

# **PEER RELATIONS AND MASCULINITIES IN A BOYS' MIDDLE SCHOOL: A CASE STUDY**

by

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## **Abstract**

This portfolio contains a multi-method case study presenting the outcomes of two research projects in an Australian, urban, Anglican, independent boys' Middle School. Ecological theory informed the study, explaining how the experiences of the boys and their development are shaped by the interacting environments of school, family, peers and the wider society. The central theme of this portfolio is that the nature of experiences encountered in the social and learning environment at school shape the social development of students. The projects illuminate this theme in some detail.

The first project was an action research project concerning peer relations (including bullying). It used a range of questionnaires, student focus groups, staff interviews, ongoing incident data and a reflective journal to research the school's environment. An *in situ* approach to intervening in and investigating reported incidents was developed in this action research project. This approach has the acronym of CEEVEC and it proved to be effective in many cases.

The second project researched Year 9 boys' views of masculinity, factors influencing their views of masculinity and the school's role in the construction of their views of masculinity. This project incorporated student focus groups and a student questionnaire, analysed using both Exploratory Factor Analysis and Rasch analysis. A predominant plural view of masculinity was found consistent with Swain's 'personalised view' where social context is important. Older male role models from the boys' families emerged as the most important influences of their views of masculinity.

The two research projects are linked by an overarching paper. The findings of the two projects and the linked conclusions have wider implications for practice in the case's Middle School and the quality of the learning environment created at school in general.

## Certification

*I certify that the substance of this portfolio has not already been submitted for any degree and is not currently being submitted for any other degree or qualification.*

*I certify that any help received in preparing this portfolio, and all sources used, have been acknowledged in this portfolio.*

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Signature

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