of them coordinates the program for a year in the middle school (Years 7 to 9). Secondly, the English department allocates a one-hour period per fortnight from its timetable during which a teacher accompanies their English class to the library for Boys and Books. The bottom line is that every boy gets three years of B&B, 20 sessions per year on average.

An essential part of most B&B lessons is a read-aloud from a new or very popular book. The boys love it. If you can make a book come alive in a read-aloud, you’ve discovered the secret to Boys and Books. During B&B when the teacher librarian is not reading aloud or recommending books, the boys quietly pursue their own reading interests without having to justify their choice of material . . . there are no strings attached to B&B! It’s not unusual to see the full gamut of reading material being gleaned over in this free-reading session: print fiction, picture books, non-fiction, graphic novels and magazines . . . they all have a place.

If the sheer scale of Barker’s operation puts you off and makes you think it’s not for you, we can tell you that it’s not the number of teacher librarians or boys involved that makes the program successful. It could work equally as well with one teacher librarian and one class—providing the all-essential fire in the belly is present. Boys and Books would be a monumental flop were it not for the aforementioned passion and enthusiasm of its coordinators. We love reading young adult literature and enjoy sharing our passion with the boys, not just in B&B but also in the playground, on
the way to lessons, at recess and lunch, walking to the station, at the local bookshops . . . in fact, anywhere and everywhere there’s a place to stop and chat.

Parents are, of course, an important part of the loop. We give incoming Year 7 parents an introduction to the library early in first term. A large part of this session is devoted to Boys and Books. Parents whose older children have been through the school already know about the program and help to spread the word. Even brand newies have picked up the word from other parents. Word of mouth is the best advertising.

The boys respond to the program, not just by reading and sharing their love of it, but also by recommending great reads to us. Some of our most popular books and series have come to us from students. We have to admit that we missed the start of the CHERUB series. It was already two books old when some new Year 7s asked ‘Where’s CHERUB?’ The rest, as they say . . .

Author visits are also an important way of keeping the vibe going. Matthew Reilly, Garth Nix, Anthony Horowitz, Scott Monk, Markus Zusak, John Flanagan, and Andrew Daddo have all enthralled the boys with tales of their experiences in writing. We’re confident that upcoming visits by Jack Heath and Scot Gardner will do the same.

Boys and Books has become a vital part of the library’s operation. The spin-offs are endless and help to support and invigorate the library’s other services and activities. By being involved closely with boys and their reading we are connecting with them about something important in their lives. The links to pastoral care are obvious and widely acknowledged throughout the school. In fact, seeing the success of Boys and Books, many of our classroom teachers have sought to get in on the act. Our Hear & Now storytelling season—which operates every Friday lunchtime—sees students pack into the fiction area to hear a teacher read, tell, act, sing, juggle or dance a great story. Anything goes, so long as it’s entertaining.

While we consider Boys and Books to be a great success, do the boys feel the same? In an attempt to find this out, a small action research project was conducted in 2005. Of the many encouraging findings that emerged from a survey of 328 boys in Years 7 and 8, several stood out:

- Some 99% of boys enjoyed B&B.
- Some 90% of boys enjoyed having the teacher librarian read aloud.
- Some 70% of boys use B&B time to select reading material.
- When asked to provide one suggestion as to how B&B might be improved, over 40% of boys suggested there should be ‘more B&B’.

The current Year 12s were the first to experience Boys and Books, back in 2002 as Year 7 boys, and the first to spend three years in the program. Of course, we wanted to find out what they recalled about B&B and what difference it might have made to their reading habits. The results of a recent survey of Year 12 boys contained no surprises. The majority of the 175 boys who responded loved Boys and Books, or at least thought it was ‘pretty good’. It was also clear that the combination of being read to, having a quiet time in their busy schedule to get lost in a good book, and the absence of any written work appealed mightily.

Despite the apparent success of B&B at Barker, we are always on the lookout to enhance the program. Earlier this year we created Fully Booked—a blog where teachers and students can discuss their reading and reading-related matters. And now the Tuesday Book Club is about to be launched. This will be a student-driven book club where students choose the books and lead the discussion. It will also provide an opportunity for our senior students to continue the book connection.

In The Power of Reading, Stephen Krashen reviews a large body of research that indicates a positive relationship between reading for pleasure and student achievement. If student learning outcomes are enhanced as a result of Boys and Books, we see this as a bonus. However, improving academic learning is not the primary objective of B&B. Rather, it’s about fostering a love of reading; of taking boys beyond the bounds of their own experience into worlds beyond. What we want to do, in the words of Michael Sullivan in Connecting Boys with Books, is ‘to focus on the one thing that really matters when the day is done. We want boys reading. We want boys and books together.’

John Free and Di Laycock are teacher librarians at Barker College. John coordinates Boys and Books in Year 7, while Di is responsible for Year 8.
We have designed a sustainable learning centre using energy-efficient materials and designs. The octagonal shapes can be repeated and linked in the form of a beehive. We are calling our current design the Relaxagon: this captures the sense of how we don’t see it as a dependent learning environment. Rather, it will be a learning place where teams are working together to create something beautiful and memorable. By doing this we are also building strong working relationships and partnerships with our architects, builders and community partners.

The Castlemaine Sustainable Classroom Project has been a key curriculum and community focus of Castlemaine Secondary College for the past two years.

In that time, students have explored energy-efficient designs, eco-friendly building materials, and the aesthetics of an innovative, community-developed, multi-purpose classroom that makes energy use visible to its users.

As part of the learning process students have:

- interviewed and worked closely with local architects and tradespeople
- investigated local building designs of innovation and sustainability best-practice
- developed a design brief with an international design consultant
- developed building plans with the Mount Alexander Shire Sustainability Planner and Building Surveyor
- made presentations to our school council, federal MPs, Mt Alexander Shire local council and Bendigo Bank
- co-written funding applications to support the project
- developed a classroom design and plan based on energy-efficient design principles that will be shared by community groups, develop community capacity, and serve as a model of best practice in sustainable design.

The results of this process have been incorporated into promotional brochures, PowerPoint presentations, 3D models for displays and a website (www.freewebs.com/relaxagons/index.htm).

Over the two-year journey the students and teachers have brought together the know-how and significant technical expertise in the Castlemaine area, and designed the two classroom modules known as Relaxagons.

What follows is the students’ own account of their learning process, explored during a series of conversations and through extracts from their project journals.

Our journey
I guess it all began when we were designing our ‘living city’ in the old garden beds and sand pit at Barkers Creek. We were kind of just mucking around with some old piping and the overflow from the pond when it rains. We built some channels and then Daniel suggested we begin to build a miniature city. This was way back in Year 7.

In Year 8 we got involved in the Shed Project. A Year 9 Independent Learning Team restored the shed while we were in Year 7. We then helped in Year 8 with interior design; our paintings and murals are there on the walls inside the shed. We’ve outgrown the shed at Barkers Creek now and we will do the next best thing by designing and building a whole new classroom.

This is the next step and it feels more mature. The project started...
halfway through Year 8. We have been going over many different designs, different methods of building, and different business and funding partnerships.

This paper will show you just what we have come to over the past year and a half.

The team
Our team includes Jared Lemon, Sam Panter, Matthew Plumridge, Daniel Fitzpatrick, Loudon Cooper and Luke Ashton-Lawson. We all have different roles, although we all help each other with every aspect of the building.

This is because we all have things we are better at than others. Matthew and Sam are the people that coordinate the design process; Daniel and Luke lead the partnerships area of the building; Jared and Loudon lead the publicity side of the project. The group as a whole usually does the public speaking for the group, and we can all talk about our own parts of the process of building the Eco Hut.

How Eco Hut Designs began
Eco Hut Designs is the name we came up with when we were developing our first eco-hut plans. We were working closely with our building mentor, Richard, who taught us a great deal about technical drawing and the orientation of the building. Initially, we were looking at tyre construction.

The honeycomb design
The design process has probably been the longest process and has gone over many changes. The first design was a circular shape. It then moved onto a semi-circle attached to a square, and eventually changed to the design we have now; an octagonal shape.

The teachers were enthusiastic and encouraged us to design a larger construction. We have come up with an octagonal form, one that we realised can be repeated and linked in the form not too different to a beehive (hence the honeycombs).

Not only have the outer designs changed, but the materials we are using have changed as well. Originally we were going to build the Eco Hut from straw bales and used car tyres, but eventually we decided to just use straw bales, and to build a feature out of used car tyres.

The process of designing has not only changed with what we want it to look like, but what is possible and rational to build.

We might call our first design the ‘Relaxagon’. This captures the sense that we don’t see it as a dependent learning environment; rather, it can be a learning place where individuals and teams are working together to create something beautiful and memorable. Doing this we can also build strong working relationships and partnerships, plus it is a joyful event.

Making the building an example of sustainability
We want to create a learning centre that models best practice sustainability and design. A key element of the building is the recycled materials: both the straw bales and used tyres. The insulating effects of straw bales are excellent, and we are planning to use passive solar design, water tanks and solar panels to enable the learning centre to be self-sufficient in regard to energy use, as we waste so much energy in regular schools. Our interior design is open-plan, connecting the kitchen space and all the different learning styles.

Double-glazed windows and interesting doorways will connect the indoor and outdoor spaces. You can step out onto our decking and niches and then into the garden areas.

The themes
There are many themes that we are trying to incorporate into the Eco Hut/Relaxagon, themes such as the

[Barkers Creek] isn’t as overwhelming as this big school environment. It kind of connects primary and secondary: forming a bridge. It’s adapting—not a complete or sudden change.
four elements of earth, wind, fire and water. Along with elemental themes, we would like to incorporate cultural themes connected with Buddhism and Indigenous cultures: connecting with Eastern philosophies so to speak. We would also like to have a modern feel, and try and combine Western and Eastern. A particular way to do this would be through furnishings, wildlife and structure. These are just a few of the themes we would like to use in this building.

Figures 1 and 2 (opposite), the holistic learning wheel and spiral, inform our learning approach.

The living feel of the Eco Hut
We want a living sense in the rooms, with connections to light, water, fire and sound. We want the buildings to have a ‘light’ presence in the bush. The octagonal network creates a feel of the beehive, bustling with activity and life.

A safe area to include a fireplace would be excellent.

Music is also an important element, because the right music can establish any mood you would like: from peaceful ambient music to ripping metal, we believe that creating an environment that’s flexible for music is a must.

There will be water features and a sense of being able to step out onto the verandahs as there are lovely views of the mountains, which are also becoming part of our overall design.

Through conscious use of space, colour, natural light, displays of children’s work, documentations, and attention to nature and detail, the environment serves as a teacher. A key part of our ongoing research centres around the Reggio Emilia approach.

Learning, Barkers Creek style
What follows are excerpts from ‘sustaining our conversations’: a fascinating discussion with the boys around learning, middle years and educational change.

The boys reflect on how learning at Barkers Creek involves being in the outdoors a lot, taking walks and being in the bush.

What we like . . .
What we like about Barkers Creek is that it keeps the best element of primary school: a hands-on approach, being relaxed, having fun, having one space where sometimes the teachers switch around. It doesn’t matter what you do as much, you can play without having to impress anyone, there is no peer pressure but you are able to go with the flow. It isn’t as overwhelming as this big school environment. It kind of connects primary and secondary: forming a bridge. It’s adapting—not a complete or sudden change. The Independent Learning Projects also give young people an opportunity to find out what their passion is and how they can make a difference. Some need hands-on things and to be able to move around to learn well: they need to feel and to see end product.

The Relaxagon: Why are we building this building?
We will leave school and we could leave a mark, a legacy, something to leave behind. When we are 30 we will have our reunion and take a walk around Barkers Creek. That will be fun. What we are doing has educational value. We will have learned a lot. It has been good fun, hands on: something new and innovative.

How will the centre be run?
For our sustainable learning centre, it is important that no one is a failure when they come here to learn. It has to be a relaxed environment, a place to hang out. It is a partnership with the teachers. We want it to be more us taking care of the centre and for it to be run together, a real partnership.
bridging community to school. People come to learning in many different ways, there is no one simple way of learning. Often teachers don’t let kids mature by not letting students make decisions. There used to be a set plan then, but we have come a long way since my parents were at school.

The sustainable classroom
There are limitless possibilities for the uses of this building. There are possibilities of having an artist in residence living in the Eco Hut, having music concerts on the decking at the front of the building and organising music and class concerts. Other possibilities include private functions, council meetings, dinners etc. The main use for the buildings will be for classrooms, and relaxation.

How we envisage the Relaxagon
We are thinking together again of the image of the bridge and of the arch and its strength as a building form; and of moving from the old approaches to learning to the new. The arch can hold the two. I guess with the Relaxagon we are helping find the bridge from the old to the new. And we asked ourselves: what might this bridge look like and whether we could draw ourselves as we are crossing this bridge? We talked also about thresholds, of the entrance to this new space. When he said, ‘We are going to build the sustainable classroom’ some of the boys laughed, but Mr Kohane replied, ‘Once we have secured our partners and people really believe in what you as young people are imagining, it will happen’.

Summary
The Eco Hut is a joint venture led by the Barkers Creek Community Partnership, and reflects a unique collaboration of key stakeholders—builders, designers, architects, local council, parents and small businesses—working with and mentoring students and teachers in sustainable design and the uptake of energy-efficient technologies.

Together, the partnership is aiming to ‘rejuvenate, re-imagine and develop the existing Barkers Creek school site using best practice design’. The collaboration has been led by coordinator Andrew Kohane and Year 9 students who believe passionately in using local building material, solar and low-energy technologies, to reduce energy use and encourage others to recycle.

Importantly, the students, teachers and partners together recognise a paradigm shift that is occurring in education and the need and scope for this to be reflected in innovative classroom designs.

There is strong interest from the main campuses of CSC and primary schools in our cluster to access our designs, partnership approach and technologies to facilitate similar processes and ultimately build their variations of our pilot sustainable classrooms.

We are very interested in collaborating with other schools to promote the amazing abilities of our students and their capacity to lead innovation and change in educational communities.

Visit the boys’ website at: www.freewebs.com/relaxagons/index.htm

Andrew Kohane has developed holistic community-based learning programs in both primary and secondary settings. He is developing the Munthari Campus of Castlemaine Secondary College as a model for sustainable design, independent student projects and local community partnerships. Andrew co-manages the Relaxagon Building Project with the boys’ Eco Hut Team and can be contacted at Kohane.Andrew@edumail.vic.gov.au or phone 03 5479 1111.
Why focus on fathers?
Good question! At the fifth national Working with Boys, Building Fine Men conference, held in July at the University of Newcastle, this question was put to an audience of 85 teachers and executives—all of whom had given up their holidays to find some answers. Some 300 answers were summarised into 50, with several common threads emerging:

- Every child has a father!
- Fathers are positive role models.
- To encourage and develop positive relationships with fathers and father-figures.
- Fathers are untapped resources.
- Boys learn to be fathers from their fathers.

The importance of involvement from fathers and father-figures is becoming increasingly clear, through research such as that by Richard Fletcher. The benefits in terms of social-emotional wellbeing include stronger attachment leading to more stable relationships and more resilient children. Educationally, the involvement of fathers and father-figures has also been shown to assist in improving academic outcomes for boys and girls. Research has identified that the children of involved fathers:

- are less likely to have social difficulties
- are more likely to negotiate adolescence with fewer problems.

Fathers in Communities: the project
In 2006 the Fathers in Communities project was initiated to encourage and develop more father involvement with their children. This two-year project is being run by the Family Action Centre at the University of Newcastle. It is funded by the Australian Government’s Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs and is supported by the NSW Government’s Department of Education and Training.

The first 18 months of the Fathers in Communities project initiated the first of many steps in overcoming the apparent imbalance of male and female role models in the school and local community. With the long-term goal of involving more fathers in the development of their children’s growth, the project began with the obvious but often overlooked step of ‘getting people on board’.

Our initial aim was to raise the awareness of school staff and the immediate community regarding the need for greater father and father-figure interaction during a child’s formative years at school. Through a series of meetings and surveys conducted at the schools participating in our program, this initial aim was achieved.

First steps: dad’s breakfast
The task of getting the fathers and father-figures into the schools proved to be a very positive experience for fathers, students and staff. The concept was simple: put on a breakfast barbecue for the dads. With encouragement from the staff and executives of the schools the students quickly came on board and were able to entice their fathers and father-figures up to the school through some enthusiastic talking, personally-made invitations and of course reminders in the newsletters. Of the nine schools involved the lowest representation of families (including single-parent families) within the school was 55%.

Fathers and father-figures were treated to breakfast cooked by the schools’ P&C (which allowed staff to mingle and meet fathers), and this was followed up by a half-hour tour to their children’s classroom.
Activities that teachers had provided during this time were father-friendly, hands-on and often interactive. Students had the opportunity to participate in activities with their fathers while showing them that their school and classroom was in fact a very father-friendly place. Fathers were given the opportunity to sample a working classroom environment, which was promoted as a non-threatening, fun and informative place through structured activities and displays promoting the value of fathers.

Next steps: the strengths of fathers
During the initial stages of awareness raising, the Fathers in Communities team was able to instigate a database of fathers who were interested in helping in the school. This was achieved by fathers and father-figures being asked to complete a Fathers Strengths survey in which they were able to highlight their strengths, interests and/or expertise, as well as their desire to assist in the school. This survey was successful for a number of reasons. Students were given the survey as a homework activity and, as such, the expectation was that each form would be completed and returned. The form was structured in such a way that fathers not only felt that their skills and interests could be beneficial to their children and their school but that they would be entering an environment that was father-friendly and acknowledged the contributions they could make.

Schools were able to use these databases when they required assistance for excursions, sporting events and tasks around the school. Individual classes were able to tap into this resource for classroom helpers and also as guest speakers. Fathers and father-figures were invited to speak to classes on a topic of their interest. Some of the talks were about their jobs, their hobbies, holidays they had been on, cultural backgrounds etc. Students were able to use these talks to develop their questioning and listening skills while gaining an insight into the different, interesting and sometimes unusual aspects of fathers within their class.

Maintaining the momentum: a unit of work
One of the challenges was to maintain the interest and enthusiasm of both the school and the fathers. To this end, teachers from several schools involved in the project attended a half-day workshop at which they developed units of work to encourage father involvement.

The project team wanted to demonstrate that encouraging fathers did not require a large amount of extra work by the teacher, and that father participation could be achieved simply by approaching several areas of the curriculum from a different perspective.

The second aim was to present a unit of work that encouraged father participation within the classroom both as helpers and educators. Topics for units were determined by the interests of both the class/school and the fathers who had indicated an interest or expertise in certain areas. It was important that all activities were not deemed to be ‘extra’ work but fitted smoothly into areas already being studied and were directly linked to the curriculum as an integrated unit of work. Activities included in the units needed to be interactive and hands-on so fathers and children could work together and see relevance in the work they were doing. These units were written for a five-week period, with a one-to-two-hour lesson each week.

A brief rundown of the unit

Bike ed
This unit was developed with the aim of increasing awareness of bike safety and maintenance. Fathers have been asked to help with construction of road safety signs, construction of a ‘road’ within the school grounds and help with bike maintenance where students are shown how to service their bikes and ensure they are roadworthy.

Clown catchers
This craft activity involves construction of plywood clown faces. Fathers are asked to help make templates for the clowns and then cutting the plywood with fret saws. Some holes also needed drilling and of course the designing of appropriate patterns for the painting of the clowns’ faces.

Bin art
Keeping the playground clean was a priority of one school and the
solution was to update the bins around the school. Fathers were asked to help the students surveying and identifying areas in the playground that needed extra rubbish bins. Once these areas were identified dads were asked to help with painting the bins, which required preparation and undercoating the bins, tracing designs and pictures onto them and finally painting them. With the ownership of the bins firmly in the students; hands it is hoped that they will both use the bins more often and ensure they are well looked after.

Camping
With a storeroom full of tents it was only a matter of time before the call went out for help setting them up. Fathers were asked to help students determine suitable areas within the school to set up camp and then pitch the tents. This activity was followed up by a day-camp within the school grounds where fathers were asked to help the students set up a camp area, cooked their lunch and participated in outdoor activities.

Gardening
A raised garden bed and planting of vegetables was the task of one school, and fathers were asked to help in the construction of the garden beds and the planting of the seedlings. A roster for father helpers to assist in watering and weeding was one of the follow-up activities. An obvious extension to this activity would be the harvesting of the vegetables. A few dads helping with the preparation (and cooking) before eating would also go a long way to breaking down stereotyping.

Dads 4 Kids
Dads 4 Kids is a series of after-school activities run by volunteer fathers from the school. This initiative was started by a group of fathers interested in spending more quality time with their children. Their purpose was twofold: they wanted to engage with their children in a fun-filled school environment, while also promoting positive role modelling for disengaged fathers at the school. Once a term the fathers organise an hour of activities for the students to participate with their fathers. These activities are all fun bases with enjoyment being the focus, not winning. The only requirement for students to participate was that they were accompanied by a father-figure.

The introduction of the units and activities into the schools has given staff an opportunity to gauge the involvement potential of the fathers and father-figures. Research has shown that in the early years of school, fathers want to be involved in their children’s education but find it a daunting prospect. Many dads have the lingering bad taste from their own—often negative—school experiences, while the changing curricula and different teaching styles that are encouraged in our school system are seen as threatening by some would-be father helpers.

With the changed attitude of staff, father-friendly displays within the school, and classroom and a database of willing helpers, the units of father-friendly work are the next logical step in building the school/community relationship and encouraging fathers to maintain and develop a working (helping) relationship with their child’s school, teacher and classroom.

Results so far?
There has been a positive a change in the attitude of all schools, staff and community the project has worked with. All who have been surveyed or involved in discussions have demonstrated that there is a need to develop father involvement within the school and community.

Since the initial meetings and dads’ breakfasts there has been an improved relationship between staff and fathers, with a more father-friendly atmosphere within the
Schools being actively developed. Staff members have commented on the positive aspects of the activities in terms of initial meetings and ability to foster positive relationships with the families of their students. Comments such as ‘It’s the first time I’ve seen his dad’ and ‘I’ve never met any of these dads before today’ were commonplace, with all staff surveyed agreeing that they had not been able to engage successfully with fathers in the past.

Fathers were extremely positive in their responses, often mentioning the ways in which school had changed ‘since their time’. Their engagement with their children was obvious with many smiling-faced dads being ‘dragged around’ the rooms as children proudly showed off their work and their school. Some comments from the fathers were:

- Good to meet some of the other dads and see them spending time with their kids. I’m not alone.
- Getting dads involved in child’s schooling is a great idea.
- Enjoyed sharing activities and talking to other fathers concerning our children.
- Wonderful way to meet other teachers and parents.

The students’ positive experiences were clear, with comments like:

- It was fun having dad helping my in the classroom.
- Dad helps me with my homework now.
- Mum said it was great that dad came up to the school.
- My dad knew how to play handball!
- Dad really liked my books.

Where to next?
The initial results from the Fathers in Communities project have been extremely positive. Staff, students and fathers have all expressed a desire to continue working towards developing a more father-inclusive environment. This will include ongoing social events, such as fathers’ breakfasts, fathers as guest speakers, homework and classroom modules directly targeting fathers, Dads 4 Kids afternoon activities and workshops targeting fathers.

To maintain the momentum and to make father-inclusive practices sustainable, schools need to regularly revisit these activities. This can be achieved through father-friendly practices in the school’s strategic plan and assisting staff through regular development programs.

Key guidelines for involving fathers
- Make it part of the school’s strategic plan.
- Address staff concerns and issues.
- Keep the mothers informed.
- Highlight the benefits to children about getting dads involved.
- Ensure students without a father or father-figure are catered for and are involved.

Further information on father involvement:

Resources to support and promote father involvement is available through the Family Action Centre’s publications and resources unit:
www.newcastle.edu.au/centre/fac/publications-resources

During his 25-year teaching career, Dave Turnidge has been heavily involved in student welfare issues, developing school policies that promote best practice and facilitating school and community-based workshops. He is currently dividing his working week between support-behaviour teaching in West Wallsend schools and working on the Fathers in Communities project. Contact Dave on 02 4921 7280 or David.Turnidge@newcastle.edu.au.

John Andriunas is the coordinator/community worker of the Fathers in Communities project and also runs groups of all ages for the Family Action Centre’s Caravan Project. Prior to working at the FAC John was a youth worker/team leader providing residential support to youth aged nine to 17 years. Contact John on 02 49216853 or john.andriunas@newcastle.edu.au
In 2006, Ballina Public School decided to form a Year 4/5 boys’ class to trial the philosophy of the Success 4 Boys modules. As part of this trial Michael Taylor adapted the NSW Department of Education and Training’s Connected Outcomes Group (COG) units to incorporate the use of information and computer technology (ICT) and ICT-related activities such as animation, design and build to engage students. The program has now grown legs of its own and is being taught in Ballina, Toukley and Wyong Creek in various forms.

Andrew Smith and Jane West describe the basics of the program and how it’s been used for an automotive design/machining project.

The program engages students in learning related to their individual interests and provides each student with a body of work, which they will value and draw inspiration from. The manual and organisational skills they learn in this unit are skills they will be able to apply in any future endeavour and areas of interest.

Project-based learning encourages the development of management skills and lateral thinking skills, allowing students to develop these skills in both individual (intrapersonal) and group (interpersonal) learning situations.

Students participate in work which is of a practical nature and are encouraged to think as owners of their own work. A large part of the program is the development of entrepreneurial and research skills.

Working on their own individual learning program allows students to conduct research from home (online) and/or in the library, working at their own pace to achieve a quality standard.

Built within the program is the opportunity for the student to self-program work using Bloom’s taxonomy of thinking skills, cross-referenced with Gardner’s theory of multiple intelligences to devise activities appropriate to their abilities and needs.

ICT skills are heavily integrated throughout this unit of work and are used in a way that promotes their use in later endeavours.

The project reported here focuses on automotive design and machinery; however, the projects are individually tailored to the students’ interests and can take many forms:

- Boat design: boat designs, propulsion systems, concept sketches, design and build.
- Architecture: house and building design, energy-efficient houses, company logos and ads.
- Jewellery design: design own jewellery under own label, vary the materials used, research famous current and ancient jewellery design and use.
- Making an animated film: research various kinds of animation, clay animation, cut-out, computer graphic, line drawing, character building and story maps.
- Create a new rugby league team: new team being introduced in your area, team colours, mascot, name and ads.

Automotive design/machines

In this particular project students create a design brief for a fuel-efficient car for the immediate future, as well as other design and vehicle-related activities. Engaging exercises encourage creative skill
development and effective use of modern ICT.

Some suggested tasks are listed below. This version also links in with the COGS ‘Machines’ units.

The first group of letters following the task refer to the position on the Gardner-Bloom grid. For example, VIS-UN refers to a task designed for visual–spatial learners and is targeted at embedding understanding of the relevant concepts. The following alpha-numeric abbreviations show an outcome from the NSW DET syllabus, one which is addressed by this exercise. Often there will be many other outcomes that can be addressed in each activity.

- Research fuel-efficient cars on the internet. Identify engine systems that are viable in the immediate future. EER-KN TS2.2 PPS2.4
- Write an information report on the history of fuel-efficient vehicles using images from websites to illustrate. VER-UN TS2.3
- Write an exposition detailing the engine chosen for your vehicle and explain why you think this is the most suitable engine. Prepare a diagram of this engine within your exposition. Prepare concept sketches for the vehicle you have been contracted to design. Include plans, elevations, end elevations and isometric sketches of your design. You may use the chassis templates provided to help. Display these in your design portfolio. VIS-UN SGS2.1 TS2.2 VAS2.3
- Design a logo for your design company. Prepare a title page for your design portfolio incorporating company name and logo. Include a concept sketch on your title page. VIS-UN VAS2.3
- Give an oral presentation of your logo and its meaning. VER-AP TS2.1
- In groups of two or three brainstorm a list of things a fuel-efficient vehicle should include and a list of things it should not include. Prepare as a presentation page and discuss in a larger group with other groups who have also brainstormed these points. VER-AP TS2.1
- Write a description of the car you are going to design detailing the attributes you have decided the car should include. VER-AP TS2.1
- Design and shape a 1:20-scale model of the car you have designed using the wooden engineering chassis supplied. VIS-AP VAS 2.3
- Evaluate the fuel-efficient car designs completed by the class by analysing how well the designs have fitted the design criteria, i.e. the car seats two people, it can carry some luggage, shopping or tools, it is an all-weather car, it has distributed the occupants, engine and luggage well, it looks good and it has a suitable non-polluting engine. Use the voting page to mark your choices. VIS-EV TS2.1
- Write a jingle for your car design. Pick a piece of music to go with jingle. Perform and record. MUS-AP WS2.9 MUS2.1
- The car that is chosen as the best design will be moulded using silicon and plaster. A plaster version of the winning design will be given to each student. Students will then complete their own version of ‘Pimp My Ride’ to see who can come up with the most amazing 3D model of the winning design. VIS-CR VAS2.2
- Using a digital camera take a series of top and side pictures of your clay car. Download these on to a computer and open the pictures in a paint program. Using Paint and images found on the internet use your graphic skills to turn the pictures into as real a car as you can. VIS-CR VAS2.2
- Using Paint, design several different versions of your car, e.g. a hot rod, a sport version etc. VIS-CR VAS2.2
- Using your finished pictures design an advertisement for your car. Include a slogan, some
The Boys in Schools Bulletin

Michael Taylor is now Assistant Principal at Casino West Public School and is highly experienced in training teachers and students in ICT. Jane West is Assistant Principal at Toukley Public School. Andrew Smith was a teacher and Boys’ Coordinator at Toukley and has just transferred to Wyong Creek Public School.

Websites of interest

http://www.3wheelers.com/projgal1a.html
Michael Taylor, one of the teachers involved in the original automotive projects, later went on to design and build cars. This website showcases some of Michael’s work.

http://www.carver-worldwide.com/Home/Index.asp?nc=1
This is the home page of the company Carver, which manufactures three-wheeler cars.
Social role modelling and the influence of peers
A case study from Armenia

In her observations of boys’ behaviour in two Armenian special schools, Christine Kelly shows that—in the absence of family—peers become the regulators of boys’ behaviour and emotions.

Why anyone would consider constructing a school on the outskirts of town—between the city dump and cemetery—only becomes clear when you discover that the students were considered inmates to be kept inside rather than students eager to learn. Nubarashen Special School #18 feels like a hollow cave. The building is grey and bleak, with only glimmers of sunlight through the second-floor plastic sheeting that is used for windows.

In contrast, Vardashen #1 Special Education Complex has broken a cycle of abusive relationships and, with assistance from Médecins Sans Frontières France and World Vision Armenia, is developing into a school for learning.

In both of these schools boys rely upon their peers to act as models and regulators of behaviour and friendship, while the majority of teachers and other supervisors are authoritarian figures who demonstrate that ‘might is right’.

Boys’ behaviour: two observations
This article begins with observations made by the author at two institutions in Yerevan, the capital city of Armenia: the first at Vardashen #1 Special Education Complex; the second at Nubarashen Special School #18.

Both institutions were established to cater for the needs of ‘social orphans’—the term used in the Commonwealth of Independent States (the former Soviet Union) to refer to children whose parents are alive but do not have sufficient resources to care for them. However, the climate at each school is becoming increasingly polarised. Note that the students’ names have been changed in this article.

Observation One: Vardashen
The class observed at Vardashen #1 Special Education Complex was a sixth form grammar class with eight boys and one girl, 14 years of age. The grammar lesson began with the sole female student writing the date on the board. As the teacher explained parts of speech, all the students listened—except for three boys sitting at the back.

When requested, two boys in the middle of the room stood (as required when addressing a teacher) and provided the teacher with sentences correlating with the focus words. Michael, one of the boys who had been speaking at the back of the classroom, began singing. Michael
was asked to create a sentence using the words ‘also, but or too’. He neither stood nor answered correctly. Alex, who was sitting next to Michael, put on his glasses and started writing in his book. Michael then correctly provided a sentence to the teacher.

The teacher gave the class activities from a textbook to complete. She watched intently as Michael and Alex talked together. Alex looked up and saw the teacher watching him, took off his glasses, stood, smiled and—jokingly, but correctly—created a sentence. Michael then unsuccessfully tried to engage Alex in discussion. Michael again answered questions incorrectly. The teacher admonished Michael to answer correctly or ‘it will be bad for you’. Michael walked to the front of the class to write on the board. He used capitalisation incorrectly, so using the palm of this hand he smudged the word and wrote over the top. The teacher looked disapprovingly at Michael.

When Michael returned to his desk, Alex was writing in his book. Michael watched Alex for two minutes. Michael provided a correct sentence for the teacher and then began writing in his book. For the remainder of the lesson both Michael and Alex answered questions correctly and completed their work without talking with each other.

**Observation Two: Nubarashen**

The second observation was conducted at the all-male Nubarashen Special School, with seven 15-to-17-year-old boys, during a session of ‘free time’ in the television room.

At the beginning of the observation the head teacher asked each student to stand as she described personal details of the student’s family background, age and grade-level under-achievements.

Once the head teacher had left the room, leaving the supervisory teacher in charge, a student turned up the television volume, changed the channel to sports and then switched back to music again. A few students stood up and moved around the room; however, most stayed close to the teacher and listened to the supervisory teacher in conversation with the observer’s translator.

A video clip of a provocative female artist played on the television. The boys stopped their conversations and for the duration of the video, watched in complete silence. Once the video concluded, conversation recommenced. Different students continued to turn up the volume; however, the teacher did not respond to the provocation.

Davit entered the room and instructed that all boys must go to the garden upon the request of the head teacher. As the boys left through the narrow door and along the corridor, Davit pushed Armen against the wall and then hung his arm around another student’s shoulders. The teacher began a discussion with her back to the staircase, unaware of the students descending the stairs behind her. (Each step on the staircase was intentionally constructed to be different heights, and only wide enough for one person to walk up or down to control the physical behaviour of students.) Davit descended before the other students and waited at the bottom of the staircase. Armen climbed the rail and began to slide down. Another student attempted to run down the stairs but fell at the bottom. Armen slid down to the bottom step and jumped off the rail. Davit pushed him against the wall and struck his elbow into Armen’s face, then continued walking with the other students. Armen stood against the wall for a minute, rubbed his face and then continued outside. For the rest of the observation Armen was quiet.

**Peer importance**

Steve Biddulph states that, from the age of 14, boys begin to rely less on their parents as models and look externally for mentors or role models of behaviour (Biddulph 1997, p. 7). Peers take on a particular significance for the students at Vardashen and Nubarashen as most students come from single-parent, low socioeconomic backgrounds. Many families will have neither the financial security nor interest in seeing their children return to the family home. Peers thus become the substitute family and provide role models, along with teachers and administrators, on norms of behaviour. Since the majority of the teachers at these institutions are female, the male peer group’s role as ‘the bearers of gender definitions’—particularly that of masculinity—is even greater than mainstream society (Connell 2000, p. 162).

**Risk-taking and competition**

Risk-taking and competition extend boys’ notions of behavioural types that are acceptable for masculine identity (Hartman 1999, p. 25). Both observations show elements of risk-taking and competition. In the Vardashen observation Michael’s incorrect careless answers and lack of respect while answering (sitting
rather than standing) was in an effort to provoke the teacher to respond and gain status from his peers. However, when this notoriety was not forthcoming, his behaviour conformed to that of a respected peer by academically applying himself (Browne 1995, p. 227). The risk-taking behaviours at Nubarashen had a more negative impact on the role of masculinity. By pushing the limits of the teacher’s response by increasingly turning up the music volume, progressively more risky behaviours in descending the narrow misaligned stairs, and the physical harassment of an individual male student in front of other students all went uncontested. This behaviour increased the power base of the main perpetrator (Brown 1995; Connell 2000).

The role of homophobia
The role of homophobia in shaping male identity is complex. Traditionally in Armenia, male-to-male contact through hugging or holding hands is an accepted form of expressing friendship, particularly among youth. Although culturally acceptable, during the observations contact between males in the two institutions was predominantly that of aggression. Furthermore, most comments between students at Vardashen reflected teasing associated with sporting abilities rather than teasing using homophobic words. However, there have been cases of students who would label other male students as ‘girls’ indicating weakness—usually when they would not contest a physical fight (Plummer 2001, p. 4). This, according to a senior social worker at Vardashen, implies the homosexuality of the student.

The abusive backgrounds of some of the Nubarashen students suggests that the boys’ bravado, after the bullying incident, was in an effort not to show weakness and therefore be seen as homosexual (Browne 1995, p. 188; Plummer 2001, p. 4). Additional pressures may also have been affecting his response, most notably the influence of the prevailing strong ‘macho’ masculine image at the school. Interestingly, there was total silence while a provocative female singer aired on the television screen to the group of teenage males at Nubarashen. The peer pressure of the objectification of the female was complete. What would have happened if a male student continued talking or playing? It seemed apparent that silent behaviour was expected and harassment would result if any noise interrupted the viewing.

Many male students at Nubarashen have experienced sexual abuse by male relatives. For generally altruistic purposes these boys have been removed from their families and placed in an institution with minimal appreciation and support by the staff of their complex emotional and behavioural state. Their sexual identity has been based on experiences that now place them at risk of continuing the cycle of abuse and establishing an undercurrent of homosexuality. ‘Rolling peer pressure’, boys inducting boys into certain behaviours (Plummer 1999, p. 3) will continue the cycle of homophobic and homosexual behaviour at Nubarashen unless intervention measures are established.

Agents of masculine identity
Connell’s framework asserted that schools can both be agents of masculine identity as well as the setting for students to be the agents of masculine identity (2000 p. 155–64). (While Connell focuses his framework on industrialised nations, it is also applicable to a country such as Armenia that has high school participation, and high literacy.) The attitude of the teachers at Nubarashen is that the boys are bad, they cannot help themselves, and the teachers are present to
control them. The teachers have constructed the masculinity identity as including physical, impulsive, and risky behaviour rather than appreciating that masculinity and femininity are flexible social constructs (Francis 2000, p. 15). The teachers' expectations limit the boys' perceived abilities, which thus becomes a limiting factor in the boys' academic and social progression.

The representations of males in the environment, cultural norms, the interactions between males and females, mass-media communications, peers and culture all influence masculine identity (Browne 1995; Browne & Hartman 2000; Connell 2000; Plummer 2001). Additionally, teachers are susceptible to the overriding masculine paradigm with which the schools are operated. The two schools employ only three male teachers each. Of their areas of expertise, physical education was the predominant role that male teachers fulfilled. The concentration of the males in this area demonstrates the schools' endorsement of male identity around physicality.

**Shift in attitude**

Over the last two years students at Vardashen have experienced an attitude shift towards schooling and the role of masculinity. The school's culture has been changed, abusive teachers removed, supportive counselling services increased, and vocational activities targeted to the students interests. The school has created an environment that enables students to feel a sense of belonging to a community, and no longer need to align themselves in groups of boys or gangs for identity and safety (Biddulph 1997, p. 41). The positive developments at Vardashen have balanced the perception of masculinity towards greater equality between physical strength and academic achievement.

Although a trained teacher with 14 years' experience in three different countries, as an observer in the Nubarashen and Vardashen observations I was not performing a teaching role. Initially at Nubarashen the male students endeavoured to interact using English and Russian words to gain my attention, but they soon seemed to disregard me. Had I been male, a rare sight in these schools, there may have been more interest in engaging in conversation and more zealous questioning of the reason behind the need for observations.

**The role of staff**

The role of the classroom and supervisory teachers was very important to the dynamics of each incident. In particular the teacher's sex had a substantial impact on the dynamics of each incident. In both observations the teacher was female. Over 80% of the students come from single-parent families where the vast majority of carers are mothers. The students are often conflicted about their feelings towards their mothers: most desperately want their love and approval but feel anger towards their mothers' inability to care for them. These feelings are often transposed towards the female teachers. The students want the approval and attention of their teachers, even if obtained through negative behaviours.

The female grammar teacher in Vardashen, trained in the Soviet pedagogical approach, was authoritarian. She was the provider of knowledge and the students were recipients. Despite this authoritarian approach, during the observation she still allowed the students a certain degree of latitude with their answers and attitudes. She encouraged participation and some discussion about the grammar terms. The teacher initially managed misconduct nonverbally, through eye contact, trying to engage ‘wayward’ students in activities. The male head teacher, also observing the class, tried punitive measures ('Answer properly or it will be bad...')
for you’) to force the student to answer questions more politely. These two approaches modelled to students the difference between the genders; the males used threats to achieve order and the females used more subtle methods.

All the directors at Nubarashen have been male, giving weight to ‘masculinity meaning authority’ (Connell 2000, p. 153). Although the interactions with the director are limited, each boy understands that, ultimately, a male has the power at the school. The female head teacher at Nubarashen is domineering and authoritarian. She likes to take control of classroom activities—even if not her own—highlighting areas of student failure and demeaning students through sharing intimate and often negative stories from their past. These characteristics do not endear her to the students. Outside the classroom environment, however, the male students felt able to challenge her authoritarian comments. Yet despite the students’ lack of respect for the head teacher, her example of ‘might is right’ pervades the students’ very existence.

Reflecting on the situation at Nubarashen, an observer could be overwhelmed with the enormity of issues and the desire to quickly respond to the needs of the boys. One of the most powerful interventions at Nubarashen would be to challenge the established attitudes of the staff. This endeavour could only proceed with a commitment by the staff to change, a receptive learning culture established and, ultimately, the removal of some of the ‘old guard’ of teachers (Ludowycke 1997, p. 19). However, the complexity and magnitude of this intervention would be considerable, and would require the full support of the administration. Currently this support does not exist; thus, an alternative intervention is proposed.

**Male mentoring**

Students at Nubarashen crave sustained and supportive relationships. Their role models are often people who are ill equipped to provide them encouragement, skills, or an increased sense of self-worth. A male mentoring program that seeks to train the students in social and emotional learning while increasing the boys’ choices and encouraging a sense of belonging to the school may sound ambitious, but it is an intervention well worth attempting.

Critically, the boys need non-aggressive models of how males behave with each other and that they do not need to have ‘power over’ another individual to be seen as masculine. Browne strongly recommended that any strategy that aims to address masculinity and aggressive behaviours exhibited in front of other students needs to be completed with male students in groups, as this is where the problem behaviour was initiated (Browne 1995, p.188). Additionally, as proposed by Ludowycke, students who are placed in groups of multiple ages are able to develop mentoring skills of younger students (Ludowycke 1997, p. 16).

**Power to make choices**

Students also need to feel some power by making choices (Berman 1998, p. 43; Glasser 1986, p. 27). Nubarashen prescribes the majority of academic, vocational and physical aspects of the students’ lives. They feel powerless apart from the power they can assert over others in rare socialisation times. (Apart from meal times the boys are kept separate in groups no larger than 10.) Berman suggested that when students have the freedom to make choices, rather than always being regimented and directed, they are more likely to choose effective in-control classroom behaviours (Berman 1998, p. 44).
**Proposed Intervention**

The school needs to feel less like an institution and more like a home, as many of these boys will know no other home until adulthood. They need a sense of belonging, ownership and guardianship of the school. Before the last winter a group of boys smashed every window on the second floor, with little observable outcomes for the boys in restitution. These windows are now taped with plastic. This aspect of the proposed intervention was conceptualised when the observer saw a group of four boys watching a workman paint one room of the school. The boys sat transfixed for two hours. They were literally ‘watching paint dry’ but were fascinated.

The intervention would consist of a group of 17 men, experienced in painting, welding, building or construction. Each man would meet with a group of four boys (of different ages) from Nubarashen once a week for (initially) one year to complete school community service projects of the students’ choosing. The men would be hired under a contract that does not pay a wage but does include transportation, food and materials that they would need to complete the activities. The minimal costs of these activities would be amalgamated into current World Vision projects at Nubarashen. It is projected that a number of men would apply as Yerevan has a high rate of under-employed and unemployed men, limited opportunities for pensioners, and a strong sense of community cohesion.

The positions would be advertised as volunteer work and men from families at Nubarashen would be encouraged to apply. The two school social workers would interview each of the applicants, and through links with the Police and the Ministry of Social Welfare would complete background checks on the candidates. The prospective candidates would then need to commit to the privacy of students and also be committed to the overall mission of the intervention. The mentors would participate in intensive seminars on social and emotional learning including: self-awareness, social awareness, responsible decision making, self-management, and relationship management by the social workers (Zins et al. 2004, p. 35).

**Preparing the way**

Before the onset of the intervention, the schoolteachers, other staff and family members would be provided information about the mentoring program through seminars and information documents, and asked to provide any feedback. This intervention would be implemented and managed within the existing social program managed by the social workers; thus, no additional teaching staff time inputs would be required.

At the beginning of the project the students would meet with the social workers to brainstorm possible school projects that they wish to complete e.g. building soccer goals or bedside tables. After eliminating projects that would be unachievable, and encouraging others that have not been mentioned, the boys—with their male mentors—choose a project that would be suitable for their group. One afternoon each week, when vocational training courses are usually timetabled, the groups would meet and begin work on the assigned project. Sometimes these groups would need to venture into the city to buy materials. The activities would not be limited to the school projects, even though this is the focus. At times there would be opportunities to celebrate together as groups view the work of other groups, celebrate cultural events or even venture into the city to experience a performance, movie or other special event.

**Multi-faceted evaluation**

Evaluation by the students, mentors, social workers, and teachers is critical in understanding the perception of the different stakeholders and also in monitoring behavioural changes and impact on the students. Each month after a mentoring session with the boys the mentors would meet to debrief, discuss and share positive outcomes of their involvement. Other evaluations would be in the form of individual questionaries, informal observations of the activities in the
school and individual meetings with the students, staff and interested parents. This information would then inform further practices of the mentoring program in the future.

Peers are the students’ family at Nubarashen and Vardashen. The underlying sexual abuse, poor familial role models and harsh discipline from family and school teachers provides students with poor social role models of behaviour. The peers, with these negative role models themselves, regulate behaviours through role modelling and aggression. The prevalent beliefs of masculinity by peers, teachers, school, family and culture affect the male students’ understanding of behaviour. It is not until these models of masculinity are questioned and replaced by supportive and positive models that the cycle of destructive behaviour will change.

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Christine Kelly is a primary school teacher who has taught most grades from Kindergarten to Grade 8. She has taught in private, public and international schools in locations as diverse as Canberra, Hanoi and Los Angeles, and currently at Quality International School of Yerevan, Armenia. She has worked as a teacher, curriculum developer, and values education coordinator. Christine has recently finished her Masters of Educational Studies at the University of Newcastle via distance, and counts the time spent in differing Armenian orphanages as the highlight of her study.
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The Boys in Schools Program is a not-for-profit program. We provide research, support and resources to educators throughout Australia. We help schools to harness boys’ irrepresible energy and humour in positive ways that allows schools to showcase boys’ strengths and creative talents, at the same time as improving educational outcomes.

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- The second edition of the Being a Man Photopak (as well as our other wonderful resources!).
- The Graduate Certificate and Masters in Education.
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We offer Graduate Certificate and Masters programs 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 primary, secondary, single-sex or co-educational schools.

Course details

The program offers flexibility for busy teachers. At least three courses are offered each semester, and students can begin in Semester 1 or 2. On completion of the Graduate Certificate, graduates can apply to continue to complete the Masters 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 $750 (inc. GST) per course. There is also a general service charge. Course fees may be a legitimate tax deduction.

More information is available at

www.newcastle.edu.au/courseinfo/handbook.htm

or

phone Leah Pringle on 02 4921 8739

or

e-mail Leah.Pringle@newcastle.edu.au
Open workshops—two national tours per year
Presented by Freerk Ykema or Brian Hayes

Three-day training workshops are delivered throughout Australia twice a year, during February-March and October-November. This training is presented by Freerk Ykema or Brian Hayes and is open to all educators. For tour dates visit: www.newcastle.edu.au/centre/fac

This training provides a survey of the entire program. The emphasis of Day 1 is on the contents of Lesson 1 to 4: standing strong, the Rock & Water attitude in physical, mental and social contexts; dealing with pressure from others. Day 2 extends the range of exercises and topics: breathing to extend physical power and to maintain self-control; the body language of ‘The Tunnel’ and of ‘The Beach’; feeling, setting and respecting your own and other people’s boundaries. All lessons from 1 to 8 are practised on Day 3. Lessons 9 to 13 are about self-realisation and so are more suitable for older students. They address sexuality, personal development and lack of direction. Lessons 9 to 13 are best directed at boys only. Cost is $695.00 per person (includes GST). Visit www.newcastle.edu.au/fac/centre for current tour dates.

Closed workshop—three-day training
Presented by Brian Hayes

This three-day closed workshop provides a survey of the entire program and is only available for a whole organisation/one school (including feeder school). The training is presented by Brian Hayes and can be delivered throughout Australia at any time (except during the national tour dates). Conditions apply.

SET FEE • $22,000 (incl. GST) for a maximum of 40 staff members. Includes 40 x Rock & Water Manuals, certificates for staff, name labels and evaluation forms. Staff members must be from the one organisation or cluster. Other conditions apply.

Closed workshop—one-day introductory training
Presented by one of our qualified instructors

The Family Action Centre also offers one-day introductory workshops around Australia with our qualified instructors, all of whom have been trained by Freerk Ykema. This workshop provides a survey of the entire course focusing on the first six lessons of the program. This includes standing strong physically and mentally, introduction to the Rock & Water attitude (in physical and verbal confrontation), Rock & Water in the schoolyard and in relationships (What kind of friend am I?). It also includes breathing exercises, exercises for boundary awareness and body language. This is a great way to familiarise staff with the Rock & Water principles in your school/organisation. Maximum of 30 participants per workshop included in set fee. Extra participants will cost $77 each.

SET FEE • $2500 (incl. GST) plus all travel, sundries and accommodation costs for a maximum of 30 staff members. Price includes 15 starter manuals, 1 x theory booklet, 1 x basic exercise video, certificates, name tags, evaluation forms. Other conditions apply.
TOUR DATES FOR OCTOBER AND NOVEMBER 2007

8–10 October 2007
Melbourne, Vic
Parade College (three-day training)
Contact: Anne Lombardi
alombardi@parade.vic.edu.au
or call 03 9468 3300

11–12 October 2007
Melbourne, Vic
Parade College, (advanced training).
Contact: Anne Lombardi
alombardi@parade.vic.edu.au
or call 03 9468 3300

16–18 October 2007
Adelaide, SA
Rostrevor College, Woodforde, SA
Contact: Vince Fleming
vfleming@rostrevor.sa.edu.au
or Caroline Pape cpape@rostrevor.sa.edu.au
or call 08 8364 8200

28–30 October 2007
Cairns, Qld
Djarragun College, Cairns, Queensland.
Email June Chan or phone 07 4043 3777

1–3 November 2007
Darwin, NT
Venue to be confirmed
Contact: The Family Action Centre,
FAC-Events@newcastle.edu.au
or call 02 4921 6403

6–8 November 2007
Muruwillumbah, NSW
Muruwillumbah High School
Contact: The Family Action Centre,
FAC-Events@newcastle.edu.au
or call 02 4921 6403

12–14 November 2007
Coffs Harbour, NSW
Orara High School
Contact: The Family Action Centre,
FAC-Events@newcastle.edu.au
or call 02 4921 6403

19–21 November 2007
Sydney, South West, NSW
St Clair High School
Contact: The Family Action Centre,
FAC-Events@newcastle.edu.au
or call 02 4921 6403

26–28 November 2007
Newcastle, NSW
Callaghan College, Waratah Campus, NSW
Contact Family Action Centre for details.

TOUR DATES FOR MARCH AND APRIL 2008
Due to unforeseen circumstances the March/April tour dates may change slightly.
All workshops organised by the Family Action Centre in NSW, NT and ACT will be presented by Brian Hayes; all other workshop will be presented by Freerk Ykema. Some dates may overlap for this reason.

3–5 March 2008
Albion Park, Wollongong, NSW
Venue to be confirmed
Contact: The Family Action Centre,
FAC-Events@newcastle.edu.au
or call 02 4921 6403

10–12 March 2008
South Western Sydney, NSW
Venue to be confirmed
Contact: The Family Action Centre,
FAC-Events@newcastle.edu.au
or call 02 4921 6403

12–14 March 2008
Emerald, QLD
Venue and contact details to be advised

18–20 March 2008
Townsville
William Ross State High School, QLD
Contact: Wendy Smythe, Wsmyt1@eq.edu.au
or phone 07 4726 7666

19–21 March 2008
Canberra, ACT
Farrer Primary School
Contact: The Family Action Centre,
FAC-Events@newcastle.edu.au
or call 02 4921 6403

24–26 March 2008
Newcastle, NSW
Venue to be confirmed
Contact: The Family Action Centre,
FAC-Events@newcastle.edu.au
or call 02 4921 6403

25–27 March 2008
Auckland NZ
Venue to be confirmed

31 March–2 April
Sydney, Northern Suburbs, NSW
Venue to be advised
If you are interested in being a host school for the Northern Suburbs please contact
Michelle.Gifford@newcastle.edu.au. You will need a school hall at least 20m x 30m. For hosting you will receive two free placements valued at $1370. Other conditions apply.

29–31 March 2008
Wellington, NZ
Venue to be confirmed

2–4 April 2008
Sunshine Coast, Kawana, QLD
Kawana High School
Contact: Tim Morrow
tmor882@eq.edu.au or call 07 5493 3388

9–11 April 2008
Melbourne, Malvern, VIC
De La Salle College
Contact: Christine Thompson
crthomps@delasalle.melb.catholic.edu.au or call 03 9508 2100

14–16 April 2008
Brisbane, QLD
Kenmore State High School
Contact: Sharon Chaston
schas7@eq.e.du.au or call 07 3327 1555

18–21 April 2008
Perth, WA
Venue to be confirmed
Contact: Bill Johnstone
freowill@bigpond.com or call 0411 134 808

2007 Vol 10 No 3 • The Boys in Schools Bulletin 47
To initiate thoughtful conversations between boys, their peers and their teachers the Boys in Schools Program has produced the Being A Man Photopak. The 52 black and white photos show boys, young men and older men in diverse roles and settings provoking immediate and powerful responses to what it means to ‘be a man’ in the world today.

Themes of survival, fun, freedom, power and belonging feature strongly in the photos. The photo selection was informed by William Glasser’s Choice Theory, which suggests that every action is an attempt to meet these most fundamental human needs. This second edition of the photopak incorporates feedback and advice from the many participants at staff development seminars conducted by the Boys in Schools Program.

The images that worked from the original pack were those that implied a range of possibilities, showed close-ups of men engaged in an authentic experience, and those that showed men and boys displaying their skills and competencies in a whole range of ways. The most popular images were those that spoke to people in different ways and sometimes showed contradictory or mixed messages. With this in mind, we commissioned a set of new strengths-based images of men and boys to spark new thoughts on what being a fine man might look like in 2007.

The 52 photos of men and boys of all ages and backgrounds provide powerful, sensitive and engaging images that display the many different ways that males interact. The situations range from traditional work backgrounds to outdoor activities to intimate personal interactions.

The pack includes a leader’s manual with exercises and questions to accompany each photo designed to support personal expression and interaction. The manual helps to open up discussion and conversation around male identities and what it is to be a man today. Such explorations allow for the diversity of groups with whom you might use the photos, as well as diversity in the communities within which you might be working.

Remember: male identity comes in many forms and also grows and changes in individuals over time.

The Being A Man Photopak is suitable for use by teachers, parents, youth workers and health workers.

Michael Gurian’s DVD-presentation keynote at the Working with Boys, Building Fine Men conference was an absolute knockout, and ever since then both we and the Gurian Institute have been bombarded with requests for copies. Unfortunately, due to contractual obligations Michael can’t release the content of that address. However, the Boys in Schools Program has negotiated a substantial discount on the two Gurian Institute DVDs upon which Michael’s keynote was based. These are:

Understanding the Minds of Boys and Girls
Filmed in 2005 at the Gurian Institute Summer Training in Colorado Springs, this DVD covers the research in how boys and girls learn differently. It is at times humorous, at times touching, and as always in Gurian Institute work, combines theory with practice.

Raising and Educating Boys
This is the first full-hour training DVD by Michael Gurian on the subject of raising and educating boys. It was filmed at the Gurian Institute Summer Training in Colorado Springs, and features conclusions and practical strategies garnered from 20 years of research in male development.

The price for each DVD is $175.00, plus postage. Please note that this is a substantial discount on the regular price: contact Alison or Vickie to place your order.

For more information go to our web site: www.newcastle.edu.au/centre/fac/publications-resources/beingamanphotopak.html
Contact Alison Carter
Phone 02 49217014 Fax 02 49218686
Email Alison.Carter@newcastle.edu.au

Price $79.95

What’s important for boys in relationships? How do you tell a mate that you like him?”

Michael Gurian DVDs available at last!
Well, this is it for paper versions of the Bulletin. It's been an amazing ten-year journey of raising issues, hearing stories, collaborating in writing and design and always, always being inspired by the boys and the teachers out there in schools. Our electronic version will continue getting the word out about this great work, so don't forget to fax back your re-subscription form so you can have it emailed directly to you for free in 2008.

To cap off our paper journal we've got a great collection of stories from the conference held in July for those of you who missed out. The most inspiring thing about all of these stories is the incredible innovation and collaboration between teachers and boys and—in some cases—the community to engage boys in real tasks. Literacy can be enhanced through technology or rap music; mentoring can happen with older boys or dads, or older men at work; learning can happen in the classroom, the shed, or the building site. There's no end to the opportunities that teachers who care can provide, and boys who are interested will engage in. If these stories inspire you, there's more on the Boys in Schools website too, including video clips and PowerPoint slides.

Our research article this time is a fascinating case study from Armenia. The author had the opportunity to do this study while working in Armenia and studying by distance mode in the Master's Program in educating boys, at the University of Newcastle.

Our Bulletin Board showcases our new resources, research and professional development programs. Don't miss the new Being A Man Photopack. And for the many of you who saw Michael Gurian at the conference and begged us for his DVD for your staff development day, we've made a special arrangement with the Gurian Institute to distribute his training material in Australia.

While it's not goodbye from us, the end of the paper version does mark a huge change, so thanks to all of you who've made it a great success by contributing and purchasing it year after year—and to all the editors, designers, artists, distributors who made it possible—give yourselves a huge clack on the back. The future's digital and we'll be there—with the boys. So catch us on your computer or our website www.newcastle.edu.au/centre/fac. See you in cyberspace in 2008.

Deborah Hartman
for the editorial committee

Editor’s Note
In our last issue some information was misprinted about the Being A Man Photopack so we are running the information again on page 48. Our apologies.

NEW RESOURCES

<table>
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<th>Description</th>
<th>RRP (INC. GST)</th>
<th>QUANTITY</th>
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<tr>
<td>Being A Man Photopack (second edition)</td>
<td>$79.95</td>
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<td>Educating Boys: The Good News (Book $45.00; CD-ROM $25)</td>
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<td>Nuts &amp; Bolts of Kids &amp; Schools: A Course for Dads</td>
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<td>6 Pack of Strengths</td>
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<td>6 Pack of Strengths — Mini Pack: Poster, 320 spot stickers &amp; booklet</td>
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<td>6 Pack of Strengths — Top-Up Sticker Pack: 320 spot stickers</td>
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<td>7 Days That Matter — Building Your Father-Son Relationship</td>
<td>$19.95</td>
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<td>Boys Business (book &amp; CD-ROM)</td>
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<td>Bringing in Friends in Handbook</td>
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<td>Resilience Identification Resources</td>
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<td>Boys at Work — Issues facing boys in early education (DVD)</td>
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<td>Boys World DVD — Boys: views on learning, literacy &amp; identity in schools</td>
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<td>What Kids Want DVD — Year 5-8 boys &amp; girls interviewed about their vision of an ideal school</td>
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OTHER RESOURCES

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<td>Strength Cards for Kids — strengths-based resources for primary school-aged children</td>
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<td>Boys Ruler posters</td>
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<td>Boys to Man posters</td>
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<td>113 Ways to Be Inspired As A Father poster</td>
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<td>Rock &amp; Water</td>
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<td>Bringing It Together: 23 case studies of Rock &amp; Water in practice</td>
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<td>Rock and Water Approach Manual (3rd edition)</td>
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<td>The Rock and Water Perspective Theory Book</td>
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<td>Rock and Water Reaction video (English subtitles, high-school age only)</td>
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<td>Rock and Water Visual Stickers</td>
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<td>Indigenous Resources &amp; Engaging Fathers</td>
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<td>The Skills &amp; Strengths of Indigenous Dads, Uncles, Pops &amp; Brothers DVD</td>
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<td>Young Aboriginal Fathers Report</td>
<td>$9.95</td>
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<td>Indigenous Fathers posters, DVD and report: Special package deal</td>
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<td>Fatherhood Research in Australia (report)</td>
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<td>DeepSpeak: the world according to you</td>
<td>$59.50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Story Cards For Kids — strengths-based resources for primary school-aged children</td>
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Make cheques payable to: The University of Newcastle (ABN 15 738 576 735)

Contact name: Organisation: 
Postal address: 
Postcode: 

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Boys in Schools Program resources ORDER FORM

For a full list of Family Action Centre publications, go to www.newcastle.edu.au/centre/fac/publications-resources/index.html
In 2008 we’re delivering a brand new Boys Education seminar program. You can choose from the topics below or sign up to attend the whole series. No matter how far along you are in your work with boys, there’ll be something for you.

Each seminar will be delivered by an experienced practitioner in boys’ education and will include practical resources for you to take back to your classrooms. For more details on each of the workshops see our website: www.newcastle.edu.au/centre/fac/binsp/seminars.html

- Getting going with boys’ education
- Boys, literacy and the 3 Rs: real, relevant and radical
- Getting the best from boys
- Can I bring my dad for Show and Tell?
  Increasing the involvement of fathers and father-figures in schools
- Stronger and happier: increasing student resilience

For seminar venues, prices and dates see our website www.newcastle.edu.au/centre/fac/binsp or contact Victoria Clay
phone 02 4921 7737
email victoria.clay@newcastle.edu.au
Editorial

Well, this is it for paper versions of the Bulletin. It’s been an amazing ten-year journey of raising issues, hearing stories, collaborating in writing and design and always, always being inspired by the boys and the teachers out there in schools. Our electronic version will continue getting the word out about this great work, so don’t forget to fax back your re-subscription form so you can have it emailed directly to you for free in 2008.

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