



The Boys in Schools

BULLETIN

→ Practical Initiatives Addressing Boys' Needs

PRODUCED BY BOYS IN SCHOOLS PROGRAM OF THE FAMILY ACTION CENTRE

In this issue

Linking social and emotional learning to school success

Find out how boys show empathy, respect and self-control — and improve their academic results.



The Boys in Schools BULLETIN

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The Boys in Schools Bulletin

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

Guidelines for contributors

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

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

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

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

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Editorial



In this edition we revisit one of our recurring themes, that there are strong links between the emotional and social wellbeing of boys and their academic success. Schools that have systematically incorporated this notion into their approach are clearly reducing behavioural problems and raising the academic levels of their boys. The research

article detailing the USA experience outlines some of the processes schools need to go through to do this. It's not an easy task and requires leadership and commitment from all the school community. Yet the articles in the practice section clearly show the benefits for the boys, the teachers and the parents. These inspiring articles show what's possible in many different contexts. They show how social and emotional skills can be linked to curriculum outcomes and integrated into everyday classroom teaching.

Social and emotional learning can occur in science classrooms, in English classrooms, in both primary and secondary schools, in schools where 97% of the students have English as a second language — in every learning environment. It is closely linked to the preferred learning styles of the boys. And when it does occur, the boys have more healthy relationships with their peers and their teachers and their academic results improve.

Many of these articles brought a tear to my eye as I got a clear picture of boys being listened to and listening, of boys experimenting and risk-taking in a productive way, of boys developing academic resilience, feeling good about themselves and school, having fun and achieving the successes they are capable of. I encourage you to take up these ideas in your school and to let us know of your successes.

Also in this edition we have an update on the 4th biennial Working with Boys Building Fine Men Conference. We already have some excellent confirmed speakers who take up the themes of how boys learn best and how we can support them to do well at school and in life.

Next edition we return to another of our favourite themes: **boys and literacies** and we'll have a full conference program for you. Don't forget to register early for the fourth biennial Working with Boys Building Fine Men Conference. We don't want you to miss out.

It's clear from the range and depth of the stories we are able to bring you that many schools are really working on finding solutions to the difficulties boys face. That's why the theme of our Working with Boys Building Fine Men Conference is *From practise to practice*. We're way beyond raising awareness of the problems, or even experimenting with a few strategies. We now have an emerging body of 'best practice' in boys' education that the Boys in Schools Program is proud to be able to bring to you at our conferences and to document in this *Bulletin*.

Deborah Hartman

For the editorial committee

The article 'The Scientific Base Linking Social and Emotional Learning to School Success' is an edited excerpt reproduced with the permission of the publishers of *Building Academic Success Through Social and Emotional Learning: What does the research say?*, edited by JE Zins, RP Weissberg, MC Wang and HJ Walberg, published in 2004 by Teachers College Press, Columbia University, New York, pp 3–23.



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4th Biennial Working with Boys Building Fine Men Conference __back cover



practice

The art of 'failing forward'

Learning habits for resilient thinking

Alan Maher describes how the use of collaborative teams met a science challenge assisting Year 8 boys to take control over their own learning. (Note: Year 8 in Queensland and Western Australia is equivalent to Year 7 in other Australian states and New Zealand.)

How did you get started on this project?

I have been interested in boys' education issues and in the debate about how to deepen learning outcomes for boys through developing their social and emotional intelligence. Developing social, emotional and spiritual awareness is a major focus of my role as a Middle School Team Leader at Anglican Church Grammar School (Churchie), a boys' school of 1700 students in East Brisbane, Queensland.

The work of Robert Marzano and Art Costa on creating a different kind of classroom has long been of interest to me because of the dimension focusing on developing productive habits of mind. This interested me as a science teacher because a key part of becoming a scientist is developing the way a scientist thinks.

The collaborative challenge is designed to both develop boys' mental habits of being accurate, and build reflective practice for a deeper understanding of social and emotional dimensions.

What is failing forward?

The idea of failing forward stems from natural learning processes like a child trying to walk. A child first tries to stand up, falls over, gets up and tries again to stand — each time moving closer to the goal. Translated to the classroom, the task is set deliberately just beyond the experience of the group so that students fail quickly but at the same time provides them with resources and the insistence that *they* can find the answer. To do so means they then have to learn to deal with their frustration, and work out what to do next. In essence it is training students in resilient thinking.

Failing forward in an educational context is a concept from Art Costa's work on creating habits of mind. He says that, 'Autonomous individuals set personal goals and are self-directing, self-monitoring, and self-modifying. Because they are constantly experimenting and experiencing, they fail frequently — but they fail forward, learning from the situation.'

What has led you to take this approach?

I have been searching for opportunities to more effectively link pastoral and curriculum goals in a series of tasks that lead the boys to a level of confident independence toward the end of our Middle School (Year 9). I really wanted to make this happen by structuring a learning experience for them to learn how to think with resilience. The main idea was to work on what they do when they don't know. Art Costa said that 'you can tell how well people think not by what they know but by what they do when they don't know'. So, in one sense I was working with his habits of mind and combining them with the motivation of a challenge.

The challenge was based on an experiment that is a traditional two period topic but when set as a reflective group-managed task it stretched out to three weeks. I was really after learners who could set personal goals in a familiar environment. An environment that reinforced their primary desire for excitement when puzzling things out. No marks were held over their

heads. They were concentrating on scientific processes and the affective domain — building a capacity for resilience or habits for resilient thinking. I chose first term in Year 8, as it is a time where we have a large proportion of new students from our feeder schools mixing with continuing students. It is a time when they are introduced to laboratories with scientific equipment, senior school displays, ongoing experiments and the chance to dress up with safety gear and use heating flames — science different from their previous experiences in primary school.

The task was set just beyond their reach, students had only been introduced to a range of laboratory equipment — naming, drawing and using some. The concept of error was new to them and I was amazed that students didn't realise the need for scientists to be sure of the accuracy of their observations. So I told them a story:

Imagine how a biologist would feel if he or she had been working on a breeding experiment, for a species nearing extinction, only to find that an error in procedure or measurement could only be remedied by starting the experiment all over again!

As future scientists they would have to learn from failure and start again, and again, if necessary. The challenge requires them to work within their group to find ways in which to improve procedures and accuracy in the face of adversity.

The challenge

In my Year 8 Science class I announced:

Three weeks ago we did an experiment on separating sand, iron filings and salt. How to do that is familiar to you. What will be new to you is working in the role of a young scientist. You need to understand that scientists are people who value repeatable experiments that can be done by others in different parts of

the world and sometimes done with different methods of approach. They make accurate observations, and repeatable results reinforce conclusions that the scientific community needs to make so that they can move forward into new areas of endeavour with confidence. A good scientist demonstrates good patterns of thinking and uses intelligent ways when confronted with problems. They are good problem solvers who seek accuracy and think deeply upon the methods that they use.

So here is the challenge. I have three samples here (indicating jars A, B & C). Our lab technician has given me the exact proportions of sand, iron filings and salt mixtures in each jar on this piece of paper. Three young scientists will form a research team to determine the proportions in a sample of the mixture A, B or C and present your results in a PowerPoint report. That means you will have to be precise in separating the three substances and accurate in measuring the amounts you have. Here are the answers (waving the piece of paper) and they'll be staying in my back pocket until the end of this challenge.

Research teams

There were three students per research team: an organiser, analyst



••• A research team filtering sand from salt solution.

••• Because they are
 ••• constantly
 ••• experimenting and
 ••• experiencing, they
 ••• fail frequently —
 ••• but they fail
 ••• forward, learning
 ••• from the situation.

••• Art Costa

• In this context they
 • can take the time
 • to build reflective
 • practice and
 • develop problem-
 • solving strategies
 • on their own.

and computer expert. The organiser was responsible for requesting resources, labelling and managing trolley materials. The analyst was responsible for tabulating results and processing data into a meaningful form for comparison. The computer expert was responsible for Internet searches, software tutoring, scanning and creating an effective report. Everyone was responsible for sharing team ideas and the completion team generated tasks.

I first asked how good the boys were at computer presentations, based on whether they could put together a PowerPoint report, and identified a computer expert to form each research team by choosing two other boys who then adopted the other roles of organiser or analyst.

What happened next?

Teams began to work by discussing their previous experiences and how well they knew the task in terms of separation procedures using physical properties of substances. The analyst recorded their planning and the organiser created equipment requests. I suggested to them that keeping good notes of ideas that worked and why some didn't work was an important practice for scientists. Scientists need to revisit the methods they use when drawing conclusions and reporting their findings.

Soon after their first separations one boy, with a pleading look, came up to me with a soaked and sandy piece of filter paper and said, 'Sir, I can't weigh the sand'. I said, 'Well tell me what you have in your hand'. 'Sand,' he replied. It took a while for him to recognise that he had more than just sand. He didn't see that he was weighing the filter paper, water from his wash bottle and the sand that he was trying to separate.

Now that you recognise that you have sand, paper and water rather than sand by itself. You need to eliminate the weights of everything other than the sand. Your best option

is to go back to your group and find a way to solve your problem. If you can't find a workable procedure you'll have to start again.

A slightly frustrated group eventually modified their procedure and started again.

These boys were used to having answers given to them on a plate and I am guilty of relying on a form of 'recipe' science to get the job done in time to meet assessment deadlines. But in this context they can take the time to build reflective practice and develop problem-solving strategies on their own. They need to be accurate but they don't want to start again. Even with a frustrating answer from the teacher they still want to meet the challenge. They're excited — it's a game. They know it's not too hard and that it should be within their reach. Teams talk with passion — it looks chaotic as students are puzzling and thinking.

What's required to make this approach work?

As their teacher I have to allow them to fail. That takes some deliberate strategy. Students are used to just being told the answer. The next thing is that they must fail quickly, so that they forced to dig deep within themselves for solutions.

Two-way teaming

Were the groups important?

The reason for setting them up in research teams and in roles is so that they have some resources to help them to deal collaboratively with the failure. I would not enter into any team discussion unless I was witnessing a social difficulty of dominance or withdrawal that was leading nowhere.

The main conversations must be within their research team and not between teams. However, effective learning needed an additional group structure. I gather the boys into three secondary teams by role. Drawing students into specialist teams was akin to conversations at a

conference or symposium located at my board for clarification, brainstorming, and thinking time. These specialists get together to talk about a problem common to their expertise and to develop tentative solutions or to identify homework to be shared amongst them. This was time spent strengthening their roles and I couldn't believe it when I first heard them setting their own homework. It was then that I realised that they needed a formal start to each session where they reported to their research team to discuss findings, technical hitches, different equipment they might use and then plan priorities for the rest of the lesson. Collaborative confidence was flourishing and building social confidence and that emotional wellbeing that stems from knowing that your peers value what you do.

Two-way teaming meant that each boy worked with two others in his research team and eight others in his specialist team. There was enough mixing of knowledge and interpersonal skills to generate good ideas and to ensure that boys didn't rely on a few dominant friends.

How did the boys respond to the need for accuracy?

It floored me to witness how little the boys took account of what they were actually doing. For example, when it was time to separate the salt, they had a solution in an evaporating dish and were using a Bunsen burner to heat and evaporate the water. The trouble is that as the last few drops of water evaporate in the dish some of the solution will spit salt onto the benchtop. Boys would come to me, with pride written all over their faces and say, 'We've got the salt worked out!' And I would have to say, 'Are you sure? . . . What's this on the bench?' They needed to be challenged several times before they would recognise or admit that a problem existed. They were impulsive and really got frustrated when they realised that they might have to start again!

The image shows three overlapping cards. The top card is titled 'Reflections' and contains the text: 'Our team has been very productive for the last two weeks.', 'Although we were not very successful in our experiment we had great teamwork.', and 'Having an extra member in our group helped with sharing'. It features a cartoon illustration of a man thinking. The middle card is also titled 'Reflections' and contains a list of points: 'We could have tried to work better as a group.', 'We should have let everyone have a go at the experiments.', 'Over the past week we have all worked well as a group.', and 'The...'. It features a small illustration of a person thinking. The bottom card is titled 'Evaluation' and contains the text: 'Potential error may have been introduced by the following:' followed by a list: 'Thought more before we acted.', 'Weighed all containers before we put anything in.', 'Pour liquids without spilling a drop.', and 'Try to stop people from touching our experiment.'. It features a cartoon illustration of a boy thinking.

● **Boys' learning**
 ● **focus is enhanced**
 ● **because self-belief**
 ● **is boosted in a**
 ● **group taking risks,**
 ● **doing and thinking**
 ● **collaboratively.**

Restraining impulsivity is another habit of mind.

I found myself repeating, 'Three brains are better than one. The solution lies within you to be more accurate. There are many ways to do this. Go back and think about a better way.'

Or I'd say: 'That's a real problem. The best way to find the correct result is to get your team together and talk about it.'

The main thing is that I don't tell them what to do. They have to work it out. The whole idea is for them to think in a different way — but I don't tell them that either. I just leave it as a challenge that is within their powers as a group to solve. Students soon viewed my role as a safety officer and facilitator — not as an answer machine. They had to work together and think for themselves and when success is finally achieved the experience is richer.

Did they help each other?

Each group has its own sample taken from one of the three jars and the exact amount on each spoon is different, so really it is impossible for them to help or cheat.

Competitiveness meant that the teams didn't set out to help each other and one of my laboratory rules is that students are not to wander around the lab talking to groups without permission. Although it was inevitable that in the early stages groups were doing similar things — later they diversified as different strategies were explored.

Why is this approach important for boys?

Boys are verbally weaker than girls, they don't communicate easily with each other and may not be strong in social and emotional dimensions — these boys are 12 to 13 years old. They are in the 'me' mindset and need to come in contact with their inner self, to explore how they think and this was assisted by their frustration and desire to get it right. To experience themselves as young

scientists and have an empowered voice when returning to research teams fulfils emotional needs. I think that boys of this age tend to listen with one ear and let it slide out the other. The only way for it to stick is to become frustrated and invent their own way to overcome the problem. In this way learning becomes deeper and resilient thinking is developed.

How did your teaching change?

The types of questions I began to use were different. I stopped controlling the room through content and attention-based questions. I had to stop short of giving The Answer. I became conscious of how giving answers robs a boy of the time to make connections from within his experience. My questions were more about how teams were working. As the teacher I was no longer in the centre. The boys were not even conscious of this; they were too focused on their group challenge.

This style of pedagogy takes time and patience to develop but when it does there is a 'buzz' in the room and collaborative talk moves to 'what if' dialogue. Great conversations between students occur when the teacher sits on the sidelines and just listens — probably thinking on the occasional intervention for interpersonal skills as the dynamics are changing.

Could you give an example of one of the group discussions?

In one session I took all the analysts out. At that stage they had weighed their various amounts of salt, iron filings and sand and it was their job to present in a table of results. I had to say, 'Each team has used different quantities of the mixture so all your weights will be different. You have to think of a way to compare quantities.' The analysts talked by themselves.

Meanwhile the other boys continued refining their procedures, for example, realising they had to place their magnets inside a cliplock bag to ensure the collection of all



Secondary specialist teams of organisers, analysts and computer experts meet regularly to discuss common problems, develop tentative solutions and share homework.

iron filings that had been sticking to magnets.

In the analysts group one boy finally suggested using percentages. They then resolved to read a section of their maths text that they hadn't reached at that time as their homework. The next day each research team discussed their findings for a comparative measure. After that homework became a matter for each boy's role and this needed a formal reporting process in their research teams to inform decision-making before the team could move forward.

Building reflective practice

What did you do to ensure that reflections would be made?

By insisting that notes were kept on procedures used, reasons for their decisions, results, what they thought were problems that needed to be considered. Prior learning gave them a structure for procedural planning.

I gave them some ideas to stimulate an evaluative process:

- How accurate was your research team?
- Explain to your audience the measure you used for comparison.

- Show important calculations by using a hyperlink to a text document.
- Give reasons for the differences between your ratios and those in the original mixture.
- Provide reflections by answering the question: How would you improve accuracy if we had the time to repeat this experimental challenge?

I provided a few images of Rodin's sculpture, *The Thinker*, to use as an insert or as a link icon and gave a lesson on font types and size for emphasis, use of colour and the contrast between text and background, white space and the amount of detail on each slide. Also, I wanted them to realise that scientists were people who often use visual representations and animations to explain models when communicating to a wider audience. As young scientists they will need to develop a sense of multiliteracy.

At the end of this challenge, I created a PowerPoint collage based on samples of work from each research team and included rationales for the importance of learning strategies for lifelong

learning. Each boy emailed this collage home with the introduction, 'Dear Mum and Dad'. One boy who had school-based learning support said as an intro: 'Look Mum. Sir's used my idea on his first slide.' Another expressed his ideas by using an iceberg analogy to say that this challenge had more below the surface than you see on the surface.

Did you notice any carry over to other subjects?

The boys appeared less inclined to give up and more willing to try something new was my observation. They readily settled into purposeful engagement and could form groups that had a task focus rather than seeking to stay with friends. Other teachers noticed this readiness.

Did getting it right matter?

Not really. They'd learned to be scientists that tough out the phase of confusion and uncertainty.

Did you get any comments from parents?

Not many. Some parents understood the shift in focus but others did not. One parent focused only on whether his son got the right answer and dismissed the rest. With hindsight I think that I should have produced a sheet explaining the challenge for parent-teacher interviews and then to send the emails home as a mechanism to stimulate dialogue on lifelong learning between parents and their sons.

Personal reflections

What advice do you have for teachers interested in this approach?

If resilient thinking is to be the outcome then create enough space in the curriculum for the boys to learn through the trials of failing forward by:

- finding something familiar to the group and treat it as a challenge
- giving yourself three times what you first think it will take
- moving yourself from being

content driven to being process oriented

- using the space at the end of a term, perhaps three weeks out, where most of the assessment tasks have been completed
- as the challenge proceeds write personalised comments for reporting to the social and/or emotional growth in the learner

What did you learn?

I found a task to teach resilience within the curriculum by drawing on the positive influence of peers. This helped me understand that motivation, as described by Andrew Martin, was maintained through a heightened sense of student control of task decisions. It is when students take responsibility for planning in groups, that the group raises standards and the capacity for effort and strategy. Boys' learning focus is enhanced because self-belief is boosted in a group taking risks, doing and thinking collaboratively. And in this paradigm, an anxious student can take what he needs from failure and build thoughts constructively in a low-risk environment in his research team or team of specialists.

Also, I failed forward myself. I had to recognise the opportunities that I missed and develop other opportunities as they unfolded, for example when the boys began to set their own homework. After that I started using time at the start of subsequent lessons for each boy to report his overnight findings to his research team.

As a teacher I was a learner in how the boys relate to one another. They are socially flexible and emotionally very changeable. I came to know more of the boys individually. I learned not to give The Answer and to be more Socratic.

I now believe that habits for resilient thinking and behaviours for success are learnable and changeable if students are motivated and in control of their learning.

Who benefited most from this approach?

Results in science were better than I had otherwise expected. The boys who saw themselves as weak found a way to contribute something worthwhile. They had to communicate ideas. Every group came up with a reasonable answer even if it was not the same as the answer stored for so long in my back pocket.

In a sense the intellectual challenge is not isolated or restricted to a few boys in a gifted and talented program but an enrichment of learning that is available to all rather than a few. All of our students need to learn how to cope with challenge and change by building strategies through experience. Learning habits for resilient thinking is essential for success.



Alan Maher is a Middle School Team Leader at Churchie. He has worked as a teacher of Science, Mathematics and Geography in independent schools after graduating with First Class Honours in Geophysics from the University of New England in 1975. Alan was seconded as a strategic planner and item writer for the inaugural Queensland Core Skills Test and, more recently, he has been developing and assessing cross-curricular tasks. He can be contacted on (07) 3896 2200 or alan.maher@acgs.qld.edu.au



The eyes have it

A path to mainstreaming social and emotional intelligence

Christine Goad describes how a simple observation became a catalyst for transforming a 'war zone' into a place where students are resolving their own conflicts and teachers are mainstreaming social and emotional intelligence. Head of Primary, Anthony Mead, discusses how staff now use the Six-Step Conflict Resolution Strategy as a matter of course.

When Christine Goad arrived in 1997, Gilson College was a three-teacher primary school and four-teacher high school with around 200 enrolments all up. At that time the school was reached by a dirt road from the low socio-economic western suburbs of Melbourne.

Ostensibly a denominational school, only about 15% of students were Adventist, the rest were from a huge range — all sorts of non-Christian religions — Hindu, Buddhist, Muslim. The ethnic mix was predominantly Eastern European plus a large proportion from South American El Salvador. Amazingly, 97% were ESL students. Academic outcomes were low, well below the benchmark of tests done by the Victorian Government Learning Assessment Profile. In fact, one parent described it as 'mission impossible'.

Christine: Two years after I arrived I started this initiative because, as one parent so aptly remarked, my classroom was like a war zone. So was the playground. In fact, we needed a United Nations peacekeeping core! There were fights regularly — every day, name calling, racial tension between the different groups.

What made you focus on social and emotional intelligence?

Christine: I was doing a Masters Degree at the time, and I just stumbled across the idea. I noticed that when the children spoke to each other about how they were feeling, if I insisted that they look at each other, they seemed to be more amenable to contact with each other and almost always would say, 'I'm sorry.'

This included the boys?

Christine: Oh yes, because most of the conflicts were with boys. Unfortunately there are no separate stats, but from memory, 80% were boys, 20% girls, across all spectrums of bullying behaviour (verbal abuse, pushing/shoving, name calling).

What happened next, after you got this eye contact strategy?

Christine: I was going to do my Master's research on developing changing curriculum when my supervisor said, 'Oh that's boring, why don't you look into this eye contact thing — I think you're onto something really interesting.' From then on it led me to a study of emotional intelligence. From the net, my husband and I searched and searched for information about eye contact, which led to conflict management and the development of empathy.

By the time I finished my Master's,

I was a lot clearer about what I wanted to achieve at school. Over a period of six months I documented more than 100 conflict resolution incidents in the school, most of them in my Year 3/4 classroom. The eye contact was the key at the time in getting resolution. I had to give the offended party (the 'victim' as you might say) a lot of emotional support and help with the language that they needed to use. To achieve this I had to develop within them an awareness of their feelings and how to express what they were feeling. It started developing from there — understanding your emotions, being able to articulate them, and speak



Christine Goad looks on as Year 1 boys sort out a difference of opinion.

Gilson's Conflict Resolution Strategy — the starting point for teachers and staff.

Six-Step Strategy

- 1 Setting the scene** The student approaches the teacher with a complaint about another child or the teacher notices that a child is angry or upset. The 'other party' is called aside. It must be a one-on-one situation so that neither child feels disadvantaged or intimidated. If there is more than one offending child, each one needs to be dealt with separately for the same reason.
- 2 Emotional reassurance** The teacher recognises the feelings of both children and offers assistance and support to resolve the problem. At this stage the teacher makes sure the students are calm enough to begin resolving the issue, speaking to each child in the same encouraging, non-judgmental tone. If they aren't ready they are given time and if they appear angry, suggestions are made to deal with this; deep breaths, counting to 10, having a drink of water, time out, etc.
- 3 Formatting confrontation** Identifying the child who seems to be the victim or the most upset, the teacher encourages the student to tell the other child how he/she feels and say that he/she doesn't like whatever it is that the other child has done to hurt him/her, e.g. 'I don't like it when you call me names. It makes me feel upset and hurt.' Both children are asked to look each other in the eye while this is taking place. Some children require much guidance at this point to remain focused but sustained eye contact is important.
- 4 The confrontation** Sometimes students will begin the dialogue by making accusations against the other, placing blame. They may also address their remarks to the teacher, referring to the other student in the third person. If this occurs, the teacher needs to gently remind the student to talk directly to the other student in the first person, using 'I' sentences and stating clearly how he/she feels.
- 5 Repeating the process** At this critical stage the offending student usually responds favourably with 'I'm sorry', but if there is no response the procedure may need to be repeated. Usually both students have offended each other and the teacher needs to provide the opportunity for the other student to respond by repeating the procedure.
- 6 Resolution** Usually the conflict has been resolved at this stage and both students are satisfied and happy. However, the teacher needs to attempt to gauge the sincerity of the outcome and it may be necessary for the students to suggest further efforts to make up for damage done, e.g. restoration of broken property, an undertaking not to repeat the offence, or even a written apology and action plan to improve. When the teacher perceives that both have reached a genuine resolution, checking on the feelings of both parties, it is good to commend both students for their efforts before sending them on their way.

Every conflict situation can become a practical learning experience for students, building effective conflict management skills rather than having authority figures imposing solutions. The teacher's role is to facilitate opportunities for students who are upset because of the actions of another, giving necessary support and encouragement to confront the situation and bring about a suitable resolutions.

directly without confrontation to the other person who was hurting them. That was the starting point.

Our Conflict Resolution Strategy developed from this work. It is a quick and easy 'six-step strategy' that is now the starting point for us. When one of our male teachers was leaving he said, 'I'm going to do this for the rest of my teaching career — this is the one big thing that I've learnt at Gilson.'

Why did it work with the boys?

Christine: This was the mystery I wanted to unravel. From the research I discovered that eye contact evoked honesty and empathy, both of which are needed to get a resolution. It also requires sufficient safety within the classroom, which is why the third person is necessary. The teacher's role is to reassure the 'victim' and make sure that everyone is safe.

By the end of 2000, having identified Emotional Intelligence and what it is all about, we started looking further as to how to implement this into the curriculum. Once again we went on-line and found the outline from Daniel Goldman, 'Emotional Intelligence in the Curriculum'. There were ten points, but, from further articles, and on-line searches, we have identified five main areas: self-awareness, communication, conflict resolution, empathy, and self-management.

Were you looking for research to support what programs worked?

Christine: Yes, but we also wanted to link the ideas that we hoped to get across to the children to the curriculum outcomes. We wanted to mainstream Emotional Intelligence into our curriculum. It is our responsibility to teach according to outcomes, and we didn't just want to have this as an add-on (like a two-week program at the beginning of the year that we then forget about). We decided to search through our curriculum frameworks documents to see if our existing outcomes

covered any of these ideas and they were there! They are all through our health and physical education studies, and in our SOSE (study of society and the environment) documents. So there was plenty of evidence to mainstream it into our curriculum.

In 2001 I trialed a five-week program in term 1, which went so well that other staff decided to try it. Linking to the outcomes was a very important step so we used the curriculum frameworks documents, and identified the outcomes and indicators that best reflected these ideas, in order to mainstream the teaching of these key ideas into our curriculum. Framework documents based on these outcomes and indicators were prepared ready for teachers to use in developing fully integrated studies teaching units that included a number of KLAs (key learning areas).

What else did you need to do in 2001 to prepare the ground?

Christine: We had cyclic review that year, which meant we really had to overhaul our curriculum in detail. We really have to justify everything that is going on here, so we went to the curriculum frameworks documents and designed frameworks for levels 1, 2, 3 and 4 which actually supported the five main areas of emotional intelligence (see the accompanying boxes showing sample framework documents). At first we had to generate our own activities each time, but now there is so much commercial material flooding the marketplace that we can just select what we want.

The sequence is important. We start with self-awareness and self-worth, with the thinking that everyone is smart — not just a few — everyone. We implement multiple intelligences right at the beginning and let them all know that they are special and smart. So they are feeling good — that's the starting point in terms of teaching the children.

We have had to help the students develop an understanding of the

vocabulary relating to social-emotional development, and learn the phrases. When resolving conflicts, we'll tell them what to say initially, until they learn what to say.

We teach our students year after year. We start when they first enter school so it is a continuous reinforcement around what to say. As the children mature, the activities change, but the ideas remain the same. You can imagine a child who starts in Prep, by the time they have been taught this year after year, it is really part of them. The difference is noticeable with the new students that come into the school. It's really obvious who has been through the training and who hasn't.

After four or five consistent years it has changed the whole tone of the school. I have one conflict to resolve in a day, and then not every day, whereas before I would deal with 10 to 15 conflicts daily. Classroom management is a totally different option now. The classrooms are easier to manage and teachers are less stressed.

Why do you think it has worked with the boys in particular?

Christine: Because they are no longer so angry, their emotions are being recognised, and we are resolving the anger that they had. They are in a better state to use their brains to learn and are more cooperative. It became so loud and clear back in 1999. I remember one particular incident where a boy came in from playground and was crying. I said, 'Take out your book, do your handwriting.' Five minutes later, 'Do your handwriting.' He had not moved and was still crying. He had not taken his book out, I could not get him to do anything until I stopped and said, 'Hey, what's the matter?' If you try to get kids to work when they are upset or angry, you are wasting your time. That's the bottom line — you have got to deal with the emotional first before you can expect them to learn.

Sample outline of the integrating of SEL concepts into the mainstream curriculum.

Level 3 / Getting a Good Start

Topic 4 / Emotions — ourselves and others

2 weeks

Learning outcomes

SOSE	SO 3.10 Identifies rights and responsibilities for members of a community. 3.11 Explains differences and development between individuals. 3.12 Recognises threatening situations and describes actions. 3.14 Devises a set of rules or code of behaviour based on agreed set of values.
HEALTH & PE	3.15 Describes feelings when people refer to their physical appearance, gender, nationality, language, achievements or personality. 3.16 Discusses how ineffective relationships can cause stress
EQ CONCEPTS	Communication: Sending 'I' messages instead of blame, being a good listener. Group Dynamics: Cooperation — knowing when and how to lead, when to follow. Conflict resolution: How to be fair with other kids, with parents and with teachers, the win-win model for negotiating.

Teaching focus

Learning activities

The six basic emotions	4.1 Class discussion: Brainstorm to identify some of the wide range of feelings that we all have, according to different situations and surroundings. Teacher explains what an emotion is and introduces the six basic emotions. 4.2 Group activity: ■ Each student is given a card with one of the six basic emotions. ■ Students find other students with the same emotion and list feelings connected with the emotion. ■ Each group presents to the class and each emotion is discussed in turn.
Our feelings	4.3 Individual activity: Worksheets: Definitions of each of the emotions. Close passage. Vocabulary list: Children find and list feelings that are linked with each emotion. 4.4 Class discussion: Discuss empathy, body language and how we are able to interpret the feelings of others.
Identifying emotions and corresponding feelings	4.5 Partner and individual activities: Identifying possible feelings of people in magazines by reading faces, and possible reasons for the feelings. Worksheets on feelings, close passage on body language.
Bullying and putdowns	4.6 Class discussion: Revise rights and responsibilities. Violation of the right to be safe. Bullying and putdowns: different types and how to recognise them. Feelings of both people involved. Consequences for bullying. 4.7 Group activity: Role-play different bullying situations and how to deal with them appropriately. Coping strategies discussed. 4.8 Individual activity: Children write about an incident when they have been bullied.
Assessment health & PE 3.12, 3.15	4.9 Assessment health & PE 3.12, 3.15: Quiz — bullying. 4.10 Class discussion: Dealing with anger and conflict, positive and negative thinking, 'You' and 'I' messages, expressing feelings. (See lesson plans from Program Achieve.)
Conflict resolution and anger management	4.11 Role-play: Conflict resolution situations with assertive communication of feelings. 4.12 Individual activities: Worksheets on 'I' and 'You' messages and 'LION' (managing anger).

Integration into the creative arts

Creative arts Working in groups, children find faces in magazines to match the different emotions. Children design posters or bumper stickers with anti-bullying slogans, e.g. 'Put-down-free zone'.

Resources Bernard, M (1995), 'Program Achieve', Sections 3 and 8, Australian Scholarships Group, Melbourne, Victoria.
Jasmine, J (1998), Conflict Resolution K-4, Hawker Brownlow Education.
Johansen, J & Hay, L (1996), 'Mind Your Mind: How to Master your Thoughts and Feelings and be Happy', Australian Scholarships Group, Melbourne, Victoria.

When you deal with boys that get sent to you, do they still get provoked as much as before?

Anthony: They can still become angry but we try and reinforce that it is not the anger that is the problem — it is the way they actually deal with it. We always encourage them to try two or three steps and if that doesn't work to tell a teacher.

If a child is sent to me in general, I am still really just majoring on the minor. In comparison to what I hear from colleagues in other schools, the things that I deal with are miniscule — very rarely even things like swearing let alone physical contact. They're more things like this person is not listening. We make a big deal of little things — eye contact, manners. If someone is not using their manners that is a big shock-horror at our school whereas at a lot of schools punching the teacher or swearing at them is the equivalent. Angry outbursts still happen from time to time but usually it's from the newer kids that are coming into our school. We are a very fast growing school. Last year at the Primary we had about 190 students.

Sometimes there must be long-established conflicts between students who just don't like each other.

Anthony: Those pop up occasionally. We don't try to push two people together that naturally have a clash, but I think the key word across all of our classes during the orientation unit is respect. And they need to learn that even if they're never going to be best friends with somebody, we are all living here together at the school and there are certain expectations, very minimal expectations that they simply must follow if they want to be happy in that situation.

Why is your school growing so fast?

Anthony: There are probably a couple of reasons. One is word of mouth. A lot of people say, 'My sister's children are in the school and I'd



⋮ **The same boys, now in Year 6, still use the conflict resolution strategies.**

really like to try and get my children in.' We are also located in a very fast growing area.

Do kids that have been kicked out of other schools tend to come to you?

Anthony: Often it is the other way around. We attract the kids that don't want to put up with bullying anymore. Their parents are actually pulling them out of other schools because they want their children to be in a safe environment. We do have a few good schools around us, but we also have a few schools that have quite a rough reputation. The teachers don't teach the kids how to manage conflict. They tend to turn a blind eye. The parents that I speak to really appreciate that we want to deal with conflicts and not just ignore them.

What was required to get your teachers to apply it all consistently?

Christine: Our school's curriculum is guided by our school curriculum document, which was last reviewed in 2002. All teachers are provided with a copy of this document at the appropriate level and it is expected that all teaching programs be planned according to the school curriculum outline. For the first term

of every year, every class is presented with an EQ based curriculum. We don't have to tell staff that they have to teach this material because they believe in the ideas too. At the beginning of each year we try to share the main concepts with staff in short in-services over a period of weeks so that they realise the importance of it. I begin with a quote about a person's success in life: 'Eighty per cent is determined by EQ, 20% is determined by IQ.' The next quote is 'EQ CAN be taught.' Then I ask them, 'If that is the case what are we doing about it?'

When new staff arrive, how do you bring them up to speed?

Anthony: At the beginning of every year in term 1 we teach the Orientation Unit plus Christine and others have put together resources to assist teachers at their particular level. Materials such as books for the kids to read, even for teachers as a resource to help them plan exciting lessons based around the ideas.

How would you give teachers who haven't mainstreamed these ideas a starting point?

Christine: All teachers need to do is go to the school curriculum document where they find

Planner developed by Sandra England sets the tone for the classroom for the year.

Level 4 / You and me together			UNIT PLANNER	
Week	Topic	Content	Outcome key	
1	You are special: Getting to know you, making friends	<i>Focus:</i> Introductions and Friendships <i>Key Ideas:</i> ■ You are special to God, family and the teachers at Gilson College ■ You are special in this classroom ■ We can be friends and make friends	H&PE R 4.16 HD 4.1	
2	Getting along together: Rights and responsibilities	<i>Focus:</i> We all have rights and responsibilities <i>Key Ideas:</i> ■ Exploring our rights and our responsibilities — What are they? Who has rights? Why do we have rights and responsibilities? What rights do we have? How do we get them? What are our responsibilities? How are they related?	H&PE HD 4.1 R 4.14 R 4.15	SOSE SO 4.9
3	Getting along together: Rules and consequences	<i>Focus:</i> A happy classroom and school environment are essential to our happiness <i>Key Ideas:</i> ■ Setting our codes of behaviour and rules ■ Discussing violations and formulating logical consequences	H&PE R 4.14	
4	We are all different : Stereotyping tolerance	<i>Focus:</i> Understanding our differences <i>Key Ideas:</i> ■ Defining stereotyping and why we should avoid it ■ Defining tolerance and why it is important	SOSE C 4.3 C 4.4 SO 4.9	H&PE R 4.15
5	We are all different: Let's tell how!	<i>Focus:</i> How are we different? <i>Key Ideas:</i> ■ Celebrating our differences — cultural, social, academic, physical ■ Exploring Multiple Intelligences — 'How am I smart?'	SOSE C 4.3 C 4.4 SO 4.9	H&PE R 4.15
6	Emotional intelligence: Self-esteem and emotions, how do you feel?	<i>Focus:</i> The relationship between self-esteem and emotions <i>Key Ideas:</i> ■ How do you feel about yourself? ■ Explore the range of emotions — happiness to anger — six basic emotions ■ Exploring the emotional rooms of the brain 1 (John Joseph)	H&PE HD 4.1	
7	Emotional intelligence: Empathy, do we know how others feel?	<i>Focus:</i> Learn to feel for others in all situations <i>Key Ideas:</i> ■ How do you feel about others? ■ Learning to see the range of emotions in others ■ Exploring the emotional rooms of the brain 2 (John Joseph)	H&PE HD 4.1 R 4.15	
8	Bullying: What is it? Why do people bully?	<i>Focus:</i> Describing bullying <i>Key Ideas:</i> ■ Defining bullying and why people bully ■ Types of bullying ■ Bullying situations	H&PE R 4.13 R 4.14	
9	Bullying: How does it affect us? How can we handle it?	<i>Focus:</i> Discovering the harmfulness of bullying and how to react <i>Key Ideas:</i> ■ When I feel angry how do I act? ■ Reacting to bullying ■ Strategies to counteract bullying — 'I' statements, assertiveness, body language, conflict resolution, negotiation skills, coping skills	H&PE HD 4.1 R 4.13 R 4.14	
10	We are good at stuff: Setting our goals	<i>Focus:</i> <i>Key Ideas:</i> ■ Using our differences, talents and gifts for others and ourselves ■ Setting personal goals ■ Setting class goals for the rest of the year	H&PE R 4.9 HD 4.1	

frameworks documents based on required outcomes and indicators that support these ideas. I think the overview/outline, 'You and Me Together', by Sandra England, a staff member who has been involved from the start, fully covers the ideas that set the tone for the classroom for the year as well as provide children with the skills they need for success. She developed the level 4 'You and Me Together' unit planner this year for a Year 5 or 6 class.

So, in assessments would you report on these units or the kids' behaviour?

Christine: We report on the outcomes of course. We have reporting statements. We have thorough authentic assessments that take place. There is a whole section that is reported on.

What would be an example of how you'd report on empathy?

Christine: We would look at the outcome that relates to empathy, for example, 'develops an awareness of others and respects their rights and responsibilities'. We'd go via the outcomes and find the appropriate word.

What if there is a student who didn't have the ability to generate empathy, which is often what we see in boys?

Christine: Just keep working on them. We had one little guy who started here in Prep — he was an absolute horror and it was very difficult for him to have empathy. It's taken us three years to teach him eye contact but this little guy only has to be reminded and his body language improves. He very quickly gives you eye contact, tones down his voice and tries to address the problem rather than blame. It has taken a long time with him because he has special needs.

It sounds like the whole process has essentially been about reducing the defensiveness of boys?

Christine: Reducing the defensiveness

of boys, giving them the skills needed to recognise and understand their emotions and feelings then deal appropriately with them.

Many programs say they teach recognition of feelings but students might learn a list of words to do with feelings as opposed to recognise what the actual experience inside is. How do you bring this alive?

Christine: We teach them what the basic emotions are and they are taught this from a very young age with facial expressions. We do activities in class as part of their orientation lessons. They learn about the six basic emotions: joy, surprise, anger, fear, disgust and sadness. Then they learn the vocabulary that goes with them; they identify feelings. We create a scenario and ask them what this person might be feeling. We role-play it, so they can understand what the feelings are that match those different emotions. They learn the vocabulary and practice in role-plays so that when they have those feelings they are better able to articulate them.

We also integrate it right through our English and integrated studies. For example, when they give presentations for oral language it might be about a most memorable emotional experience. They choose an emotion, then get up and speak for two minutes about what happened.

So what have you noticed between the ability of the boys and girls to learn this stuff?

Christine: Well, of course, it takes longer for some of the boys.

Anthony: From what I've noticed, boys have a need to be recognised and heard more. Christine stresses the importance of building up the kids themselves first. That way when they face a situation that is difficult or upsetting, they don't need to feel that it's a personal attack because their self-esteem is intact. By making them feel special and important first, you cut out the need for retaliation.

• **By making them**
• **feel special and**
• **important first, you**
• **cut out the need for**
• **retaliation.**

Have you found that you have adjusted your Behaviour Management Policy to support what you're doing?

Anthony: We did actually revise our policy two years ago. We sat down as a staff and said, 'Okay, how are we going to deal with certain behaviour?' To tell you the truth, for the number of students we have [250], I have very few students needing to come to me for major offences. Most of the misdemeanors are managed in-class, because the teachers have sufficient strategies now to do that.

So have you been working on their behaviour management strategies as a school?

Christine: I would like to suggest that the children themselves are the reason why we don't.

Ahah! That's great.

Christine: They don't present us with the same sort of problems that they did when I first came here. There's no answering back, there is mutual respect, there's more interest and joy in learning. It has eliminated the hassles we used to have so there is more space for teaching.

I presume your academic results have lifted?

Christine: We were well below, especially in our spelling, we are now above the State average. We are just a little above the State average in almost all of our scores.

Back on the teaching of it, have you had to vary your teaching style so that boys pick up on some of this 'softer' skill development?

Christine: With the multiple intelligences we identify what the strengths are right from the start. It helps us know who our kinesthetic learners are, who our verbal learners are and we really try to get the concepts across in a way that the children will learn best.

How did you get the teachers to be more experimental?



... **Angry outbursts are now rare, as boys rely on their verbal skills to sort out their differences.**

Christine: We try to have a lot of variety. We've got quite a following here of a movement called 'brain-based learning' which is teaching how the brain learns best. It involves lots of hands-on group work and social interaction. That is part of our core teaching strategy. Teachers have the freedom to present their curriculum the way they want. We meet once a week for an hour, but it's there incidentally all the time.

Anthony: We have a curriculum component in our staff meeting each week and as part of her role as curriculum coordinator, Christine takes that segment of our staff meeting. So on a weekly basis we get to touch base and to nut out some of the things that are happening in our classroom and discuss better ways we can learn from each other.

Are the boys saying anything themselves about the way the school runs?

Christine: One of the biggest things the boys like in my program in particular, is that we have breaks. Every 40 minutes we have PE breaks for five to ten minutes and I would never revert back to not having those breaks. We go outside and play a game, it's always very physical — running, red-rover-all-over, skipping,

running around the oval . . .

And what do the girls do at that time?

Christine: The girls join in, but the boys in particular get rid of all that extra energy and when they come back into the classroom they are focused. All around the schoolteachers are doing it and this is another reason why we are minimising conflict.

So the boys notice this and speak about it.

Christine: Oh yes. My boys write to me in journals and one little guy who is really active says, 'I really love being in your class because we have breaks.' Another child will say when he is moving on to his next class, 'Does he know about the brain and that we need to have our breaks?'

How often do you use the journals?

Christine: Once a week for about 10 to 15 minutes or however long they need. It's free-form — they write whatever they like. They write what they won't say even though they know I am going to read it.

What else have you had to change apart from the breaks to support the social-emotional development?

Christine: Consistent recognition of their emotions no matter what. And that goes for every day. If a child comes at the end of play time with tears in his eyes, angry and upset, the teacher is aware straightaway that that child is unable to learn, so you deal with that problem right then and there even if it involves taking a child out of another class.

If you were starting again, what would you do differently?

Christine: Would I do it differently? Probably not. Linking to the outcomes I would do all over again — definitely. Because I now have an emotional-literacy curriculum model clearly outlined from Daniel Goldman. Yes, I would still take that, search the syllabus and adjust the teaching content to suit.

What's the next step for you guys?

Christine: Sharing with other schools.

So you are pretty much happy with where it has got to, you don't need to develop this part of the program further?

Christine: Probably not. We could resource it a little better but as we look in the marketplace there is very little need to develop our own resources any further. Because as I said before everybody is publishing teaching materials, they seem to be aware that there is a need here and it is flooding the market at the present time.

What have parents said about their boys after being in your mainstreamed programs?

Christine: I remember a kiss on the cheek from one of the fathers on speech night and he said, 'You've given him back his life,' because his son was able to learn to read in Grade 4. That little boy is now in Year 9. His literacy improved because he calmed down and was able to manage his emotions.

Anthony: One of the classic comments I get in my role as the head of primary, is 'Until we came to this school, my son didn't want to hop in the car of a morning. It would be a kicking and screaming match trying to get him to want to go to school.' In contrast they say that nowadays the kids will often be up, dressed, had breakfast and all ready to go without the parents actually needing to tell them. To a parent that is just an absolute blessing.



Christine Goad is curriculum coordinator and a Year 3/4 teacher at Gilson College. In her 25 years of teaching experience she has taught from Prep to Year 10 in three different states in both state and independent schools, one year of which was in Western Samoa. For the past 18 years she has been actively involved in developing curriculum and assisting teachers to implement change. In 2000 Christine completed her MA degree in curriculum and instruction with emphasis on teaching strategies implementing multiple intelligences, emotional intelligences and brain-based learning.



Anthony Mead graduated in 1998 after which he taught Year 4 at Macquarie College in Newcastle, NSW. He transferred to Victoria in 2002 and was appointed to teach Year 5. Anthony is currently team-teaching Year 5 and is the head of primary. His wife is also employed by Gilson College and similarly finds it a very positive environment. Anthony was surprised to find the tone and culture in the school so positive considering the vast array of cultures and ethnic groups the students at Gilson College represented. His interest in EQ grew as he saw students resolving their difficulties using little teacher interaction.

Note: Further information is available from www.feel.org/articles/goldman.html

★ The joys of teaching boys

An experiment with single-sex classrooms

Ann Wyatt's delight in teaching boys is evident in this tale of how Marian College helped its boys improve their English scores, develop an interest in reading and mature in their attitudes to learning.

Marian College, at Kenthurst, is a coeducational Catholic high school in the Hills District of Sydney. It was founded 16 years ago and began with an enrolment of 53 Year 7 students. There are presently 760 students, enrolled from a range of socio-economic backgrounds, from both rural and urban sections of the surrounding area. The student population is predominantly Australian born, with English as the language spoken at home.

At the end of 2002 several of the staff in different key learning areas (KLAs) were invited to apply for Focus on Learning Grants provided by the Catholic Education Office in the Parramatta Diocese. Having recently spent 16 years teaching boys at another local Catholic college, I felt that many of the insights into boys' education, which I had acquired over that time, could be beneficial to the students at Marian College.

Our applications were successful and it was decided that the focus for my grant would centre on Year 8 English. The concern that students in the middle stream of the cohort were not reaching their potential prompted us to make a change in the way we structured English classes in that year. A lack of engagement with English by boys, and indeed some girls, led to the suggestion that single-sex classes would be an option. Also, it was in keeping with recent research, that we made the

decision to try something new. Mrs Tricia Sewell, the English coordinator, and I took a boys' class each, and the special education teacher, Mrs Hardie, worked with a small group of boys who were experiencing learning difficulties.

After an initial meeting with a representative from the Catholic Education Office, the school principal, Miss Lynn Bard and Mrs Sewell, the final decision was made. We formed three girls' classes and three boys' classes, five of which were mixed ability. At the beginning of 2003, a letter was sent home to the parents of Year 8 students, inviting anyone who had concerns about the programme, to contact the principal. Only two parents inquired about our new venture and after

some discussion, were happy about their children continuing in the relevant class. Their main concern was that formerly, these students were in a top-graded class and would now be continuing in a mixed ability class.

In order to monitor the progress of all the students in an environment where neither group would be advantaged over another, it was necessary to choose a theme for study, which would be suitable for both boys and girls. The topic, heroes, was selected and each teacher was free to use a range of resources appropriate to the class. All classes used the Disney film *Tarzan*, and this led to some lively discussions on body image.

All Year 8 students were entered in



• Marian College's Year 8 boys who took part in the 2003 Literacy Program.



Some of the Year 8 competitors of the Tarzan Jungle Yell Competition.

the Premier's Reading Challenge. This was easy to monitor, as two periods per cycle were allocated to wide reading. A considerable portion of the grant was spent on the purchase of non-fiction material. A bookseller was contacted, and all Year 8 students were asked to choose the books, which they would like to have in the library. By the end of the first semester, Year 8 students had read over a thousand books and the librarians were amazed at how the borrowing of reading material had improved.

The benefits of the reading time were evident after the results of the half-yearly examination were known. Students reported that, although there was a considerable amount of quite challenging reading in the English paper, they were better able to deal with it, and complete their responses. Overall, students' marks, especially those of the boys, showed a favourable improvement.

The results of the half-yearly English examination were amazing. The project was still quite new, but already the signs that change would happen, were there. Seventy-three per cent of the boys improved their marks from the end of Year 7, some by as many as 20. Equally pleasing, was the fact that 73% of the girls also improved. The self-esteem of the students received quite a boost

and they began to view English as a subject where they could achieve good results.

As the novelty of being in single-sex classes began to wear off, students realised that there were many benefits to be gained from the new arrangement. The behaviour of the boys was noticeably calmer, without them having lost their sense of fun. They did not seem as embarrassed about answering

• The results of the
• half-yearly English
• examination were
• amazing.

questions, they encouraged each other and acknowledged the efforts of those who found learning difficult.

Teaching boys is a delightful experience, as they respond readily to praise and the knowledge that you really do like teaching them. Often, during my years of teaching, people have sympathised with me when I mentioned that I taught boys. 'Oh, you poor thing,' they would remark. 'They must be dreadful. How ever do you cope?' Many of my most memorable

moments have occurred when working with boys' classes.

Birthdays have always been special in my family, and I wanted my boys to share in this. So, on his birthday, every boy received a card and a voucher for the canteen. The English lesson had to be something to look forward to, so we always had lots of humour in our classroom. Our Tarzan Jungle Yell Competition was hilarious. We did this on the school oval, where we could make as much noise as we liked. Those who were too shy to do a solo performance, were invited to join in the group 'yell', beating their chests and imitating chimpanzees. The boys insisted that I join in and we all had the best time. Afterwards, we returned to the classroom, where certificates were awarded.

In term 2, each class completed a novel study and this was where teachers' choices were important. Stories appropriate and appealing to each gender were selected and this proved to be very successful. It was not that the books were particularly gender specific, but they were more interesting in terms of subject material, to either boys or girls. *Alex Jackson: Grommet* by Pat Flynn was a great favourite for the boys, while Katherine Cushman's *The Midwife's Apprentice* led to some interesting and beneficial 'girl' discussions.

During the year, the *Sun Herald* ran an 11-week competition, where, for the first 10 weeks, a serialised story appeared, each chapter being written by a different well-known children's author. The eleventh chapter was to be written by the young people who entered the competition. One of my boys, a talented writer named Elliot James, won the competition and the editor commented that the entry was so good, it was difficult to tell that it had not been written by one of the adults! We were all very proud of him.

Most of the students maintained their improvement in the final examination and the most gratifying aspect of the programme was seeing how the boys had matured in their

attitude to learning, appropriate classroom behaviour and respect for each other's abilities. On prize-giving night, Year 8 boys appeared in first, second, fourth and seventh places in English.

Some of the comments in the surveys conducted at the end of the year were:

- *It was great. We could do boy stuff.*
- *Our teacher knows a lot about different sports. It was cool not having homework on nights when there were cricket finals or World Cup football matches on TV.*
- *I really enjoyed just having boys in the class. You could ask questions and not be embarrassed.*
- *I thought it was good, but it's interesting sometimes to hear the girls' point of view too.*

Teachers in other KLAs often remarked that the boys seemed more settled in class, even though they were with girls for these lessons.

Evaluations from the parents were very encouraging.

- *I've never seen my son read so many books. He hasn't read for years.*
- *My son loves English. His marks have improved and he doesn't mind doing homework now, because he is beginning to believe in his ability to achieve.*

■ *I hope this programme continues.*

Some parents did not notice too much change, but were still happy with the project.

The college has repeated the format in Year 8 in 2004, but this time the boys' classes are graded, as are the girls'. It will be interesting to measure the results, as last year's mixed ability classes benefited from having more able students in them.

My advice to anyone teaching boys, is to let them know you love teaching them, that the boundaries you set around their behaviour does not eliminate having some fun, and be interested in what interests *them*. On the last day of term 4, I asked my students if they would rather have had a male teacher, and they said, 'Definitely not.' I asked them why, and they said that I was just like their mum, I set rules and I understood them. If this meant that I was a bit 'soft' it doesn't seem to have done them any harm. I am a grandmother of eight, four of whom are boys, so I've learnt some survival techniques.



Ann Wyatt completed her four-year teacher training at Sydney Teachers' College and the Sydney Conservatorium of Music in 1961. Her first appointment was Birrong Boys' High School, where she remained for several years, teaching English and music. Between 1973 and 1985, Ann had the opportunity to teach Kindergarten to Year 6, after which she returned to high school. Ann has been at Marian College for three years, where she is exploring the different learning styles and their impact on learning potential. She is particularly interested in learning difficulties and educational kinesiology. Apart from her teaching certificate, she has the following qualifications: AMusA, BEd, Grad Dip Local and Applied History, MA (Children's Literature).



⋮ Elliott James, winner of the *Sun Herald* Short Story Competition.



Developing a yearning for primary learning

A focus on literature and the creative and practical arts

Shore Preparatory School acknowledges that their boys' learning preferences are maths, information technology and sport. However, as Steven Bowers explains, they have set out to actively challenge this natural order.

As I walk through the school gate in the morning I am greeted with 'Good Morning, Mr Bowers — how are you?' Increasingly, over the past 16 years the boys will continue: 'Mr Bowers, did you know that we are going on an excursion to the Rocks today?' 'Mr Bowers, have you seen the crystals which are growing in my classroom?' The questions continue unabated. As I reflect on these comments I am reminded of what the attraction to primary teaching is. The bright eyes, enthusiastic attitude and willingness to learn and act like a sponge — eager to soak up whatever information, skill and knowledge is apparent. I am also reminded of the awesome responsibility we as educators have towards these young people. We need to meet their needs and understand their perspectives so that we can develop their minds. However, it is development of their minds that remains very important. In the development of the boys' minds we are also establishing routines and perspectives, which will scaffold the boys' attitudes for the remainder of their lives. It is this that remains the most important aspect of education in primary school. While skills and knowledge are important, the enhancement of an inquiring mind with an enthusiastic attitude can tailor a boy's successful development through the teenage years and beyond.

A primary education sets the platform for life-long learning. It is

important to ensure that the enthusiasm, which greets us daily in our schools, is embraced, shaped, and enriches the minds of our young charges!

What subjects or activities do primary boys favour?

Howard Gardner's book *Frames of Mind* (1993) outlines seven types of intelligence:

- **Linguistic:** generally referred to as verbal intelligence both written and oral
- **Logical:** mathematical intelligence — enjoy collecting and organising, analysing and interpreting, and can see patterns in relationships
- **Spatial:** capacity to think in pictures and learn most readily from visual presentations
- **Musical:** rhythmic intelligence — sensitivity to sounds of all types
- **Bodily-kinesthetic:** expresses itself through bodily sensation
- **Interpersonal:** gregarious people who are reluctant to be alone
- **Intrapersonal:** independent and self-directed, with a strong capacity to understand him/herself, his capacity and options

Gardner, in recent times suggests that there may be other forms of intelligence. It is important for educators to recognise that students will have favoured ways of learning. Students may even exhibit several intelligences. This makes it important to vary our teaching and

to recognise both our own preferred learning style and those favoured by the boys. Therefore, the traditional 'chalk and talk' large and small group style of teaching may be suitable for some students who favour the logical and/or linguistic intelligences. However, as we all can attest other boys favour different intelligences.

Therefore, our teaching and learning activities must meet all needs within our classroom. Accordingly, it is important not only to base our teaching and learning activities on different styles of learning but also to expose all boys to as many styles of learning as we are able to resource within our school. The advantages of this include supporting those students who otherwise would not receive acclaim and secondly, it highlights that there are preferred styles of learning that are different from our own. At Shore Preparatory School this is an important concept built into the 'balanced' and 'all-round' aims of the school and supported by the welfare and academic policies.

Over the years at the school I have formed some views on what areas of learning the majority of boys typically favour. These include mathematics; science activities, research, which has been structured yet enables individual or group interpretation on format or presentation; information technology activities (including computer based activities); and physical education and sport (games).

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Therefore, if we let our school take a 'natural' direction these activities would be favoured; our school would perform well in standardised testing in mathematics and our sports results, when playing against similar sized schools, would be good. However, to let this natural order dominate the culture of the school is to limit the development of the boys within our care.

This is the dilemma, the challenge, and the responsibility, we as educators of young boys accept.

What did we need to promote and what does the research say?

Literature

Typically, boys find reading uninviting. It is not that they cannot read, rather that they would prefer to do other things. Reading appropriate literature is very important because all learning is based on how we interpret text. Reading and understanding written text is critical to children and particularly boys wanting to learn independently.

Alloway and Gilbert (1997, p 122) state what good primary school educators know is that 'accurate reading and writing are essential, but if we are to improve children's literacy levels, we need to look closely at what literacy is about, why we think it is important and what literacies are important to children (boys).'

Ann Wuth in *Boys and Literacy Teaching Units* (1997, p 3) suggests that young boys especially need older boys and men to be 'literacy mentors'. Further, men, particularly dads, need to model that they value reading and display how it is important at home and at work.

Silent sustained reading has been advocated for many years as a practical way to ensure that children are reading. Janise Arthur (in Gardiner 2001, p 32) investigated the connection between sustained silent reading programs and attitudes towards reading, with special attention to alliterates —

those who can read but choose not to. Her conclusions were that daily reading opportunities improved attitudes, which resulted in other benefits. 'Studies of children in kindergarten, primary and middle grades who have demonstrated a voluntary interest in books were not only rated to have better work habits, social and emotional development, language structure, and overall school performance, but also these children scored significantly higher on standardised reading tests' (Arthur 1995, p 2).

The task then, is to inspire boys to want to read appropriate literature. This aim is supported by Tough (1982, p 42), a respected and well-known educator from the UK who stated 'that our aim must be to provide conditions that lead the children to become independent readers, able to take responsibility for their own reading.'

Accordingly, we as educators have a responsibility to entice and encourage boys to read. It is no good forcing reading — we must change the culture to make reading relevant to the needs of the boys in our school.

Creative and practical arts

Similarly, within the Preparatory School the creative and practical arts were something that was not embraced by the boys. (For the purposes of this paper the creative and practical arts include music, dance, drama and the visual arts.) How limiting this is to the holistic aspect of a primary-aged boy's development! In recent times there has been research into the benefits of the creative and practical arts.

Music

Research supports the view that music should be available to every student studying at school. As Eric Jensen (2000, p 3) argues: 'The evidence suggests that the musical arts are central to learning. The systems they nourish (which include our integrated sensory, attentional, cognitive, emotional, and motor

capacity processes) are in fact, the driving force behind all other learning. This doesn't mean that one can't learn without the arts; many have. But learning with the arts provides more opportunity to develop these multiple brain systems, none of which is easy to quantify due to the nature of the process.' Robert Zatorre, (Jensen 1998) a neuropsychologist at the Montreal Institute says: 'I have very little doubt that when you are listening to a real piece of music, it is engaging the whole brain.' Jensen (2000) suggests that children should begin music in their early years — the benefits multiply the earlier a music program commences.

Music also enhances memory systems. Again this particularly applies to very young children. Students who have music training before age 12 were able to recall much more information than those who were not given this opportunity.

In recent times researchers have also found a link between music and reading. A study among Year 1 students concluded that there was a correlation between pitch discrimination and how well children read! (Jensen 2000, p 55)

This has significant implications for primary/elementary educators and schools. To delay the commencement of a music program inhibits the overall development of the students.

Of course, we can debate what is a music program and who teaches it — qualified or unqualified staff? Nevertheless, a music program is important to the development of primary-aged and elementary-aged children.

Visual art

Jensen (1998, p 38), based on research (Garner 1996; Parente & Andersen-Parente 1991; McGraw 1989), suggests that the use of visual arts not just to draw but also teach thinking skills and build emotive expressiveness and memory has been a remarkable demonstration of



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the brain's plasticity. Teaching students art also has been linked (Simmons 1995) to better visual thinking, problem solving, language and creativity. Jensen (1998) also states that by learning and practising art, the human brain actually wires itself to make stronger connections.

It appears, then, that visual arts has much more to offer than cultural awareness and the formal aspects of learning to draw.

Dance and drama

The importance of physical activity every day is supported by growing research. Jenny Seham of the National Dance Institute in New York City has observed for years the

'measurable and heart-warming academic and social results of school children who study dance. Seham bubbles with enthusiasm over positive changes in self-discipline, grades, and sense of purpose in life that her students demonstrate' (Jensen 1998, p 87).

Peter Strick (Jensen 1998) of the Veteran Affairs Medical Centre of Syracuse New York discovered that: 'the part of the brain that processes movement is the same part of the brain that processes learning.'

Again, it would seem that to exclude movement (dance) from our curriculum limits the development of the children for whom we are responsible.

The child without access to arts is being systemically cut off from most of the ways he can experience the world.

General comment

There has been a recognition in recent years that participation in the creative and practical arts meant that you were teaching a child about cultural awareness. While this is correct the research today suggests there are important educational reasons to engender a culture which embraces the arts. Jean Houston says that the arts stimulate body awareness, creativity, and sense of self. Houston concludes, 'The child without access to arts is being systemically cut off from most of the ways he can experience the world' (Williams 1977).

Constantly, education systems, policy-makers and educators want measurable quantifiable results. James Gardell the principal at Douglas Elementary School, Columbus Ohio, which has a focus on the creative and practical arts, has been able to do this. Gardell states that achievement scores were raised 20 points above the district norms in five of six academic areas. Subsequently, demand for places at the school rose significantly. Gardell, in Jensen (1998), believes there is a 'definite link' between the academic achievement and the creative and practical arts.

James Hanshumacher (1980) reviewed 36 studies into the link between academic achievement and the arts. Hanshumacher concluded that arts education facilitates language development, enhances creativity, boosts reading readiness, helps social development, assists general intellectual achievement, and fosters positive attitudes towards school.

To conclude, Jensen (1998, p 87) states that 'Give a school daily dance, music, drama and visual art instruction in which there is considerable movement (dance), and you might get a miracle.'

Accordingly, a rich well-balanced primary education would include a comprehensive creative and practical arts program. Therefore, changing the perception, and changing the culture of the creative and practical

arts at Shore Preparatory School became a focus.

How did we proceed? What were our aims?

Given the above there were two specific aims which gave rise to a third aim.

Our two specific aims for the boys were:

- the development of a genuine desire to read appropriate literature
- the desire to be an enthusiastic participant in the creative and practical arts, which includes dance, drama, music and visual arts

Our school needed to embrace these activities to enable a cultural shift in the attitude of the boys, their families and the wider school community.

Once the culture shifted towards embracing the creative and practical arts and a genuine desire to read appropriate literature, we believed that the boys would, consequently, move towards our third aim:

- to develop a desire for independent life-long learning

Effective schools

To commence, research was also carried out on what makes a school effective. We were of the view that it was wise to reflect on the characteristics of an effective school in light of our aims. Beare et al. (1989, p 18) state: 'The effective school . . . is a concentrated culture, based upon core assumptions about its prime function — instruction and learning. Coherence within subjects, across subjects, across year groups, among classroom approaches does not emerge by chance, but is driven by a common vision about education, about the school, and about the school's programs. It comes from a collectivity of people who have derived a collective vision or picture together.'

Maughan and Ouston (1979,

pp 18–24, cited in Beare 1989, p 8) also state that good schools were characterised by lessons which were work-oriented with time focused on subject matter rather than behaviour or administration.

In more recent times (2003) Jenny Lewis, the principal of Noumea Public School in the Blue Mountains and Chairperson ACEL, discusses the term ‘community of practice’. Lewis states that:

- a community of practice is different from a team in that the shared learning and interest of its members are what keep it together
- it is defined by knowledge rather than task, and exists because participation has value to its members

In conclusion, the research highlighted the need to ensure that staff, parents and the entire community support our aims. As the Preparatory School staff were concerned about the first two aims (boys developing a genuine desire to read appropriate literature and the importance of embracing the creative and practical arts), they were very enthusiastic about promoting what we as a school would like to do. Equally, it was important to include the entire Preparatory School community into our vision.

Changing culture

Before sharing the vision with parents it was important to be clear about what the school was able to do. Attitudinal changes can only be supported if we have practical support. Cultural changes do not happen quickly. Therefore, a commitment to the aims with practical support was necessary.

The process of cultural change was long and arduous. It certainly was not a linear progression. Rather, practical outcomes were achieved by small increments over many years, e.g. in the visual arts, dance and drama, and enrichment programs. However, each incremental step was

a bridge to the next practical outcome. Over time, these small steps became significant steps, which the boys, staff and boarder school community embraced. Therefore, the practical outcomes listed below belie the important aspect of this process, which is to bring people with you.

With the aim of developing a genuine desire to read appropriate literature, and after much thought (by the headmaster, head and deputy of the preparatory school, master of curriculum, the teacher-librarian and the entire preparatory school staff) it was resolved to:

- make the teacher-librarian position fulltime
- open the library twice every day — before school and lunchtime
- make the library ‘boy’ friendly:
 - clear large signs
 - appropriate literature for each year level
 - a range of appropriate fiction and non-fiction material
- make the library the heart of the school — bright, inviting and with attractive displays
- promote quality literature through displays in the library and around the school
- create a language enrichment position which uses literature and literacy development to promote excellence for our more able boys
- ensure the teacher-librarian and class teacher discuss books which invoke an interest in the boys and are appropriate
- create reading lists, which are rarely published
- choose library monitors which will be respected by their peers
- use public forums to promote literature to the boys and the wider school community
- request help from parents to cover and maintain library stock
- request help from parents to set up and replace literature and library displays
- promote individual books
- commence reading groups in the classroom with the assistance of parents

- promote reading groups and what they achieve

Similarly, to encourage boys to embrace the creative and practical arts it was resolved to:

- create a part-time dance/drama teacher
 - ensure that while the program is developmental it is also appealing to the boys and their abilities — modern dance
 - create an opportunity for the boys to perform
 - ensure that dance and drama is allocated set times in the timetable
 - create an after-school elective dance group for boys who want more opportunities to dance (fee recovery basis)
- create a part-time visual arts teacher
 - ensure that while the program is developmental it is also appealing to all the boys and their abilities — includes different media
 - create an opportunity for the boys to display their work regularly
 - create an opportunity to showcase visual arts — visual arts exhibition
 - ensure that visual arts is allocated set times in the timetable
 - create an after school visual arts group for boys who want more opportunities for visual arts (fee recovery basis)
- continue to promote music
 - ensure that while the program is developmental it is also appealing to the boys and their abilities — includes different musical groups (choirs, strings, brass, wind, ensembles)
 - provide private tuition for any boy who wishes to play (subject to class teachers’ comments)
 - create an opportunity for the boys to perform their work regularly
 - create an opportunity to showcase music — school

- concerts, class concerts, studio concerts
- perform an annual musical which includes all sixth class boys
- create other opportunities to promote the creative and practical arts

However, an important aspect, is not what is to be done but rather how it is to be done. As the research highlights, it is important that all staff embrace the practical outcomes above, but more importantly that all staff work to support overtly and covertly the aims.

The issue in many schools is that the same staff are competing for the same students. Within our small school it has been important to be as inclusive as possible and to limit the opportunities for this conflict to occur. If conflict does occur then the head or deputy of the preparatory school resolves the issue. Therefore, as much as possible rehearsals take place within the timetable. Much planning needs to occur to ensure that time is used effectively and that other aspects of the curriculum do not suffer.

However, I have never had concerns raised with me about the practice spent on the musical rehearsal each year. I know, as do parents, that the boys will remember their musical for many years to come.

The emotional strings have been honed and strengthened through this process. Oh, to be able to stir the emotions to recall other aspects of primary education!

Returning to the two initial aims: As teachers, many are frustrated or closet actors, maybe poor actors but nevertheless sales people. It has been important that staff have believed and promoted both the literature and CAPA focus. The more united the staff, the more genuine the belief in the vision, and therefore, the better the outcome for the boys.

Sharing the vision with parents

It was apparent that we needed to articulate the vision. Why was the promotion of literature important? How can parents support the literature focus? Why were the creative and practical arts important? How can parents support the CAPA focus?

Sharing the vision with parents was a particularly enjoyable task. Communicating to parents about the research on boys, literature and the creative and practical arts provided much insight into the concerns held by parents. Highlighting the vision within the context of a balanced and all-round education was both rewarding and enlightening. Opportunities arose on an almost daily basis. These included formal meetings — information nights, parent staff interviews, cocktail parties, musical evenings, visual arts evenings and informal meetings. As every parent and boy who was to commence the following year was interviewed, new parents and boys were in no doubt about where our focus was.

A significant means of articulating our aims was the weekly newsletter. Consistently, articles would appear about the benefits of reading and the importance of parents, particularly dads, modelling reading to their sons. The overt use of photographs to reinforce the focus on literature and the creative and practical arts proved successful. Consistently, dads were challenged about the importance of spending time with their sons. Dads were also encouraged to make a time to take a regular reading group.

Other complementary factors

Positive discipline policy and code of respect

Despite articulating the vision it was also resolved that the preparatory school needed to review the welfare and discipline policy. It was felt that an emphasis needed to be accorded to a positive discipline policy with

support from a code of respect. The essence of these documents was that the language was affirmative with behaviours written about what is expected rather than what is *not* expected. Concurrently, the boys were made aware that they have responsibilities. If the boys choose not to take their responsibilities seriously, then there are consequences for their actions. Both the Positive Discipline Policy and the Code of Respect were discussed at length with the boys before implementation.

The Positive Discipline Policy and the Code of Respect have been embraced by boys and their parents. Despite this there are occasions when the clarity of a particular situation is not as clear as we all would wish it to be.

This policy was embraced to ensure the school was a safe place, which supported learning.

A part of the welfare policy was the system of rewards. Every week numerous awards are handed out for a variety of achievements which include: good work and conduct; excellent achievement awards; visual arts awards; music awards; sports awards; and importantly reading awards.

Simultaneously, it is also important to acknowledge excellence by the boys in their activities. It is important to do this publicly.

Group work and active listening skills

Another important aspect was the structured teaching of boys of how to participate in group work. A particular skill was especially important — teaching active listening skills. The talk process within a group or a class is only effective if active listening is taking place. Some useful strategies included encouraging boys to:

- use positive signals for listening — nodding, smiling, eye-contact, positive body language
- ask questions, make comments,

- contribute stories on the same theme
- pose, or fill in answers to, two or three questions after having listened to an audio or video cassette
- negotiate rules for speaking (i.e. take turns to speak)
- ensure everyone in the group participates
- share the task if a group response is expected

The teacher's role in this is not simple. Key issues will include:

- taking part in a group or class discussion as an equal member
- thinking aloud/speculating on an outcome
- conversing with the pupils as you would with an adult friend
- listening — valuing what the pupil is saying

Teaching boys active listening skills and the rules for group work is an ongoing task. However, it is important that the instructions are clear and specific as to the types of behaviour that are expected for group work to be productive. In addition, as a teacher it is important to model the behaviour expected of the boys.

Cross-age mentoring — 'buddies'

For a variety of reasons the buddy program became a way of linking several programs together — especially the development of active listening skills. The older boys took their responsibilities very seriously and enjoyed these weekly structured learning activities. The younger children also enjoyed the opportunity to meet the older boys. It was also a structured way of ensuring all boys developed an understanding that we all have different needs and that we all have something to contribute. The inclusive nature of the program enabled all children to feel a sense of achievement.

Conclusion

More important than the structures and the practical applications of the aims was the conviction of the shared vision for the entire school community. The key aspect of all this work is not with the staff and/or the parents though both groups are critical to the success. The key aspect is with the boys themselves.

Critically, do the boys believe the staff and parents are serious about the espoused views or do the boys sense simply platitudes? As we all know the boys detect untruths and hypocrisy very quickly — even young boys. Therefore, beware, the success of a cultural shift of this magnitude is not with the programs. Rather the success of these cultural changes is not in a predefined outcome but rather in the shared journey. This journey has a direction but not necessarily a conclusion. The critical point is, Does everyone share the vision?

I concur with Brian R Walsh, the former headmaster of the Buckley School in New York, who suggests that participation in many aspects of a primary/elementary school education is easier within an all-boys school. 'In elementary school, girls simply overwhelm and intimidate boys because they usually do everything better, faster and more gracefully.'

A couple of years ago the children's author James Moloney, who wrote *A Bridge to Wisemans Cove*, visited the preparatory school for Book Week. As the boys enjoyed reading his books they were very attentive. At the morning tea James Moloney made the observation that he had never seen all the male primary school teachers so eager to discuss literature while the female primary school teachers were readily discussing rugby! The staff also enjoyed his sessions.

Last year, at our Saturday afternoon rehearsal for our sixth class musical, *Pirates of Penzance*, approximately 40 of our 66 boys were attempting to read the latest Harry Potter novel in the semi-

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darkness of the Smith Auditorium.

The process of cultural shift is not complete but I know it has commenced! Long may we continue on this journey towards the pursuit of independent life-long learning.

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Steven Bowers has been Master of Shore Preparatory School (head of the primary school) since 1989 when the primary section of the school consisted of six classes: one Year 3, one Year 4, two Year 5, and two Year 6 classes — 180 boys. Last year they opened Shore Preparatory School, Northbridge, which has expanded the primary school to include an early learning centre for three- and four-year-old children and Kindergarten, Year 1 and Year 2 classes. With a focus on literature and the creative and practical arts the educational programmes are inclusive and aim to provide experiences and educational opportunities for children to develop and be challenged within a supportive and nurturing environment.

Like all educational institutions Shore Preparatory School is busy, yet professionally rewarding. According to Steven, 'The strength of the school is the dedication and hard work of the staff.'

★ Taminmin High

A place where BAD boys are not just doing well, they're being rewarded

Erin Evans talks about the great 'BAD' boys at her school in the Northern Territory.

Taminmin High School is located about 50 km from the centre of Darwin. We are in a rural community that is growing in population. Most kids come from five-acre blocks up to large pastoral properties. We have a couple of Indigenous communities within the school feeder area. Some of the kids travel an hour and a half to get to school. The population breakdown is basically 20% Indigenous young people, 20% of Asian backgrounds (Thai, Malaysian, Philippino, Vietnamese) and the rest are a majority of white Anglo with a few other minorities.

How did the 'BAD' initiative come about?

Initially we had a lot of success working with young people making a film addressing drug and alcohol and partying issues, so we thought we would have a go at getting some more funding to try and work with our boys in the school. We're not known for our academic abilities — that wouldn't be our strong point. We are a rural school — we've got Agriculture and a lot of vocational education, so we were concerned about how we could keep our kids engaged, connected and interested in school. And the boys were the ones most at risk of disengaging from the traditional classroom.

What is 'BAD' and what did you do?

BAD is an acronym for Boys Against Drugs. We got a Department of



Getting ready for fishing.

Education grant to work with young people about alcohol and other drug issues, and we selected the boys. Being part of Mindmatters Plus we came up with the great idea of profiling our kids by talking to all the teachers. From an extensive list of students we were able to highlight the most at-risk kids and offer them a place in the BAD Boys program.

The kids are released for five lessons a week, which means they have one line out of the traditional classroom doing things around the Mindmatters resilience building activities — teamwork, communication etc. We're also doing resilience building with the boys through things like playing a game of footy or going for a walk or doing some work on the farm. We culminate these activities by taking the boys away on a three-day camp. They have had three camps so far

and we've also taken our positive message out to some Indigenous communities which have even less access and are more isolated than us.

Where did they go on their camp and how did that work?

The first camp they went out to Ngukurr in Arnhem Land. They spent three days out there and that camp went fairly well. They set up some competition between the Ngukurr boys and the Taminmin boys. They had football and other games and the Ngukurr boys took our kids out hunting and looking at different cultural activities with them, which was really good. In that first group we had a vertical mix of kids and there were a few hiccups with the blending of those kids. It worked well but there were a few more tensions than with the Year 8 and 9s (like a middle school group)

where it worked much better.

The second group was a middle school group and they went across to the Tiwi Islands, Bathurst Island. The boys had a leader from within their own year group and they worked really well as a team together. The bus broke down and they had to push the bus eight kilometers. That took a lot of working together; sharing the workload; recognising that it was getting hard for somebody and taking over from that person. Everyone was working together — both Indigenous and non-Indigenous kids as well as the teachers. So they worked out some really good skills out there. Then they had a fishing competition. Whoever caught the biggest fish actually won a fishing line as an incentive. They learnt domestic skills like cooking and cleaning. Having to cater for themselves they had to think about what they needed and how they were going to prepare it. They certainly learnt a lot of skills. In many cases they were doing activities where they didn't realise they were learning at the same time.

How often have you run the program?

We've run it three times now, with Year 8, 9 and 10 kids, but now we've knocked it back to only Year 8 and 9. We have between eight and 12 boys in each group.

What would you say were the outcomes from each of those camps?

One of the boys that went on the most recent camp was a young man who was quite isolated from his peer group. In his first year at high school, he spent a lot of time in the medical clinic because that's where he felt safe. He basically spent every lunch time and recess with me. He had lots of problems with harassment even by some of the boys he actually went away with. Now this kid is in Year 9. He says hello to me but he is out there playing cricket and he has the social



⋮ **Josh and Aiden fishing.**

skills to cope in the playground. He is not being harassed anymore because he's picked up the skills to say, 'Hey I don't like that, please leave me alone.' He's also picked up the skills where he can go and enjoy things with a group of boys.

We haven't seen this kind of huge difference in all of the kids. Yet there has been a reduction in the presentation for Time Out. A ten-week program does not solve everything. Ongoing support and changes to the overall curriculum are going to make a difference to these kids. There is recognition that we might have to work a little bit differently, think outside the square. We are quite focused on looking at the kids who aren't so academically focused and have interests in trades for example. We're looking at how we can facilitate them into those trades rather than saying okay, at school you've got to sit down and work with a timetable. So I think we're taking a very flexible approach. We have surveyed using the Mindmatters initial ACER surveys. We've done a pre survey of those kids and we'll do a post survey probably in the middle of this year to see if there is any change in how they thought about themselves and their self-esteem. The survey asks lots of questions about different facets of their life — family, home, themselves, school — so I think we'll

see a dramatic difference in some of those surveys but we haven't asked those questions yet.

When will the results be out or ready?

Probably the end of the year. I'm not sure if there have been any done immediately post. It is a long-term process.

If other schools wanted to pick up an initiative like this, what advice would you give them?

I think it is really easy for us to dictate, you know 'You've got a deficit and we've got to fix it.' Involving the young people in planning from the beginning is very important because if they own it they are going to get a lot more out of it. Maybe we didn't do so well at that, but I think with the next one, that is where we will start.

Erin Evans is the health-promoting school nurse at Taminmin High in the Northern Territory.



Barnsley boys breaking through

BEBOP brings real behavioural changes

Barnsley Public School in the western reaches of Newcastle has been focusing on boys' education for the last seven years, thanks to the hard work of Support Teacher Learning Assistance (STLA), Trevor Watson.

Recently Barnsley Public School successfully implemented BEBOP (Boys' Education Boys' Outcomes Program), but as you can see from Trevor's conclusions, the road has not been easy.

To be honest this program has been hard work on an emotional level, particularly in the beginning. Taking a group of challenging students, putting them together and providing them with a stack of challenges is not for the faint-hearted. However, over time I had the opportunity to experience these students on a different level. They no longer remain the constant challenges that I have to deal with every second duty. They are a group of very lonely students who don't know how to get their own needs met and they genuinely struggle to integrate into their social worlds. They are students who are certainly capable of change and I believe through this program I have been able to show them how they can do things differently if they choose to. After all they are the pilots.

Over the years the school has made many attempts at improving the social and academic outcomes for its boys. These include such initiatives as professional development of the staff on boys' issues relating to education; father and child gala days; Barnsley's Big Breakfasts, and parent tutoring. To broaden the options for the boys,

lunchtime sporting competitions were run while the school entered an inter-school chess competition. Student literacy profile formats were implemented to assist tracking, assessment and reporting of students' progress. Maths and literacy groups were skill streamed to allow all students better access to the curriculum.

Barnsley Public School has traditionally embraced many BEBOP-type philosophies; however, the implementation of these programs seemed to be having little impact on the identified 5% to 7% of challenging students in the school's total population. The school asked for assistance in establishing a program for a targeted group of eight boys in Years 4 and 5 who were having difficulty with anger and behaviour. A five-week program was developed by the Boys in Schools Program and taught by Trevor. Last year he taught the program to the selected group and is teaching it to two separate groups of boys this year. The program has not been running for an extended period of time so results shown need to be treated with caution at this stage, but Trevor's reflections on the process are certainly encouraging.

Putting together our BEBOP groups

We identified the targeted students from Grades 3 to 6 (approximately 5% to 7%) through the analysis of

the school's Welfare Register. These students' names were regularly recorded in the 'welfare book', by teachers on duty, for a range of concerning behaviours they displayed. The school's welfare committee analysed and prioritised the list of students placing them into two groups of eight. The committee also decided that two of the eight students, in each group, could be students who would offer the group some positive peer role modelling. As a result six members of the group were presenting challenging behaviours and two members of the group were not.

Timetabling our BEBOP groups

A permission note was provided to each student who was selected to participate in the program. This permission slip informed the parents of the programs objectives and that the school's support teacher would be working with their children on this program. The note also outlined that the sessions had been planned to take place for two one-hour blocks per week for 10 weeks. These sessions would fit nicely into the support teachers' timetable from 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. Monday, Tuesday Wednesday and Thursday. During these one-hour learning blocks of time, the students leave their mainstream classrooms to attend the Support Teacher's classroom and work on BEBOP. Out of the 16 notes



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tracing, pyramid building, charades, blind Lego, and stick relay to name a few.

Objectives of the program

The overall objectives of this program were:

- to provide opportunities for these students to gain a greater understanding of themselves, their feelings and emotions
- to support students in their endeavour to improve their self-value, make positive change and positive choices
- to encourage and practise anger management strategies
- to provide opportunities to practise effective communication
- to show students how their behaviour can impact on the way the social world views them

What I learnt as the teacher and would do differently next time

Many of the activities seemed to be designed to challenge the students. This often created great degrees of stress for the students, particularly in the early stages of the program. As the teacher I would suggest being very aware of student anxiety and make adjustments to the instruction of the activity. Sometimes it pays to break instruction down into smaller steps and practise each step as you go. I would also suggest that as the program progresses, so too does the students' resilience. It is very important to hang in there and work with the students through their anxiety and frustrations. Whenever I have taught the complete program I have experienced substantial improvements in the students' ability to cope with these challenges over time. It is when the students are about to explode that the most effective work can be achieved. Talking the students through their red faces and gritted teeth helps them to gain control and take a different path or make a different, more positive choice. I would strongly recommend that the

sent home all but two parents gave permission for their child to participate. The two parents who did not provide immediate permission were the parents of the 'role model' students. A subsequent meeting with these parents resolved their concerns.

Getting the program together

Stephen Gaul provided the support teacher with a five-week BEBOP program from which we made student work booklets. The program covered topics such as: valuing self; feelings and emotions; choices; what is your body saying?; keeping calm; naming your anger; where do you fit?; and avoiding conflict. These

booklets contained a range of written activities directly connected to the many kinesthetic activities the students participated in throughout the program. With Steve's guidance we were able to purchase and put together a BEBOP kit. This kit included things like ropes, tent poles, bowls, marbles, 100 balls, marble rollers, electrical tape and blindfolds. A budget of \$250 was required to set up the kit and this was applied for and approved last year. Many of the activities in this program provided the students with physical challenges and emphasised teamwork. Examples of these activities include, skipping rope games, blindfold games, body

students participate in this program for at least two terms at two days per week. One term is simply too little time to achieve the set objectives.

As the program progressed I realised that the students were given little opportunity to self-reflect on a week-to-week basis. I subsequently trialed a graph type chart with a XY axis. This chart I titled 'How Well Do I Fly?' in which the X-axis represented the weeks in the program and the Y-axis represented a score out of 10. This chart showed an aeroplane path along the graph. If the students received high scores the path of the plane would be plotted in the clouds. If, however, the students received low scores the path of the plane would be crashing into the city below. As the program progressed so too did the plotted path of the plane with the students as the pilots. This allowed the students the opportunity to see for themselves how effective or ineffective they had been during the program over time. Before every session I would anonymously use a student's graph as a discussion topic. We would discuss the peaks and troughs on the anonymous graph, and hypothesise what might have caused these plots. Some examples of what the students would generally say the troughs were caused by were things like, spitting the dummy, sabotaging a game, hitting another student or not playing fairly. At the conclusion of each lesson every student was given the opportunity to recommend a score for each other and to justify the suggested score. It was then up to each student to consider what the others had to say and to draw their own conclusion in deciding their own plotted score for the day. The teacher also had the opportunity to plot their perceived score on each individual student with a verbal justification if it was required. Over time an individual picture begins to develop for each student that they are able to reflect on and make changes to if they choose. This plotting process appeared to be very successful and

the students really looked forward to completing their daily graph and talking about it all. I would highly recommend the use of this type of method for student reflection in this program.

Outcomes for boys

Strong relationships among the BEBOP group members had obviously developed during the program. The students would spend a great deal of their recess and lunchtimes together as a group playing handball, swapping Tazos or playing chasing games. New friendships certainly improved the quality of life for some of these students.

There was also an example of one particular student apologising for his offensive behaviour. Although this doesn't seem like a big deal, for this particular student it was a major breakthrough and a real surprise to the Barnsley staff.

Interestingly, while the students participated in the program there was a significant reduction in students' names being entered in the Welfare book. However, on the completion of the BEBOP program there was a return of some of the students' challenging behaviours, though these behaviours were certainly less frequent. This return of the concerning behaviours, indicated that some of the targeted students were finding it difficult to transfer their new knowledge into their real social worlds. Subsequently, we explained the content of the BEBOP program to all Barnsley staff members and suggested that certain students may require reminders of the strategies taught in the program. These reminders may assist these students transfer their new knowledge more effectively. An example of what might be said to a student could be, 'How are you flying right now at this moment, can you give yourself a score out of ten? Do you want to improve this score? How might you go about improving things for yourself?'

Trevor Watson has been a support teacher at Barnsley Public School for the past seven years. In addition to working K to Year 6 supporting students with learning difficulties he has worked with the class teachers supporting them and building up levelled literacy resources and units to accompany those resources. He also has a strong commitment to student welfare and has run programs with students and parents to achieve positive outcomes in this area. Prior to being appointed to Barnsley Public School, Trevor worked in DOCS with children with disabilities and those suffering emotional trauma.

The Scientific Base Linking Social and Emotional Learning to School Success

An edited excerpt from *Building Academic Success Through Social and Emotional Learning: What does the research say?*, edited by JE Zins, RP Weissberg, MC Wang and HJ Walberg, published in 2004 by Teachers College Press, Columbia University, New York, pages 3–23. Reprinted by permission of the publishers.

The following is an edited excerpt from the introductory chapter ‘The Scientific Base Linking Social and Emotional Learning to School Success’ in a new book *Building Academic Success Through Social and Emotional Learning: What does the research say?* edited by JE Zins, RP Weissberg, MC Wang and HJ Walberg. The book makes a strong case for teaching social and emotional skills in an integrated way throughout the curriculum and gives many examples of how schools and teachers are doing this in the USA. It has important implications for the teaching of boys, as it clearly demonstrates the link between behaviour and learning and discusses how school programs can be effective in supporting students to achieve academic success by paying attention to broader life skills that boys so often need support to develop. This excerpt provides an overview of the book. Teachers interested in this area may well want to read the whole book.

Schools will be most successful in their educational mission when they integrate efforts to promote children’s academic, social, and emotional learning (Elias et al. 1997).

SEL is the process through which we learn to recognise and manage emotions, care about others, make good decisions, behave ethically and responsibly, develop positive relationships, and avoid negative behaviours (Elias et al. 1997). These key characteristics need to be developed for our children to be successful not only in school but in life; those who do not possess these skills are less likely to succeed. They are particularly important for children to develop because they are linked to a variety of behaviours with long-term implications. In addition, because schools have access to virtually all children and are expected to educate them to become responsible, contributing citizens, they are ideal settings in which to promote children’s social-emotional as well as academic development.

The need to address the social-emotional challenges of students that interfere with their connecting to and performance in school is critical. Issues such as discipline, disaffection, lack of commitment, alienation, and dropping out frequently limit success in school or even lead to failure. Related to the need for such instruction, the many new professionals entering the teaching force need training in how to address social-emotional learning to manage their classrooms more effectively, to teach their students better, and to cope successfully with students who are challenging. Moreover, such skills likely will help these teachers to manage their own stress more effectively and engage in problem solving more skilfully in their own lives.

Adelman and Taylor (2000) argue that if schools only focus on academic instruction and school management in their efforts to help students attain academic success, they will likely fall short of their goals. As an alternative, they propose a model that includes a

third domain, an enabling component, that is combined with the instructional and management components. This component promotes academic success and addresses barriers to learning, development, and teaching. It includes activities such as resource coordination, classroom-focused enabling, support for transitions, and home involvement in schooling. The enabling component is an essential facet of efforts to improve academic success, and SEL serves as a critical element of it by assisting students in navigating the social and emotional contexts of the classroom effectively, and by helping schools create positive environments conducive to learning. This three-component model recognises that addressing students' social and emotional development is not an additional duty charged to schools along with academic instruction, but rather is an integral and necessary aspect to helping all students succeed.

One problem with current efforts to promote social-emotional learning is that they are fragmented quite often. That is, there are categorical programs to promote health; prevent violence and delinquency; encourage school bonding and attachment; prevent dropping out; and decrease teen pregnancy and AIDS. As a result, there simply have been too many programs introduced; schools nationally are implementing a median of 14 practices to prevent problem behaviour and to promote safe environments. With this proliferation of efforts, the question must be raised about how well they can carry out so many different activities (Gottfredson & Gottfredson 2001). It also is a mistake to address these problems in isolation instead of establishing holistic, coordinated approaches that effectively address academic performance mediators such as motivation, self-management, goal setting, engagement, and so forth (see discussion by Christensen &

Havasy in this volume).

Our goal is to examine relationships between SEL and **school success**, an outcome that to be fully understood, must be defined far more broadly than as the scores students receive on standardised tests (Elias et al. 2002). Success in school can be reflected in many ways, and contributors to this volume discuss a vast array of variables associated with school success that can be addressed through effective SEL practices. Examples include school **attitudes** (e.g. motivation, responsibility, attachment), school **behaviour** (engagement, attendance, study habits), and school **performance** (e.g. grades, subject mastery, test performance). These are important components that can foster commitment to academics and effective school performance.

Person-centred focus

Social and emotional education involves teaching children to be self-aware, socially cognizant, able to make responsible decisions, and competent in self-management and relationship-management skills so as to foster their academic success. The framework in Table 1.1 makes it clear that children need to be aware of themselves and others; that they need to make responsible decisions; that they need to be ethical and respectful of others; and that they need to give consideration to the situation and relevant norms. They also need to manage their emotions and behaviours and to possess behavioural social skills that enable them to carry out solutions effectively with others. As a result, these skills and attitudes can help students feel motivated to succeed, to believe in their success, to communicate well with teachers, to

Table 1.1 Framework of person-centred key SEL competencies

Self-awareness

- Identifying and recognising emotions
- Accurate self-perception
- Recognising strengths, needs, and values
- Self-efficacy
- Spirituality

Social awareness

- Perspective taking
- Empathy
- Appreciating diversity
- Respect for others

Responsible decision-making

- Problem identification and situation analysis
- Problem solving
- Evaluation and reflection
- Personal, moral, and ethical responsibility

Self-management

- Impulse control and stress management
- Self-motivation and discipline
- Goal setting and organisational skills

Relationship management

- Communication, social engagement, and building relationships
- Working cooperatively
- Negotiation, refusal, and conflict management
- Help seeking and providing

set academic goals, to organise themselves to achieve these goals, to overcome obstacles, and so forth. In sum, their attachment to school and commitment to academics can be fostered so that it leads to effective school performance.

Environmental focus

It is not sufficient to focus only on person-centred skill development. Consequently, effective SEL interventions are provided within supportive environments, and they also are directed at enhancing the social-emotional environmental factors that influence learning so that the climate is caring, safe, supportive, and conducive to success (Hawkins 1997; Learning First Alliance 2001). Communication styles, high performance expectations, classroom structures and rules, school organisational climate, commitment to the academic success of all students, district policies, and openness to parental and community involvement are all important. They can build on one another and foster the development, effective application, extension, and generalisation of SEL skills to

multiple settings and situations, as well as remove some barriers to learning (see the Christenson & Haysy and the Hawkins, Smith, & Catalano chapters for discussion of this aspect). Schools can give students ample opportunities to develop and practice appropriate social-emotional skills and serve as bases from which to promote and reinforce SEL. Ultimately, these efforts can enable students to become knowledgeable, responsible, caring, productive, nonviolent, ethical, and contributing members of society (Elias et al. 1997).

Illustrative model for SEL programming and school success

Figure 1.1 illustrates the connection between evidence-based SEL programming and better academic performance and success in school and in life. It indicates that SEL interventions and skill development should occur within a supportive learning environment, as well as help to produce such a climate. As a result, opportunities for reward are created and SEL competencies are developed and reinforced. These enablers in turn lead to more assets

and greater attachment and engagement in school. The final outcome is improved performance in school and life.

A number of instructional SEL approaches can be used to promote school achievement. First, there are **specific SEL curricula** (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning [CASEL] 2003; Osher, Dwyer, & Jackson 2002) that address content areas such as substance abuse or bullying. Second, social-emotional skills also can be **infused into the regular academic curriculum** so that academic and SEL skills are coordinated and reinforce one another. Once students possess skills such as being able to set goals and solve problems, they can apply them to enhance their study skills and increase their academic engagement, or these same skills can be applied to subjects such as social studies and literacy. The chapter by Schaps, Battistich, and Solomon shows how SEL can be integrated with the language arts curriculum, and the one by Elias illustrates its infusion across the curriculum. As a result of these efforts, materials become more relevant and engaging, and students' motivation to learn can increase.

A third approach, illustrated in the chapter by Hawkins and colleagues, is to **develop a supportive learning environment** so that student learning occurs within a safe, caring atmosphere in which high expectations are expressed and there are many opportunities for reinforcement. Students thus may be more engaged, feel more attachment, and exert greater effort. Closer relationships and better communication with teachers may result, and students may be better able to seek help when they need it. These authors also describe proactive classroom management, which can lead to better discipline and a more orderly environment in which students can learn better.

Altering the instructional process to promote social-emotional skills and learning is another

Figure 1.1. Evidence-based SEL programming paths in school and in life

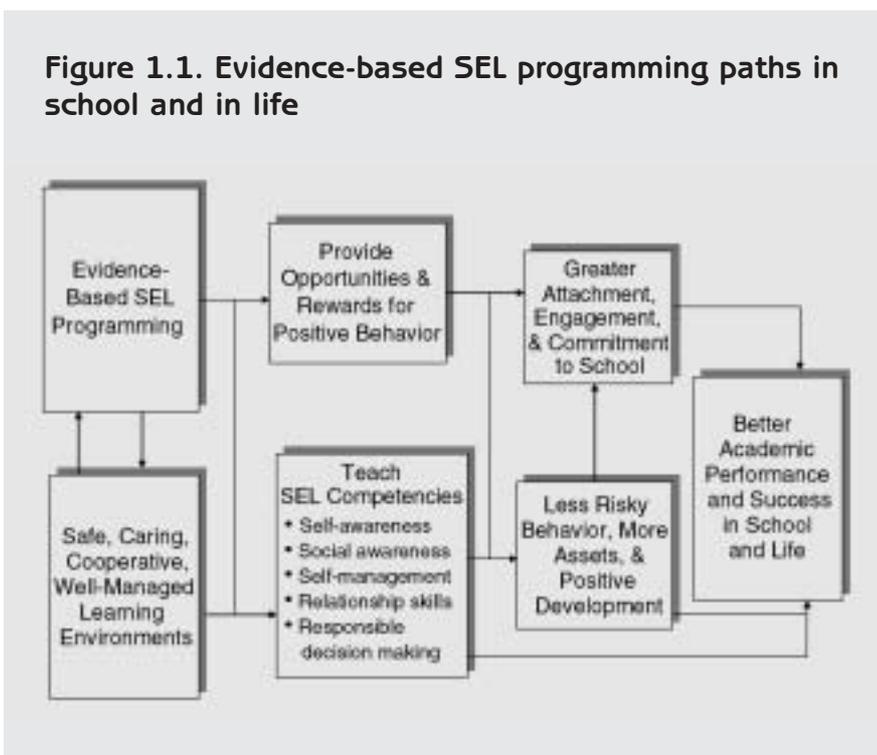


Table 1.2. Essential characteristics of effective SEL programming

Carefully planned, theory and research based

- organised systematically to address identified local needs
- based on sound theories of child development, learning, prevention science, and empirically validated practices
- implementation monitoring and program evaluation incorporated during planning process

Teaches SEL skills for application to daily life

- instruction in broad range of social-emotional skills, knowledge, and attitudes provided in developmentally and socio-culturally appropriate ways
- personal and social applications encourage generalisation to multiple problem areas and settings
- helps develop positive, respectful, ethical attitudes and values about self, others, work, and citizenship
- skills include recognising and managing emotions, appreciating perspectives of others, setting positive goals, making responsible decisions, and handling interpersonal interactions effectively

Addresses affective and social dimensions of learning

- builds attachment to school through caring, engaging , cooperative classroom and school-wide practices
- strengthens relationships among students, teachers, other school personnel, families, and community members
- encourages and provides opportunities for participation
- uses diverse, engaging teaching methods that motivate and involve students
- promotes responsibility, cooperation, and commitment to learning
- nurtures sense of security, safety, support, and belonging
- emphasises cultural sensitivity and respect for diversity

Leads to coordinated, integrated, and unified programming linked to academic outcomes

- offers unifying framework to promote and integrate social-emotional and academic development
- integral aspect of formal and informal academic curriculum and daily routines (e.g. lunch, transitions, playground, extracurricular)
- provided systematically to students over multiple years pre-kindergarten through high school
- coordinated with student support services efforts including health, nutrition, service learning, physical education, psychology, counseling, and nursing

Addresses key implementation factors to support effective social-emotional learning and development

- promotes a safe, caring, nurturing, cooperative, and challenging learning environment
- monitors characteristics of the intervention, training and technical support, and environmental factors on an ongoing basis to insure high-quality implementation
- provides leadership, opportunities for participation in planning, and adequate resources
- institutional policies aligned with and reflect SEL goals
- offers well-planned professional development, supervision, coaching, support, and constructive feedback

Involves family and community partnerships

- encourages and coordinates efforts and involvement of students, peers, parents, educators, and community members
- SEL-related skills and attitudes modeled and applied at school, home, and in the community

Design includes continuous improvement, outcome evaluation, and dissemination components

- uses program evaluation results for continuous improvement to determine progress toward identified goals and needed changes
- multifaceted evaluation undertaken to examine implementation, process, and outcome criteria
- results shared with key stakeholders

Table 1.3. Examples of outcomes of SEL interventions related to school success

Academic outcome	Interventions
<i>School attitudes</i>	
stronger sense of community (bonding)	CDP
more academic motivation and higher aspirations	CDP, Coop, SSDP
better understanding of consequences of behaviour	SDM
able to cope more effectively with middle school stressors	SDM
positive attitudes toward school	Coop, SSDP
<i>School behaviour</i>	
more prosocial behaviour	C & C, CDP, Coop, PATHS, RCCP, SDM, SSDP
fewer absences; maintained or improved attendance	C & C, SDM
more classroom participation	SSDP
greater effort to achieve	Coop
more likely to work out own way of learning	CDP
reductions in aggression and disruptions; lower rate of conduct problems	SSDP
fewer hostile negotiations	CDP, Coop
more likely to be enrolled in school/fewer drop-outs	C & C
on track to graduate	C & C
fewer suspensions	C & C
better transition to middle school	SDM
higher engagement	C & C, Coop, SSDP
<i>School performance</i>	
higher in math	RCCP, SDM
higher in language arts and social studies	SDM
more progress in phonological awareness	C & C
increases in performance over time (middle school)	CDP
no decreases in standardised test scores	PATHS
improvements in reading comprehension with deaf children	PATHS
higher achievement test scores and/or grades	Coop, SSDP
better problem solving and planning	PATHS
use of higher level reasoning strategies	Coop
improved non-verbal reasoning	PATHS
better learning to learn skills	SDM

Key

- C & C: Check & Connect (Christenson & Havy)
- CDP: Child Development Project (Creating Caring Schools) (Schaps et al.)
- Coop: cooperative learning (Johnson & Johnson)
- PATHS: Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (Greenberg et al.)
- RCCP: Resolving Conflicts Creatively (Brown et al.)
- SDM: Social Decision Making and Problem Solving (Elias)
- SSDP: Seattle Social Skills Development Project (Hawkins et al.)

Note: Outcomes presented based on evidence reported in the respective book chapters.

approach. A good example is the Johnson and Johnson chapter, which reviews the research on cooperative learning. Within such classrooms, students not only experience the excitement of learning academic material from one another, but they also develop important skills in negotiation and conflict resolution, and a peer culture for supporting academic achievement is developed. A fifth example of how instruction can be provided is found in programming in which the ‘**informal curriculum**’, such as the learning that takes place in morning meetings, the lunchroom, on the playground, or in extracurricular activities, is used as a basis for improving behaviours so students are better able to participate in the classroom and thus become more effective learners. The Schaps et al. chapter (this volume) illustrates this type of approach.

Partnerships between parents and teachers, as described in the Christenson and Havy chapter, represent a sixth approach. Such efforts to create good social relationships can help make expectations clearer and also provide additional support and encouragement for student learning.

Finally, **engaging students actively and experientially in the learning process** can be highly beneficial. The best SEL approaches encourage application of SEL competencies to real-life situations, and combining SEL and service learning is an excellent way to utilise innovative instructional methodologies to engage students in the learning process. Service learning involves ‘teaching and learning . . . that integrates community service with academic study to enrich learning, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities’ (National Commission on Service Learning 2002, p 3). The Teen Outreach program, for example, contains an explicit developmental focus aimed at reducing rates of teen pregnancy and school failure through structured service learning

experiences in the community, along with classroom-based discussion of the service experiences (Allen, Philliber, Herring, & Kuperminc 1997). The program also incorporates classroom-based discussion of social-developmental tasks such as understanding yourself and your values, human growth and development, and social and emotional transitions from adolescence to adulthood. Students who participated in the program reported significantly fewer pregnancies, school suspensions, and failed courses during the year compared to controls. It can be hypothesised that as an enabling component, the program’s positive outcomes are in part related to the promotion and development of SEL skills such as self-awareness, empathy, problem-solving, adaptive goal-setting, and communication.

These examples show that SEL instruction can be provided in many different ways to promote, enhance, and support students’ academic performance. Such efforts involve more than focusing on academic content; they also require addressing social-emotional or psychological aptitudes (i.e. metacognitive, cognitive, motivational, and affective), as these are among the greatest influences on school performance (Wang, Haertel, & Walberg 1993). Further, Wang and colleagues found a number of other factors addressed by SEL programming to be linked to learning outcomes, including instructional variables (e.g., classroom management, the frequency and quality of teacher and student social interactions) and characteristics of the home environment (e.g. parents’ interest in and expectations for students’ success).

Characteristics of effective SEL interventions

Researchers from CASEL identified the essential aspects of effective SEL practice. Thirty-nine guidelines were developed based on their scientific

investigations, reviews of the empirical and theoretical literature, visits to model sites throughout the country, and personal experiences in implementing and evaluating SEL practices (Elias et al. 1997). Essential characteristics of effective SEL programming are summarised in Table 1.2, and additional discussion of the guidelines may be found in a variety of sources (e.g. CASEL, 2003; Elias et al. 1997; O’Brien, Weissberg, & Shriver 2003; Weissberg 2000; Zins, Elias, Greenberg & Weissberg 2000). The guidelines are consistent with the learner-centred psychological principles described in the McCombs chapter, and are also supported by many of the studies cited in the various chapters.

In contrast to the guidelines outlined in Table 1.2, the use of traditional short-term, primarily didactic, isolated (uncoordinated) efforts to promote SEL has not been shown to be as effective as long-term coordinated efforts, although these isolated approaches continue to be found in many of our schools. Instead, negative effects on drop out, nonattendance, and several conduct problems are associated with counseling, social work, and other therapeutic preventive interventions (Wilson, Gottfredson & Najaka 2001). Of additional concern is the finding that many practices, including some well-designed interventions, are either not evaluated or their evaluation procedures tend to be weak (Drug Strategies 1998). In fact, a recent review of 80 nationally available classroom programs found that only 14% provided evidence of effectiveness, as demonstrated by multiple studies documenting positive behavioural outcomes post-test, with at least one showing positive behavioural impact one-year post-intervention (CASEL 2003).

Academic outcomes associated with SEL interventions

SEL programs vary in the extent to which they directly address

academic achievement, and in the past many researchers did not evaluate such outcomes. Nevertheless, even one of the first examinations of the research on the connections between SEL and school performance concluded that the research base was strong enough that 'an important task for schools and teachers is to integrate the teaching of academic and social and emotional skills in the classroom' (Hawkins 1997, p 293).

Today it is becoming more common to address academic along with social-emotional issues, as well as to measure the results of such efforts. In the CASEL (2003) review of the 80 nationally available programs, 34% included methods to promote the integration of SEL with academic curricula and teaching practices. For example, some encourage students to apply SEL skills such as goal setting to improve their study habits; others emphasise integration of SEL with academic subject matter such as examining conflict resolution skills in the context of a unit on international relationships; and others promote teaching practices such as cooperative learning and effective classroom management. All of these approaches can have positive effects on academic performance, especially those that had teachers acquire and use more effective teaching techniques, where 83% of such programs produced academic gains. In addition, 12% of the programs that did not specially target academic performance documented an impact on academic achievement. This figure, however, might have been higher if more of these programs had assessed systematically academic outcomes, as these programs accounted for 40% of the SEL programs that yielded academic gains. These findings underscore the need to assess academic outcomes in future investigations of SEL interventions.

Wilson and colleagues (2001) conducted a meta-analysis of 165 published studies of the outcomes of

school-based prevention programs that ranged from individually focused counseling or behaviour modification programs through broad, school-wide efforts to change the way schools are managed. Among their findings are that programs focusing on SEL resulted in improved outcomes related to dropout and nonattendance, both of which are important factors in school success. Interestingly, the findings in these two areas are even stronger than those related to delinquency and substance use, the other two areas in which prevention practices appeared to be effective. Self-control or social competency promotion instruction using cognitive-behavioural and behavioural instructional methods and non-instructional programs are found consistently to be effective in reducing alcohol and drug use, dropout and nonattendance, and other conduct problems. Environmentally focused interventions (e.g. classroom management, class reorganisation, school management) also have good outcomes. The intervention features associated with these outcomes correspond with those described previously.

A recent report on school-based prevention programs identified a number of them as model programs and subsequently examined them with respect to risk and protective factors related to school performance (US Department of Health and Human Services 2002). Among the specific academic outcomes were improved grades, standardised test scores, and graduation rates; increased grade point average; and improved reading, math, and writing skills. Other school performance measures found include improved attendance; and fewer out-of-school suspensions, retentions, and special education referrals. The majority of these programs were comprehensive and involved school and family partnerships.

Other sections of the book demonstrate application of many of

the principles and intervention strategies contained in the first section. For example, you'll find that efforts to promote school engagement and bonding, home-school partnerships, and cooperative learning are components of most of the programs described. In addition, each of these chapters cites solid research evidence that demonstrates the effects of SEL on school success as summarised in Table 1.3.

Maurice Elias provides a description of the widely used Social Decision-Making and Social Problem Solving curriculum and illustrations of how it can be integrated into the overall academic curriculum. In the curriculum the structure for skills instruction is provided, and efforts also are directed at integrating academic instruction to promote generalisation. A number of specific academic gains are described that are associated with the program.

The Seattle Social Development Program, a universal preventive intervention in elementary schools, is described by David Hawkins, Brian Smith, and Richard Catalano in the next chapter. Using a social developmental perspective, the program creates conditions that enable children to develop strong bonds to family, school, and community, and it increases opportunities for children to be involved in prosocial activities. A wealth of evidence is presented showing that the SSDP has a positive impact on academic performance, and that these gains were still found at age 18.

Joshua Brown, Tom Roderick, Linda Lantieri, and Lawrence Aber discuss the Resolving Conflicts Creatively Program (RCCP) that has been implemented widely throughout the United States. The program emphasises professional development for teachers to support the delivery of the RCCP curriculum. Evaluations of the program show a variety of promising results. High rates of RCCP instruction were significantly related to positive changes in academic achievement,

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thereby reducing the risk of future school failure.

Another widely adopted curriculum, The Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS), is the focus of the chapter by Mark Greenberg, Carol Kusche and Nathan Riggs. PATHS is intended to promote skills in emotional literacy, positive peer relations, and problem solving, as well as to prevent behavioural and emotional problems in young children. It is an integrated component of the regular curriculum and also includes generalisation activities. Studies have found significant positive effects on cognitive processing abilities important for school success, and that these effects had a reasonably enduring impact over time.

Eric Schaps, Victor Battistich, and Daniel Solomon discuss the Child Development Project. It emphasises helping schools become caring communities of learners so that positive relationships, norms, and values are developed. Their research shows that strengthening students'

sense of community in school increased academic motivation and aspirations, that many effects persisted, and that several years later a substantial effect on academic achievement was found.

Conclusions

We hope you are inspired by the magnitude of possible methods to address SEL and boost school success. A clear, evidence-supported case that SEL, as an enabling component, fosters academic learning is made. The contents offer educators, policy makers, university trainers, researchers, and practitioners important guidance and useful tools that can be applied to improve the lives of today's students and tomorrow's leaders. They also demonstrate that the SEL field has a solid and expanding scientific base. Our goal is to share the knowledge base regarding how SEL can improve children's academic performance, so that a similar case for it is made as already has been done regarding citizenship (Billig 2000), health (Blum, McNeely &

Rinehart 2002), and other important outcomes that we want for children.

The major conclusion drawn following the extensive examination of the topic reported in this book is that there is a growing body of scientifically based research supporting the strong impact that enhanced social and emotional behaviours can have on success in school and ultimately in life. Indeed, the research-based findings in the book are so solid that they emboldened us to introduce a new term, 'social, emotional, and academic learning,' or 'SEAL.' Our challenges now are to continue to develop the link between SEL interventions and academic achievement and to apply this knowledge more broadly to assist all children. By providing readers with this information, we hope to influence practice, research, training, and policy. We invite you to travel with us on the journey to learn more about the promotion of SEAL.

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bulletin board



Conference: Involving men across the spectrum of family services

- Learn how to recruit men of diverse ages and backgrounds
- Address the fundamental questions concerning male involvement:
 - What sort of activities suit men of different backgrounds?
 - What is needed to run a group for fathers?
 - How can children's voices be included in work with men?
 - Is a male presenter essential?
 - What about violence?

Those attending the two-day intensive workshop program will receive a *Bringing Men In* handbook with detailed examples of strategies, activities and resources to engage fathers and male carers.

A one-day conference
& two-day training
workshop
for health, welfare, youth,
education & community
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Conference
29 November, 2004

Training Workshop
**30 November & 1 December,
2004**

at the
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Conference
\$200.00

Conference & Training Workshops
\$500.00

Two-day training workshop

Training workshop outcomes

For **male** and **female managers, supervisors** and **team leaders**

At the conclusion of this workshop participants will be equipped to:

- Identify male-specific support for families
- Select male staff and volunteers to work with families
- Develop policies to support male-friendly practice, including policies to deal effectively with violence
- Build male support structures in the workplace to increase male solidarity and accountability
- Utilise effective recruitment strategies to bring males into services, programs or projects
- Encourage gender-sensitive supervision for female and male staff
- Apply a strengths-based framework to fathers

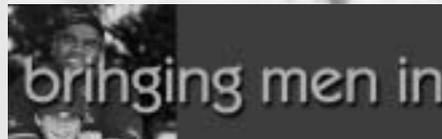
For **male** and **female practitioners**

At the conclusion of this workshop participants will be equipped to:

- Utilise engagement strategies and skills to involve fathers and other male carers
- Initiate groups for fathers and other male carers
- Empower children to negotiate fathers' roles with their fathers
- Support single mothers while working with fathers
- Facilitate workplace change to develop a male-friendly culture
- Bring a deeper understanding to your work of fathers' roles in Indigenous populations
- Engage marginalised men in family work
- Use a strengths-based approach in assessing and supporting fathers
- Utilise male-female teams for the benefit of fathers

The workshops will involve case presentations, practical exercises and participatory group work to enable each participant to develop a framework and skills relevant to their own area of work.

Due to the interactive nature of the workshops only 50 places are available. Conference places are limited to 150.



Registration

Please download the conference registration form from our website:

<http://www.newcastle.edu.au/engagingfathers>

Or to receive a faxed copy of the registration form please contact Janine Bendit on 02 49218640 or janine.bendit@newcastle.edu.au

bulletin board



Cover UP . . .

**Design the cover of the next
Boys in Schools Bulletin . . .**

The Boys in Schools Program wants to recognise and showcase boys from around Australia and their creative work

Get your boys' work kn**NOW**n, sh**OWN**, out t**HERE**!

Send us your boys' artwork

tags – sketches – drawings – paintings – poems –
photographs – graphic designs – cartoons

Clearly label **all** work with artist name, school and contact details so we can return their work to you.

Selected works will be published on the cover of the *Boys in Schools Bulletin* and in other Boys in Schools Program education publications. Your school and your boys will be acknowledged wherever shown and a copy of publications will be forwarded to contributing artists.



What now?

Contact The Boys in Schools Program and find out more about:

- submitting your boys' artwork
- lesson plans for a photography/art class project on boys' identity: ID ME

Contact

Boys in Schools Program
Family Action Centre
University of Newcastle
Callaghan NSW 2308

Pone (02) 4921 8739

Fax (02) 4921 8686

Email Lindee.Hahn@newcastle.edu.au

All artwork on this page was created by Angus Wood of Canberra when he was a Year 12 student at Canberra Grammar School.

Professional Development for Educators

At the Boys in Schools Program, we are passionate about boys' education. We really want to help teachers and parents get the best for our boys and from our boys.

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

Would you like to know:

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

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



Our postgraduate programs will change the way you work with boys

If you are one of the many teachers out there in the dark recesses of the staffroom trying to work out how to survive the boys in 8.8 last period, our **postgraduate programs** may be what you need.

We can help you in your struggle with boys who refuse to cooperate with your efforts to educate them.

The Boys in Schools Program offers both a **Graduate Certificate** and a **Master's program** specialising in educating boys. These programs are the first in Australia for practising teachers who wish to develop their professional expertise in educating boys in various settings, primary, secondary, single-sex or co-educational schools.

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

In its short history our postgraduate education has had a major impact due to its practical and innovative nature, as our first students found:

- **We've changed our whole reporting system to parents as a result of an assignment I did on benchmarking.** *Principal, large private boys' school*
- **I've been able to implement programs for boys with nearly every assignment we've done. This is a very practical course.** *Assistant principal, rural co-ed high school*
- **The readings are very exciting. They really got me thinking about boys.** *Female primary school teacher*
- **Where did you find all this up-to-the-minute information? I haven't seen it anywhere else.** *Male teacher, urban public high school*
- **Each of the assignments completed could be used within the school environment in one way or another to improve boys' learning.** *Male teacher co-ed regional high school*

Course details

The program offers flexibility for busy teachers. At least three courses are offered each semester and students can begin either semester one or two. On completion of the **Graduate Certificate** graduates can apply to continue to complete the **Master's program**. To complete the Graduate Certificate students must successfully complete a total of 40 credit points made up of one core course and three electives. Graduates can apply to continue on to the Master's program. 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 on www.newcastle.edu.au/courseinfo/handbook.htm or contact Michelle Gifford on 02 4921 8739 or email Michelle.Gifford@newcastle.edu.au

bulletin board

Do you want a whole-school approach for Rock and Water?

The Boys in Schools Program & Gadaku Institute now offer a one-day introductory Rock and Water workshop



One-day introductory

The Boys in Schools Program can now offer one-day introductory workshops around Australia with our newly qualified instructors who have been trained extensively by Freerk Ykema.

The one-day workshop provides a survey of the entire course, focusing on the first four lessons of the program which include standing strong physically and mentally, introduction to the Rock and Water attitude (in physical and verbal confrontation), and Rock and Water in the schoolyard and in relationships (What kind of friend am I? Too rocky, too watery?). It will also include breathing exercises, exercises for boundary awareness and body language.

Maximum of 30 participants per workshop. This is a great way to familiarise staff with the Rock and Water principles in your school or organisation.

Total cost: \$2300 (inc GST) plus any travel and sundry expenses. Price includes 15 starter manuals, one basic exercise video

and one perspective theory book and is presented by our qualified instructors.

Three-day course

The Rock and Water course offers teachers a new way to interact with boys in relationship to their physical and social development, though the program can also be taught to girls.

Physical exercises are constantly linked with mental and social skills. In this way the program leads from simple self-defence, boundary and communication exercises to a strong notion of self-confidence.

The program offers a framework of exercises and thoughts about boys and manhood to assist boys to become aware of purpose and motivation in their life.

Topics include: intuition, body language, mental power, empathic feeling, positive thinking and positive visualising.

Discussion topics in the three-day course include bullying, sexual harassment, homophobia, goals in life, desires and following an inner compass.

New South Wales, Australian Capital Territory, Northern Territory

Newcastle

November 1, 2, 3 (3-day seminar)

Venue TBA

November 10, 11, 12 (3-day seminar)

Sydney

November 15, 16, 17 (3-day seminar)

Canberra

November 18, 19, 20 (3-day seminar)

Contact: Michelle Gifford, Boys in Schools Program, Family Action Centre, University of Newcastle

Ph: 02 4921 8739

Fax: 02 4921 8686

Email: Michelle.Gifford@newcastle.edu.au

Queensland

Gordonvale (North of Cairns)

April 18, 19, 20 (3-day seminar)

Contact: Brian Dowling, Djarragun College

Ph: 07 4056 3555

Fax: 07 4056 6111

Email: admin@djarragun.qld.edu.au

Email: dowling52@bigpond.com

Caloundra

October 18, 19, 20 (3-day seminar)

Contact: Judi Baker (Caboolture Senior High School)

Ph: 07 5498 0115

Email: jbak22@eq.edu.au or iwill8@eu.edu.au

Victoria

Malvern (Melbourne)

April 22, 23, 24 (3 day-seminar)

Contact: Christine Thompson, De La Salle College

Ph: 03 9509 3011

Email:

crthomps@delasalle.melb.catholic.edu.au

Bundoora (Melbourne)

October 4, 5, 6 (3-day seminar)

Contact: Bernadett Linehan, Parade College

Ph: 03 9468 3300

Email: belinehan@parade.vic.edu.au

Bundoora

October 7, 8 (2-day advanced training seminar, participants must have completed 3-day training & implemented program with students)

Contact: Bernadett Linehan, Parade College

Ph: 03 9468 3300

Email: belinehan@parade.vic.edu.au

Western Australia

South Perth

May 5, 6, 7 (3-day seminar)

Contact: Susan Laughton, Wesley College

Ph: 08 9368 8047

Email: Slaughter@wesley.wa.edu.au

South Perth

May 8 (1-day Introductory seminar)

Contact: Susan Laughton, Wesley College

Ph: 08 9368 8047

Email: Slaughter@wesley.wa.edu.au

South Australia

St Peters (Adelaide)

October 11, 12, 13 (3-day seminar)

Contact: Stephen Webber, St Peters College

Ph: 08 8362 3451

Email: swebber@stpeters.sa.edu.au

New Zealand

Christchurch

March 26, 27, 28 (3-day seminar)

Contact: Chuck Marriot:

Ph: +64 3 358 7014

Fax: + 64 3 3587014

Email: rockandwaternz@xtra.co.nz

Christchurch

March 29 (1-day refresher seminar)

Contact: Chuck Marriot:

Ph: +64 3 358 7014

Fax: + 64 3 3587014

Email: rockandwaternz@xtra.co.nz

Auckland

March 31, April 1, 2 (3-day seminar)

Contact: Chanel Houlahan, Kristin School

Ph: +64 9 415 9566

Email: choulahan@kristen.school.nz

Auckland

April 3 (1-day refresher seminar)

Contact: Chanel Houlahan, Kristin School

Ph: +64 9 415 9566

Email: choulahan@kristen.school.nz

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Family Action Centre, University of Newcastle

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What works in educating boys?

Hear from

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- all sorts of boys
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... about boys and
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Who should attend

- early childhood, primary and secondary teachers
- school leaders and policy-makers
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Conference Website

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Mr Freerk Ykema, The Netherlands, Boys and Identity: Theory and practice of the Rock and Water Program
Dr Martine Delfos, The Netherlands, Boys: brains, behaviour and learning
Mr Lauk Woltring, The Netherlands, Boys, risk taking and traffic

Australian speakers

- Prof Don Edgar**, RMT, Boys to men – school work
Ms Deborah Hartman, University of Newcastle, Boys in Schools Program
Ms Victoria Clay, University of Newcastle, Boys in Schools Program

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- Engaging Fathers in the School
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Welcome reception

Sunday 3 April

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Monday 4 April and Tuesday 5 April 2005

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