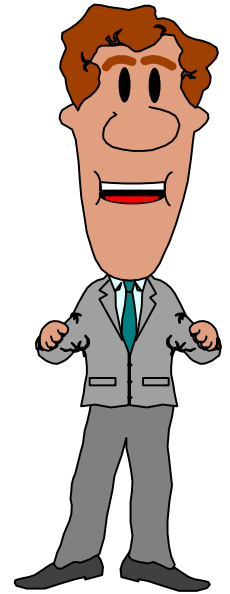


Self Confidence and Criticism

Girls tend to lack confidence in their ability to successfully carry out intellectual tasks. Despite their superior performance, it is girls who generally expect to encounter most difficulty when learning new things. Boys are more able to shrug off failures by attributing them to lack of effort on their part, or unfair assessment by teachers. Girls on the other hand, constantly underestimate their ability, fail to attach significance to their successes whilst losing confidence when they fail. This is because girls blame failure on their perceived intellectual inadequacies while explaining success in terms of luck. In doing so they fail to convince themselves that they are capable of succeeding and they come to avoid challenging new situations in which they fear they will fail.



How does this arise? Perhaps because boys tend to be criticised more frequently for lacking neatness in their work, for failing to make sufficient effort and for misbehaviour in the classroom. So girls begin to lose confidence because they get less criticism from teachers.

Boys are given ways of explaining away their failures in terms of behaviour, which could be modified; the girls are given no such excuses that they can make for themselves.

(Paraphrased from studies by Licht and Dweck)