

Sustaining the Gifted Warrior!

**Mrs Irene Daniels
Head of Learning Enhancement
Lake Joondalup Baptist College
Western Australia
dani@ljbc.wa.edu.au**

Notes on "COPING" from *Coping For Capable Kids, 1993, Cohen, L & Frydenberg, E., Hawker Brownlow Education Australia.*

"Coping is your way of dealing with your world and the problems that life dishes out." P.6

Coping is adaptive functioning, where the individual and the environment are engaged in an interactive process. The individual perceives the world in a unique way and these perceptions make up the person's reality. The individual then responds to the environment according to his or her perceptions.

Self stresses – the messages we give ourselves (the shoulds, musts, have to & cant's)

We need to reduce our stress by reducing our inner drive to be "er" e.g. smart-er, slim-er, bett-er.

The theory of coping provides a framework within which behaviour can be investigated according to how an individual adapts. Thus *coping* is a set of cognitive and behavioural strategies used to deal with the demands of everyday living.

Frydenberg and Lewis have identified 18 distinguishable coping strategies. These make up the thoughts, feelings and actions which individuals are able to call upon in particular circumstances to manage their concerns.

We need to have a range of strategies called the coping repertoire or coping vocabulary.

Two distinguishable modes for dealing with life's problems.

- a. Cognitive (Thinking) domain – problem-focussed coping –attempts to deal with the problem directly)
- b. Affective (Feeling) domain- emotion-focussed coping (attempts to reduce the stress felt by the individual)

For competence in coping it helps to have the ingredients for a healthy self-concept and a positive self esteem, plus experiences in coping that lead you to believe you can handle your problems.

Psychosocial competence: an active coping orientation. This person is characterised by

- High initiative
- Realistic goal setting
- Substantial planning
- Forbearance and effort in the service of attaining goals

- Capacity for enjoying successes and an ability to learn from failure and building from both

The Adolescent Coping Scale (ACS) Frydenberg and Lewis. 1993 ACER Press

The 80 items on the ACS were generated from over 2000 descriptions of coping strategies provided by over 600 secondary students in Australian schools. Their responses were grouped into 18 key areas. The scale was constructed on a population which represented the full range of intellectual functioning and was trialled on thousands of young people. However no such list is complete.

The major objective in developing an adolescent measure of coping was to facilitate the development of psychosocial competence in young people. The underlying philosophy behind the development of the ACS is the belief that we can all take a long hard look at what we do and modify aspects of ourselves that we would like to improve – ways that we would like to act, strategies we would like to abandon or use less and strategies that we would like to enhance.

Also the purpose behind the seminar – by reflecting on one's coping and armed with some ideas from others, we can embark on a journey of personal development and share this with those in our care.

COPING STRATEGIES

- A. Those which represent an attempt to remain positive while solving the problem:
- **Focus on the Positive**-represented by items which indicate a positive and cheerful outlook on the current situation. This includes seeing the bright side of circumstances and seeing oneself as fortunate, eg. *It helps if you look at positive things.*
 - **Focus on Solving the Problem** – a strategy which tackles the problem systematically by learning about it and taking into account different points of view or options, eg. *I look at all the possible ways I could overcome this worry, then I work out a plan to cope with it.*
 - **Physical Recreation**-characterised by items which relate to playing sport and keeping fit, eg. *I play sport or just keep fit.*
 - **Seek Relaxing Diversions**-relaxation in general rather than sport. It is characterised by items which describe leisure activities such as reading and painting, eg. *I escape with music, either listening to it or playing.*
 - **Work Hard to Achieve**- describes commitment, ambition and industry, eg. *I am working hard to the best of my ability.*
- B. Interacting with other people and remaining socially connected
- **Seek Social Support**-an inclination to share the problem with friends or relatives and enlist support in its management, eg. *I talk to someone as I find it really helps.*
 - **Invest in Close Friends** -involves engaging in an intimate relationship e.g. *I spend as much time as I can with my boyfriends or girlfriend*
 - **Seek to Belong** indicates a caring concern for one's relationship with others in general and, more specifically, concern with what others think, eg. *If I talk to people about what they like, they accept me.*
 - **Seek Spiritual Support**-characterised by items which reflect prayer and belief in the assistance of a spiritual leader or God, eg. *I pray to the Lord to take care of all my worries.*

- **Seek Professional Help**-denotes the use of a professional adviser, such as a teacher or counsellor, eg. *I go to the teacher or counsellor to get help.*
- **Recourse to Social Action**- letting others know what is of concern and enlisting support by writing petitions or organising an activity such as meeting or a rally, eg. *I got people to sign a petition and sent a letter to the government.*
- C. Less productive in reaching a solution. Emotional focus rather than an action-oriented one.
 - **Worry**- indicates a concern about the future in general terms or, more specifically, a concern with happiness in the future, eg. *I worry about school.*
 - **Wishful Thinking**-having hopes and anticipations of things turning out well, eg. *I daydream a lot.*
 - **Ignore the Problem**-characterised by items which reflect a conscious blocking out of the problem, eg. *I try to forget about my concerns.*
 - **Tension Reduction strategies**-characterised by items which reflect an attempt to make oneself feel better by releasing tension. (such as smoking, eating or drinking) , eg. *If something bad happens I go an write it down, I have a cry and then I feel heaps better.*
 - **Keep Problems to Oneself**-characterised by items which reflect the individual's withdrawal from others, and wish to keep others from knowing about concerns, e.g. *I don't show my feelings, and instead I deal with things myself.*
 - **Self-blame**-indicates the individuals see themselves as responsible for the concern or worry. eg. *It's my fault I feel so bad.*
 - **Not Coping** (a declaration of an inability to cope)-consists of items which reflect the individual's inability to deal with the problem and the development of psychosomatic symptoms, eg. *I don't have any strategies-I just battle on, taking each day as it comes.*

Coping and Giftedness

Most commonly used strategies: Work Hard to Achieve and Focus on Solving the Problem. (More than regular young people too)

Least used strategies: Getting involved in Social Action, Tension Reduction, and Seeking Spiritual Support.

Gifted young people also further distinguished from the regular population by their less frequent use of engaging in intimate relationships or friendships, less inclined to daydream or resort to wishful thinking. Also less inclined to declare their inability to cope and resort to tension reducing strategies e.g. alcohol & drugs.

See also:

<http://school.familyeducation.com/gifted-education/stress>

Articles: *Gifted Students and Stress Management*

Reducing Stress for the Gifted Adolescent

Sample Evaluation Sheets (Answer lines deleted)

LITERACY EXTENSION CLASS EVALUATION (FOR STUDENTS)

NAME: _____ CLASS: _____

1. What have you have enjoyed about attending Literacy Extension?
2. Have had any negatives associated with attending Literacy Extension (L.E.)?
3. Name at least two things you have learnt or achieved from attending L.E. this term.
4. If Literacy Extension was continuing next term, would you like to attend? _____
5. Put a tick in the box which shows the way you think about the importance of each aspect of being in Literacy Extension Group.

1	Being in a small group of students (about 8).			
2	Being in a group with others of similar high ability as me.			
3	Doing harder work (at a more advanced level) than usual.			
4	Enjoying the opportunity to do extra English type activities.			
5	Having a different teacher (Mrs Daniels).			
6	Reading new stories & poems, discussing & thinking about these.			
7	Missing out on what's going on in my regular classroom.			
8	Being challenged in my thinking.			
9	Learning something new.			
10	(Your suggestion)			

6. Would you like to attend other Extension Classes? _____

7. Tick the box which matches your response to possible Extension Classes.

EXTENSION CLASS	YES!	NOT SURE	NO WAY!
1. Science			
2. Environmental studies (Endangered animals & environments)			
3. Inventions & Inventors			
4. Night of the Notables (Research a			

notable person and give a presentation on them)			
5. Independent Research, own choice of topic.			
6. Creative Writing			
7. Make My Own Picturebook			
8. Classic Literature			
9. Caves, (Speleology) , Geology,			
10. Philosophy (exploring concepts such as Happiness, power, love, prejudice, freedom, courage, peace)			
11. Creative Thinking & Tournament of the Minds			
12. Tournament of the Minds			
13. History :			
14. Suggestion:			

8. Describe your 'ideal classroom'.

9. Describe your perfect school

10. 10 REASONS FOR GOING TO SCHOOL.	11. REASONS NOT TO GO TO SCHOOL



Dear Parent/s,

Your daughter/son has been attending a Literacy Extension group run by Mrs Daniels during this term.

Your feedback in relation to this is sought. It would be greatly appreciated if you could answer the following questions and return this to your child's class teacher or Primary Reception by the end of this term, Thursday 3rd July.

Thank you

Head of Primary K-4

Head of Primary 5-7

LITERACY EXTENSION EVALUATION: Term 2 2008. (FOR PARENT)

What is the Year level of your child which this Evaluation is based on? _____

1. Did your child make any comments of a *positive* nature about the Literacy extension class? If so, what were some of these comments?
2. Did your child make any comments of a *negative* nature in relation to attending the Literacy extension class? If so, what were some of these comments?
3. Did you observe any different or new behaviours from your child which you attribute to them attending Literacy extension?
4. As your child was identified as a student exhibiting high ability in the Literacy domain, what other provisions do you think should be provided for your child?
5. Do you think a programme such as the Withdrawal from regular class Learning Enrichment Group should continue? Please explain your opinion.
6. Have you any suggestions or comments about provisions for students of high academic ability at Lake Joondalup Baptist College?

Thank you. Your feedback and contributions are greatly appreciated.

PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM TO YOUR CHILD'S CLASS TEACHER OR RECEPTION

LITERACY EXTENSION EVALUATION: Term 2 2008. (FOR TEACHER)

Name:..... Class Level taught

1. Did the students who attended Literacy Extension make any comments of a *positive* nature about the Literacy extension class? If so, what were some of these comments?
2. Did these students make any comments of a *negative* nature in relation to attending the Literacy extension class? If so, what were some of these comments?
3. Did you observe any different or new behaviors from these students which you attributed to them attending Literacy extension?
4. When Literacy Extension students were out of your class, at the group, they were missing what was going on in your classroom. How did you feel about this? Were students required to catch up on what they missed?
5. What comments have you had from **parents** of students who attended Literacy Extension?
6. Do you think a programme such as the 'Withdrawal from regular class for a Learning Extension Group' should continue? Please explain your opinion.
7. Have you any suggestions or comments about *other* provisions for students of high academic ability from your class? How else could you be supported to help them?
8. Have you any ideas, or comments about, catering for students of high academic ability at LJBC(Primary) in general?

SECONDARY CREATIVE CHALLENGES CLUB STUDENT EVALUATION
2008

NAME: _____ YEAR LEVEL: _____

1. Did you enjoy being part of the Creative Challenges Club? _____
2. Please explain the reasons for your answer
3. Why did you initially choose to attend the Club?
4. Why did you *continue* to attend the Club?
5. What 'gap' or 'need' in your education did Creative Challenges Club fulfil?
6. What changes would you make to your educational programme, which you think would improve your learning outcomes?
7. Describe your "ideal school" in key words
8. Have you participated in Tournament of the Minds? Which years (how many times?)
9. What have been the benefits for you, of participating in TOM?
10. Why do you think the Tournament of the Minds program should continue?
11. Please tick the box to show the degree of value you attribute to aspects of being involved in the Creative Challenges Club and Tournament of Minds program.

	Very important	Important	A little important	Not very important
a. Having an opportunity to work with other students who are at my intellectual level & interested in the same activities as me.				
b. Getting to know other students in the college who I would not usually mix with.(Mixed ages)				
c. Having an opportunity to spend more time engaged in creative thinking & problem solving activities.				
d. Being intellectually challenged.				
e. Having the opportunity to work with a different teacher (Extended learning teacher)				
f. The opportunity to be in the TOM competition.				
g. The opportunity to represent my school at an interschool level and interact with other students of similar interest & intellectual ability.				

Any other comments would be valued:

Thank you.

Mrs Daniels.
Extended Learning Teacher. 19th June 2008

NAME: _____
YEAR: _____

TOURNAMENT OF THE MINDS 2008

STUDENT FEEDBACK and EVALUATION FORM (Secondary)

- (1) Have you been part of TOM before? _____
When? _____
- (2) What were your initial reasons for wanting to commit yourself to being part of TOM?
- (3) Check the list of Objectives of TOM. Have they been achieved for you? What do you feel you have gained/ learned/ achieved through your involvement in TOM?
- (4) What have been some of the negative aspects of being in TOM?
- (5) What suggestions would you make for next year to improve the running of TOM at LJBC?
- (6) Give a percentage to show your desire to be involved in TOM again next year- 0% (Definitely NOT)100% (Definitely YES) _____
(If Year 10 assume you were able to participate again)
- (7) Any other comments:

THANKYOU FOR YOUR FEEDBACK & YOUR DEDICATED EFFORTS
PARTICIPATING IN T.O.M. THIS YEAR. WELL DONE