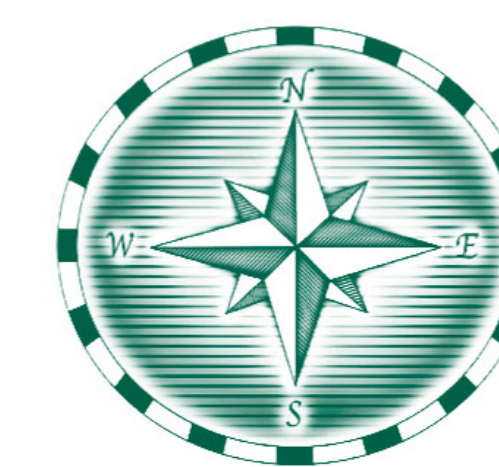


# Boys as Positive Role Models

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## Introduction

There is a great opportunity for Year 10 students to be positive role-models for the junior boys, as they are in a position of admiration amongst their junior peers. This research project was designed to help these students reflect on their position as role-models within a pastoral care environment, and give them the tools to be positive role models for the younger boys of the House.

## The Research Question

How might participating in a program that focuses on fairness, leadership and teamwork help Year 10 students develop as role models?

## Research Context

Shore School is an independent day and boarding school located in Sydney, Australia. Key features of the senior school are:

- ✦ Approximately 1200 students from years 7 to 12
- ✦ 14 Day Houses and 4 Boarding Houses
- ✦ Vertical House system delivers the school's pastoral care program
- ✦ Pastoral care program designed to assist each boy come to terms with his own responsibilities in meeting the intellectual and social demands of life

## Participants

This action research project involved Year 10 students from Gilmour House. These students were selected because:

- ✦ Gilmour House was in its first year of operation and all five members of the year group could participate
- ✦ Participants were at an age where they exert significant influence over the junior boys in the House, but do not necessarily have the tools to use this influence positively
- ✦ All participants do Drama as an elective subject
- ✦ The Housemaster was looking for ways to increase the involvement of these students in creating a positive environment in the House

## The Research Action

The research action involved participants undertaking a program focused on developing them as role models. The program required participants to:

- ✦ Participate in a focus group to define fairness, leadership and teamwork
- ✦ Identify school-based scenarios where these traits can be displayed
- ✦ Perform scenarios across consecutive weeks in House Meetings
- ✦ Actively live each trait for that week
- ✦ Participate in focus groups held throughout the program to discuss role models and character development

## Data Collection

Qualitative data were preferred over quantitative data, as the action research process is focused on observing, reflecting and adjusting working practices. The data collection tools utilised were:

- ✦ Questionnaires
- ✦ Focus Groups
- ✦ Direct Observation

## Data Analysis

The data analysis was completed using the following steps:

- ✦ All data reviewed
- ✦ Specific events and experiences identified
- ✦ Common experiences noted
- ✦ Events and experiences labelled using their commonalities
- ✦ Attributes relative to each common theme were identified

## Conclusions

- ✦ Taking time to stop and reflect on assumed behaviours is important
- ✦ Defining key character traits for students is essential
- ✦ Program encouraged students to be more conscious of their actions
- ✦ Participants empowered by the realisation that they have influence on junior boys of the House
- ✦ Explicitly teaching boys skills to be positive role-models is beneficial
- ✦ Program is easily transferable to exploring other character traits, as well as concepts beyond character development
- ✦ The challenge lies in encouraging boys to make decisions as positive role-models when they are not being held accountable for their actions

## Key Readings

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Peterson, C. (2006). *A primer in positive psychology*. New York: Oxford University Press, Inc.

Reichert, M. & Hawley, R. (2009) *Teaching boys: A global study of effective practices*. International Boys Schools Coalition. Pawling, New York.

## Further Information

The full report of this project and an online copy of this poster are available at <http://www.theibsc.org>.



## Key Findings and Discussion

- ✦ Boys developed a greater awareness of the traits of fairness, leadership and teamwork
- ✦ Boys were more aware of the impact they have as role-models.
- ✦ Positive behaviours were exhibited in junior boys' behaviour.
- ✦ The tasks provided motivation to undertake actions of good character.
- ✦ Senior boys perceived more positive interactions with junior boys.

"You realise that you were always going to be judged by what you do. So, you had to keep up your standards."

"The main benefit for me was realising that the younger boys look up to me more than I realised, so I had a chance to correct my behaviour and lead by example."

"It gave me a lot more interaction with it. It made you realise what it actually was. The physical actions, rather than just the words."

"I could see that after we clearly showed them how to lead and how to do things, they did them."

"It improved my relationship with the younger boys."

"It has shown me how much of an impact I have on the younger boys and so I actually need to be careful about what I do"

"Yeah, the younger boys actually listen to us!"

"There's actually been a big difference! After each scenario you can see a change."

"I guess that they learn how to receive the message from us. I think it's also that they learn how to respond from our leadership."

