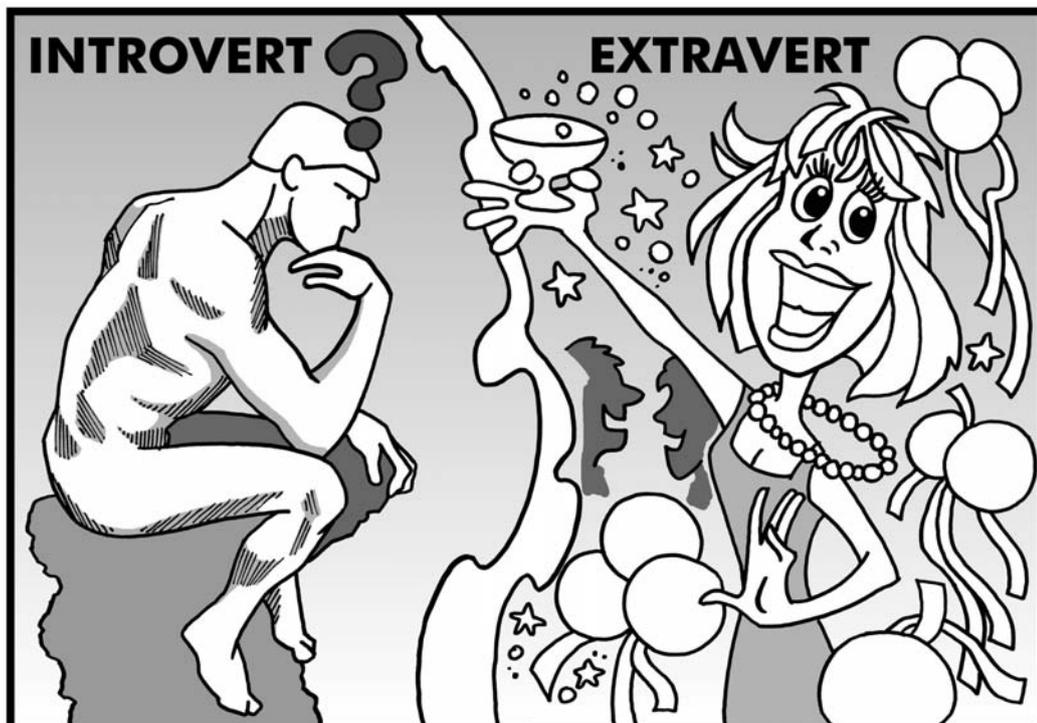


# Part 2

## Introverts and extraverts

Like most simplistic classifications, the designation of people as **either** introverts or extraverts arises from, and results in, a lot of stereotyped thinking. Introverts are often portrayed as socially withdrawn and socially inept. Extraverts are often portrayed as party animals.



The key to the difference, however, is not so much the individual's behaviour as the source of their energy. Introverts gain energy from within themselves; they tend to be reflective people who are 'oriented towards the subjective world of thoughts and concepts' (Silverman, 1998, p. 39). Extraverts are more directed towards the world outside themselves and gain energy from other people or events. Introverts constitute a minority group in western societies, comprising approximately 25% of the population. Interestingly, however, studies of gifted adolescents and adults have found a much higher proportion of introverts. Shelagh Gallagher (1990) studied more than 1,700 adolescents in programs for the gifted and found that 50% were introverted. Very highly gifted students are even more likely to be introverted; Linda Silverman, in her studies of young people of IQ 160+, found that more than 75% were introverts (Silverman, 1993).

Studies of the personality characteristics of introverts and extraverts, and, in particular, how they 'show themselves' to the world, have found that, in general, extraverts have more of a 'single-layered' personality. What you see is pretty much what you get. By contrast, introverts are more likely to have a 'private self' which they see as the 'real me' and a 'public self' — the **persona** — which they use for 'everyday wear'.

Some introverts can 'act' good extraverts! Many gifted teachers have this talent. Indeed many 'closet introverts' who have a high public profile as actors, popular musicians, or politicians and who are required to 'perform' frequently in their public role, develop a carefully cultivated extravert persona for public consumption, showing their introvert side only to family or close acquaintances.

Obviously, the majority of people have elements of both introversion and extraversion in their personalities. The question is not 'which' one is, but which 'side' dominates. The following list, adapted from Silverman (1993), describes essential differences between introverts and extraverts — but remember that this is not so much an issue of dichotomy as a matter of degree.

Extraverts **tend to:**

- get energy from interaction with people or events
- have a single-layered personality; they are much the same in public and in private
- be open and trusting
- think out loud
- like to be the centre of attention
- learn by doing
- be comfortable quickly in new situations
- make friends easily and have a lot of friends
- be easily distractable
- be impulsive
- be risk takers in groups.

Introverts **tend to:**

- get energy from inside themselves
- feel drained by people
- have an 'inner self' and an 'outer self' (multilayered)
- need privacy
- mentally rehearse what they are going to say before they start speaking
- dislike being the centre of attention
- learn by observing rather than doing
- be uncomfortable with changes
- have a few very close friends rather than a wide circle of more casual friends
- be capable of intense concentration
- be reflective
- dislike being in large groups
- be quiet in groups for fear of embarrassment or humiliation.

Schools are highly 'social' organisations. Children are encouraged to be gregarious and to form wide-ranging friendship groups. Children who prefer the companionship of one or two close friends, as gifted children often do, are often encouraged to socialise more widely. Students who don't often respond in class because the pace of discussion is too fast and they don't have time to formulate their thoughts into words before the topic has changed, are urged to 'contribute a bit more'. We pay lipservice to reflective thought but we don't encourage it. 'Wait time' — the length of time a teacher waits in class for a question to be answered — is seldom more than two or three seconds.

The following section is adapted from the work of Silverman (1993, 1998) and Roedell (1988), and provides useful advice for teachers and parents of gifted introverts.

## **Responding to the needs of introverts**

### **Give 'wait time'**

Introverts need rather more time to think before responding to a question or statement than do extraverted age-peers. Gifted introverts may be able to think of many more responses and they need time to select the response that says most clearly what is in their minds. A useful and practical teaching technique is to give 'wait time'.

The teacher asks the gifted or reflective student a question and then gives her structured time to respond. 'Jacquie, how did the author build up suspense in the story? I'll come back to you in a few minutes'. Then the teacher moves on with the lesson or asks simpler (lower level in Bloom's hierarchy) questions to two or three other students before glancing back to Jacquie. If Jacquie is ready to respond she can nod to the teacher to indicate this; if she needs a little more time she can smile a 'not yet'. When she does respond, her answer will be much richer and more detailed. She will be happier with her response — and so, probably, will her classmates and teacher. Note that the teacher's question required an analytical and evaluative response. Students should not be expected to 'snap' back answers to questions at the higher levels of Bloom, and introspective gifted students are especially unlikely to be able to do so.

### **Don't interrupt them**

Gifted students have an enhanced capacity to see the 'interconnectedness' of things and they may want to explain these interrelationships in their answers to questions. It can be extremely frustrating and deeply humiliating for a bright introverted student when a teacher or classmate interrupts before he has reached the end of the explanation. Sometimes it completely destroys the student's train of thought. Besides, it's rude. We teach students not to interrupt; we should obey the same conventions of courtesy ourselves. If we want to explain to the student that it's counter-productive to be so long-winded, it is better to do this in private, after the lesson. We could assist the student to practise making her answers more concise.

### **Don't embarrass introverts in public**

Of course, we shouldn't do this with any student but introverts are liable to be much more humiliated. Remember that gifted students are not only likely to be introverts, they are also likely to be more emotionally responsive (remember the section on overexcitabilities in Core Module 3?).

### **Reprimand them privately rather than publicly**

This is a natural lead-on from the last paragraph and for the same reasons! However, if, as a teacher, you feel the reprimand must be public, address the behaviour, not the individual. 'Chad, that was pretty thoughtless behaviour. Somebody could have been hurt,' rather than, 'Don't be so thoughtless, Chad, you could have hurt somebody.'

### **Let them observe in new situations**

As indicated above, whereas extraverts learn by doing, introverts tend to learn by observing. Most people make mistakes in their early stages of learning a new field or process but introverts tend to value privacy and they like to be allowed to make mistakes in private. We should also remember that gifted students are less accustomed to making mistakes and they are also more likely to be mocked by classmates when they do so. They are usually poignantly aware of this and it may increase their nervousness. Let them watch first, when they are learning something new, before attempting it. 'Discovery learning' is not the preferred process for introverts!

### **Develop an 'early warning system'**

Gifted introverts are more likely than extraverted ability peers to enter a 'flow' state when they are working on something they love and are good at. Some can become quite distressed if they are suddenly told to stop what they are doing immediately and move on to something else. Give them a 15-minute warning to finish whatever they are doing — or to get to a stage where they can leave it — before moving on to the next activity or before calling them to dinner.

### **Don't push them to make lots of friends**

You are unlikely to make a gregarious student out of an introvert but you **are** likely to make the introvert feel pretty uncomfortable if you insist. The introvert is well aware that society is comprised largely of extraverts and that he or she is a member of a minority group. Assist the introverted child to find one or two children who have similar interests or abilities and encourage the development of this friendship. By the middle years of primary school gifted introverts may already have experienced rejection for being 'doubly different' and they may need encouragement and practical advice if they are to develop the confidence to approach other students as possible friends.

### **Respect their introversion; don't try to make them into extraverts**

If you do this, you risk giving them the wrong message — that it is not acceptable to be an introvert. They will have enough people giving them this message; they don't need their teachers or parents joining the choir.



## Introversion: Issues for rural students

Gifted students from rural and remote areas who have lived all or much of their lives in the country and who move to boarding schools to complete their education may experience particular difficulties if they are introverts. The constant presence of other people, the crowds, the continual chatter, the emphasis on competition in sports and, above all, the absence of privacy in sleeping, eating, learning and leisure time can be extremely distressing.



*Paul, aged 16, was sent to a boys' boarding school in a large city two years ago. He lives on a remote property two hours' drive from the next settlement and all his previous education was through correspondence and School of the Air. For weeks on end he would see only his family and the people who worked on the property and he was content with this way of life. 'We have literally thousands of books,' he says, 'because mum and dad and grandpa are great readers and so was my grandmother before she died, and from as far back as I remember bookstores in the city would send up packages of new books every few weeks.'*

*Boarding school came as a severe culture shock.*

*'There were times when I thought I would go mad,' says Paul. 'I was surrounded by noise all the time. It just never stopped and even when I did try to get as far away as I could — I would go right out to the end of the oval when no one was there and sit down with my head between my knees trying to shut things out — the noise still seemed to be there inside my head.'*

*'Nobody seemed to be able to discuss things quietly. It was cool to be raucous and the teachers didn't seem to be able or willing to do anything about it. And answers had to be snapped back and I just can't do that. I need space to think. One of the teachers used to shout at me, "Snap out of it and snap it out" and that caused great hilarity, and any time I delayed in answering after that someone would shout it.'*

*'The worst thing was having no silence at night. I'm used to the absolute quiet of home where all you hear at night are the stock and the wind and there would be continual noise — beds creaking, kids snoring, traffic noises in the distance, planes going over. And having no privacy at night; that was even worse in a way.'*



*This year Paul's parents moved him to another school which has a special 'acclimatisation' program for students coming in from the land and things are a little better because there are teachers who are rather more understanding and a school counsellor who himself was a gifted boy from the bush and understands the situation for these students. However, he has had a rough two years.*



*Ellie, who is now herself a teacher, remembers her years at boarding school as being 'years of compromise'. 'I missed the smell and sound of the bush almost unbearably — the homesickness was physical, like an ache inside me — but the quality of the education I was getting was just amazing. The teachers were wonderful and they realised I was bright and encouraged me to excel. In addition I was able to talk to them about how I was feeling and they really tried to understand. The other girls were a problem sometimes because they were very lively and always chattering and I really need spaces of silence — but I love reading and they would understand that I would just have to go away sometimes and be by myself. Really I would have been happy to **be** by myself outside class hours — I'm not much of a socialiser even now and I'm content in my own company and with my husband and two or three good friends; I don't seem to need **groups** of people as much as most other people do.'*

It is important that schools anticipate and respect the social and emotional needs of gifted students who are introverts in environments which are, understandably, designed for the majority of young people who are extraverts.

## Issues for gifted boys

In comparison to the considerable amount of research conducted over the last 20 years on gifted girls, there has been surprisingly little research on social and emotional issues affecting gifted boys. Thomas Hébert (2002), in a review of the research literature, reports that the few studies which have been conducted appear to focus on identity and a belief in self, understanding emotional sensitivity and empathy.

A study of gifted, **high-achieving** boys in an urban high school found that the most significant factor in their success was their strong belief in themselves (Hébert, 2000). They had definite aspirations that were aligned with their particular talents and they believed firmly that these aspirations would be met, not only because of their high ability but also because of their drive to succeed.

Hébert noted, however, that because of this strong belief that they would succeed through their intellectual and emotional qualities, these young men allowed themselves to appreciate qualities in themselves not normally associated with ‘masculinity’ — or at least, stereotyped views of masculinity. These qualities included the capacity to appreciate individual differences among people around them; the ability to appreciate beauty in poetry and literature; and a valuing of interpersonal relationships, including protective relationships with younger children. They had developed the ability to acknowledge their capacity to empathise with the emotional needs of others, and to be emotionally self-aware and self-expressive. Furthermore, they viewed their capacity to express themselves emotionally as something that would help them to become more successful in life.

Hébert’s study is consistent with what theorists have proposed about the heightened emotional sensitivity of gifted individuals — although it is more usually reported in gifted girls and women. Hébert (2002) proposes that it was accepted and observable in the gifted young men in his study because they were achieving at high levels, were admired and valued in their particular high school which placed a high value on academic achievement, and were therefore able to demonstrate this side of themselves without so much risk of social rejection. However, as Hébert warns, ‘if a sensitive, intelligent young man grows up experiencing criticism and ridicule in a culture that does not appreciate sensitivity within males, he may suppress his sensitivity and consequently withdraw emotionally from others around him’ (2002, p. 139).

This is happening today in Australia. Even after several years of growing community concern, boys are generally socialised to conform to what Barbara Kerr and Sanford Cohn (2001) call ‘the Boy Code’ which expects them to:

- be strong, silent and self-reliant
- be able to handle anything they try
- never or rarely show weakness
- be in control
- achieve status and power over others
- avoid at all costs behaviour which could be interpreted as oversensitive, overtly compassionate or ‘sissy’.

In short, boys are discouraged from taking emotional risks.

## **Competitiveness seen as masculine**

As discussed in Core Module 3, in 1983 John Nicholls proposed two types of intrinsic motivation, task-involvement and ego-involvement.

In task-involvement, learning is more inherently valuable, meaningful or satisfying, and attention is focussed on the task and strategies to master it, rather than on the self. In ego-involvement, learning is a means to the end of looking smart or looking stupid, and attention is focussed on the self. Both types of motivation involve an element of competitiveness; however, whereas the task-involved student is competing against herself ('I want to do better than I did last time'), the ego-involved student is competing against his peers ('I want to do better than the others').

Australian research reveals that boys are significantly more ego-involved than girls. This in itself would not be of concern; however, as reported in Extension Module 3, this research also showed that ego-involved students have significantly lower self-esteem than task-involved students of similar ability (Gross, 1997).

We encourage boys, much more than girls, to compete against their peers for success and prestige, but we may not be sufficiently concerned about the effects of competitiveness which arise from ego-involvement.

## **Underachievement in gifted boys**

Underachievement continues to be a major problem for gifted boys. Colangelo, Kerr, Christensen and Macy (1993) found nine times as many boys as girls who were achieving significantly below their academic potential. Indeed, Kerr and Nicpon (2002) propose that underachievement may be a way in which gifted boys define their masculinity. When gifted boys are denied an education appropriate to their stages of academic development they know, and resent, the fact that they are being held back and they may become difficult and disruptive students.

## **Among boys, athleticism is generally admired and fostered over academic success**

- As discussed in Part 1 of this Module, official acknowledgement and rewards in school are more likely to reinforce students' sporting prowess than academic achievement. It is not surprising if this reinforces the perception of gifted boys that, while sporting ability is valued, academic ability is not.
- Status among male peer groups is generally achieved through sporting achievements rather than academic achievements.
- Sporting activities are generally arranged through skill levels, thus allowing for acceleration, ability grouping, mentorships and other opportunities for the enhancement of skills through working with students at similar levels of achievement.
- The sporting culture provides an expectation of commitment and hard work, and reward for effort, as well as acknowledgement and support for talent.

- For all these reasons, it could be said that an ‘ideal’ environment for talent development is provided on the sports field. Can we say the same of our classrooms?
- Is it any wonder that many highly able boys are expending time and energy in sport and using the class time to recuperate before the next sporting session?

### **Absence of effective male role models**

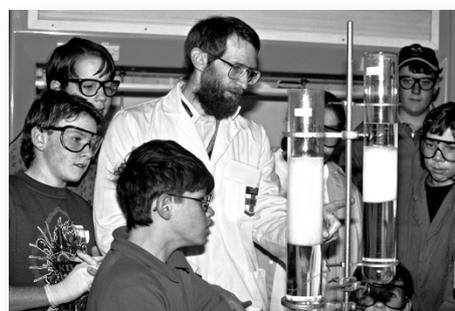
- Increasing numbers of Australian children live in single-parent families. In more than 85% of single-parent families, there is no father living with the children.
- More than 80% of primary school teachers are female.
- Yet two-thirds of non-teaching school executives are male. What message does this give boys — nurturing is for women, decision-making is for men?
- A number of studies have found that, of the parents who participate in courses and workshops for parents of gifted children, the considerable majority are mothers.
- Researchers speak of ‘father hunger’ — the need for effective role modelling by fathers who will see their son’s gift not as an embarrassment or unmasculine, but as a strength to be fostered (Hawley, 1993).
- Many of the ways in which parents are advised to help with their gifted child are impractical for fathers: eg help in the child’s classroom; help teacher with materials; act as an advocate for the child within the school. Often we only bring Dad in when there is a problem to be fixed. Mum is the ‘minder’; Dad is the ‘mender’!

### **Boys are oriented into ‘gender-appropriate’ courses**

The example we give here is replicated regularly in organisations across Australia.

GERRIC — the Gifted Education Research, Resource and Information Centre at the University of New South Wales — runs enrichment workshops for gifted and talented students in each January and July school vacation period. The Scientia Challenge program offers several two-day workshops for gifted students in Years 7–10. The work is set at Year 11–12 level and the workshops are taught by UNSW academics working in their fields of special expertise.

Workshops in the sciences attract many more boys than girls. Our sincere efforts to encourage girls with talent and interest in science do work sometimes — but not as often as we would like. ‘Jenny’, in Year 9, who chose a Scientia Challenge workshop on Ethics in Law, gave the workshop a glowing evaluation but said to one of the assistants afterwards, ‘It was so good, but I still have a little niggling wish that I’d applied for the Physics course.’ ‘Why didn’t you?’ asked the assistant. ‘Oh well,’ she said, ‘I thought it would be all boys and I didn’t want to be the only girl there.’



If Jenny and other gifted girls retain that perception, it will be a self-fulfilling prophesy! **Teachers and parents must encourage girls with special interests in maths and science to attend vacation courses and other enrichment opportunities in these talent fields. Likewise, boys with special interest in the social sciences, art and music must be encouraged to pursue their interests in those fields.**

## Some practical courses of action

### 1. Provide, for boys, positive role models of men who:

- (a) share their feelings
- (b) admit to making mistakes
- (c) listen to and trust women.

These can come from the media, books or real life.

Discuss with your students: Why is it culturally acceptable to express emotion on the sports field and take pride in one's success, but less so in the classroom?

Bring in, to talk to the students, sportsmen and other real-life heroes who are also very bright and very articulate; and have them talk about their hobbies, interests and attitudes, outside of, as well as within, the world of sport. (Explain to the visitor, beforehand, what it is you are trying to do.)

For gifted boys from diverse cultures, bring in successful models from their own cultures.

Have as guests male doctors, police officers, TV personalities and others discussing the emotional peaks and valleys of their own lives. Discuss with them, beforehand, the sort of things you would like them to address — both cognitive and affective issues.

**2. Provide gifted boys with male mentors** who can assist them academically and with class projects (eg students from nearby universities, senior citizens from local retirement villages). Give students the experience of seeing strong men as nurturers.

### 3. Establish support groups for gifted boys.

Issues you might like to present to them for discussion could be:

- How were you identified as gifted?
- Do you agree with the identification?
- What do the terms 'gifted' and 'talented' mean to you?
- What do your parents think it means to be gifted?
- What do your teachers think it means?
- What do your classmates think it means?
- How is being gifted an advantage to you? How is it a disadvantage?

- Have you ever deliberately hidden your giftedness? If so, how and why?
- What is different about being gifted and being a boy?
- Is there a time in school (primary, secondary) when it is easier being gifted? More difficult? Why?

(Issues suggested by Nicholas Colangelo, 1996)

**4. Form cluster groups of boys gifted in language** — placing 6-10 gifted boys in the mixed-ability classroom to support and encourage each other.

**5. Try to avoid gender-role stereotyping.**

- Show men involved in quiet activities.
- Books should portray boys being sensitive, in nurturing roles, displaying gifts other than physical, trying not to hurt other people's feelings, allowing other people to be themselves.

**6. Encourage boys to read more fiction** where they will come across dilemmas of 'the human condition'.

**7. Talk to them** about the issues raised in this presentation and about their gifts.

These suggestions for practical activities first appeared in Gross (2002).

## Issues for gifted girls

In Australia over the last 10 years girls have come to outperform boys on almost every academic school subject. Why then, are researchers and educators still concerned about underachievement among gifted girls?

Underachievement is a concern wherever it appears and it is certainly of concern that many of our ablest young women, like many of our ablest young men, are performing at levels very considerably below their potential.

Linda Silverman points out that in the early years of school gifted girls are more socially aware than boys of the same age; they notice nuances of behaviour and what is and is not acceptable to the peer group, and they are more likely to conform, even in the first few weeks of school, to what they believe is expected of them (Silverman, 1993). Sally Reis (1998) identified the following cluster of interacting issues as being of particular importance in influencing both gifted women's self-perceptions and their perceptions of their obligations towards their parents, their own families, the workplace and society in general:

- Dilemmas regarding understanding and accepting one's own abilities and talents.
- Ambivalence of parents and teachers towards the girl's development of high achievement.
- Decisions about duty and caring (putting the needs of others before one's own needs).
- Personal, religious and social issues.

### Parental issues

Girls in the primary school years and in adolescence seem to be rather more influenced than boys by their parents' beliefs about giftedness in general and about their own children's high ability in particular. Girls seem to adopt their parents' beliefs as their own, changing their own former attitudes towards their ability. For example, a study of maths self-concept among gifted adolescent girls (Dickens, 1990) found that the girls 'took on' parental opinions about their maths achievement even when their parents' impressions were quite inaccurate. As a result, even when girls were outperforming boys on classroom maths tasks and tests of maths achievement, they tended to perceive their maths ability as substantially inferior to that of boys, and attributed their success primarily to effort (Pajares, 1996).

## Teacher issues

Teachers are much more successful at identifying academic giftedness in boys than in girls (Reis, 2002). This is partly because girls who do not want to be recognised as talented are rather more skillful than boys at ‘dumbing down’ and disguising their gifts, but also because teachers tend to ascribe high ability more often to boys than to girls. For example, an American study found that maths teachers were much less successful in identifying girls with unusually high maths ability than they were with boys (Kissane, 1986).

Indeed, teachers have been found to adhere quite strongly to one of the most prevalent gender stereotypes; that boys are innately brighter than girls and that when girls’ achievement matches that of boys it is because girls have worked harder (Arnold, 1995). If girls are acquiring this belief from teachers as well as from parents, as discussed above, it is not surprising if they come to decry their ability.

Ironically, from the middle primary years onwards gifted girls avoid displaying outstanding intellectual ability in order to be accepted by the peer group (Silverman, 1993; Callahan, Cunningham & Plucker, 1994). This may be why teachers assume their success is due to ‘grind’ rather than giftedness!

## Social issues

Competition — or rather the avoidance of it — can be quite an issue for girls. For girls with strong affiliation needs, competition can be perceived as a dichotomous situation in which ‘if one wins, the others lose’. Gifted girls who take this perspective may even actively avoid being compared to others in case the other person ‘loses out’ on the comparison and feels distressed or undervalued. ‘The “winner” at best feels uncomfortable, and at worst undeserving. The “loser” feels inadequate, jealous and guilty for her reaction.’ (Bell, 1989, p. 119). Consequently these gifted girls frequently downplay or even deny their success. Add this to the fear of social isolation if one is identified as ‘too’ bright or ‘too’ studious and it is easy to understand how and why gifted girls may mask or camouflage their ability for peer acceptance.

Perfectionism is another issue which has special repercussions for gifted girls, as some aspects of perfectionism seem to affect women more than men. In her study of perfectionism in gifted students in the upper primary and lower secondary years, which we discussed in Extension Module 3, Patricia Schuler (1997) found that gifted girls were much more anxious about avoiding mistakes, both because of their own high standards and because of the high standards that they perceived their parents set for them.

These girls viewed making mistakes in schoolwork as ‘failing’ — even if they then corrected the mistakes before handing work in. Just **making** the mistake was viewed as failure! They worked to please others — particularly their teachers and parents — rather than for their own intellectual or emotional satisfaction and it was important to them that the work should be as flawless as possible at each stage of the process.

By contrast, boys were more likely to view the finished piece of work as the goal for success; for them, the process was much less important than the final product.

The regularity with which the same themes appear in studies of parental and teacher expectations of gifted girls, and gifted girls' expectations of themselves, reinforce how important it is that the home and school work together to identify and foster high abilities in gifted girls in the primary and secondary years, and to encourage gifted girls' acceptance of their abilities and acceptance of themselves.

### **Some practical courses of action**

Many of the practical strategies suggested in the section, above, on gifted boys, can be adapted for use with girls. For example, placing a cluster of girls with special aptitude in maths or the sciences into a mixed-ability class may give them the confidence to speak out and display their talents in a way that they might be reluctant to do if they were the only girl with high abilities and interest in the subject. The questions suggested for use with counselling groups can be readily adapted for use with girls.

## **Managing your own responses**

In 1997 Bruce Knight and Stan Bailey edited a remarkable book called *Parents as lifelong teachers of the gifted*. It is a treasure house of practical advice for parents, grounded in sound research, and much of it is equally valuable for teachers. This section paraphrases some of the practical suggestions offered in a chapter by Deslea Konza, on ways of managing the challenging and difficult behaviours displayed by some gifted students.

### **Examine your own expectations**

Gifted students tend to be more socially and emotionally mature than their age-peers but this does not mean that their behaviour will be socially mature at all times and under all conditions. Gifted children are primarily children and sometimes they will behave in ‘stupid’ and immature ways. Don’t expect perfection.

### **Resist the call to battle!**

Gifted children tend to be articulate and quick-witted and some like to use these skills in argument rather more often than they should. Try to avoid being ‘sucked in’ to a debate by one of these mini-lawyers; they may have been thinking out their strategic points before starting the argument.

Tell the child firmly that you have made your position clear and you are not going to argue about it. Then move on with what you are doing and if the child keeps arguing, ignore him. He’ll stop when he starts feeling stupid — there’s no point in arguing into a vacuum.

### **Turn the negatives into positives**

It’s not easy to view a stubborn or obstinate child’s behaviour in a positive light when that behaviour is being used as a weapon against you; however, looking at it positively can be an effective strategy. The determination and persistence that the child is demonstrating can be very useful qualities if he or she is encouraged to use them to contribute rather than to hinder.

This is referred to as ‘cognitive reframing’ or ‘restructuring’. It can help you take a more positive view of the situation while you are working to help the child turn his or her energy and inventiveness towards more productive goals.

### **Be a good model**

The most positive way of showing students how to live happily and productively among others is to model it yourself. If you want to teach students how to admit fault and apologise, make sure you let them see you doing this too. Most of us have at some time spoken or behaved towards a student hastily and perhaps less than fairly; it usually happens when we’re stressed! The next time it happens for you, model a graceful (and rueful) apology. If you make a mistake, acknowledge it. Model patience, restraint, honesty, sensitivity, negotiation and compassion. Your students will respect you for this. They will see it as strength rather than weakness and they will come to value you highly.

## Reflective/Practical Component

What are the three most important pieces of information this Professional Development Package has given you about the social and emotional development of gifted and talented children and adolescents?

Are these issues separate or interrelated? If they are interrelated, in what ways?

How can you use this information to make your school a safer place, socially and emotionally, for academically gifted and talented students?

If only **some** staff members in your school have taken this Professional Development Package, how can you share, with these colleagues who have not done so, the information that you regard as particularly important?



## Resources

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