

Helping Boys Shine in Our Schools — Programs & Ideas

Program Name	Link	Program Details	Benefits
Clontarf for indigenous boys.	http://www.clontarf.org.au/ Australia Wide	Exists to improve education standards, life skills and goals for young aboriginal men. Main goals are to build self-esteem and provide opportunity. Clontarf use sports such as AFL and Rugby League training to obtain their goals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provides young aboriginal boys in a healthy outlet for their energy - Provides a community of boys with similar goals. - Promotes self esteem - Increases education standards
The Rites of Passage Institute (Dr Arne Rubinstein)	https://ritesofpassageinstitute.org/	Founded by Dr Arne Rubinstein, the Rites of Passage Institute runs Father/Son camps, breakfasts and Rites of Passage programs in schools around Australia. The Institute believes that in our modern age, we've lost our rituals and by building strong communities and a healthy sense of belonging, they can support young people and communities to thrive. The Institute also runs leadership training programs for people interested in facilitating their own programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bringing out the best in boys and celebrating them becoming young men - Promoting strong, healthy relationships & a support network - Encourages boys to have a vision for the future - Bringing rites of passage rituals into mainstream culture.
The Rite Journey (Andrew Lines)	http://theritejourney.com/ Australia Wide	The Rite Journey Program strives to help young and adolescent children become self aware, responsible, resilient and independent adults. This program focuses on helping children find a healthy passage into adulthood by rebuilding traditional rites of passage in a cooperative manor.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Helps create a healthy passage from adolescence to adulthood - Promotes self awareness and strength of the mind
The Man Cave	https://themancave.life/	The Man Cave is a preventative mental health charity for boys and young men. They provide programs, positive role models and an abundance of resources plus facilitate programs for teenage boys, parents and educators.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Explores the concept of masculinity - Challenges problematic gender stereotypes - Building healthier relationships for boys

Daniel Principe	https://www.danielprincipe.com.au/	Daniel is a passionate youth advocate and educator. He champions boys across Australia to challenge culture and aspire to live courageous, respectful and empathetic lives. Daniel is a board member of the DART Institute, an ambassador for the Women's Resilience Centre and an ambassador for the national campaign Consent Can't Wait. He was a nominee for the 2025 NSW Australian of the Year.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Speaks relatably to young men about healthy masculinity, consent, respectful relationships and the cultural challenges young people are facing.
The Kagan Cooperative	http://www.kaganaustralia.com.au/ Australia Wide	Kagan Australia helps teachers develop necessary skills to keep children engaged in the classroom. The Kagan philosophy centres around the idea of active engagement as well as cooperative learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Integrated learning - Cooperative classroom learning - Increased Engagement
Grandparents program	Idea from Facebook Post	Grandfather takes group of boys and some girls and completes small projects around the school. Embeds curriculum learning within	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improves pride and sense of achievement - Creates family ties - Enhances children's sense of belonging and wellbeing
Make my teacher lunch day	Idea from Facebook Post	Each week a student is drawn from a hat to make the teacher lunch. Teacher provides dessert (and shows off his cooking skills - these kids get some great sweets!). Student can bring one friend to lunch.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Building better relationships with students - Connecting with families through discussions on the different types of food the students bring in - Positive effect on the class behaviour and attitude -

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<p>Achieve Anything Academy</p>	<p>http://www.invincibleworldwide.com/school-programs/</p> <p>Australia wide</p>	<p>The Achieve Anything Academy is built upon the Japanese concept <i>Kiazen</i>, which means to constantly rise up to new levels. This program works to challenge all people to become their best self. It combines mental, physical and social aspects of learning to engage students. This is achieved through a combination of building leadership skills and martial arts programs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Holistic approach to engagement - The Martial Arts aspect is especially good for boys as it teaches many life lessons such as patience and discipline whilst also channeling a physical outlet. - Empowering and Inspiring - Very Physical
<p>The Resilience Project</p>	<p>https://theresilienceproject.com.au/</p>	<p>Through education and workplace programs, events and wellbeing resources, The Resilience Project focuses on the key pillars proven to cultivate positive emotion: Gratitude, Empathy and Mindfulness (GEM) and Emotional Literacy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increased student social and emotional wellbeing - Increased emotional literacy - Reduction in depressive and anxiety symptoms - Increased sense of belonging and connection (across peers, school environment and at home) - Increased confidence and self esteem
<p>Team Courage with Dr Kaylene Henderson</p>	<p>https://couragecoachingonline.com/for-schools/</p>	<p>The Team Courage program is available to all K-6 schools looking to address the resilience, anxiety levels, emotional literacy, social-emotional and behavioural wellbeing and overall mental health of their students, without adding to teacher workload.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - evidence-based strategies from a psychiatrist who's also a mother - teaches strategies to build resilience and coping strategies - offers in-home guidance for parents of anxious kids (useful even while your child may be on a mental health support waiting list).
<p>Fun friends program</p>	<p>http://www.pathwayshrc.com.au/fun-friends-4-7-years/</p>	<p>The Fun Friends Program is directed towards children aged 4-7 and works to nurture development in all core areas. This program is based around cooperative learning. Fun Friends works on social skills such as eye</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Helps to build the foundations needed for basic social engagement

		contact, using a brave and confident voice, emotional intelligence, making friends and more.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Specifically directed towards the early years - Makes learning fun and goals achievable.
Holyoake Drumbeat program	http://www.holyoake.org.au/drumbeat Australia wide.	The Holyoake Drumbeat Program teaches social skills, resilience and the importance of positive relationships through the use of African Djembe drums. This program is flexible in its use and caters for the differing needs of students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Helps students to enhance their social skills - Requires students to be actively involved and engaged in the program - Uses music to transcend cultural barriers
Classcraft	https://www.hmhc.com/programs/classcraft Based in Canada and the United States Available online.	Classcraft is a program, which has been developed to engage students through the use of technology and gaming. Classcraft combines gaming with real life circumstances to provide an engaging and cooperative classroom. This program can be run for a semester or a whole school year.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cooperative learning - Engaging - Inclusive of students whose interests lay in gaming or technology
Pathways to Resilience Foundation	http://pathwaystorresilience.org/ Based in Queensland	This program strives to achieve resilience in families, children and communities. The organisation works to help at risk groups by introducing a common language of wellbeing at schools. This program provides training and professional development as well as coaching and mentoring facilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cohesive learning through community - Helps to build strong relationships - Helps at risk children - Prevents disengagement

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<p>Katajin</p>	<p>https://www.wesley.wa.edu.au/learning/what-is-katitjin/</p> <p>Wesley College WA</p>	<p>Katitjin is a Noongar term meaning “to listen and learn”. The Katitjin program embraces the fact that boys go through a number of changes through adolescence, which affects their motivation and engagement levels. This program focuses on teaching life skills such as self-awareness, working in teams, leadership, engagement in the community and more. There are camps associated with the Katitjin program, which allow boys an outlet into the great outdoors.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Acknowledgement of boyhood struggles - Helps to build needed social skills - Camps are great for leadership - Helps to build strong and healthy relationships
<p>Rock and Water Program</p>	<p>https://www.rockandwater.com.au/</p> <p>Based in Queensland, but offered Australia wide</p>	<p>The Rock and Water Program is a program that was developed in the Netherlands in response to the increasing amount of disengagement of boys and increased amount of drug abuse, alcohol abuse and violence including increased amounts of bullying. The Rock and Water program focuses on strengthening the mind, body and spirit. This is a holistic approach to engagement and has been adopted by many educators in Australia and the world.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Addresses real life problems - Helps to create a strong being in mind and body - Addresses disengagement
<p>Mindful works</p>	<p>https://www.facebook.com/sharnmindfulworks/timeline</p> <p>Based in Queensland</p>	<p>Mindful Works is an educational organisation that offers retreats, workshops, courses and more to teachers, students, schools, healthcare professionals, businesses and individuals. Mindful Works organisation teaches the practice of mindfulness</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provides the option of relaxation - Promotes resilience through
	<p>Bold Park Community School</p>	<p>The Casseta Project was run out of Bold Park Community School. This project integrated learning in all core areas</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gives children a view of other occupations - Provides hands on learning

The “Casetta Storica” (Little House of History)	WA	by means of hands-on experiences. This included the children’s consultation with architects, working “on the tools” with builders/roofers/electricians and a solar energy consultant. Everyone was required to correctly use building terminology on site and there was a rotation of occupations so everyone had input in every responsibility on site. Although this is a past project it is a good idea for future projects and can be instigated in any school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Builds connection with the local community members and organisations - Gives children insights into how things work
Creative Moves	www.creativemoveswa.com.au WA	Creative Moves is a Western Australian program that engages children through the movement of dance. This program offers boys the chance to be creative in their movement whilst also practicing discipline. This is a great program for all ages as it challenges gross motor skills for the youngsters and is a creative outlet for older children.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provides a creative outlet for adolescent boys - Very physical - Can be adapted to all ages - Works with curriculum
6 seconds	www.6seconds.org Internet Based	6seconds organisation supports the development of emotional intelligence. This program is for all ages.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development of emotional intelligence - Cohesive learning structure
8 ways	https://www.8ways.online/ Western Region and Parts of Sydney	The 8 Ways framework is about including and using Aboriginal perspectives in your teaching methods rather than in the teaching content. 8 Ways works to eliminate tokenistic cultural lessons by changing the way the lesson is presented.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creates less segregation in the classroom - Incorporates Indigenous language and culture into each lesson - Engages all children

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The Brave Program	https://brave4you.psy.uq.edu.au/	An interactive online program developed by The University of Queensland and Beyond Blue for the prevention and treatment of child and adolescent anxiety	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Free for parents and people who work with children and teens- Supports children and teens to overcome worries
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Backtrack	http://www.backtrack.org.au/ Based in Armidale, NSW	Backtrack’s mission is to offer young people who have lost their way an opportunity to reconnect with their education and training, to become work ready, find jobs, lead happy and productive lives and participate fully in the community. They offer 3 programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Paws Up program uses dogs to connect youth with others, build trust & learn self-discipline. - AgLads creates employment opportunities and support for youth in rural communities. - Links to Learning re-engages kids in Yrs 6-10 with their education, developing resilience and social skills.
Quality Circle Time	http://www.circle-time.co.uk/ Based in UK but applicable in k-7	A model developed by Jenny Mosley for building schools that support the social and emotional learning of all students and staff. This shows a whole school approach from K-7 (search on YouTube for “Quality Circle Time Golden Model in Action - Watercliffe Meadow School 2015” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TPbhdKFzG9M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enhances student communication, especially listening, problem-solving and cooperation - Boosts staff wellbeing - Encourages positive behaviour.
Gurian Institute	http://www.gurianiinstitute.com	The Gurian Institute in the US has a model school program which is worth taking a look at. Although US based there is some useful information on there. They also have books, downloads and online courses for educators interested in gender and education.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Professional learnings for educators based on the work of New York Times bestselling author, social philosopher and family counsellor Michael Gurian.
The Resilience Doughnut	http://www.theresiliencedoughnut.com.au/	Another great resource to help build resilience in both children and teens.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Helps boys identify what is working - Can track progress each term (helps with goal setting)

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<p>The Fathering Project</p>	<p>http://www.thefatheringproject.org</p> <p>WA based</p>	<p>The Fathering Project’s Schools’ Program aims to positively promote the important role of fathers, and father figures, to the entire school community through the formation of a “Champion” Dads’ group, or Fathering Project School Group (FPSG).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Builds social interaction, knowledge and skills - Brings male role models into school community - Relaxed, informal and fun
<p>Family Action Network</p>	<p>https://www.newcastle.edu.au/college/health-medicine-wellbeing/research/fan</p> <p>University of Newcastle</p>	<p>The FAN is a research, teaching and practice centre focused on families and their community. They have some fantastic resources on their website.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regular ‘Boys in Schools Bulletins’ - Resources on fathering, Indigenous fathers, education and building resilience

IMPROVING LITERACY & NUMERACY ESPECIALLY FOR BOYS

<p>The Reading Thing</p>	<p>http://thatreadingthing.com/</p>	<p>Run by teen literacy expert Tricia Millar, this program claims to build skills knowledge and confidence in hours rather than years. TRT has been evaluated by Professor Greg Brooks, and is in the most recent edition of "What works for children & young people with literacy difficulties" and is recommended by the Dyslexia SpLD Trust.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Offers dignified and age-appropriate literacy support - Incorporates inside or outside education systems - Has been used in small and large organisations, schools, colleges, youth offending services and national charities.
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Walker Learning Approach	https://earlylife.com.au/about-walker-learning/ Australia Wide and International	The Walker Learning Approach is designed for children 0-14. This program embraces the need for maths and literacy teaching but embeds the lessons with child interest and real life practicality. This approach makes learning meaningful and culturally diverse.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creative thinking - Critical thinking - Problem-solving - Engagement from interest
Mad Libs	www.madlibs.com	Mad Libs is a word game in which participants fill in the blanks to create a story... the site features books (based on popular programs, comics, etc. such as Archie, Adventure Time, Star Wars, etc.), a board game, card games and a hugely popular App that's been downloaded 6 million times.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bright, fun and engaging - Fun way to increase vocabulary/improve spelling - Good for individuals and families
Spelfabet	http://www.spelfabet.com.au National	Developed by a speech pathologist this site provides resources to teach systematic synthetic phonics.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provides phonics material that is relevant to older children and teenagers - Downloadable resources for schools and parents
Cumquatmay	http://www.cumquatmay.com.au/	Home to the Rip Rap series of novels by Judy Keen, for students in grades 4 to 9 with lower than average reading ability. The novels are designed to look like and they cover similar content to the novels that peers with regular reading ability would be reading.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rebuilds confidence - Helps with foundation reading skills - Topics develop in complexity and relevance according to age - Has associated teacher manual
TRUGS – Teaching Read Using Games	www.readsuccessfully.com	Systematic synthetic phonics reading games to improving literacy and boost vocabulary.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fun way to practise reading and spelling - Can be used at home and school to consolidate learning - Also develop skills in turn taking, language and memory

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Story Dogs	Http://www.storydogs.org.au	Based on the successful American literacy program Reading Education Assistance Dogs (R. E. A.D) Story Dogs gets Australian children and young adolescents reading one-on-one to dogs. Sessions facilitated by the dog's handler who is trained to teach emergent readers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fun, non-threatening way to practise reading aloud to a non-judgmental audience - Dogs promote relaxation and allow children to read at their own pace
LiteracyPlanet	http://www.literacyplanet.com	Fun and engaging Australian program designed to boost literacy through games, and aligned with the Australian curriculum.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Uses 'quest-style' pathway which boys may enjoy - Socially safe way to play with multiplayer in a competitive format - Students can also work at their own pace.
Maths Through Movement	WA based but online purchase available (releasing Term 2, 2016)	This teacher resource program combines the Maths and Dance syllabus to teach students maths concepts through movement and embodiment. The resource is designed for generalist teachers without dance experience. Read more here: http://dancemagazine.com.au/2016/02/20291/	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Suits kinaesthetic learners - Engages students through movement instead of worksheets - Suits students challenged by sitting still and concentrating
Luka Lesson	https://www.lukalesson.com/ Australian spoken word music artist	Luka Lesson is a young Australian poet of Greek origin and an educator who runs workshops in schools (Years 5-12) to inspire students of any ability level to write and perform poetry.s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Uses role model to stimulate interest in words - Has worked with students of many backgrounds to encourage them to write and perform their work, many for the first time.
Kahn Academy	https://www.khanacademy.org/	Kahn Academy offers practice exercises, instructional videos to help learners outside the classroom. They cover a huge range of subjects: maths, science, computer programming, history, art history, economics, and more. Their maths program runs from kindy level to university level.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Step by step videos demonstrating concepts - Practice exercises - Students can have a personalised learning dashboard to track their progress and interests

			- Totally free and international.
Mathletics, Education Perfect, Kahoot	http://au.mathletics.com/home https://worldseries.educationperfect.com/ www.kahoot.com	Janine Webb from Wesley College in WA says in a blog on the college website: “If we use boys’ interest in technology as an element of their learning we can see positive outcomes.” For example, sites such as Mathletics, Language Perfect and Kahoot are very popular with boys. On these sites, there is competition in the learning. Boys love the idea of the leaderboards and awards. Some educators call this the ‘gamification of learning’ and, in its place, it can be an effective tool.	<p>Mathletics: aligned with Australian curriculum, can appeal to boys’ competitive nature...</p> <p>Education Perfect: allows daily learning, revision, assessment.. covers languages, English, maths, science and humanities</p> <p>Kahoot: Free game-based learning platform teachers can use with students</p>

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Some Common-sense Tips for Engaging Boys From Those at the Coalface

In 2015, I put the call out to people in my Facebook village and via my newsletter community, seeking solutions to the increasing underachievement and disengagement of boys in our schools. I sought ideas, positive tips, projects or programs from anywhere in the world and many of those have been included in the list of programs above... here are some of our favourite tips that were shared.

Classroom culture/guidelines – rather than tell them what the rules are – remember boys like structure and rules – ask them what they would like in a positive classroom! Eg: No put downs, no shouting or shaming, work wherever you like as long as you don't bother anyone else, help others succeed, failure is a normal part of learning. Then collate it as a class – and then they feel heard, consulted and a part of a team ... things that build belonging. So often they want what we want!

Silent Sound signal – often boys don't hear what we say as they are busy doing something else – using the silent sound signal, raising your hand and as each student notices your hand up they finish what they are saying and put their hand up... boys especially love this respectful way of getting their attention. Make sure you use this wisely!

Be Interested and Available- SHOW ME YOU CARE! This was probably one of my favourite tips from [Maggie], it is so common sense but doesn't happen enough! This point is so important. If we want kids to listen and pay attention to us, it needs to be reciprocal. Boys especially want to feel like you are there, your present and you really care what they think. **Engagement is a two way street!** Contact parents about successes as well as the challenges – this helps boys know you are fair.

"Just want to say that the biggest thing with boys is gaining their trust. Once you have their respect, they will engage." – Cenly Wong, Facebook user

Small gestures of kindness – boys respond powerfully to being shown kindness – lolly rewards can work without ruining their lives and physical wellbeing because they happen only occasionally. The Minty moment award, the Chocolate frog award – especially to a boy who seldom hands work in and then does ... these rewards are given privately if possible. Written messages of encouragement can be very powerful – post-it notes stuck inside their homework diaries, on their assignments

Visual motivations – have them create posters for the walls that are life affirming and inspirational. They do remind the unconscious mind of the importance of positive thinking, e.b. 'I am enough exactly as I am.' 'I am-I can-I will!' 'The only real failure is when you stop trying!' 'Life is up to me!' 'Imagination is greater than intelligence.'

Have favourite teacher affirmations – that they hear often. Eg. ‘There are no bad kids – just good kids making poor choices.’ ‘All learning matters.’ ‘Every day in every way we get better and better.’ ‘Have you stoked your spark today?’ ‘Failure helps us to learn.’ ‘Have you used your Ps today? Passion. Practise. Persistence?’ and ‘I am the Captain of my own destiny!’

Physical Activity – This one is a must, regular exercise breaks throughout a lesson can really help to keep boys engaged! It also helps with brain development which means not only will they be able to concentrate longer but the content will be making more sense! Movement can be whole class ones or smaller ones for boys to do themselves – without distracting others!

“Let boys be boys. They have heaps of energy which needs to be burnt off before they can sit down and learn” – Joanne Glover, Facebook User

READ THIS:

FOR IDEAS ON CREATING SENSORY BREAKS & WAYS TO INCORPORATE ACTIVITY IN YOUR LESSONS:

<http://lemonlimeadventures.com/sensory-break-ideas-for-kids/>

Basing Lessons on Student Interest – Basing lessons on interests of your students means that you are probably going to have to mix up your curriculum, be creative and innovative! Following student interest is a huge aspect of the Early Years Learning Framework. I think we should base more of our lessons on this document!! *Remember RELEVANCE for boys – is this worth my time and energy?* Taking Maths into the real world – go measure a house, a playground, a wharf – then create a 3 D model of it. If doing traditional ballads like The Highwayman – have boys research swords, rapiers, etc.

“I have found the world of education opens for boys in high school – my boys simply switched off to literacy and maths as it is taught in Australian primary schools – boys need hands on, experimenting, feeling they are pushing the boundaries, creating with their hands, learning visually, doing, doing, doing!”
– Jenni Darwin, Facebook user

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Humour – Humour makes boys feel safe and it triggers good brain chemicals. Just think about how much more engaged you are when something is funny! It's the same for our kids, humour in a classroom will go a long way. Also don't be afraid to be silly or make mistakes, it shows students that we're only human and it will help to break down the barriers and build more trusting relationships. Have fun facts, fun quotes breaks!

"For the years I have spent working in mental health with mostly male students I have found quite simply a good sense of humour is one of the quickest ways to build genuine rapport and break down boundaries."- Ruth Elizabeth, Facebook User

Diet – Diet is such a big factor when we talk about engagement. Your diet has the ability to control your motivation levels, energy levels and brain function!!! High sugar levels means big bursts of energy and then MEGA ENERGY DEPLETION. We need to give our boys a balance of good quality protein, good fats especially Omega 3 essential fatty acids, fruit and veges, with a bit of sugar on the side. Limiting empty kilojoules from high sugar drinks and junk food can improve a boy's moods, behaviour and general well being.

Practical Engagement – Make lessons practical and hands on. I had so many comments of people saying how their boys learn better and are more engaged when the lessons are practical. I had some awesome comments saying that boys were able to practice mechanics, assembling and disassembling motors and cars, how cool is that!! It doesn't always have to be like that, just making simple links in the class to how things apply in the real world can be enough sometimes.

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Embrace the Environment – A lot of you [Facebook users] have said that your boys are spending too much time on computers, well let's get them outside. Gardening is a great way to teach practical life skills in a hands-on way. While technology is massively engaging, it stops boys moving and they need movement. Outside classes on verandahs, under trees and in the vege patch will improve boys attention noticeably!

"Our school is in the early stages of having a gardening club... The boys we have in this group are so engaged, it's amazing." – Kristie Rae Cananagh, Facebook User

Emotional Intelligence – Let's teach our boys to understand how they're feeling. There are times when boys need to be able to pick themselves up, but there are also times when they just need some love, nurturing and care. Bullying is still such a huge problem and it stems from children who aren't in tuned

with how they feel, or just aren't able to feel certain emotions. It's evident from the Facebook posts that this one often goes under the radar in school, but it's so important and needs our attention.

"The single biggest factor of underachievement and disengagement stems from a frustration of being worthless." – Graham Parkinson, Facebook User

Creating a flexible mindset – Explore Dr Carol Dweck's work. Employ the 3Ps:

1. Passion
2. Practice
3. Persistence

Then have a target — Have boys set specific goals at the beginning of term or semester – to be able to write a 2 page essay, hand all work in on time, be better organised at home around homework – and meet with them for 'check ins' – How do you think you are doing? What could improve? What "P" could you do more of?

Neurological aspects of learning – Lessons are planned to factor in the neurological components for learning- set, boost dopamine, learn something within that 15minute window brain break, do it again. Brain breaks involve things we didn't think we could do but will learn if we practice, such as juggling, clapping game, brain gym or puzzles OR 1 minute calm using the breathing strategy of '7 in/hold 4/7 out'.

WATCH THIS:

[For fabulous ways to explore poetry/creative writing.](#)

<http://www.makeuseof.com/tag/5-powerful-spoken-word-videos-will-touch-soul/>

Encourage reading – Margaret Menner has compiled a useful list of **10 Great Tips or Gimmicks for Shared Reading...** found here at <http://menner.com.au/free-stuff-10-gimmicks.html>

Explore graphic organisers – boys are often very visual and it can help them sort information. Venn diagrams, mind maps, accelerated learning techniques that boys can see help them learn.

USE THIS:

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Here are some great graphic organisers you can print and copy for classroom use: <https://www.eduplace.com/graphicorganizer/>

Paired sharing – this helps boys clarify their thoughts, what is required of a task or assessment and to work out strategies on how to get started. So many boys don't start a task because they are never sure what is wanted, so rather than start and fail, they avoid failing by not starting!

Feedback – give students opportunities to give written feedback on curriculum content after a topic has been completed. Look for suggestions on how it could be improved and what they liked the best and the least.

Acts of service – many schools take students out of school to help various charities, animal refuges or aged care facilities. Helping others is a great way to feel that we have value. Jump onto this after a natural disaster – boys hearts are often touched by awful events and they may want to help especially Red Cross, SES, Surf Lifesaving

Hatchery experience – to help boys feel OK about being gentle and caring, bring in a chicken hatchery – watching grown tough boys being gentle with newborn chickens can be life changing for the boys!

Getting more dads to volunteer in schools – whether that is a special canteen day, greeting students at school gates, playing some fun sport on oval before school, lunch time, create a go-cart club, homing pigeons ... anything a bit different to school! (see Fathering Project to see if there is a member/group nearby)

Make boys feel useful – give them jobs to do around the classroom/outside the classroom – to fight boys feeling like failure and feeling worthless you need to give the opportunities to matter!

Bring classes into school – some schools bring yoga, karate, archery, meditation into school at lunchtime. This helps boys who otherwise would not be able to have access to such classes.

Box of lego – have a large box in the back of your classroom – boys often just gravitate towards it during the 'empty' moments in class and yes they ask to use it when they finish their work!! Could get some ideas from [this lego site](#) too.

Large cuddly toys – in my computer class I have 5 large stuffed toys and boys often come in and get one and sit down with it! Sometimes they stroke it other times they pretend to have conversations with it and other times they sit it on their lap while they work! They have become my secret weapon for hands on boys...

Fascinating facts – each week have some time set aside where students need to find a fascinating fact that they can share.

To encourage boys to answer questions/participate in class – use a soft beany toy or a tennis ball – throw it and whoever holds it is the only one to speak

Finishing tasks – boys like to finish what they start rather than leave things unfinished. Give them smaller tasks so they can experience success.

Dot points in clear sight – this helps boys who forget what is required of them, and in order of required completion ... saves them asking again and again!

Keep walking around the class – having a teacher who keeps moving around the class helps boys stay on track, partly as it makes them feel safe and helps lads who can behave impulsively.

Engage boys to help do projects around the school – helping the gardener, help build paths, paint fences etc. It helps give boys ownership of the physical environment

Make it real – if doing war poetry, build a trench, even have them try to write with pencils on paper in the darkness. -just like the poets did!

Use basketball to teach maths – and stats, graphs...

Create special projects that link to curriculum – as an incentive allow them to build kites, robotics, self propelled boats, knitted ropes, macramé, paddle pop designs, recycled stuff...

To encourage writing – use pavement chalk, water paint on walls, do LARGE ... magnetic letters on walls somewhere.

Teach old games - like skipping, marbles, clapping games, hacky sacks, dodge ball

Avoid using too many words – Clarity of instruction is fundamentally important but equally so is the decluttering of a curriculum. Focus on the kid (student) and work out what he is interested in. Instruct with relevance and don't over talk! Boys hate that!

Hermit crabs! – I teach year 5/6, I find hands on task, student voice & an element of choice works wonders. I've just put hermit crabs in my classroom & excitement has lifted.

Novelty – innovative ways of showing understanding – ‘Boys respond so very well to demonstrating their understanding of a topic in non-traditional ways...eg, not pen to paper. I had great success with allowing boys to act, draw, create video recordings, build models, etc. to show what they really understood about a topic. This often led to further discussion and questions about a ‘big idea’. It also was sometimes relevant to ask “Okay, how are you going to show me what you understand?”.

“I taught Mathematics angles and geometry by getting the boys to pretend they were on a snowboard/skateboard (whatever their preference) and jump appropriately (180 degrees clockwise, 90 degrees anticlockwise, etc). Was so much fun and so much more purposeful than filling in a worksheet.” — Sarah Sheehan (email correspondence)

Helping Boys Shine in Our Schools — Programs & Ideas

READ THIS: Do you know what it's like to actually be a student in your class? Read *The Washington Post's* article "[Teacher spends two days as a student and is shocked at what she learns](#)"