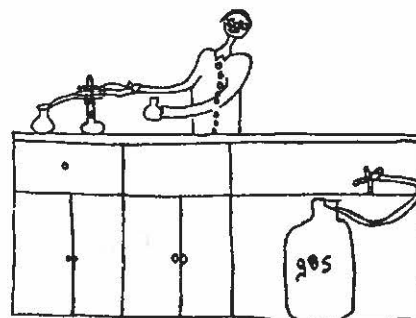


# Draw a Scientist

Deborah Chetcuti

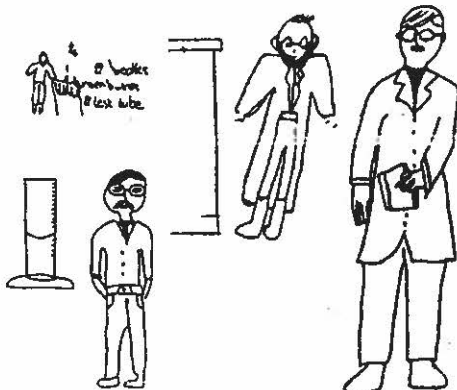


**G**irls view science as masculine. When asked to draw a scientist, girls in a Maltese area secondary school drew a scientist who was male, wore glasses, stood close to a laboratory bench, held instruments, wore a lab coat and had a beard or a moustache.

When asked why they drew all male scientists the girls came up with the stereotypic answer that "men are more suitable as scientists.... they have nothing better than girls but I see a scientist as being more a man...". The girls admit that they get this idea from the media, especially television which always show the scientists as being male and any women present are only shown as helpers and do not play a major role. As one girl says, "...when we



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see programmes on television...they always show men... they never show a woman...and when they do... the women scientists they seem to be more to help the scientist... instead of doing things themselves... they pass them things...".

These stereotypes can be overcome by:

- using textbooks and resources which do portray women as scientists;
- showing girls that they too are capable of doing science;
- bringing women scientists into the classroom to act as role models.

These are only a few examples of what can be done to encourage girls' interests in science. The most effective approach is to move away from the idea of boys being more interested in science, to encourage girls to believe in themselves and in their own potential and to acknowledge the role of girls' interests, experiences and understanding in the science classroom.

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