

MAY 2011

SWPDA

Student Welfare and Personal Development
Association of NSW (Incorporated)

Dr Kerrie Eyding
Lot 16 Mc Guinness Drive
Mount Murray
Robertson 2577

SWPDA WORKSHOP

Fostering Motivation and Engagement in Students with Special
Needs (Learning Disabled/Gifted and Talented)

Keynote Speakers

Greg Griffiths and Dr Wilma Vialle

When: Saturday August 27, 2011 8.30am (Registration) - 4pm

Where: PTC CONFERENCE CENTRE

CNR MARION & NORTON STS, LEICHHARDT

Greg Griffiths with a Masters of Education, Gurian training undertaken in USA and a Postgraduate Diploma in Emotional Disturbance and Behaviour Disorder is an educational consultant with 20 years experience in educational settings. Greg has been presenting workshops on boys education and behaviour management as well as seminars, statewide, on motivation and engagement (particularly focusing on boys). Greg will outline a number of practical and effective ways to increase motivation and engagement in the classroom, focusing on students with special needs.

Dr Wilma Vialle is an Associate Professor in Educational Psychology and Associate Dean in the Faculty of Education, University of Wollongong. Her research interests focus on maximising intellectual potential and she is particularly interested in issues of social justice. Ongoing research projects include an international study of effective teachers of the gifted, a longitudinal study of adolescent academic and social-emotional outcomes. She has published extensively on topics related to giftedness and children's learning. With her vast experience in research related to gifted and talented students, Wilma has considerable insight into their need for motivation and engagement. In order for this group to achieve their potential it is the responsibility of the school to provide the appropriate context. Wilma will outline some valuable ideas to support teachers towards this end.

Workshop Rates	Members	Non Members
Early bird (closes August 7)	\$105	\$140
Registration (from August 8)	\$110	\$155
Students	\$75	\$85

NOTE: A school/organisation membership entitles all staff to be charged at member's rate

NSW INSTITUTE OF TEACHERS

Student Welfare and Personal Development Association (through the Professional Teachers Council, NSW)
NSW Institute of Teachers endorsed provider of professional development for the maintenance of accreditation at Professional Competence
Scope of endorsement - all Elements of the Professional Teaching Standards for student welfare and personal development



Dad's Days

There has been much written in recent years about the relative school performance of boys and girls. Amongst the many suggestions deliberated over is the need for men in schools. Whether this be as classroom teachers or as parent helpers there seems to be a drought. It might not be the answer but with more than 80% of the teaching fraternity female and this emphasised in primary / infants classrooms to see more males in classrooms - particularly primary and infants classrooms can only help.

There has historically been difficulty in recruiting male teachers for infants classrooms and male caregivers seem reluctant to make the sort of time that female caregivers contribute in these early years of schooling.

My advocacy is for schools to initiate "Dad's Days" in their schools. Not a BBQ and not all 'Dads' coming on the same day (eg the school Fathers' Day breakfast), but one day each month on which 2 'Dads' per class spend as much of the day as they can in the classroom/playground. The idea for 2 'Dads' is so that there will be some companionship in what might be a strange or even hostile environment for some 'Dads', but more than 2 per class can lead to an overpowering sense or even the yarn session down the back. The 'Dads' are those of both boys and girls.

If all classes were to use the same day each month there might be a large number of 'Dads' on the premises - and that might cause some problems and confusion. It also focuses all resources on the same day without spreading their value out across the month.

Perhaps the 'Dads' of Stage 1 could be rostered on one day, the 'Dads' of Stage 2 perhaps a week or so later and the 'Dads' of Stage 3 on a third day a week or so after this event. This reduces the number of strange bodies on the premises on a given day, but spreads the presence of 'Dads' in the school over more time. Some might like to separate by infants and primary or by school year. There are many options. Conversely it means that there will be strangers on the premises more frequently and this can cause some problems as well.

How much commitment is needed from the 'Dads'? If classes are approximately 30 students (except for the younger groups) it roughly means there are 15 pairs of 'Dads' per class. With January out as students are not at school and December essentially out for end of year activities it roughly means there are going to be 10 pairs of 'Dads' needed for a calendar year per class. About one day a year for each 'Dad'. Those with multiple children will find they can be there one day or several depending on their employment, situation etc. If a roster is developed within each class with caregiver input, there can be sufficient notice for rostered days off/ leave/ etc to be organised.

Some schools doing this have found that several 'Dads' cannot commit a whole day, so come for just a half day, some just for lunch; but every primary/infants teacher has seen the boys congregate around a 'Dad' who has for some reason come into the school playground. Perhaps this can be a more regular event.

These 'Dads' will not be able to teach reading or any subject any better than others, but they can show a 'Dad's' interest in education and demonstrate that education need not be essentially feminine.

There are many families where a Dad is not present. The person coming in for that child could well be a grandparent, an uncle, a big brother - any older male who is significant for that child. There will be some that educationalists will want to see in their rooms regularly, some that would be better in their absence, but they are males who have significance for students and their presence in classrooms is something that has been missing in schools.

The process has some spin-off effects. By having many 'Dads' in the classroom when otherwise they would not be there, they can see for themselves aspects of the classroom, education, teaching etc that they may have forgotten or have changed dramatically since their schooling. This could just promote discussion of school at teatime rather than other topics of conversation or none at all.

Article provided by Greg Griffiths

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"I'm busy. Can't you make it yourself?"

Issues for student welfare in the field of gifted education*

Wilma Vialle

University of Wollongong

One of the biggest challenges for the field of gifted education is to ensure that our identification procedures, programs, curriculum models, and educational practices are:

1. supported by the best research evidence available;
2. focused on all aspects of children's development and well-being;
3. inclusive of all social and cultural groups; and,
4. respectful of different knowledge and belief systems.

Giftedness is not a static construct. Over the course of the twentieth century, we have observed a shift from views that conflated giftedness with IQ to the broader and dynamic perspectives reflected in Gagné's (2003) Differentiated Model of Giftedness and Talent, Sternberg's (2003) model of successful intelligence, Gardner's (1983) theory of Multiple Intelligences, and Ziegler's (2005) Actiotope Model of Giftedness. Percentages of the population that may be regarded as gifted have likewise shifted from around 2% to 10%. A key message in this broadened and dynamic view of giftedness is that potential needs to be cultivated. In Australia and New Zealand, Gagné's model has been widely adopted in state and school policies and has been useful in drawing to the attention of educators, the need to provide conducive environments for talent to flourish.

Sadly, giftedness is still viewed in many quarters as an elitist undertaking, which does not sit well with egalitarian nations such as Australia and New Zealand. While giftedness, by definition, exists equally in all populations, we are still a long way from recognising this in practice (Vialle, 2011). One of the unintended consequences of branding gifted education elitist is the encouragement of anti-intellectualism, which, in turn, can negatively impact students' academic outcomes and social-emotional wellbeing. The negative stereotypes of gifted students can lead to students masking their abilities in favour of social acceptance, for example. I have found popular culture often reflects (or even reinforces) such negative stereotyping, thereby providing a significant challenge for those who care about students' wellbeing.

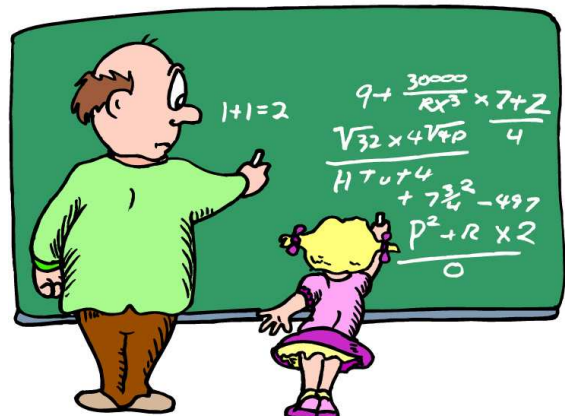
A comprehensive treatment of giftedness and popular culture was recently released in the aptly-titled *Geek Chic* (Inness, 2007). This collection of essays explores the depiction and treatment of intelligent women in the media, ranging from real women such as Hillary Rodham Clinton to television characters such as Daria and the Gilmore Girls. A central tenet of all these essays is that popular culture endorses feminine stereotypes at the same time as it challenges the marginalisation of intelligent women. The chapter by Paule in this volume, for example, explores the "super slacker girls", a term coined to describe smart young female characters who opt out of academic success and career paths commensurate with their abilities; instead through supernatural intervention, they take up altruistic roles. As such, they present a model of the underachieving gifted girl, one who does not fulfill her potential (Vialle, 2009).

For our gifted girls, the messages in popular culture, thus, are contradictory and highlight the "forced-choice dilemma" (Gross, 1989), experienced by many gifted youth, between meeting their academic needs and the need for social acceptance. If popular culture is viewed as a reflection of society's beliefs and attitudes, it is hardly surprising that many of our gifted girls are constrained by expectations that are more aligned to their gender than their potential (Kerr, 1997; Reis, 1998; Vialle, 2009).

In my ideal world, we will celebrate those who are academically gifted in the same way that we celebrate the gifted sportsperson or the talented musician. But this remains a significant challenge for educators at all levels.

This article contains excerpts from previously published work by the author.

(This article including references can be found on the SWPDA website)



SWPDA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Saturday 27 August 2011

at the PTC CONFERENCE CENTRE
CNR MARION & NORTON STS, LEICHHARDT

the meeting will commence at 4.00pm following the
SWPDA WORKSHOP

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Please join us if you would like to find out more about the SWPDA or you would like to join our committee

Learning Difficulties Coalition of NSW Inc.

The Learning Difficulties Coalition of NSW Inc is a not-for-profit organisation which advocates for and supports the one in five children who learn differently. We are strongly committed to assisting people with learning and attentional difficulties.

The Telephone Helpline (9806 9960) offers support and information to parents, teachers and professionals, including assistance in finding resources, contacts within the school system, contact with local support groups, booklists, websites, relevant seminars/workshops, publications on a range of learning difficulties, etc. Information can also be found on our website www ldc.org.au

Members also receive quarterly Newsletters, discounts on seminars and publications, fortnightly emails of current news and articles relating to learning difficulties, as well as book/dvd/website reviews (currently membership of the LDC is \$30 per annum).

Supplied by the Learning Difficulties Coalition of NSW Inc

WORKSHOP SPONSORS

The SWPDA would like to thank
Western Plains Zoos
Bridge Climb Sydney
for supporting our May Workshop



If you would like to join our committee, recommend a speaker or contribute to the newsletter please contact Kerrie on keyding@ozemail.com.au

