LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS
Creating and Maintaining Productive Classrooms

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POSITIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS
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Guide to the text

As you read this text you will find a number of features in each chapter to enhance your study of positive learning environments, helping you to understand how the theories presented are applied in the real world.

CHAPTER-OPENING FEATURES

- **AN INTRODUCTION TO POSITIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS (PLE)**
- **LEARNING OUTCOMES**
- **Chapter overview**
- **STORIES FROM THE FIELD**
- **IN PRACTICE**

Read the Learning outcomes to get a preview of what you will learn from the Chapter overview lists the key topics that are covered in the chapter.

Use the Starter story at the beginning of each chapter to give you a classroom context for the ideas and theories that you are about to learn.

FEATURES WITHIN CHAPTERS

STORIES FROM THE FIELD

- **Story from the field**
- **Voluntary listener**

Link concepts in the chapter to real-life experiences with Stories from the field, as told by mostly new graduate teachers. Apply these to your own learning by using the reflections at the end of each story.

IN PRACTICE

- **In practice**

See how techniques discussed in the book can be used in the classroom with the in practice examples.

YOU BE THE JUDGE

Consider your views on issues related to creating positive learning environments via the You be the judge boxes.

END-OF-CHAPTER FEATURES

At the end of each chapter you will find several tools to help you to review, practise and extend your knowledge of the key learning outcomes.

- **Key terms**
- **Individual and group activities**
- **Weblinks**

Review your understanding of the key chapter topics with a list of Key terms you should know.

Engage with theory and reflect on the material in the chapter by completing the Individual and group activities.

Conduct your own online reading and research using the short list of recommended Weblinks.

PROFESSIONAL REFLECTION

Work through the Professional reflection tasks at the end of each chapter and use the prompts to start developing your own philosophy for a positive learning environment.
Guide to the online resources

FOR THE INSTRUCTOR

Cengage is pleased to provide you with a selection of resources that will help you prepare your lectures and assessments. These teaching tools are accessible via cengage.com.au/instructors for Australia or cengage.co.nz/instructors for New Zealand.

INSTRUCTOR'S MANUAL
The Instructor’s manual includes:
- Additional learning activities
- Suggestions for using "Stories from the field"
- Cases

POWERPOINT™ PRESENTATIONS
Use the chapter-by-chapter PowerPoint slides to enhance your lecture presentations and handouts by reinforcing the key principles of your subject.

ONLINE VIDEO ACTIVITIES
These online video links and questions can be used to extend students’ understanding of the chapter topics and encourage them to do further online research.

ARTWORK FROM THE TEXT
Add digital files of photographs, tables and pictures into your course management system, use them in student handouts, or copy them into your lecture presentations.

FOR THE STUDENT

Visit http://login.cengagebrain.com to access the Positive Learning Environments companion website. You will find:

- a tool to help you develop your philosophy for a positive learning environment
- revision quizzes
- online research activities
- additional 'Stories from the field'
- and more resources to help you excel in your studies.
INTRODUCTION

The context

As you study to become a qualified primary or secondary classroom teacher, you will get lots of information and advice about the curriculum – namely, about what you will teach your students. In Australia, the 2008 Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians (MCEETYA, 2008) and the Australian Curriculum (ACARA, 2016) will provide your focus. In New Zealand, the New Zealand Curriculum and Te Marautanga o Aotearoa (the national curriculum for Māori-medium settings), and their attendant principles, values and key competencies (Ministry of Education, 2016), will provide your focus.

You will also get lots of information and advice about pedagogy: that is, the art and science of teaching. The Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (AITSL, 2011) and the New Zealand Graduating Teacher Standards (Education Council of Aotearoa New Zealand, 2016) will give you direction here, but it is also worth referring to literature that has been created around the concept of quality pedagogy, such as New Zealand’s Effective Pedagogies framework, Queensland’s Productive Pedagogies framework, South Australia’s Teaching for Effective Learning (TEL) framework, the New South Wales Quality Teaching framework, and so on.

There is clear research evidence that the quality, and hence the effectiveness, of your teaching is central to maximising your students’ engagement and learning outcomes (Hattie & Yates, 2014). If you become an effective teacher, you will be a key source of inspiration to your students, and highly influential when they consider choices about further education, work and life (OECD, 2005). A key element of effective teaching is creating and maintaining positive learning environments (PLEs) and, in particular, productive classrooms. The beliefs, knowledge, understanding and skills related to creating and maintaining PLEs that you will develop as you study to become a teacher will be critical to your success as an early career teacher.

There is a wide diversity of views on, and approaches to, developing this key element of effective teaching. In this text, we present our view of how to do so, which is based on our Lyford model (Lyons, Arthur-Kelly & Ford, 2015). We also present and explain a range of approaches that are informed by evidence-based theory and practice. This content will provide you with a comprehensive but manageable introduction to this field of study. We describe and explain the knowledge, understanding and skills necessary for you to move confidently from a theoretical focus at the pre-service stage to effective practice at the early career stage.

Managing the behaviour of students, no matter what their age level, 'can be a source of frustration, even stress, for teachers’ (De Nobile & London, 2012, p. 42). We aim to minimise that frustration and stress by empowering you to develop and explain your professional philosophy of teaching, and to synchronise it with your theoretical beliefs and preferred approaches to creating and maintaining PLEs, particularly in your classroom/s. We aim to empower you to develop your first-draft classroom management plan, which will be underpinned by your professional philosophy. And we show you practical ways in which to create and maintain your classroom as a PLE.

Our view about creating and maintaining PLEs is grounded on five key beliefs that we share as an author team; namely:
1. that effective teachers should use evidence-based pedagogies
2. that effective teachers should adopt an ecological perspective on developing positive learning environments
3. that effective teachers should regard the development and maintenance of positive learning environments as integral to all that occurs within their classroom and the wider school setting
4. that effective teachers should plan and act proactively to both encourage and respond to focus student behaviours
5. that effective teachers should recognise classroom management plans as dynamic documents informed by ongoing professional reflection.

The text

We regard this book to be (much like a classroom management plan) a dynamic document; a ‘work in progress’. It draws significantly on our professional reflections on the preceding editions of a previous classroom management text (Lyons, Ford & Slee, 2014), and on the professional reflections offered to us by our students, academic peers and school teaching colleagues. It also draws significantly from research in classroom and behaviour management and related fields, such as psychology.

This introduction will explain to you the structure of the 10 chapters. You will need to proactively engage with the text – particularly by having a go (individually and collaboratively) at the various end-of-chapter activities – and with our companion website. Your learning will have meaning and value if you can ultimately draft a professional philosophy statement that includes reference to pertinent theory related to creating and maintaining your classroom as a PLE. After reading this book, you will also be able to create a first-draft classroom management plan that is synchronous with your professional philosophy statement.

Now let’s preview the rest of the text. Chapter 1 introduces you to beliefs, views and approaches to creating and maintaining PLEs, particularly in classrooms. Our key reference points are the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers for pre-service teachers and New Zealand’s Graduating Teacher Standards for pre-service teachers. Our beliefs and view on the chapter topic are explained through an introduction to the Lyford model. This model can support your development of, and reflection on, your professional philosophy and your theoretical beliefs about, and preferred approaches to, creating and maintaining PLEs. The chapter sets out the content, structure and relationships among the remaining chapters, and offers plenty of opportunities (as do all the chapters) for engagement through a variety of individual and group activities.

Chapters 2 to 5 explain the four key components of taking a preventative pathway toward building classrooms as PLEs. These are demonstrated in our Lyford model. Chapter 2 describes and explains classroom climate and its key subcomponents of relationships and communication. Practical strategies for building and improving these are a feature of this chapter, and of all of the chapters.
Chapter 3 explains classroom culture, which is determined by the quality of procedural structures like rights, responsibilities, rules, consequences and due process. Chapter 4 explains the physical classroom environment and its key subcomponents of setup, use of space, ambience and safety. Chapter 5 explains instructional practice, with a focus on the interrelationships among curriculum, pedagogy and assessment, and on how these are so closely related to creating and maintaining PLEs.

Chapters 6 to 9 explain the four main approaches to creating and maintaining PLEs. Each of these chapters focuses firstly on theory related to the relevant approach, and secondly on the relevant approach's practical applications around prevention and intervention. Chapter 6 explains behavioural approaches; Chapter 7 explains cognitive behavioural approaches; Chapter 8 explains psychoeducational approaches; and Chapter 9 explains social justice approaches. These social justice perspectives represent what we consider to be a new category of approaching classroom and behaviour management.

Chapter 10 shows how you can use the Lyford model to bring together the content of the text to design and develop your first-draft classroom management plan. This will then help you to develop, discuss, reflect on and synchronise your professional philosophy statement with your theoretical beliefs about and preferred approaches to creating and maintaining PLEs.

Even at this early point, it should be evident that there are many considerations here, firstly in developing an authentic and useful professional philosophy around creating and maintaining your classroom as a PLE, and secondly in developing an effective first-draft classroom management plan that is underpinned by a strong base of theory and practice. You will need this draft classroom management plan well before your first teaching day! In other words, you have lots to learn, and lots to do – particularly with respect to creating and maintaining your classroom as a PLE – in order to become an effective teacher. Fortunately, we have lots to teach you throughout this text and on our companion website, in conjunction with your teacher education degree or other course for which this text has been prescribed.

Again: we want you to proactively engage with this text and its companion website by having a thoughtful go at the various activities included at the end of each chapter. These sections commence with a ‘Professional reflection’ box that calls on you to think about, and work on, your emerging professional philosophy statement, and to consider theories relating to student behaviour and how PLEs and classroom management plans contribute to student behaviour. The ‘Individual and group Activities’ that follow always start with a question on the chapter ‘Starter story’. The remaining activities and question sets address aspects of the chapter content in rough order of presentation, concluding with activities focused on guiding you to build your first-draft classroom management plan.

As you progress through each chapter, we also include ‘In practice’ boxes, which give practical advice for putting theory into practice, and ‘You be the judge’ boxes, which challenge you to take an informed position on real-life classroom dilemmas. These provide additional progressive opportunities for you to engage with the chapter content. We have also included examples from teacher practice to illustrate some of the concepts in each chapter. Each chapter also homes one ‘Story from the field’. These accounts have been written by actual teachers, and each illustrates a key concept in each chapter. More stories from the field can be found on the companion website; many of these contributed to the development of the Lyford model.

Remember, too, to use each chapter’s ‘Learning outcomes’, ‘Chapter overview’, ‘Chapter summary’ and ‘Key terms’ to review and consolidate your learning; they are there to help you.

Each chapter, then, includes:

- ‘Learning outcomes’, which summarise our expectations around your learning
- a ‘Chapter overview’, which lists the key topic headings for the chapter
- a ‘Chapter summary’, which concisely explains each chapter’s key points
- a ‘Starter story’, which sets the chapter in a personal context
- a ‘Story from the field’, which brings to life a concept dealt with in the chapter
- ‘In practice’ boxes, which provide practical advice for putting theory into practice
- a ‘You be the judge’ box, which challenges you to take an informed position on real-life classroom dilemmas
- a ‘Professional reflection’ activity to help you to develop your professional philosophy of teaching, and your theoretical beliefs about and preferred approaches to creating and maintaining PLEs
- figures and tables, to help to explain more complex ideas
- a ‘Summary’ to bring the chapter content back together
- a list of ‘Key terms’ to reinforce key chapter concepts
- ‘Individual and group activities’ to engage and challenge you and your peers
- ‘Weblinks’ to valuable online resources
- a ‘References’ list.

We strongly encourage you work through the text sequentially, but you can draw on some chapters more selectively. If you intend to do so, we suggest you commence with Chapter 1, then choose from among chapters 2 to 5 (which are really a group of chapters) and/or then from among chapters 6 to 9 (another group of chapters). We strongly recommend that you start on Chapter 10 only after you have studied all of the other chapters.

In addition to the text, the companion website contains a wealth of further materials, including theories informing the authors’ view on developing and maintaining positive learning environments, other theories and models, and many stories from the field written by real teachers.

Good luck with your studies, and we hope that this text empowers you to become the quality, effective teacher you undoubtedly aspire to be!

John, Gordon and Michael
January 2017

References


ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Dr John De Nobile is a senior lecturer and researcher in education, and director of the primary teacher education program, in the Department of Educational Studies at Macquarie University. He has also worked in schools as a classroom teacher and as an executive member, and for school systems as an educational auditor. His experiences in schools included working with many students with significant behavioural problems, and with their teachers and families, to achieve positive academic and social outcomes. His current research interests include leadership communication, values education and the ways in which these influence student behaviour and teacher well-being in primary, secondary and other school contexts.

Dr Gordon Lyons is a lecturer and researcher in the teacher education program in the School of Education at the University of Newcastle. He has been a classroom, support and executive teacher in primary, secondary and special schools, working substantially with students with intellectual disabilities and/or challenging behaviours. He has also worked for the NSW Office of the Public Guardian supporting adults with intellectual disabilities and challenging behaviours. One of his ongoing research interests is the development of schoolwide approaches to improving student welfare.

Professor Michael Arthur-Kelly is a teacher and researcher in the School of Education at the University of Newcastle. He is especially interested in translational approaches in bridging theory to practice, and especially the needs of individuals with complex needs in the social and communication areas.
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The publication of this first edition of Positive Learning Environments signals a 'new era' in Australian texts related to this topic. This edition has solid foundations in the four earlier editions of Classroom Management: Creating Positive Learning Environments, a best-selling Australian text which precipitated out of an original concept and collaboration by Chris Gordon, Michael Arthur-Kelly and Nancy Butterfield. This text is also a work in progress, and the product of a continuing collaboration between colleagues, peers, students, family and friends, all of whom have variously assisted, advised, critiqued, contributed, encouraged, suggested, supported and cajoled us to publication!

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Thank you,
John, Gordon and Michael
January 2017
AN INTRODUCTION TO POSITIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS (PLEs)

Learning outcomes

When you have worked through this chapter, you should be able to demonstrate a basic understanding of:

- the nature of positive learning environments (PLEs), and the diversity of factors which can impact their creation and maintenance
- the key relationship between professional standards and creating and maintaining PLEs
- the nature and relevance of the authors’ beliefs and view about creating and maintaining PLEs, particularly around adopting an ecological perspective
- the importance of recognising and encouraging appropriate student behaviours, and preventing and intervening with respect to inappropriate student behaviours
- the place of classroom management plans and the Lyford model in supporting the development of your classroom as a PLE
- the scope and sequence of this text, and how to navigate through the content to best inform the development of your emerging knowledge, understanding and skills in creating and maintaining your classroom as a PLE.

Chapter overview

- Prevention and its four key components
- Intervention and response
- Professional reflection
- Summary
- Key terms
- Individual and group activities
- Online resources
- Weblinks
- References
INTRODUCTION

Your first position as an early career teacher will be exciting and rewarding, but also challenging. Some of you, like Jeremy above, will be offered a full-time teaching position. Many of you, though, will start off as temporary or casual teachers on a day-by-day or short-term basis. Curriculum, pedagogy and assessment are among the buzzwords that will fill your day-to-day work life, but so too are terms like inappropriate behaviours, challenging behaviours and classroom management. It’s easy to get overwhelmed by all of this, so we emphasise to you at the outset the importance of being well prepared for your first teaching job.

One of the biggest challenges you will face as an early career teacher (and, indeed, one that all teachers face!) is what is widely referred to as classroom management. This term is used in research and practice and refers to the ways in which teachers manage their classroom so that their students are engaged and learning. The term, though, has gathered some negative connotations over the years, so in this text, we keep your focus on developing positive learning environments. We encourage you to take a positive view on student behaviour, and to learn how to create and maintain your classroom as a supportive and safe place for your students to engage, interact, learn and grow.

Creating and maintaining your classroom as a positive learning environment for you and your students will be one of your biggest challenges and stressors as an early career teacher, so this text, as part of your teacher education degree coursework or ongoing professional learning, is intended to help you to build the knowledge, understanding and skills necessary to meet this challenge.

Welcome to a journey of discovery! Like your peers, you undoubtedly aspire to be an effective teacher who facilitates good learning outcomes. Good-quality pedagogy is central to creating and maintaining positive learning environments, and hence good learning outcomes. You will need to learn about and come to understand evidence-based theories that underpin effective practice (Cook & Odom, 2013; Odom et al., 2005). You will need to tie together or ‘synchronise’ your emerging professional philosophy of teaching with a knowledge and understanding of the theory that drives this text. Ultimately, we expect you to be able to create a first-draft classroom management plan that reflects your professional philosophy, embraces evidence-based theories and practices on how to develop your classroom as a positive learning environment, and just ‘works’.

We will not, however, be handing you a ‘formula’ or ‘bag of discipline tricks’ for responding to inappropriate student behaviours. Creating and maintaining your classroom as a positive learning environment is not about pulling together a bunch of ‘tips’ to deal with difficult students. Effective teachers know how to create and maintain classrooms where appropriate behaviours are recognised and encouraged, and inappropriate behaviours are essentially prevented, as well as, if necessary, how to proactively intervene.

This text, along with its companion website, offers you a systematic way to create a classroom as a positive learning environment. It gives a balanced review and explanation of theories, approaches and practices, including the Lyford model, to help you to develop your first-draft classroom management plan. In addition, the companion website includes a diversity of ‘Stories from the field’. These will give you valuable insight into the thinking of other pre-service and early career teachers who have faced the very challenge you face now – that is, to transition successfully into becoming an effective early career teacher.

Remember, though: effective teachers are those who synchronise their knowledge and understanding of curriculum, evidence-based pedagogy and assessment. This particularly applies to creating and maintaining positive learning environments. But there are many different ways to achieve this synchronicity. Effective teachers often have very diverse professional philosophies and understandings of pertinent theories and approaches, so what works for one effective teacher in one setting or context may not work for another. You will have to find out what works for you, and even this is likely to vary across settings and contexts. So take up the challenge to embrace the content and intent of this text, and make it work for you!

Refer back to the chapter ‘Starter story’, once more. Don’t end up in Jeremy’s shoes! You don’t want to be facing a new class without preparation and planning around your teaching, and particularly your curriculum, pedagogy and assessment. You need to spend time as a pre-service teacher to plan how you will create and maintain your future classroom as a positive learning environment. So let’s get started!
WHAT ARE POSITIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS (PLEs)?

So what exactly are positive learning environments (hereafter generally referred to as PLEs)? In schools, they are places where students are engaged and learning. This is what effective schools and teaching are all about. PLEs are places where appropriate or ‘good’ behaviours are frequently, regularly recognised and encouraged. This is widely known as the catch them being good principle. A consequence of this positive focus on ‘catching’ students behaving appropriately is that inappropriate behaviours are kept to a minimum, because student needs are being better met through this positive recognition and encouragement. This very positive focus is effectively preventative, but we acknowledge, of course, that intervention will still be necessary if inappropriate behaviours become too challenging.

For the purposes of this text, our focus will be on class rooms as PLEs: places where a teacher facilitates engagement and learning for their class group of students. Of course, student engagement and learning occurs outside of classrooms, and outside of formal class lesson time. And classrooms often have more than just one adult involved. Indeed, many other places and times across the school and wider community settings can also be PLEs. Consequently, much of what is explained in this text is relevant to other settings.

From the outset, we emphasise that it is very important for you to understand that your plans for developing your classroom as a PLE should not be made and implemented in isolation. You will, of course, develop your own professional philosophy, theoretical beliefs and preferred approaches to developing PLEs, but we strongly recommend that you to do this in collaboration with your peers and more experienced others. We believe that working together is essential in the teaching context, which is why many of the activities in this text are based on collaboration and group work.

Teaching in a school means working in a complex teaching and learning setting. You are very unlikely to be the only adult working with your students. They will be taught by other teaching colleagues, and will also be learning in other settings and contexts. We believe that you should adopt an ecological perspective on developing a PLE by recognising the rich interaction of influences that make up the modern classroom. In fact, nearly all schools now take a schoolwide approach to student welfare and discipline, and evidence-based systems such as Positive Behaviour Support (which we will describe in this text) have been widely adopted across Australian schools. Later on in this chapter, we will talk in more detail about taking an ecological perspective.

There are lots of textbooks and many online and audiovisual resources that can help you learn about PLEs. Much of this material, though, focuses more on classroom management and challenging behaviours. We encourage you to explore these resources – especially Australian and New Zealand resources that are readily available online – but remind you to keep your focus on creating and maintaining your classroom as a PLE; we want you to learn how to be proactive and developmental, rather than how to be more reactionary and remedial.

So if you want your classroom to be a PLE, a place where your students are engaged and learning, how can you be best prepared? You should start by thinking about, discussing and drafting a professional philosophy statement (say, of around 300 to 600 words) that explains your beliefs about why teaching and learning are important; how teaching and learning can best be facilitated; and what established theories, models, approaches, policies and practices inform your understandings and positions. There is no one ‘formula’ for drafting a professional philosophy statement, but there are quite a few websites that offer good guidance. (See the ‘Weblinks’ at the end of this chapter.) In addition, there are many online examples of teaching philosophy statements that you can review.

Your professional philosophy statement (or credo, philosophy of education or teaching philosophy; it has many names) will be the first step in making decisions about your own classroom management plan (Soccorsi, 2013). We believe PLEs are a reflection of effective classroom management, and that effective classroom management is usually manifested in a clear and workable classroom management plan. So let’s explore these two concepts now.

WHAT IS CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT?

Writers in the field refer to classroom management using terms such as ‘discipline’, ‘classroom discipline’ and ‘behaviour management’ (Charles, 2013; Edwards & Watts, 2008; Rogers, 2011). We believe that the term classroom management is more inclusive of the elements involved in creating PLEs. As with many terms and key concepts in the field of education, there are various definitions of classroom management, and these tend to reflect the beliefs, values or theoretical orientations of the people who propose them.

Classroom management has been very generally defined as ‘those actions taken by the teacher to direct classroom operations so that the class operates smoothly and in a professional and organised manner’ (Edwards & Watts, 2008, p. 3). It has also been defined in a popular Australian educational psychology textbook as ‘the actions of teachers to create a planned and organised classroom environment that supports student learning and socioemotional needs’ (Duchesne et al., 2015, p. 539). Looking at these definitions side by side, what are the key differences between them? Why do you think those differences might be present?

Both of these definitions are reasonable in that they refer to desired outcomes leading to PLEs. However, we believe that classroom management encompasses a wider number of elements, all of which contribute to PLEs.

We define classroom management as the management of relationships, organisation, teaching and related resources to develop and maintain a positive learning environment through preventative and intervention strategies, underpinned by a philosophy informed by theory and knowledge of the students, so that students are learning the best they can and their well-being is looked after.

Inherent in this definition is our desire to promote appropriate behaviour, the use of what may be termed ‘discipline’ strategies to manage inappropriate behaviour, and the need to have a plan. This definition suggests the key elements that combine to create and maintain PLEs, and these are the key elements of a model of classroom management planning we use in this book: the Lyford model. These are the elements of classroom management that we will expand on in greater detail in chapters 2 to 5.

Classroom management: a cause for concern?

It should be no surprise that classroom management generally, and student behaviour particularly, are widely reported as major sources of concern, and indeed anxiety, for pre-service, early career and
even experienced teachers. More than 20 years ago, Long and Morse (1996) described classroom discipline as the greatest concern among the professional issues teachers face. In 2010, Marsh, writing from experience in the Australian context, noted that the prevention of inappropriate student behaviour and managing the class environment in general were among the more pressing concerns of early career teachers. Other writers (Churchill et al., 2015; Groundwater-Smith, Ewing & Le Cornu, 2015) have come to similar conclusions.

More generally, it has been widely reported that teaching is a stressful occupation. Student behaviour has been cited as among the chief causes of teacher stress (Laughlin, 1984; Otto, 1986). In a study of Australian school staff, De Nobile and McCormick (2005) found issues relating to student behaviour to be their greatest source of occupational stress. Interestingly, the same report revealed relationships with students to be among the highest sources of job satisfaction. So what does this mean for you as a pre-service teacher?

As a teacher you interact constantly with your students. It is no great surprise, then, that students can be teachers’ main source of stress! It is our students who we are most concerned about. It is for our students that we work so hard: to develop them into more mature, knowledgeable and skilled young people. As teachers we gain a lot of satisfaction from interacting with our students. This is a sign of the commitment we have to, and the ‘buzz’ we get from, our work.

But yes, the ‘dealing with behaviour’ aspect of teaching is a source of negative feelings, and is strongly associated with early career teachers leaving the profession. We don’t want capable, enthusiastic and committed teachers leaving. We want to empower them to address concerns and minimise the chance of stress and other negative job attitudes dominating their professional experience.

What is critically important is for you to be able to build a PLE where your concerns about classroom management and stress about student behavioural issues can be minimised. One powerful way to do this is for you to develop a classroom management plan. So just what is a classroom management plan?

Classroom management plans

A classroom management plan is, put simply, a plan that outlines how teachers manage their learning environments. These plans are individual to each teacher, and often to each class. Effective classroom management plans include a professional philosophy statement, a comprehensive set of procedures and guidelines regarding preventative practices, and interventions that reflect that philosophy. Your classroom management plan is, in essence, a game plan describing how you want your class to operate. Clear, comprehensive and well thought out classroom management plans are key to creating and maintaining PLEs.

We will explore classroom management plans in detail in Chapter 10, but we have introduced the concept here because we want you to work through this book with the aim of developing your own. The classroom management plan you design should reflect current thinking and research in the field, which this book will help you to come into contact with, as well as appropriate guidelines that cover most aspects of your engagement with students. PLEs are an outcome of effective classroom management plans. This relationship is illustrated in Figure 1.1.

![Figure 1.1 The relationship between classroom management plans and PLEs](image)

Classroom management and theory

We have mentioned the word ‘theory’ a few times now. Current thinking, research and practice related to classroom management and learning environments should underpin your efforts to build and maintain PLEs. In this chapter (and in detail in Chapter 10) we will briefly explain our Lyford model and how the use of research-based theory enables informed thinking about explanations for student behaviour and the best ways to manage behaviour.

There is no shortage of behaviour and classroom management schemes being trumpeted on the education market. Many of these claim to have been tested with research. Many claim superiority over others. Beware of schemes that promise a quick fix or to solve all of your behaviour management problems. The only classroom management schemes worth considering are those that are based on good empirical research. Schools and teachers should look for this evidence, and this usually means examining the related research and underpinning theory.

In this book, we have divided the diversity of approaches to classroom and behaviour management into four theoretically aligned categories. This will help you to make sense of them. These approaches will be explored in chapters 6 to 9; but a brief introduction now should ensure a clearer passage of understanding for you.

**Behavioural approaches** to classroom and behaviour management (described in Chapter 6) focus on the observable, learned behaviours of individuals. They normally involve the description of actions and the measurement of them. In this approach there is an assumption that behaviour is influenced by antecedents and consequences. **Cognitive behavioural approaches** (described in Chapter 7) focus on empowering students to change their own behaviour through the development of cognitive and metacognitive strategies. **Psychoeducational approaches** (described in Chapter 8) focus on the needs and goals of individuals and the behaviours that manifest them. They normally require teachers to try to understand what cannot be seen, such as desires for belonging and the need for autonomy, in order to explain what is seen: behaviour. Therapists who support this approach propose that students can be guided to meet their goals and needs in appropriate ways. **Social justice approaches** (described in Chapter 9) are a new and emerging category. They focus on antecedents and consequences, as the behaviourists do, and have an approach to guidance that is akin to that of psychoeducationalists. However, their main focus is on reparation, justice for all and social responsibility as the ultimate behavioural outcomes.
Investigating theory

To develop your own professional philosophy statement, you need to be able to locate, make sense of, and make reference to pertinent theory. Good theory ‘explains and makes sense of phenomena’ (Beutel, 2007, p. 1). It explains and makes sense of what happens in classrooms, how students learn, why students (and you!) behave the way they do, and what you can do about this. It gives you guidance in making plans and decisions about your pedagogy generally, and about creating and maintaining your classroom as a PLE specifically. Good theory guides and enables good practice.

Your professional philosophy statement will inform and guide your classroom practices. You can use theory to underpin this statement in four ways: by being atheoretical; by aligning to one theory; by shifting between theories; or by bringing together various elements of theories to make your own theory (Lyons, Ford & Slee, 2014).

To be atheoretical means to ignore theory and ‘fly by the seat of your pants’. When the going is easy and you are not facing any pervasive challenges, this can suffice; but when challenges emerge and persist, you are likely to struggle, because you will have no way to make sense of and respond to these challenges — except by intuition. We do not recommend this. An alternative is to align to one theory, reviewing and adjusting your pedagogy as needed by using that theory to inform and make sense of emerging challenges. This is the least complex option. We recommend it as your best choice as both a pre-service and an early career teacher.

Alternatively, you can shift between theories in response to the shifting demands of different teaching and learning contexts and settings. This gives you more flexibility, but does require a broader knowledge and understanding of different theories and when to apply them. Your fourth choice is to develop your own theory by mixing and matching together compatible elements of different theories. This is a complex option, and we would only recommend this once you have moved successfully beyond early career teaching and have a very well-developed knowledge and understanding of potentially compatible theories and their elements.

In the ideal career-opening scenario — that is, being appointed to a ‘good’ school where there is a clear and successful whole-school system already in place and all your students are well engaged and learning — there might not be an immediate pressure on you to implement a thoroughly thought through, comprehensive classroom management plan. Your first appointment, though, is not likely to be such an ideal scenario, especially if you commence your career as a temporary teacher. You will need a classroom management plan, and it will need to complement school policies and practices. Clearly, you need to be prepared.

So what theories are there, and what theories are best for you as an early career teacher? We will describe and explain alternative theories (and models and frameworks) in Chapters 6, 7, 8 and 9, but, as introduced above, there are essentially four categories of approaches to creating and maintaining your classroom as a PLE: behavioural, cognitive behavioural, psychoeducational and social justice. Each of these approaches is informed by a number of theories. Ultimately, the theories that are best for you are those that have principles that match or synchronise with the principles and beliefs that underpin your professional philosophy of teaching.

In addition to the theories that will be introduced to you in this text, our companion website explains further theories around creating and maintaining PLEs generally and classroom management plans specifically. If the theories introduced in this text don’t seem to match with your professional philosophy, you might find a theoretical approach on the companion website that delivers the synchronicity you are looking for.

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS FOR TEACHERS

The beliefs, knowledge, understanding, skills and practices around creating and maintaining PLEs are critical to your success as an early career teacher. Graduate standards of teaching in Australia and New Zealand actually prescribe sets of standards under the domains of professional knowledge, professional practice and professional engagement that you are required to achieve and demonstrate at four career stages. In this text, we will focus on the standards that are pertinent to the first, graduate teacher career stage, since these are most relevant to you as pre-service teachers moving towards graduation.

It is also important for you to have some knowledge and understanding of the standards prescribed at later career stages. This is because the standards are ‘minimum’ standards, and simply set the benchmarks for you to be eligible to progress through the career stages. Naturally, you want to graduate from your pre-service teaching course, but you should keep a future focus on moving through your very early career to pass your accreditation as a proficient teacher. So try to set your sights on achieving and evidencing standards at the higher, or proficient level. Aspire to, and be, an excellent teacher!

So what standards are relevant to creating and maintaining PLEs, particularly in classrooms? This might surprise you, but all of the standards are relevant and important. You will need to know your students and how they learn to create and maintain a PLE for them. You will need to know the content and how to teach it to create and maintain a PLE. Clearly, some of the standards, and some of the focus areas and content descriptors, are more closely relevant — and indeed, many are even prerequisite to creating and maintaining your classroom as a PLE — but all are relevant and important. This relevance is clearly evidenced in the following section of this chapter, where we describe and explain our beliefs about and view on creating and maintaining PLEs.

Figure 1.2 Australian and New Zealand professional standards for teachers
You need to study all of the standards, focus areas and standards descriptors at both the graduate and proficient career stages, then list and prioritise each descriptor for attention. This is a big job, and it will take time. Knowledge and understanding of these standards will inform and influence how you go about studying and planning to create your classroom as a PLE; and this is what this text is about. You will also need this knowledge and understanding (as a practising teacher) to maintain and improve your classroom as a PLE; and this is a key part of what effective teaching is all about.

THE AUTHORS' BELIEFS AND VIEWS AND THE LYFORD MODEL

This section lists and summarises our beliefs about PLEs and classroom management plans, and our view on the process of creating and maintaining PLEs. This view is explained in the context of our Lyford model. Our views, of course, are underpinned by our beliefs.

The authors' beliefs

As an author team, we negotiated (and long argued over) our collective beliefs about creating and maintaining PLEs and drafting classroom management plans. Our five key shared beliefs are that effective teachers should:

1. Use evidence-based pedagogies
2. Adopt an ecological perspective on developing PLEs and classroom management plans
3. Regard the creation and maintenance of their classroom as a PLE as integral to all else that occurs within their classroom and the wider school setting
4. Plan and act proactively to recognise and encourage appropriate student behaviours and respond systematically to inappropriate student behaviours
5. Develop their classroom management plans as dynamic documents informed by ongoing professional reflection.

These beliefs are important because they underpin our collective view on creating and maintaining PLEs and on drafting classroom management plans. Following is a short commentary on each belief, providing you with a little more insight into our thinking. Note also that these beliefs form the basis of our own professional philosophy statements. You are encouraged to think about the beliefs that could underpin your professional philosophy. As mentioned above, this will probably also require you to think hard about the theories that influence and inform your professional philosophy.

First, the teaching profession has a long and disappointing history of under-researching evidence-based theory and practices and failing to adopt them (Grima-Farrell, Bain & McDonough, 2011). Fortunately, contemporary education systems and authorities, spurred on by the quality teaching movement, have moved to encourage and drive more directed teacher professional development. If you want to be an effective teacher (and we’re sure you do!) and be up-to-date with ‘what works and what doesn’t work’, you should read selectively about those practices, particularly teaching practices, that have a substantial evidence base showing that they can deliver significant improvements to student learning outcomes (see Hattie & Yates, 2014; and Mitchell, 2014).

Second, the ecological perspective toward creating and maintaining PLEs, particularly in classrooms, has a sound evidence base (Sheridan & Gutkin, 2000). By taking this approach, you will be pushed to make more thorough and authentic analyses of student behaviours and the reasons behind them. Consequently, your classroom management plans will be more authentic, comprehensive and effective, and you will recognise and respond to the need to regularly monitor, adjust and improve them.

Third, the creation and maintenance of your classroom as a PLE is an integral part of the whole teaching/learning school experience. This is clearly evidenced in the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers and the New Zealand Graduating Teacher Standards. Indeed, all that occurs in your classroom, and much of what happens around the school and even in the broader school community, is relevant to and can inform how you set up your classroom as a PLE. Think broadly, take an ecological perspective and look for potentially significant inter-relationships.

Fourth, the challenge to create and then maintain your classroom as a PLE is a real and substantial one. Ineffective teachers merely react to inappropriate student behaviours. Effective teachers are proactive. They teach, recognise and encourage appropriate behaviours, and in doing so prevent many inappropriate behaviours, and also respond to continuing inappropriate behaviours in a systematic way. This takes thought, planning and time.

Finally, and again taking an ecological perspective, any classroom management plan must be seen as a work in progress: a dynamic document subject to ongoing review and professional reflection. Students and their behaviours change because they are growing, learning and developing, and because the environments to which they are related change. Professional reflection is a key attribute of professionalism (Kaufman et al. 2006), and this distinguishes an effective teacher from an ineffective teacher.

As a pre-service teacher, you have the time to develop a first-draft classroom management plan for your future classrooms. You can’t prepare a working classroom management plan because many of the factors you need to consider and respond to are not yet identifiable. However, a draft classroom management plan aligned to your professional philosophy and encompassing your theoretical beliefs is a great starting point.

The authors' view and the Lyford model

Our collective view about the process of creating and maintaining PLEs is informed by our beliefs, as described above and expressed in the Lyford model (see figures 1.3 and 1.4 below). This dynamic model is explained in detail in Chapter 10, where we offer it to you as a way to bring together the content of this text and to help you put together your first-draft classroom management plan. It is introduced here to give you an insight into how we, as an author team, view and activate the process of creating and maintaining PLEs in classrooms.

The Lyford model is underpinned by theories of human development and behaviour, psychology and sociology, and teaching and learning. These theories include ecological systems theory, humanist theory, knowledge acquisition theory, sociocultural theory, psychoeducational theory and cognitive behavioural theory. These theories are synchronous with our own professional philosophy statements (and are explained in detail on our companion website).

The primary inputs into the model, and indeed the cyclic process of creating and maintaining PLEs in classrooms, are knowledge and understanding. These come from prior knowledge and
understanding, which emerge out of the plan-implement-review cycle around any previous classroom management plans, along with the cycle of professional reflection. The knowledge filter and interpretive filter make sense of this. The classroom management plan is primarily scaffolded by an ecological perspective and informed by sociocultural and psychoeducational perspectives. Four preventative practices – classroom climate, classroom culture, physical environment and instructional practices (curriculum, pedagogy and assessment) – are engaged, and selected intervention practices adopted if required. The outputs of this process are students who belong, and who are safe, happy and learning, and an effective, professionally satisfied teacher.

As mentioned above, the ideal scenario is for you to be appointed to a ‘good’ school where there is a successful schoolwide system for engaging all students in their learning. Unfortunately, it is more likely that at least some students will persist with inappropriate and challenging behaviours, so intervention practices will need to be systematically implemented. It is important, then, for you to understand what student behaviours and circumstances warrant intervention – but more on this later. First, we need you to have a very clear understanding of the nature of ‘behaviour’ and its origins.

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**STORY FROM THE FIELD**

**Donna: ‘I’m passionate about teaching’**

Classrooms full of light and learning, caring and creation, friendships not fear, scaffolding and syllabus, pedagogy and practice, research and reflection, lessons and laughter are places where students and teacher feel a sense of belonging. This feeling of belonging is essential to the human psyche. Classrooms are places where students make mistakes while learning how to make sense of the world.

There is no greater job than to teach. Like all great adventures, the rewards of teaching come from the discoveries made in the learner’s mind – you never know what treasures you will uncover that will affect them now and in the future. There is a mystical feeling about the learning process, which becomes manifest when the ‘light’ goes on in the student’s mind: when learning happens. These moments often become lifetime memories when the student remembers the moment they understood and the teacher who made it possible.

I’m passionate about teaching, and believe that we can all learn and become better human beings if given the chance. Some of us, though, will need more chances for the penny to drop. I’m a big believer that kind words and positive gestures do not fall on deaf ears. What we say and do will have an effect and will often leave a lasting impression. As teachers, we have to keep positive – and we will make a difference.

Professional experience placements have given me the chance to test and reflect on my professional philosophy and my theories of, and plans for, classroom management. Each day is
Reflection...

Consider what 'defines' good learners, effective teachers and quality teaching.

- What characteristics, attributes or qualities are evident in Donna’s story?
- Consider your own professional philosophy. What characteristics, attributes or qualities of good students and an efficient teacher are emerging?

BEHAVIOUR AND ITS ORIGINS

Here, we explain the origins of behaviour and the types of behaviour that teachers experience in classrooms. We start with ecological systems theory, which we believe is an effective way to explain the origins of student behaviour.

Ecological systems theory

The term ‘ecological’ has its roots in the biological sciences, and in that context refers to the extensive and complex relationships between organisms and their environments (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). In the context of school students, their behaviours and PLEs, ‘ecological perspective’ refers to an acknowledgment that the reality that complex relationships exist between students and the various environments around them, and that these relationships need to be considered when looking to understand and influence student behaviours. Various theories inform our ecological perspective on creating and maintaining PLEs, including Urie Bronfenbrenner’s ecological systems theory, and the theory behind Applied Behavioural Analysis and Functional Behaviour Assessment, which we describe in Chapter 6.

Ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) is a centrepiece theory underpinning our view on PLEs and student behaviour. It draws attention to the complexity of interrelationships between schools, individual children, their families, and the local and wider communities, and encourages teachers to give thought to how these inter-relationships affect student behaviour. (See Figure 1.5 below.)

Ecological systems theory identifies five environmental systems:

- the individual at the centre
- the surrounding microsystem – that is, family, school, peers, neighbourhood, and so on
- the wider surrounding mesosystem, where interactions among components of the microsystem take place
- the exosystem, an extension of the mesosystem comprising elements not directly connected with the individual, but which may interact with the individual (through, for example, policy, social norms, organisations or groups)
- the macrosystem, which refers to the overarching societal norms, laws, and so on, which can shape the other systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

A sixth system, referred to as the chronosystem (influences of change over time) is also postulated by adherents of the theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). Ecological systems theory is complex, but its principles are simple: each system has roles, norms and rules which influence the individual’s psychological development, and these are interrelated and can in themselves be influenced.

Applied behaviour analysis (ABA) and, more recently, functional behaviour analysis (FBA) are closely related evidence-based theories and practices which recognise that a variety of factors, such as
POSITIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

contexual conditions, antecedents and/or consequences, influence behaviour. Contextual conditions include many factors that lead to behaviours occurring, and these closely echo ecological systems theory, explained above. (For more detail, see Albert & Troutman, 2013; and Steege & Stuart Watson, 2009.) Contemporary evidence-based practices relating to creating and maintaining PLEs and student behaviour change. The Response to Intervention and Schoolwide Positive Behaviour Intervention and Support approaches, for example, are underpinned by ABA and FBA. We will discuss these key practices in detail in Chapter 6.

The main point to be drawn from this theory is that student behaviours can come about as a result of a complex interplay between a number of factors. Changes in any one factor or combination of factors can result in behavioural changes. ABA and FBA try to 'simplify' behavioural analysis, but these are in fact quite sophisticated procedures, and practitioners require substantial training to conduct them effectively. Understanding and changing behaviour is not a simple thing. Neither, then, is creating or maintaining PLEs. But we will explain to you principles and guidelines to follow that will help you move towards achieving competency in these processes.

Ecological systems theory, and indeed the theories behind the approaches to classroom management introduced earlier in the chapter, attempt to explain behaviour and its origins. But what is behaviour?

Behaviour is how we act or how individuals conduct themselves. It can be voluntary and based on conscious decisions. It can also be involuntary, which is action over which we have little or no control, such as a reflex. Voluntary behaviour is often a reflection of what we need, desire or have some motivating attitudinal disposition towards. In terms of PLEs and classroom management plans, we are interested in two types of behaviour: appropriate and inappropriate behaviour. The following section explains these, and then outlines the various bases of inappropriate behaviour.

Appropriate and inappropriate behaviours

We define appropriate behaviour as behaviour that is socially acceptable, suitable to the context in which it happens and respectful of the rights of others. Appropriate behaviour is what PLEs encourage and thrive on. Much of what we call appropriate classroom behaviour reflects universal values that people deem important. For example, in 2005, the Australian Government, after extensive consultation and research in school communities, promulgated a set of nine values aimed directly at promoting positive student behaviour (DEST, 2005). Similarly, the New Zealand Curriculum listed eight values that could be used by students to explore their own values and relations with others (Ministry of Education, 2007). These values were to be manifest in what many would regard as appropriate behaviour in schools, such as people caring for themselves and others, being honest, respecting others, treating others fairly, striving hard to do one's best, acting responsibly, and so on.

Inappropriate behaviour refers to the opposite. In relation to students in schools, it has been generally defined as behaviour that disrupts the classroom (Duchesne et al., 2015). It has been defined more specifically as behaviour that interferes with a student's own learning or the learning of other students, and that prevents teachers from doing their work (Beam, Wheldall & Kemp, 2007). Inappropriate behaviour is also sometimes referred to as misbehaviour, bad behaviour, problem behaviour, naughtiness and, in the extreme sense, delinquency. There are many other synonymous terms, some more blunt than others! We define inappropriate behaviour as behaviour that is socially and contextually unacceptable, and that disrespects the rights of students, including themselves, to learn and feel safe.

Passive and active inappropriate behaviours

Inappropriate behaviours can be labelled passive or active. Passive inappropriate behaviours generally only disrupt the student doing the behaviour; they include such behaviours as daydreaming, fiddling, staring into space and 'legging out'. Active inappropriate behaviours are more disruptive of other students and the teacher; they include calling out, swearing, being out of place, talking when others are speaking, interrupting, pushing, vandalising, arguing with other students or the teacher, throwing objects, teasing and bullying. Can you recall other inappropriate behaviours you observed or experienced in your own school days?

One of the authors recently asked pre-service teachers in his classroom management course to list the inappropriate behaviours that they were most concerned about just prior to commencing their first professional experience. Almost 100 per cent nominated physical aggression and bullying. About 30 per cent mentioned talking out of turn, and about 15 per cent mentioned attention-seeking behaviour. Interestingly, and probably reassuringly, research reveals that the reality in most classrooms is very different. In their landmark studies of primary and secondary schools, Merrett and Wheldall (1989; 1990) found talking out of turn and other low-level behaviours to be the most frequently observed inappropriate behaviour, and physical aggression to be among the least observed. More recent research has reported similar results (Beam, Wheldall & Kemp 2007; Infantino & Little, 2008). As this text goes to press, the first author is analysing data from a large sample of early career teachers to determine whether they report the same concerns as earlier cohorts or new challenges and issues that are quite different in nature to the findings of earlier researchers.

Given all this, it seems safe to say that, while pre-service teachers like you are likely very concerned about classroom management and student behavioural issues, and focused on addressing the more aggressive types of inappropriate behaviour, the reality is that your focus should be more on 'lower-level', higher-frequency inappropriate behaviours. So don’t worry! But do be vigilant. Know your students and strive to create a PLE using a well considered classroom management plan.

Primary and secondary inappropriate behaviours

Inappropriate behaviours can also be labelled primary or secondary. Primary inappropriate behaviours are those that students do ‘unsolicited’, and are generally self-initiated (albeit in response to some motivating factor). Secondary inappropriate behaviours are those that are exhibited by students in response to challenges to a primary inappropriate behaviour by a teacher or another authority figure (Rogers, 2011). Secondary inappropriate behaviours are often intended to distract teachers and tempt them into an argument cycle.

A typical example of the difference is when you, as the teacher, quietly ask one of your students to stop playing with their mobile phone (the primary inappropriate behaviour) when they were instructed...
to do set work. Your student rolls their eyes and makes a face (a secondary inappropriate behaviour), mocking your instruction. Continuing and escalating secondary inappropriate behaviours are likely if this engagement deteriorates into a conflict between you and the student.

We strongly advise you to keep your focus on primary inappropriate behaviour and to ignore secondary behaviours, despite the fact that this is likely to be frustrating or aggravating. Secondary inappropriate behaviours are usually attempts by students to maintain some sense of autonomy or personal power, or to save face in front of their peers. The more concerning of these behaviours can always be addressed by you and your student during a convenient lesson break or at the end of a class. Your aim should always be to help the student to understand how their behaviour impacts on the class and themselves. Secondary inappropriate behaviours are often the first instances or precursors to challenging behaviours.

Origins of inappropriate behaviour

To fully understand the origins of inappropriate behaviour, we need to consult the fields of psychology, sociology, cultural studies, and perhaps others such as anthropology and criminology. There is not enough space in this chapter to cover all these fields adequately, but fortunately, you will at least learn about educational psychology and the sociology of schooling as part of your teacher education degree.

We posit that there are three main categories that may explain why inappropriate behaviours occur. The developmental category includes intellectual abilities, levels of moral reasoning and social skills that explain why students, for example, hit their peers in the playground when a dispute happens. More mature students might be able to discuss a problem and avoid the violence, but students in infant grades, for example, may not have the skills and experience to do that. The psychological category includes disorders and other issues. For example, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) might explain why a student is behaving impulsively or not completing work on time. Psychological factors can underpin more challenging behaviours, and we expand on these in a later section. The environmental base or category includes factors such as home life, cultural and ethnic backgrounds and the classroom or school environment, including climate and physical setting. We have summarised the origins of inappropriate behaviour in Table 1.1.

### Table 1.1 Origins of inappropriate behaviour

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<th>DEVELOPMENTAL</th>
<th>PSYCHOLOGICAL</th>
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<td>- Emotional abuse</td>
<td>- Home environment</td>
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<td>- Age and experience</td>
<td>- Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)</td>
<td>- Socioeconomic status</td>
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<td>- Moral development</td>
<td>- Autism spectrum disorder (ASD)</td>
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<td>- Social development</td>
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<td>- Emotional development</td>
<td>- Self-esteem issues</td>
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Challenging behaviours and bullying

Inappropriate behaviours can escalate into challenging behaviour even if they are initially low-level (such as talking out of turn or calling out). This occurs when students do not reasonably respond to your general preventative measures or lower-level intervention strategies. Challenging behaviours present you and other students with an unacceptable level of disruption that poses a serious threat to teaching and learning. They are severe enough to endanger the well-being of the student, or the well-being of other students or staff members. Examples of high-level challenging behaviours include physical threats to, or assaults on, other students or the teacher, handling dangerous objects (such as knives), property damage and bullying.

Bullying is one form of challenging behaviour that straddles both low and high levels. It can involve lower-level inappropriate behaviours, such as teasing and social exclusion, and can also manifest as higher-level inappropriate behaviours, such as verbal and physical assault. To define bullying, we draw on the work of others (Etteg & Cross, 2004; Olweus, 1993; Rigby, 2007) to reflect the diverse perspectives taken in the literature. We define bullying as the deliberate and repeated oppression or other unjustified ill treatment of individuals or groups who are unable, or who find it difficult, to defend themselves. Bullying is a social phenomenon. All those involved – the bully/bullies, the bullied and the witnesses, also known as bystanders – need skills and help to deal with it. Indeed, witnesses may even form a 'supporting cast' who tolerate, legitimise or are silent about bullying. A central aspect of bullying is an unequal relation of power, where the victim generally feels controlled and powerless to stop the bullying. Bullying is a particularly insidious problem in schools, and has captured considerable community attention in recent years. The consequences of bullying can be horrific. Indeed, students have committed suicide as a result of repeated bullying. Bullying occurs in and outside of schools, and across social media networks by way of cyberbullying.

Cyberbullying is a relatively new phenomenon, so its full impact is still being realised. Cyberbullying is most often covert. According to Hemphill et al. (2012, p. 60), 'Electronic media, such as computers, mobile telephones, and personal digital assistants, are used by young people to bully, embarrass, exclude, or humiliate others, via methods such as e-mail, chat-rooms, social networking sites, instant messaging, websites, telephone calls, video, and text messaging.' However, cyberbullying can also be a form of overt bullying, through deliberate cyber-stalking and the sending of derogatory or hateful messages. O'Higgins, Norman and Connolly (2011) list other types of cyberbullying, including computer hacking, identity theft, impersonation, manipulation, blackmail and the revealing of private and personal information, including images as well as text.

The most worrying features of cyberbullying are anonymity, since it can be difficult to track
perpetrators, and its invasive nature. Victims can be subjected to harassment and bullying anywhere and anytime. Cyberbullying can be relentless, but simply asking students to turn off their phones or withdraw from social media sites may not be the best thing to do. Social media sites have become such an integral part of students’ lives that withdrawing from them may make students feel even more isolated and alone. In an Australian survey of 700 Year 7 students, 21 per cent admitted to engaging in traditional forms of bullying, 15 per cent to engaging in cyberbullying and 7 per cent to engaging both (Hemphill et al., 2012). Two points are worth emphasising about the emerging patterns of cyberbullying: first, perpetrators of more traditional forms of bullying are likely to practise cyberbullying; and second, victims of traditional bullying can become cyberbullies as a form of retaliation.

Challenging behaviours and psychological issues

A small number of students exhibit persistent challenging behaviours that perplex even experienced teachers. Labels such as behaviour-disordered, conduct-disordered, emotionally disturbed and mental-health level are sometimes attached to the profiles of children and young people in schools based on medical and other professional tests and diagnoses. Some of these conditions are disabilities and some are not, but regardless, schools and teachers are required to accommodate and support all of their students.

For example, students with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) present with a wide range of behaviours that vary in degree of severity and challenge (Lecavalier, 2014). There are a variety of misconceptions about children and young people with ASD, both in terms of their personal characteristics, which are often stereotyped, and their specific learning needs. There is a relatively high prevalence of ASD in comparison to other disorders, and many students with ASD attend regular schools. Therefore, it is our view that a reasonable knowledge of the nature of the disorder is essential for the purposes of assisting in early identification and diagnosis, and for guiding teaching practices and learning outcomes. The principles of ABA and FBA (see Chapter 6) provide you with evidence-based theoretical scaffolds for adapting and differentiating your teaching/learning programs, as do the social skill and communication training literature.

Some persistent challenging behaviours may indicate the onset of various mental disorders. The more prevalent disorders that generally present with challenging behaviours in school settings include ASD, conduct disorder, foetal alcohol syndrome, obsessive–compulsive disorder, oppositional defiant disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, separation anxiety disorder, selective mutism and Tourette’s disorder. These can be diagnosed in infancy, childhood or adolescence under broader categories of intellectual disability, learning disorders, motor skills disorders, communication disorders and pervasive developmental disorders.

It is important that you learn to recognise the features of these (and other) disorders so that you can refer the student to the school psychologist for further diagnosis. You are not expected to struggle on without a diagnosis, expert support and funding support (if appropriate). If one of your students is diagnosed with a psychological disorder, you will then collaborate with a professional team and the student’s family and/or carers in developing, implementing and monitoring a personalised learning plan. Remember that these disorders are relatively uncommon, and you may never encounter them.

An excellent summary guide to some of the more common mental health and other conditions that present themselves in children and young people is Natalie Trigg’s *A Teacher’s Guide to Identifying Childhood Disorders in the Classroom: Checklists and Strategies* (2005). It includes a flowchart to help you identify indications of various disorders, with summary checklists and related practical teaching strategies.

The Australian Government’s 10-year roadmap for national mental health reform sets out the national agenda for reforming and improving a full suite of programs to support people with mental health issues, including children and young people. A keystone in this initiative is the National Youth Mental Health Foundation (http://headspace.org.au). The Australian Government has also initiated the National Mental Health Strategy (http://www.health.gov.au/), the National Suicide Prevention Strategy (http://www.health.gov.au/) and the MindMatters program (http://www.mindmatters.edu.au). The government of New Zealand has also produced helpful programs and guidelines to assist teachers, including mentoring for Māori and Pasifika students and guidelines to support students with anxiety (see http://www.education.govt.nz/school/student-support/student-wellbeing/). We strongly encourage you to visit and explore these excellent and comprehensive websites.

Notwithstanding the urge you might have to ‘bypass’ prevention (the next topic in this chapter) and go straight to using interventions, we urge you to stay with us by focusing – at least initially – on creating PLEs suited to all of your students. Some students, by virtue of life circumstances, are ‘hard work’ from day one. If you develop and implement a sound classroom management plan, you will, probably with the support of your more experienced colleagues, get your class collectively on track. Only after you have given your classroom management plan your full attention should you look to the use of interventions to get your class, and particularly individual students, on track. We know how challenging some students can be, but if you get your class in shape and engaged, you give yourself the best chance to get any interventions to work.

It is very important for you to accept that you can’t ‘fix’ all of your students. It is ethical, appropriate and professional for you to develop your professional knowledge and skills to enable you to build the strongest relationships possible with all of your students, to guide and motivate them to achieve their academic and personal bests, and to support them through challenges in their lives; but it is not your job to ‘fix’ them. Some students, usually just a few, have such substantial and continuing problems in their lives that these will ‘spill over’ as challenging behaviours at school, and in your classroom.

Although you must do your professional best for all of your students, it is, as emphasised above, usually more strategic to maintain a focus on creating and maintaining your classroom as a PLE for all of your students, with a secondary focus on those few students who are a little challenging but who are more readily guided and influenced back towards appropriate behaviour. If you keep most of your students safe, happy and motivated to learn, you should be able to reasonably include and keep engaged the more challenging students in your class, but probably with interventions and other supports in place.

Challenging behaviours and duty of care

You have a duty of care to ensure that all of your students are not only included and learning, but also that they are safe. This is where risk management and duty of care considerations and responsibilities come into play. Many of our current and former students have voiced concerns about their [lack of] knowledge of, and capacity to meet, the demands of their duty of care and risk management responsibilities in schools. This is especially the case when these demands involve
students who exhibit pervasive challenging behaviours, particularly those that might result in undue risk, endangerment, abuse or assault on members of the class or school community. Duty of care and risk management are quite complex issues, and a failure to be duly informed and to act ‘reasonably’ has, ultimately, legal implications.

Duty of care has been representatively defined by Verma (2010) as ‘an obligation, recognised by law, to avoid conduct fraught with unreasonable risk of danger to others’. Duty of care arises where any teacher–student relationship exists. Every teacher and school authority must take care to ensure that their acts or omissions do not cause reasonably foreseeable injury to their students. In short, the law imposes a legal duty on teachers and schools to take care of the safety and well-being of all students.

Aside from more general expectations for the wider student population, school authorities have widely adopted the use of risk management plans as part of individual planning around students with challenging behaviours who might put themselves or others at risk. An understanding of the term ‘reasonable’ is critical here, so we strongly recommend that you review the policy and procedures documents available in the schools or educational jurisdictions in which you intend to teach.

It is our considered view, based on many years of working with a wide diversity of students, that the theory and principles underlying intervention design and implementation are the same for all students, mostly irrespective of the degree of severity of the targeted challenging behaviour/s. Clearly, if student behaviours deteriorate to a level of severity that invokes systemic, policy-driven consequences such as suspension and exclusion, then due process must prevail. Otherwise, it is your responsibility as a classroom teacher to call upon family, school and community resources to collaboratively negotiate, design, develop and implement an appropriate intervention for that student.

PREVENTION AND ITS FOUR KEY COMPONENTS

As we emphasised earlier, to be an effective teacher, you must first teach, then systematically recognise and encourage, certain appropriate student behaviours. Taking this developmental and proactive pathway means that inappropriate behaviours occur less often, and usually with less intensity. In this text, we generally refer to this pathway as preventative, because if done well, it can essentially prevent many inappropriate and challenging student behaviours. The reasoning here is simple: students don’t need to behave inappropriately to meet their needs when these needs are met through appropriate behaviours. The Lyford model identifies four key components in taking a preventative pathway towards building classrooms as PLEs: classroom climate, classroom culture, physical environment and instructional practice (curriculum, pedagogy and assessment).

Classroom climate is determined by the quality of relationships between you and other staff members, between you and your students, between students, and among students’ family and close others, as well as by the effectiveness of communications between all these parties – particularly between you and your students. If you can build and improve relationships and communications, your classroom climate will improve, and your classroom will ultimately be more positive and conducive to engagement and learning.

Classroom culture is a more pragmatic key component, and is determined by the quality of procedural structures like rights, responsibilities, rules, consequences and due process. Students need behavioural boundaries and expectations. Even most ‘good’ students will eventually act up if they don’t know how to behave or what your expectations are.

Physical environment is about the physical classroom setting and how conducive it is to engagement and learning. Again, even the most intrinsically motivated students can filter when seating, resources, lighting and access issues disrupt and impede their concentration and learning.

Instructional practice, the fourth key component, includes curriculum, pedagogy and assessment. These are often seen as the ‘the big three’ for teachers. Of course, the Australian Curriculum prevails, evidence-based pedagogy is now central to educational research and practice agendas, and larger assessment schemes (like NAPLAN and the HSC) are prescribed. All classrooms include a diversity of students with a diversity of additional needs, so differentiation of curriculum, pedagogy and assessment is now recognised as ‘core business’ in all classrooms and for all teachers. However, a contemporary shift towards embracing the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL), rather than differentiation alone, is evident in research and practice. For a more detailed explanation of UDL, see Burghart (2012), CAST (2011) and Meo (2008).

These four key components are mutually interrelated: each impacts on the other. You can’t just simplistically address or change one key component and expect significant improvements in your classroom. Again – and the theme should be evident – you need to take an ecological perspective, and to address all four key components if you are going to create and eventually maintain your classroom as an effective PLE. These four key preventative components will be explained in detail in chapters 2 to 5.

INTERVENTION AND RESPONSE

As teachers, we all hope to create and maintain classrooms that are PLEs: where our students are engaged and learning to the best of their abilities. In fact, there is probably no more rewarding profession than teaching when your students are safe, happy and learning well. But the reality of teaching is that some of our students, for a variety of reasons, will not or cannot behave well, engage well or learn well. Inappropriate (and probably challenging) student behaviour will happen in your classroom. Despite your best efforts with respect to planning, implementation and adjustment, even the best classroom management plan will fall short if measures are not put into place to systematically intervene when inappropriate behaviours persist or escalate to become challenging.

You can reasonably expect that inappropriate behaviours will be mostly prevented or minimised if you take a preventative pathway. But if you have to intervene, your theoretical choices are similar: you can take a behaviour, psychoeducational, cognitive behavioural or social justice approach. Of course, you can also carry out an intervention using more than one approach, or by using a hybrid approach that involves the combination of various elements of these approaches, but to do so, you will need to know and understand each approach very well.
IN PRACTICE

Voluntary time-out

A number of primary and secondary schools use ‘voluntary time-out’ to avoid the escalation of classroom and playground conflict both between students and staff and between students. This primarily involves teachers and/or students identifying when their ‘emotional temperatures’ are rising to a level at which anger and irrationality are imminent. This strategy is particularly useful when it involves students with ‘short fuse(s)’ and bad temper(s).

In short, when teachers and/or students themselves recognise a rapid rise in their emotional temperatures, they are directed or self-directed to a known ‘voluntary time-out space’ in the school to cool off before re-engaging with the teacher or student with whom the conflict arose. Clearly, this takes some considerable pre-training. The direction, though, is not punitive, and when students (and even teachers!) take voluntary time-outs, they are recognised and encouraged for their self-control and contribution to conflict avoidance. This is an example of a school-wide cognitive behavioural strategy in practice.

The decision to use an intervention is primarily informed by the magnitude or urgency of the classroom management problems you encounter. Remember, though, if your classroom management plan has been rigorously designed and properly implemented, substantial progress towards stated outcomes may be just a matter of perseverance, persistence and consistency. In this case, we suggest that you consult with your colleague teachers or mentors. An independent opinion or two would be prudent. We don’t want you to ‘throw the baby out with the bathwater’ and unnecessarily re vamp your entire classroom management plan. Neither do we want you to ‘overinvest’ in developing and implementing an intervention unless it is warranted.

The design, development and implementation of an intervention is a demanding task. If you do intend to invest a substantial amount of your (and others’) time in doing so, you must have reasonable expectations of the intervention’s efficacy and success. Let’s presume for now, then, that on the basis of your initial observations, collaborative consultations and reflections, some form of intervention is warranted. Your intention is to (collaboratively) plan and implement some change to the learning environment to put your classroom management plan back on track. The first thing you need to do is determine the focus of this intervention. Three interrelated variables need to be considered: the locus of the problem, the locus of control and the locus of change. For simplicity, here we will assume that your challenge is about one student – ‘Johnny’ – but, of course, challenging behaviours often involve more than one student.

The locus of the problem refers to your understanding of, and beliefs about, the source of problem behaviours. It is commonly presumed that problem behaviours in classrooms ‘emanate’ from individual students and that the source of the problem lies within that student. That is: ‘Johnny needs to change his attitude.’ However, Johnny’s problem behaviours may be sourced back to other contexts. Consider your knowledge and understanding of ecological, sociocultural and psychosocial perspectives here. Maybe Johnny’s behaviours can be sourced back to the way you and/or others relate to and influence him.

The locus of control refers to your understanding of, and beliefs about, where the focus of intervention can best be located. It is commonly presumed that as problem behaviours in classrooms are the student’s, the focus of action should be on the student. That is: ‘We need to focus our efforts on Johnny.’ The focus of the intervention, though, might be better placed on others who have relationships with and influence Johnny. Consider your knowledge and understanding of ecological, sociocultural and psychosocial perspectives again.

The locus of change refers to your understanding of who or what should change. It is commonly presumed that, as the problem behaviour is the student’s, change should occur within the student. That is: ‘Johnny needs to change his behaviour.’ But the focus of change might lay more on others who have relationships with and influence Johnny. Again, consider the ecological perspective here.

Interventions frequently target only the individual student (or group, class or other cohort of students) who displays acute or chronically challenging behaviours, but interventions may be better targeted at those others who relate to and influence the student/s – and this includes you. In this case, your intervention may need to be a systemic intervention – that is, applied systematically across broader contexts and milieus.

Interventions, whether focused on individual students, you as the teacher or broader contexts, invariably require a substantial commitment of additional time, expertise, and human and possibly other resources. It is highly preferable that the design, development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of interventions be conducted on a collaborative basis with other school staff members, consultants, parents and the student/s. Most education systems require, and most schools have, learning support or student welfare/discipline teams (or an equivalent) whose role is to support school staff in the process of providing for students with additional needs.

Particularly in the case of individual interventions, it is important to remember that students are enrolled in schools, not classes. All students are the collective responsibility of schools and, of course, their parents – not of individual teachers. If and when, as a member of a school staff, you believe that a student or group of students in your class needs an intervention because of additional needs, you should approach your mentor, supervisor or executive to negotiate the involvement of others. For a student to be placed on an intervention, which is in essence a temporary individual education program, parental participation is highly preferred, and parental approval is usually mandated.

There is a plethora of contemporary research and literature attesting to the value, appropriateness and efficacy of systemic intervention. Even among the diverse range of theorists and educators to whom you have been, and will be, introduced in this text, there is strong agreement that student behaviour is best developed and improved on at least a classwide and preferably a schoolwide basis.

If your focus is appropriately on improving the behaviours of an individual or small group of students in your class, and solely within the context of your classroom management plan, then an individual intervention is fine. If your focus is on improving the behaviours of your whole class solely within the context of your classroom management plan, then a focused intervention is fine. If your
focus is on improving the behaviour of one or more of your students in your classroom and wider context or educational milieu (for example, the playground, around the school, in other classrooms with other teachers and students or in other school community settings) then you should seriously consider a broader focus and reconsider the locus of the problem, the locus of control and the locus of change.

A systemic intervention can be broadly focused on changing the way in which the whole school community engages with welfare issues. A systemic intervention can be less broadly focused on changing the way in which teachers and students engage with each other. A systemic intervention can be even less broadly focused and only about the welfare issues of a subset of the student population. It can even be about just one teacher and one class of students; but even in this case, any plans for change put forward by that teacher would need to take into account schoolwide issues, practices and policies.

Intervention involves predetermined strategies or sets of steps that you take to influence students to change their behaviour. There are a number of ways in which teachers do intervention. Normally, you would set out your strategies and steps for doing so in your classroom management plan. At this point, an understanding of two concepts—level of response and response hierarchies—is critical.

**Level of response**

**Level of response** refers to your, and the school’s, planned actions in response to instances of inappropriate behaviour. Refer back to the example we used earlier wherein a student in your class was using her mobile phone. Your level of response in that example was reasonably commensurate with the level of her behaviour. However, if the student had been hitting another class member on the head with a ruler, just asking her to put the ruler away would constitute an inappropriate level of response. But if you were thinking of a sanction, or even a reparative task such as writing an apology to the other student, then you were probably on track with a more appropriate level of response. Escalating levels of response form your predetermined plan for responding to increasingly inappropriate behaviours.

Consider the behaviours and planned responses from one teacher’s classroom management plan shown in Figure 1.6.

Can you see what’s happening here to the level of response as each behaviour becomes more severe and more challenging? As a general rule, less disruptive behaviours are responded to with low-level interventions, while more challenging and disruptive behaviours are responded to with higher-impact, more intrusive interventions. Many schools adopt schoolwide systems that outline how all teachers should respond to a range of behaviours.

**Figure 1.6** A sample series of levels of response

- **Talking out of turn** → **Eye contact and pause**
- **Calling out** → **Reminder of rules**
- **Disrupting others** → **Time-out**
- **Hurt others** → **Referral to year advisor**

**Levels in policy**

In one suburban high school well known to one of the authors, all students start on Level 0, but are escalated to Level 1 after three low-level inappropriate behaviours (such as talking out of turn or daydreaming) or one case of middle-level inappropriate behaviour (such as disrupting others or swearing). Placement on Level 1 means that they will be subject to a standard response that includes a warning from the year advisor and, in cases of repeated behaviour, lunchtime detention. Students on Level 1 are escalated to Level 2 (involving letters home and detention) if their behaviour does not change, while students who are involved in physical violence are escalated from Level 0 straight to Level 2.

There are many possible responses that you could use as interventions to influence student behaviour. Table 1.2 shows a few examples of three levels of intrusiveness/severity: low, medium and high.

**Table 1.2** Examples of levels of responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LOW</th>
<th>MEDIUM</th>
<th>HIGH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Eye contact</td>
<td>• Warning</td>
<td>• Detention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Hand signal</td>
<td>• Restate expectations</td>
<td>• Referral to higher authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Pause</td>
<td>• Refer to rules</td>
<td>• Send to buddy-class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Quiet naming</td>
<td>• Offer choices</td>
<td>• Parent interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Proximity</td>
<td>• Time-out</td>
<td>• Combinations of the above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Combinations of the above</td>
<td>• Combinations of the above</td>
<td>• Combinations of the above</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Response hierarchies**

Experienced teachers will often have a predetermined set of actions they take when students misbehave repeatedly. You might remember a teacher who gave a warning, then a second warning, then placed the student’s name on the board. This is an example of what we refer to as a **response hierarchy**. The idea of planning responses in this way has been put forward by others. Jacobsen et al. (1981) refer to response hierarchies as plans of actions in response to certain types of persistent inappropriate. Canter and Canter (2001) referred to a similar concept of ‘discipline hierarchies’ as plans that teachers organise ahead of time so that they are ready to respond.

- Levels of response guide our planned response hierarchies. For instance, suppose a teacher notices two of his students talking to one another when they should be listening to him. He makes eye contact with the students. This has no effect, so he then pauses. The two students realise they are
being prompted to pay attention, and cease their conversation. A few minutes later, they are doing it again. This time, the teacher calls to both of them, saying, "Eric! Melissa! What is our rule about listening?" They state the rule and do not engage in inappropriate conversation for the remainder of the lesson. They know that the next action by the teacher will be a time-out.

This teacher has used a response hierarchy to influence those students to behave appropriately. The first two actions were low-level and covert, in that they did not interrupt the lesson much. The third action was far more impactful, being a calling of the student names and a brief deviation from the flow of the lesson. This middle-level action achieved the teacher's goal, and he did not have to place the students on time-out. The teacher's response hierarchy for talking out of turn could be illustrated as:

Eye contact > Pause > Restate rules > Time-out > Referral to deputy principal

The last step, referral to the deputy principal, might be in line with the wider school policy, and is quite high-impact, since the student/s would be required to leave the classroom for a time and there would be some disruption to the lesson while this was enacted. Having a response hierarchy helps you to remember what to do next as well as be more consistent in your interventions. Response hierarchies vary, but we recommend their having no more than four to five steps. We also recommend starting with a couple of low-impact responses for lower-level inappropriate behaviour. Response hierarchies for more severe behaviours will, of course, be shorter, especially where danger to others is concerned. Figures 1.7 and 1.8 demonstrate these two models.

**Figure 1.7** A model response hierarchy for lower-level inappropriate behaviours

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action 1</th>
<th>Action 2</th>
<th>Action 3</th>
<th>Action 4</th>
<th>Action 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low-level</td>
<td>Low-level</td>
<td>Medium-level</td>
<td>Medium-level</td>
<td>Higher-level</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 1.8** A model response hierarchy for higher-level inappropriate behaviours

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action 1</th>
<th>Action 2</th>
<th>Action 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Medium-level</td>
<td>Medium-level</td>
<td>Higher-level</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Jim, the deputy principal, was called to deal with a student who was shouting at and verbally abusing his class teacher. He withdrew the student without engaging the class teacher and sat the student down in his office to have a discussion about the incident. The student admitted he had been texting on his mobile phone rather than listening to the teacher, but was upset because the teacher had not followed the school's due process and given him a warning. Jim then invoked the school's response hierarchy for disrespecting a teacher—a more serious consequence than for using a mobile phone in class.

During the next break, Jim met privately with the teacher and explained how he had followed due process for the student's disrespect of a teacher. He also then cautioned the teacher for not following due process and for probably escalating what turned out to be a very disruptive conflict. The teacher was taken aback, and silently disappointed in the deputy's actions.

- Was the student's response appropriate in these circumstances?
- Was Jim's response appropriate in these circumstances?
- Was the teacher's response to the deputy appropriate in these circumstances?

You be the judge...

At a schoolwide level, Response to Intervention systems (which we will explain later) are designed to apply escalating levels of intervention, initially to large groups, then to smaller groups, and finally necessary to individual students in need.

Okay: we've covered a lot of ground for you in this first chapter. We have introduced the basics to give you a clear indication of what follows in the next nine chapters. It's time now to look back over what you have learned from the text so far. We close this chapter (and, in fact, each chapter) with a 'Professional reflection' task for you to attempt individually or in collaboration with others.

**PROFESSIONAL REFLECTION**

If you look back over this chapter, you will see how we have emphasised the importance of a professional philosophy statement. You very likely chose to pursue a teaching career because you wanted to 'make a difference' in children's lives and, more generally, make a meaningful contribution to your society. Teaching is an honourable profession, and we commend you for your choice. We are also sure that since you began your teacher training, you have at times thought about your reasons for choosing this pathway and reflected on your beliefs and reasons for doing so. It might even be the case that your program or course requirements compelled you...
to engage in this professional reflection, or even to articulate your emerging professional philosophy of teaching in discussion and/or in writing.

As we stated earlier, professional reflection is a key element of professionalism, and regular engagement in this process is a significant part of what distinguishes professionals from non-professionals. Effective teachers draw upon their professional reflections to assess and evaluate their reasoning and practices. Effective teachers draw upon these assessments and evaluations to improve their practice. Effective teachers are philosophically and pedagogically dynamic, and persistently look for evidence to guide their philosophical thinking and practice improvement.

Your first professional reflection task is to gather together your thoughts and writings about, along with any resources about, your professional philosophy and to reflect on these. You might do this alone and/or collaboratively with peers or more experienced others. We want you to 'take a stand on where you stand' in regard to the business of teaching and learning.

Now, a professional philosophy statement (of, let's say, 300 to 600 words) is a short but broad statement. But it at least explains your beliefs about why teaching and learning are important, how teaching and learning can best be facilitated, and how evidence-based theory and practices, along with jurisdictional policies, inform your beliefs. This statement is clearly about more than just PLEs and student behaviour. But your classroom should be a PLE where your students are engaged and learning, so explaining how you will create and maintain such an environment is an important part of your professional philosophy of teaching.

Up until now, you have probably not thought to look deeply at the relevance of the theory you have been learning in your teacher education course (although teacher education courses are full of theory!), and you have probably not yet thought about how you can meaningfully embed theory into a professional philosophy statement. So now is the time to think and write!

One output or artifact of this professional reflection task could be your professional philosophy statement. Given that we have yet to describe and explain to you the range of theories in this text, your statement will at first be 'impoverished'. Worry not: you need to start somewhere, and we know you have already thought deeply enough about teaching to choose it as your career! We also know that two of the main concerns for pre-service and early career teachers are student behaviour and classroom management.

We have already mentioned that there is no one 'formula' for drafting a professional philosophy statement, but there are some websites that offer good guidance. The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership's Australasian Charter for the Professional Learning of Teachers and School Leaders (see the end-of-chapter 'Weblinks') is a good starting point. There are also many online examples of teaching philosophy statements for you to explore. So your first professional reflection task for this text is to start thinking, start talking and start writing!

To help you create your draft professional philosophy of teaching statement, this text's companion website provides a template that you can download and use. The template, which is titled 'Your philosophy for a positive learning environment', contains guide questions to help you draft your statement step by step. Why not download it now so you can get started.

Once you have read each chapter — including, importantly, the 'Professional reflection' sections — use the questions and activities in the template (which build on the 'Professional reflection' sections) to gradually build and develop your professional philosophy of teaching. Once you complete all of these activities, you will have created the first element of your classroom management plan, which we guide you through in Chapter 10.

We encourage you, and your teachers, to use this resource.

**SUMMARY**

In this chapter we introduced you to the core concepts of PLEs, classroom management plans and behaviour, particularly in school settings. We introduced these in the context of a diversity of factors that impact on the core professional task of creating (and then maintaining) a classroom as a PLE, the 'ecological perspective' being central here. The relevance and importance of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers and the New Zealand Graduating Teacher Standards was emphasised. Our beliefs and views were outlined through an introduction to the Lyford model, a model to help you to develop your emerging professional philosophy and your first-draft classroom management plan.

The concept of behaviour was explored, particularly with respect to aspects such as prevention versus intervention and levels of response; appropriateness versus inappropriateness; passive versus active; primary versus secondary; and low-level versus high-level (challenging).

We then introduced you to the scope and sequence of the text, with a brief preview of chapter content and the activities that we have included to encourage you to individually and collaboratively engage with the text. The chapter closed with a professional reflection.

**Key terms**

- appropriate behaviour
- bullying
- challenging behaviours
- classroom management
- classroom management plan
- cyberbullying
- ecological perspective
- ecological systems theory
- inappropriate behaviour
- level of response
- Lyford model
- positive learning environments (PLEs)
- professional philosophy statement
- response hierarchy
Individual and group activities

Activity 1.1
Refer back to this chapter’s ‘Starter story: More time . . .’
• Discuss the importance of, and challenges of, developing: (i) a professional philosophy statement (with reference to theoretical beliefs about PLEs and student behaviour); (ii) preferred approaches to creating and maintaining PLEs; and (iii) a first-draft classroom management plan – before you begin teaching.

Activity 1.2
Review your copy of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers or the New Zealand Graduating Teacher Standards.
• Are there any standards, focus areas or content descriptors at the graduate or proficient teacher career stages that you find difficult to link to the task of creating and maintaining a PLE?
• Discuss and compare and contrast these with a peer group, and maybe with other practising teachers.
(Note: You could simplify this activity by focusing on one or more of the individual standards, rather than all of them.)

Activity 1.3
Review the chapter section ‘The authors’ beliefs’.
• Do you (and others) hold similar beliefs?
• Do you hold other beliefs (or values and positions) that you see as more important than, or at odds with, our beliefs?
• Write down your top-five beliefs about creating and maintaining PLEs, particularly for your future classrooms. Keep these at hand to inform the development of your professional philosophy statement.
• And now the hardest ask: can you find any (research-based) evidence for the veracity of your beliefs?

Activity 1.4
Review the chapter section ‘The authors’ view and the Lyford model’.
• Based on your teacher training studies to date, discuss the model – generally, with respect to the nature of its various parts, and particularly with respect to the processes explained in the model.
• How could you use this model to help you in the development of your professional philosophy statement and your first-draft classroom management plan?

Activity 1.5
• Discuss the implications, benefits and challenges implicit in adopting an ecological approach to creating and maintaining your classroom as a PLE.
• Just how ‘ecological’ can you be?
• Given your experiences as a school student, can you offer and discuss anecdotes about your previous teachers’ apparent perspectives on student behaviour, classroom management and PLEs?

Online resources

**CENGAGE brain** Visit [http://login.cengagebrain.com](http://login.cengagebrain.com) and search for this book to access the study tools that come with your textbook.

Weblinks

Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA)
[http://www.acara.edu.au](http://www.acara.edu.au)
Australian Curriculum
[http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au](http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au)
Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians (2008)
Australian Charter for the Professional Learning of Teachers and School Leaders (2012)
Australian Professional Standards for Teachers
New Zealand Graduating Teacher Standards
[http://educationcouncil.org.nz/content/graduating-teacher-standards](http://educationcouncil.org.nz/content/graduating-teacher-standards)

'SWPBIS [School-wide positive behavioral interventions and support] for beginners' (Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports)
[http://www.pbis.org/school/swpbis-for-beginners](http://www.pbis.org/school/swpbis-for-beginners)

'Writing a philosophical statement of your approach to teaching' (Flinders University)

'Teaching portfolios: introduction and overview' (Australian Catholic University)

'Great teaching, inspired learning' (Board of Studies Teaching and Educational Standards NSW)

'Functional behavioural assessment' (Center for Effective Collaboration and Practice)
[http://cecpair.org/fta/](http://cecpair.org/fta/)
References


Starting story: An epiphany!

It's odd,' thought Karen, 'but it seems that it's only during the holidays that I have the time, energy and inclination to reflect more deeply on my teaching. What is it about some of my students that makes me so apprehensive, and why do some of them give me such a hard time? Maybe it's something about the way we connect. I just seem to be talking, giving directions and reacting to disruptive behaviours most of the time.'

That evening, Karen had an epiphany. 'All this time', she thought, 'I've been focusing on management and misbehaviours. What I really need to do is focus on building an interesting and welcoming classroom where my students are motivated to keep busy, and where we talk more 'at their level'. I've got to start listening to what they're trying to tell me.'

With one week of holidays still to go, Karen found herself thinking about and researching strategies for engaging and getting in touch with her students. She was now keen to get back to school to try some of these strategies.

INTRODUCTION

We know you want to become an effective teacher, with students who are motivated, engaged and learning. Effective teachers teach their students appropriate behaviours, very often by modelling these, and then systematically recognise and encourage those behaviours. This enables the creation of a positive classroom climate. This is a constructive and preventative pathway; it is not just a reactionary pathway.

So what exactly is classroom climate, and what does it mean? And what is the evidence base enabling it to be promoted as one of four key components in taking a preventative pathway toward creating and maintaining your classroom as a PLE?

WHAT IS CLASSROOM CLIMATE?

'Learning environment', 'classroom environment', 'social climate' and/or 'emotional climate', and 'class atmosphere' are all terms that are variously used to represent the concept of classroom climate. But what is classroom climate?

Some definitions of classroom climate are esoteric, referring to it as an atmosphere or aura that can be felt in a classroom, but not necessarily seen (Marsh, 2010; NSW Department of Education, 1981). We contend that you can see classroom climate – if you know what to look for. Research helps us in this endeavour.

Indeed, quite a lot of research has attempted to describe the dimensions of classroom climate and its impacts on student behaviour. Trickett and Moos' (1973) classic research study offers one of the
most comprehensive and influential conceptualisations of classroom climate. They identified nine dimensions relating to three areas: the nature of interpersonal relationships (i.e. supportiveness and social relationships); the degree of order and control regarding behaviour (i.e. maintaining of order through rules, organisation and a variety of teaching strategies); and orientation to academic goals (i.e. extent of focus on tasks and competition).

Other researchers have identified different sets of classroom climate dimensions, but most of these fit within the earlier framework developed by Trickett and Moos. For example, Trickett and Moos identified a dimension known as ‘Support’, which referred to how teachers showed interest in their students. Fraser and his co-authors, alternatively, identified a dimension they called ‘Personalisation’, which referred to teacher interactions with students and concern for students’ well-being and growth (Fraser & Fisher, 1983; Fraser & O’Brien, 1985). It is worth noting that both of these classroom climate frameworks were developed from studies in secondary schools.

Similar dimensions were identified in later studies of primary and secondary classrooms, and this research has helped to clarify what dimensions may comprise classroom climate. For example, Rowe et al. (2010) identified ‘support from the teacher’ and ‘support from peers’ as two distinct dimensions. They also identified a dimension relating to student perception of their academic progress in a class. A later study by Patrick, Kaplan and Ryan (2011) identified two teacher support dimensions: one concerning emotional support for students and the other related to student learning. Their study also identified a dimension focused on respectfulness and one concerning teacher encouragement of peer interaction. In addition, recent Australian and New Zealand movements towards quality pedagogy (such as the Queensland Productive Pedagogies framework, the New South Wales quality teaching model and New Zealand Effective Pedagogies approach) are promoting strategies that are congruent with certain dimensions of classroom climate, including social support and academic engagement.

Dimensions help us to break down and analyse a complex phenomenon like classroom climate into parts that can be felt, but also seen. For example, dimensions relating to support can be observed by watching how teachers interact with their students, and dimensions relating to academic goals can be captured by seeing what students are working towards during lessons.

While it is beyond the scope of this chapter to present all of these dimensions of classroom climate, we have analysed them to arrive at our own inclusive framework for this concept. We draw substantially on Trickett and Moos’ conceptualisations, but also on the work of Brackett et al. (2011), Fraser (1998), Patrick et al. (2011), Rivers et al. (2013), Rowe et al. (2010) and Thomas, Bierman and Powers (2011). Our framework is summarily described and presented in Table 2.1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AREA OF FOCUS</th>
<th>DIMENSION</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) Relationships</td>
<td>(i) Teacher support</td>
<td>Teacher offers students academic and social/emotional support, showing a genuine interest in their welfare and acting quickly to reduce the impacts of inappropriate behaviour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(ii) Peer support</td>
<td>Students offer social and academic support to one another and work well together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(iii) Teacher respect</td>
<td>Teacher shows and models respectfulness to students, and expects it to be reciprocated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(iv) Peer respect</td>
<td>Students are generally respectful to one another, and conflicts are handled in a calm manner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) Orientation to academic goals</td>
<td>(v) Academic focus</td>
<td>Students are being driven to achieve their best; there is intellectual challenge, and they can describe how they are progressing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(vi) Quality teaching</td>
<td>Students are interested in their work, are often actively engaged in tasks and are motivated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) Order and control</td>
<td>(vii) Classroom culture</td>
<td>Students know the rules and procedures well and know what to expect if they misbehave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(viii) Organisation</td>
<td>The classroom is well organised and the physical environment is pleasant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Positive classroom climates exist when the abovementioned dimensions are experienced most of the time. For example, teacher supportiveness and encouragement to do one’s best will logically lead students to have positive feelings about the learning environment, because they will feel supported in their learning. In classrooms with positive climates, rules and consequences are clear, respectfulness is present, relationships are strong, and students are more likely to feel safe and accepted – and to have positive perceptions of climate. Research has also shown that positive climates can lead to improved student motivation and achievement (Reyes et al., 2012).

On the other hand, in negative classroom climates, most or all of the abovementioned dimensions are not experienced to a great extent, if at all. Such classrooms have been described as places where students perceive teacher supportiveness as being either low or non-existent. We know that inappropriate student behaviours are more likely to occur in negative classroom climates, even accounting for the impacts of those behaviours on climate to begin with (Brackett et al., 2011; Thomas, Bierman & Powers, 2011).

We hope that, by now, you realise that positive classroom climates are quite similar, conceptually, to PLEs. Classroom climate is integral to classroom PLEs; that is why we have introduced it in this
chapter, ahead of the other three preventative practices explained in this text – namely, classroom culture (Chapter 3), physical environment (Chapter 4) and instructional practices (i.e. curriculum, pedagogy and assessment: Chapter 5). You might notice that these other three preventative practices are included in our framework of classroom climate dimensions above. This is intentional! While they are distinct concepts, classroom culture, physical environment and instructional practices do influence classroom climate, and vice-versa.

It might also have occurred to you that classroom climate relates to student microsystems as explained in ecological systems theory. Now you’re thinking! When we talk about classroom climate, we are also referring to students’ microsystems, because of the close relationships with teachers and peers that exist within that level of ecology. With this in mind, we take the position that orientation to academic goals and to order and control are important dimensions of positive classroom climates, but also that these rely to a great extent on teachers developing positive relationships. It will be timely, then, for us to explore relationships and communication in the following sections. If you want to become an effective teacher, you will need to know and understand how to develop highly positive relationships with all those who you interact with as a teacher, and you will need to know and understand how to facilitate the best communication between all these parties.

As Figure 2.1 suggests, the relationships and communication subcomponents combine to form the key component of classroom climate. Your ability to build strong, positive relationships will be influenced by your ecological, sociocultural and psychoeducational perspectives. Ultimately, your beliefs about, and strategies for, building a positive classroom climate will become essential parts of your professional philosophy of teaching and first-draft classroom management plan. So let’s look more closely at the significance and diversity of relationships, particularly those that will arise in your future classroom and schools involving your students, but also students’ families and other school staff members.

**Figure 2.1 Classroom climate in the Lyford model**

As a teacher, your leadership will influence the relationships that form in your classroom.

First, think about the individuals and groups of people who may or will be part of your first class(es). You might extend your thinking to the broader setting of the school, and even the local school community. (Take an ecological perspective!) There will be you, of course, as a teacher; but yours might be a larger, ‘shared’ class, in which case you’ll have a colleague working alongside you (maybe not the person of your choice!). Every school has at least one support teacher who has additional teacher training and expertise to support you in assisting your students with additional needs. You will almost certainly be working alongside this staff member in your ‘classroom’. Oh, and nearly every school has paraprofessional support staff: teachers’ aides who are assigned to support you with your students with additional needs, and who follow the teaching/learning programs provided by you. They’ll often be there! And don’t forget your adult volunteers (parents and other school community members) who will ‘come and go’, usually regularly but sometimes intermittently.

Now, whether you’re in a primary, secondary or combined school, other teachers will teach your students – sometimes as the same group in your classroom, sometimes as the same group in other classrooms, and sometimes in different groups in other classrooms. Ah, yes, your students; let’s not forget them! In your classroom, there will usually be around 20 to 30 ‘individual’ students. Each is her or his ‘own person’ and, naturally, you will be aiming to build positive relationships with each and every one of them.

Of course, each of your students will already have relationships, and will be building new relationships, with each and every other student in your class. First, paired relationships will form,
and then group relationships will form. You will influence both of these types of relationships, even in as simple a way as through your organisation of desks.

Now, we know you really want all of your students to form a relationship as a class group, and your leadership behaviours will be the key influence here. We have already taken for granted that you want to create and maintain an harmonious and supportive learning environment where all of your students will be engaged and learning as best they can. Oh, yes: and parents, carers and family; don’t ever forget them. Their emerging relationships with you and their ongoing relationships with their children (and others’ children) will be particularly important and influential.

We're sure that our point here is clear: the many relationships that form in and around your classroom, and among and around your students, are significant and influential when it comes to both students' learning and well-being and your own professional and personal well-being. You are the key partner in and among this diversity of relationships, even though they spread out well beyond the four walls of your classroom.

The development of positive, sincere and valued relationships in and among your students and classroom is not just a professional expectation and standard. More importantly, it is a moral imperative for you; and your professional philosophy should reflect this. So let's take a deeper look at what we believe to be the first three key relationships.

Key relationship 1: You and your students
The most important relationships you will need to build are between you and each of your students. It is important to remind you that you are their teacher, but you do not have to be their 'friend'. You should, of course, be 'friendly', but your role and responsibility is to guide, lead and teach students during school time to help them to develop academically, socially and emotionally, to the best of their ability. How you see your relationships with your students is a central consideration in the development of your professional philosophy.

Key relationship 2: You and your students' parents or carers
To build relationships with your students, you will also need to build relationships with their parents or carers. If you intend to be an effective primary teacher, this is an imperative. If you intend to be an effective secondary teacher (in which case you are likely to be teaching more than 150 students), then you should aim to build relationships with as many parents and carers as you can. These relationships will probably be less 'rich' than those of your primary colleagues, but they should still be as positive, supportive and productive as possible.

Key relationship 3: You and your whole class
You should give very careful consideration to how you will build valued positive collective relationships between you and all of your students as members of a class group. Students will very likely already have established peer relationships (indeed, most students move through their entire school life with many of their starting cohort), but broader home, school and class changes, along with more personal changes arising out of physical, social and emotional developments, invariably lead to changes to, and new opportunities for, relationships within and across the school years.

Please note: we are not suggesting that you should go on a mission of 'social engineering' here! All members of your class should already be aware of the rules, rights and responsibilities and/or codes of conduct that belong to them as class and/or school members. Consequently, there will already be guidelines for how members should reasonably interact. We will discuss this in much more detail in Chapter 3 when we explore classroom culture.

STRATEGIES TO DEVELOP RELATIONSHIPS
In the previous sections, we explained what we believe are the first three main relationships you should focus on when you start teaching. There will be differences in emphasis between teachers appointed to primary and secondary schools, as well as differences between those appointed to full-time and temporary positions. These will become more evident as you develop your professional philosophy and first-draft classroom management plan. So what strategies to develop relationships do we recommend?

We have outlined, in the following sections, three groups of strategies for you. Of course, there are many more, but these are our starting points for you. (Other resources have been included in this chapter's 'Weblinks' and on this text's companion website.) The first group of strategies includes those you could employ 'at the beginning' of your appointment – from day one. The second group of strategies include those you could employ 'along the way': on a continuing basis throughout the year or for shorter periods, if you have a temporary appointment. The third group could be employed strategically 'as needed', and in response to your ongoing assessment of the efficacy of your classroom management plan and the continuing development of your classroom as a PLE.

So, let's start 'at the beginning'.

At the beginning...
There have been many, many 'get to know you'-type activities developed by teachers for use at the beginning of each school year. This is for a very good reason: it is extremely important for you to get to know your students, and for them to get to know you. Activities can be tailored to suit students from Kindergarten to Year 12, and are employed, essentially, to gather key information about each student that you can use to build 'personal profiles'.

This information includes, for example, students' preferred name, and maybe a photo; some reference to their family members and friends; their favourite school-time subjects, topics and activities; their favourite pastimes, hobbies, sports and games; and their favourite sports team and/or entertainer/s. These sorts of activities can span over a number of days; some of them also give you opportunities to qualitatively assess each student's social skills, learning motivations and learning abilities, and challenges in an informal and fun way.

You also need to think about 'how much of you' you will share with your students. Just like you need to know them, they can benefit from knowing you better, too. This encourages trust and open
communication. Of course, you would give careful thought to what your students at their level of emotional and social maturity should know about you; this consideration will also relate to your professional philosophy of teaching.

An early ‘Hello’ text, email or letter home to parents or carers, preferably before the end of the first school week, is a great way to start relationship-building with key family members at home. Imagine yourself as a parent of a student, receiving an early warm welcome from your child’s new teacher, which shows the enthusiasm and interest that teacher has for knowing and teaching your child. This is relationship ‘money in the bank’. You will, though, need to draw on what you have learned through your early in-class ‘get to know you’ exercises to make sure your communication is accurate and appropriate. This is also a great opportunity for you to share elements of your professional philosophy and an outline of your academic and behavioural expectations.

A third suggested strategy is to use a significant portion of your early time with your students to discuss, and perhaps negotiate, class expectations, rules, rights and responsibilities, and/or a code of conduct. Regardless, these discussions should always come very early in the year. They give you another great opportunity to know your students better, and particularly to understand where they stand with regard to key aspects of classroom culture.

IN PRACTICE

Magic treasure: everyone is valued

For about 25 years, Gordon (the second author) has brought his ‘magic treasure’ into Kindergarten to Year 12 classrooms. This is a small, ornate vessel sealed by a lid and with a mirror within. This is his key strategy for building positive and trusting relationships with students of all ages.

Without referring to the mirror inside, Gordon richly describes the vessel’s contents as a magical treasure that, when opened, will reveal something ‘special and magical; something that will make you smile!’ With much ado, he invites selected students to publicly peak inside to see this ‘very, very special treasure’. But on one condition: that the special and magical contents not be revealed to others (sort of).

Students come forward on invitation, have a peak, almost invariably smile (and Gordon smiles at them), engage in eye contact, and return with their secret to their seat in class. Younger children can’t resist, whereas adults can be more self-conscious. Gordon uses this again and again over the year.

You work out how and why it works so well.

Along the way...

As you move into the weeks following your first lessons with your class/es, you will need to continue to work on building positive relationships, and maybe even correcting some relationships.

One way is to invite students to talk and/or write about their prior knowledge and/or interests in forthcoming topics and projects. This will give you increasing insight into their prior knowledge and learning motivations, and also help you to preview and differentiate your teaching/learning plans.

Try going ‘off-task’ with a small group of students. Seriously! We’re not kidding. While the class is involved in an independent task (one where they are working on a task individually or in groups and do not need to focus on you), sit with a small groups of students and ask them about their weekend; or about their favourite pastimes; or just ask, ‘What’s been happening?’ or ‘What music are you listening to at the moment?’ Through this type of activity you will find out how your students ‘tick’, and they will develop a sense that you are approachable – an important aspect of communication that we will talk about later – and that you value them. This informal chat might lead to other opportunities for connection, such as, for example, asking a student how their football game went on the weekend, or where they placed in a dance competition. This can sometimes lead to the disclosure of information that might explain a change in attitude or behaviour, or trigger interventions from other professionals. So be prepared for what can come.

This activity, of course, builds trust. The students feel they can trust you as a confidante, and you as teacher also develop trust in them. This leads to more open communication (more about this later) between you and the students, and among students. One of the ways you can reinforce both your approachability as teacher and open communication is to allow times at which students can talk to you about work issues and personal issues.

As needed...

There are times when you might notice the class losing social cohesion, students getting annoyed at each other more frequently or just a sense of negative mood in the room. There are many reasons why this might happen. Sometimes you, as the teacher, have become less supportive or have emphasised control too much. Sometimes it is because students are feeling pressure from assessments and related workloads. There are many possibilities. It might be time to engage in a ‘taking stock’ reflective activity.

This is an ‘oldie but a goodie’, and it works well to facilitate reconnection. Move seating aside and have the class sit in a broad circle. Each student is given a coloured card with another student’s name on it. You ask students to write one positive thing about that student on the card and then pass the card on to the next student, who does the same. Occasionally, students will see their own card, and it is okay for them to write about themselves, too. At the appropriate time, students deliver the cards to their destinations. They sit in their own space in the room and read what their peers have written about them. Quiet background music may help to set the mood. After five minutes, convene the class for a debrief discussion. Guide questions might include: ‘What did you find most surprising?’ ‘What did this activity do for you?’ and ‘How do you feel?’ The idea behind such activities is to facilitate social reconnection between students, to break up cliques and to get the classroom climate moving in a more positive direction.

Another activity that produces similar results is having the class organise an end-of-term or end-of-unit celebration. They must work together to organise food, space settings and any formal speeches – even peer awards, with the citations bringing to light something positive each individual
student has achieved or contributed. The authors have seen celebrations that try to mimic the Golden Globe Awards, with handmade trophies, humorous, non-offensive jokes and even music. The activity does take time away from the formal curriculum, but the effort and sense of fun created can help to mend strained relationships and restore a positive climate.

**STORY FROM THE FIELD**

**Tamara: Reaching boiling point**

The words still ring in my ears: 'You think what you have to say is important! You’re just a child.' Not what I expected to witness on my professional experience placement. I was struck to the core - as if the words had been said to me - yet I watched as the student returned to his seat, eyes downward and silent. No doubt those words found a place in that child's memory.

I could not believe that an experienced teacher would address one of her students in such a manner. Regardless of circumstance, the teacher missed an opportunity to communicate with the student in a positive manner and to achieve the type of behaviour she desired. I have reflected on the situation time and time again. If only she had been more patient. If only she had negotiated an escape route before reaching boiling point. If only she had shown an interest in the child. If only she knew the power of positive communication...

This same student excelled in his ICT class. Why? As soon as he entered the room, he was met with a smile and a positive greeting. He was praised for his achievements. He had a voice that was welcomed in the room. Most importantly, he had a relationship with his teacher that had been built on positive experiences. The ICT teacher had the ability to guide and support this student’s learning in profound ways.

This didn’t happen easily. A lot of effort had gone into knowing the interests of this student and his peers. Developing an awareness of student needs should ‘drive’ the way students are taught. Being open and approachable may seem a small and simple thing, but to some it can be everything. Witnessing the difference between these two approaches to teaching has stirred my desire to concentrate on building positive relationships with my students. This, of course, means a lot of time and effort on my part, but I am totally convinced that the benefits are well worth the investment.

**Reflection...**

Tamara’s implied professional philosophy and theoretical approach to classroom management resonates with the tenets of psychoeducational theory generally, and places some importance on developing a positive classroom climate via communication.

- Does your emerging professional philosophy do the same?
- Can you draw more links between Tamara’s story and other ideas introduced in this chapter?

**COMMUNICATION**

By now, we hope you are sold on the idea that valued relationships are ‘gold’. But good communication is fundamental to building valued relationships and promoting positive behaviour in classrooms and schools. It’s almost a ‘chicken and egg’ situation. Communication skills are so important, but we rarely reflect closely upon what we say, how we say it or how we listen. Neither are we likely to spend time thinking about our non-verbal communication.

Humans engage in very complex communicative behaviours without being consciously aware of them. We often become so focused on the transmission of information that we pay little attention to the manner in which we communicate. This is what makes communication tricky to reflect on, and sometimes difficult to change. It is even more difficult to try to understand what another person is feeling or thinking; so much is unsaid and misunderstood.

**The 10-Component (or 10C) Model of Communication**

Our challenge here is to help you to come to a reasonable understanding of communication in all its complexity. One way is to show and explain a diagram. There are many communication theories and models, but the one we present here is the 10-Component (or 10C) Model of Communication (De Nobile, 2016). This model draws and builds upon the work of others, including De Nobile’s model (De Nobile, 2003), which was developed to explain organisational communication in schools, and which builds on the classic works of Shannon and Weaver (1949), Schramm (1954) and Berlo (1960). It comprises the commonly known elements of source, receiver, message, channel and feedback, but includes two additional components: noise and environment. The 10C Model continues to evolve, focusing particularly on aspects of message. Figure 2.2 gives a visual representation of the 10C Model.

Following is an explanation of each of the components of the model, followed by an explanation of the interactive processes within the model.

**Figure 2.2 The 10C Model of Communication**
Sender
The sender is the source of a message. The sender uses their knowledge and skills of communication and knowledge of the topic to formulate ideas, encode those ideas into language and transmit those thoughts to others. The sender must also be able to decode the (feedback) response. (See ‘Feedback’ below.)

Receiver
The receiver is the person, or people, who get the message. The receiver must decode the message in order to perceive it, using his/her own communication knowledge and skills, and then interpret it for meaning. They may also provide feedback that is a response to the message that is verbal or non-verbal.

Channel
The channel is the way in which the message is sent. There are three aspects to channel: medium, direction and level of formality. Medium is the method used to convey the message. This can include a wide range of options, such as verbal or non-verbal, oral versus written, electronic versus analogue, and individual, dyadic or group. Direction refers to hierarchical structure, such as principal to teachers, teachers to students and among students. Level of formality refers to whether the communication is formal or informal, and this will often be reflected by the modality of the language used.

Message
Then there is the message itself. This seems the simplest concept of all, but there is a twist. The message is the idea or set of ideas that the sender is trying to give to the receiver. Simple? Not so! Receivers can also perceive messages that were not intended by the sender. We will look closer at this when we explore noise. There is more to messages, though. Messages actually ‘do’ things, and they are experienced by way of their qualities. We call these aspects functions and features (see below).

Feedback
Okay: this one is simple. Feedback is the receiver’s response to the original message. It is important because it will confirm whether or not the receiver got the message as intended; if not, the sender can try again or adjust midstream. Feedback can also serve functions and have features. It can be verbal or non-verbal, as we shall see when we talk about the process.

Functions
Most messages and feedback serve some kind of purpose. Four main functions of these have been identified from research (De Nobile, 2016). Supportive communication is our attempt to encourage, affirm or provide other forms of support. Directive communication aims to get receivers to comply with rules, procedures or guidelines. Cultural communication involves interactions that develop and maintain the culture of the place, such as the values and beliefs associated with classroom cultures and school culture. Democratic communication has the goal of getting people involved in decision making.

Features
Communication is also experienced in terms of its quality. One key quality of communication in positive classroom climates is openness. Openness is the degree to which people can speak honestly and interact without fear of someone ‘shooting the messenger’. Openness is encouraged by people being approachable and sharing trust with one another. Another feature is load. People experience communication overload, which is too much information, or ‘underload’, which is not enough information (De Nobile, 2016).

Noise
Noise is any interference that can distort the message or the feedback. Noise, which can come from physical or external sources, is caused by something interrupting the channel or senders and receivers – such as the sound of jackhammers on the street muffling a teacher’s instructions for a task – or can be the result of communication overload. Noise can also be internal, caused by psychological and sociocultural factors, such as the experiences and attitudes of the senders and receivers (De Nobile, 2016).

Our experiences, attitudes and values affect the way in which we communicate in both subtle and not-so-subtle ways. What occurs is that inferences are made about the people we interact with on the basis of what we know, or think we know, about them or the situation. This can lead to our messages or feedback being misinterpreted.

Internal environment
The internal environment refers to the climate and culture in which the communication takes place. Classroom climate will influence how open communication is, the amount of supportive communication that occurs, the degree of feedback given to senders, and so on. The communication practices, in turn, influence classroom climate and it is in this way positive or negative classroom climates are maintained. Classroom culture will largely dictate how people interact in terms of the methods, the level of formality, and even the type of language.

External environment
Finally, the external environment refers to the societal norms and local community idiosyncrasies that can influence the way people express things and the way people relate to each other (De Nobile, 2016). The external environment may comprise elements of students’ ecosystems.

The process of communication
Now that we have explained the key components, let’s look at how they interact to become a process.
‘Simple’ communication between two (or more) people can be explained as a two-way process. It involves sending and receiving messages, and in most instances these processes occur simultaneously.
Message receivers are not passive. They continually provide feedback to the sender of the message – sometimes verbally (as in utterances such as ‘Mmm,’ ‘Oh’ and ‘Yes, I see’) and sometimes with silence. Remember: silence and pauses are as important as speech in communication. They hold
meaning for the recipient and convey meaning to the sender. Feedback can also be non-verbal, and, because we are not usually conscious of signals such as eye contact, facial expressions and the way we sit or stand, these can be highly potent in signalling how we are receiving messages.

The receiver perceives ideas, and decodes and interprets messages sent in terms of their content and function. The sender of the message, in turn, makes adjustments to the message content and manner of delivery in response to the feedback received. Again, these adjustments can be unconscious or conscious. If we pick up that the listener is uncomfortable, we may soften our tone. If we see an expression of puzzlement, we often repeat ourselves. In the ebb and flow of conversation, we may not be aware that this is what we are doing. Of course, sometimes, when we are intent on getting a message across, or when we are in a hurry, we may miss the subtle signals of the recipient – in which case misunderstanding and miscommunication can occur; this is an example of noise.

Noise gets in the way of messages being clearly understood. Due to the many transmutations in the communication process, the original and the final ideas seldom equate. Figure 2.3 identifies some of the external and internal interferences that may impact upon communication as noise.

External noise can distort messages, especially in relation to context and setting. For example, discussing a student with a parent in the middle of an active and noisy classroom will be different from talking to a parent in a quiet, private office. The time of day can determine if we are expecting too much or too little in terms of student attentiveness – and we tend not to begin Maths classes half an hour before school closes for this reason! The levels of physical noise and visual distraction are influential. Students on the autism spectrum may require different environments to those of other students. Classes that are bursting with students’ work, colour, vibrancy and activity may not suit the concentration levels of all students. However, we also cannot assume that silence works best, since many students, especially in middle and high school, maintain that they work better with background music from their headphones.

Internal noise is also significant. In order to minimise misunderstandings, effective communicators need to be aware of the interpretations and inferences they make from non-verbal communications, avoid jumping to the conclusion that their inferences are correct, and be aware of their own non-verbal behaviour and how it may be interpreted. This explanation should highlight just how complicated communication can be, and how easy it is to misinterpret non-verbal communications and actual content.

We sometimes make assumptions about the expertise of the receiver. For example, we may assume that a five-year-old does not understand a concept in the same way an eight-year-old does, and vice-versa, but we know that there is a vast difference in abilities and age. If we overgeneralise, we may pitch communication in too complex a way, in which case we might cause overload and lose the audience. If we oversimplify, the audience may become bored and disengaged.

The receivers of messages perceive, decode and interpret messages. However, receivers are affected by similar interferences to senders. If we stay with verbal communication as our example, acuity of hearing is central. Other cognitive systems are also involved in message perception, especially the attention system and the working memory. The reverse of the encoding process, decoding, takes place. The making of meaning will occur through the individual’s knowledge and interpretive filters.

Words, and sometimes phrases, have denotive meanings and connotative meanings. Denotative meanings are the accepted ‘dictionary’ meanings of words and phrases. Connotative meanings, however, are highly dependent on an individual’s experience and cultural background. If the message transmitted contains metaphor, irony, humour, sarcasm or colloquial terms, then it is more likely that the connotative meaning was intended. It can sometimes be confusing when people who have learned another language appear to be fluent speakers in that language, yet still sometimes misunderstand messages delivered in it. This is because we all interpret information based on our own experiences and sociocultural backgrounds. Metaphor can cause confusion, while irony, humour and sarcasm can cause discomfort, shame and offence, because the message may be received literally – at face value. This is particularly the case with very young students.

Non-verbal communication

Communication is as much about what you don’t say as what you do say. Non-verbal communication plays a big part in communicative interactions, and refers to any meaningful aspect of a message other than the spoken or written words. It usually includes aspects of facial expression, eye contact, ‘paralinguistics’ (i.e. volume, inflection, pitch, tone, articulation, pauses and rate of speech), body positioning, gesture, proximity and touching.
Regardless of what you say, what you do is also critically important. Non-verbal communicative behaviours often convey emotions like anger, frustration, joy, interest and boredom, as well as attitudes and values. These behaviours are learned, and are quickly internalised. Different cultures have different non-verbal behaviours, and these often have very different meanings. For example, in parts of India, if you swing your head from side to side, it means you are attentive and in agreement, whereas in most Western countries, this means a clear ‘No’ or rejection.

Non-verbal communication is important because:
- it is less consciously controlled, and therefore less likely to be deceptive
- much of what we say is ambiguous, so meaning is often clarified by non-verbal means
- we use irony, humour and sarcasm in speech, most of which is based on meaning something other than the words spoken
- we often don’t speak in well-formed sentences, so non-verbal behaviour helps us to form meanings
- non-verbal characteristics are more effective in communicating emotions
- we rely heavily on non-verbal behaviours to govern the flow of conversations.

Non-verbal communicative behaviours are not necessarily easy to interpret. Dictionaries cannot be used to check their meaning. Sometimes even relatively obvious signals, such as a smile or a frown, are deceiving. Because they are a powerful way of influencing classroom communications, relationships and behaviours, you need to ensure that your non-verbal communications are clearly understood. Where verbal and non-verbal information and inferences are contradictory, we often default to the evidence of the non-verbal behaviour/s. In other words, people tend to believe what they see, rather than what they hear.

This illustrates the challenge of interpreting non-verbal communicative behaviours accurately. We tend to observe behaviours and infer meanings. Our interpretations come from our own habitual behaviours and from those of familiar others. When we see someone doing what we or others close to us would do, we assume that she or he means the same, but this may not be so. The more ‘direct’ the person is from our experience, in terms of social class, geographic location or cultural background, the more likely the interpretive error. Teachers who work in multicultural settings, in particular, need to take this into account; otherwise, mutual misunderstandings will be likely. However, it is also important that teachers and students in areas of Australia and New Zealand where there is less cultural diversity are aware of the variety of prevailing social practices.

In more recent times, communications have become even more complicated. Verbal communication is still prevalent in schools and the wider community, but these days, so much more communication is done via ICTs: desktop and laptop computers, tablets and smartphones. This has produced different ways of, and new rules for, discourse engagement, because, even though much of what is communicated through ICTs is written, the discourse is more like speech. This brings with it well publicised and widely experienced problems with inappropriate communication.

**Facial expression and eye contact**

*Facial expressions*, which are conveyed mainly through the mouth, eyes and eyebrows, are among the most easily recognised non-verbal behaviours. They unconsciously transmit what we are feeling. *Eye contact* often communicates such things as interest, degree of intimacy, relative status and personal characteristics such as shyness and assertiveness. It often impacts on the ‘flow’ of conversations.

Different cultures have different conventions about facial and eye contact behaviour, and these quickly become second nature in children. In many Indigenous Australian cultures, for example, children avoid eye contact for cultural reasons, and yet in the wider Australian community, eye contact is regarded as an indicator of attentiveness and/or respect.

**Gesture, posture and positioning**

*Gesture* refers to body movements, usually of the head, arms, hands or shoulders. These movements often have specific meanings, and can convey quite nuanced messages. Crossing our arms, for example, may depend on our posture (leaning forward or back) signal disengagement or attentiveness and comfort. Gestures and posture frequently accompany emotional states such as excitement, hopelessness or impatience.

In Indigenous Australian cultures, there is a very large repertoire of hand gestures that convey specific messages. An example of this is shown in the Australian film *Samson and Delilah* (2009), in which both the English and the Walpiri languages are used, and hand signals are often used to convey very specific meanings. In many Aboriginal cultures, even the manner in which an individual is positioned in relation to another communicates information about relative status, intimacy and formality.

Gesture, posture and positioning act together to convey particular messages. Consider the different messages you might convey as a teacher: if you stand rigidly in the front of your classroom with your arms folded; or if you sit casually on your desk with your arms extended or to your sides; or if you kneel down next to a student’s desk slightly to their side. In the first instance, the message might be that you are asserting authority over the class because of a disruption. In the second, it might be that you are expecting your students to open up in a class discussion. In the third, it might be that you are indicating a willingness to help a student who is having difficulty.

**Proximity and touch**

*Proximity* refers to the physical distance between people. Most people are familiar with the notion of ‘personal space’: an invisible area of space around us, the invasion of which can make us feel uncomfortable. Most of us have also experienced the feeling of being ‘backed up against a wall’ by people who invade this personal space. The use of space and touch indicate relative levels of intimacy, respect and formality in conversations. Individuals accept or tolerate varying distances depending on the closeness of the relationship to others involved, and on their cultural background.

Some forms of *touch* are ritualistic signals of greeting and parting, such as a handshake with a stranger or a kiss on the cheek of a family member (although not all cultures do this in the same way). A touch on the shoulder or arm can indicate support, encouragement or affection, but touches on other parts of the body can be interpreted as too intimate or offensive, and can even be regarded as assaultive. In some cultures, touching the top of the head can be deeply confronting. There are also often cultural rules about the ways in which boys and girls, and women and men, interact.

Proximity and touch are powerful signals of relationship, closeness and caring, and for this reason, particular sensitivity is necessary. This is especially the case when different genders are involved. For
example, women of certain religions may not want to take something from the hand of a male outside of their immediate family, or may not feel comfortable shaking hands with a male.

Communication problems

Communication is a particular concern when working with students with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and emotional problems. These students will often experience poor relationships with peers due to their behaviour. Students with ADHD may not be aware that their frequent movement is disruptive. Students with ASD often have difficulty understanding the emotions of their peers and might miss nuances in conversations, leading to misunderstandings.

While teachers should be building opportunities for social interaction generally, there are strategies that can be employed to promote better communication specifically, which, of course, can improve social interactions. Of paramount importance is that the teacher builds a positive classroom climate based on trust (Proser, 2006; Whitt & Danforth, 2010). If you, as teacher, demonstrate openness, are accepting of all students and show genuine interest in them, students will perceive you as someone they can turn to when things get tough. They will also be more inclined to act on your advice when they experience social problems.

Students with ASD often appreciate some accommodation in relation to communication. For example, eye contact might be problematic in oral interactions, so perhaps not insisting on it would be helpful to them. Some students with ASD speak in a monotonous voice when describing something, use a foreign accent or repeat phrases (echolalia) when around (Scottish Autism Service Network & National Centre for Autism Studies University of Strathclyde, 2009; Yapko, 2003). Some understanding and recognition of this prevents misunderstanding. It is also helpful to learn preferred communication channels and use these to assist students with interactions they find frustrating (Khath, 2009; Yapko, 2003). We provide an example of this in the following ‘In practice’ box.

\[\text{IN PRACTICE}\]

**Mark: Accommodating communication**

Mark has ASD. He is high-functioning, which means he achieves reasonably well at school, but he experiences some frustration with social interactions. One particular area of difficulty involves the canteen. Mark feels that ordering food from the canteen during lunchtime can be a problem, because the canteen workers can sometimes get his request wrong, which causes confusion and delay, and leads to significant frustration.

To help Mark, the canteen has made a special arrangement with him. Mark now writes what he wants — often the same snack, which he refers to as ‘my usual’ — on a piece of paper and hands it to the server, who then produces his order with minimal fuss. All the servers at the canteen know this arrangement, and it is not particularly noticeable to others because it is done rather expeditiously.

While Mark’s view of the practice was, ‘I just want them to understand,’ he also recently declared, ‘I should quit writing it down and start saying it.’ This suggests he is gaining greater confidence in that situation and will not need the written down requests in the near future.

The use of visual cues, such as hand signals, or sounds, such as clearing your throat, can be used with students with ASD, oppositional defiant disorder (ODD), ADHD and emotional problems to let them know when their behaviour is becoming too disruptive. These methods need to be negotiated with the student before being practiced. Watching for students’ body language, such as facial expressions and sitting postures, might provide you with an early warning system in regards to imminent emotional outbursts or other disruptions, and give you time to defuse the situation with an appropriately timed distraction. Communication, you might now realise, is not just used to identify signs of a disorder, but is also the tool that can be used to deal with many of the issues that are raised.

**STRATEGIES TO DEVELOP COMMUNICATION**

By now, you must be sold on the idea that effective communication is gold! You’ve read the theory above; so now, within this context of new knowledge and understanding, we will explain four strategies that you can use to optimise communication with your students and establish a positive classroom climate. You’re likely to feel awkward and even challenged when you first start practising these strategies. So sit down with some familiar friends and get started. It will take quite a lot of practice for you to develop fluency. Take time out now to learn about, practice and build fluency and familiarity with these strategies: they all ‘work’!

**Strategy 1: Active listening**

Humans misunderstand a lot of verbal communication. They often don’t listen as well as they need to. As such, we first encourage you to learn a technique widely known as active listening. It is often used for dealing with inappropriate behaviours and for negotiating solutions.

There’s a big difference between listening and hearing. Hearing involves sounds being received by the ear and translated into signals sent to the brain. Listening involves the use of the attention system to translate sounds and other signals into language in order to interpret meaning and evaluate the message. Hearing is passive, whereas listening is purposeful. Active listening is all about being more conscious of the act of listening.

Listening is the part of communication we do most, yet, according to De Vito (1998), our listening behaviour can lead to inaccurate messages. Listening is an aspect of communication in which people receive little training, and they tend to demonstrate little awareness of their listening behaviour. There is wide variation in listening performance, with the best happening between familiar friends and the worst occurring with children. De Nobile (2016) goes further, describing oral communication as an inefficient channel because of problems we have with listening.

The listening skills of teachers are in danger of deteriorating because of teachers’ authoritative and responsible position in relation to students in their class (as reflected on by Karen in the chapter ‘Starter story’). The demands of the classroom setting and a need to maintain order often work against teachers’ ability to take the time to listen well. In turn, students may have a diminished inclination and capacity to listen to their teacher’s instructions as a result of the teacher ‘going on too long’ or of other students also trying to talk.
Imagine that you're about to leave school for home. You go out to the car park to find your car has been stolen. You run back to the school office and tell your principal: 'Some b— stole my car!' to which the boss replies, 'Well, I suggest you call the police instead of telling me, and catch a cab home. I hope you've finally learned your lesson to leave your car locked. You've been reminded so many times...'

We're sure you'd feel a lack of empathy, and be disappointed and probably angry, if this was the response you got. Adults — and especially teachers, unfortunately — often respond to the problems that children experience and express in a very similar way.

Active listening is evidenced in verbal and non-verbal responses. While someone is communicating, the listener can affirm listening through nods and small utterances such as 'Mmm,' 'Yes,' 'Sure' and 'I see,' and can signal attentiveness with an open body and uncrossed arms and legs, and by leaning forward. Being at the same level as the speaker and moving closer, but not invading personal space, is also suggested.

A powerful signal of active listening is to paraphrase what the speaker has said before answering. Phrases such as, 'Am I right in thinking what you are saying is ...' or 'Are you saying that ...' demonstrate active listening. These questions also aid in effective communication, because they provide the speaker with opportunities to clarify any points that may have been misunderstood — with a form of feedback, in fact. They also show that the listener cares, which provides a strong basis for relationship-building.

Consider the following communicative interaction involving Ms Lim (a teacher) and Shona (her student).

```
No-one likes her anyway...
```

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shona</th>
<th>Ms Lim</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I hate Amy!</td>
<td>Sounds like you're pretty angry with her.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shona</td>
<td>Ms Lim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yeah, she's nothing but a nasty whinger.</td>
<td>You feel annoyed about something she's done.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shona</td>
<td>Ms Lim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She's always picking on me. She posted photos of me to her friends.</td>
<td>It does hurt when people do things behind your back.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shona</td>
<td>Ms Lim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yeah, and she's done stuff like this before. Last week she was spreading rumours about Julie. I'm not going to have anything to do with her anymore.</td>
<td>You think you might be better off keeping away from her?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shona</td>
<td>Ms Lim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yeah! I think that's a good idea. Then I wouldn't have to put up with her at all. No one else likes her anyway.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Shona began by expressing a strong emotion. Ms Lim resisted the temptation to ask why; to respond with advice such as ‘Why don’t you just ignore her?’; and to moralise or otherwise devalue Shona’s feelings by saying things such as, 'That's not a nice way to talk,' or 'You need to learn to get along with others, Shona.' By responding with a paraphrase of the emotion she heard, Ms Lim communicated that she cares about Shona and that she is willing to listen without judging her. This is one way to encourage open communication. Ms Lim encouraged Shona to continue to talk, and thus enabled Shona to express her emotions and specify the problem more clearly. In her second response, Ms Lim again avoided asking ‘Why?’ but took a broad guess at the source of the problem and expressed it in a tentative way. In her third response, Ms Lim demonstrated empathy by indicating that she understood the cause of Shona’s feelings. Shona’s next statement showed a reduction in emotional expression, and so Ms Lim paraphrased the content of Shona’s statement.

By using active listening, Ms Lim enabled Shona to come to a rational conclusion. She could have suggested it earlier, but because she enabled Shona to find the solution on her own, Shona was more likely to accept and be committed to that course of action. Shona and Ms Lim also concluded this interaction with a strengthened relationship, so Shona is more likely to return to Ms Lim if further difficulties emerge.

Developing the skill of active listening is not easy. It can feel unnatural at first, but it does become easier with practice. To implement active listening, it will be necessary for you to give your full attention to what the other person is saying, and then feed back a paraphrased version of the content, the feeling, or both.

When shaping your responses, the suggestions of Dinkmeyer and Mackay (1982, pp. 47–52) are valuable. They suggest you use sentence stems like:

```
It must be... when...
You feel... because...
You're saying that...
You're... because...? It seems as though... and you feel...?
I guess you feel... when...
Sounds like...?
```

Your responses should be as specific as possible. The more accurate your paraphrasing, the more understood the other person is likely to feel. If, though, you are in a situation in which the other’s feelings are difficult to discern, the 'Sounds like...' stem may be your best option. The use of active listening may lead to a 'natural' solution, as in the scenario above. If not, you may need to use Strategy 4: Negotiation (see below), but only after the 'heat of emotion' has subsided.

**Strategy 2: Open questioning**

Another way to improve communications, particularly between you and your students, is to use open questions. **Open questions** require open-ended responses. Closed questions can be answered
with only ‘Yes’, ‘No’ or limited-choice responses. You will need to learn to ask more open questions of your students, in order to gain further information and/or to help them to consider issues they haven’t raised. We believe that open questions are generally more useful than closed questions, particularly when you are trying to encourage your students to discuss a certain issue.

Questions that begin with ‘How’, ‘What’, ‘When’ or ‘Where’ are more open. Questions that begin with ‘Did’, ‘Is’ or ‘Will’ are closed, because they can be answered with a ‘Yes’ or a ‘No’. Questions that begin with ‘Why’, though technically open, require the student to justify his or her behaviour, and often operate as closed questions, gaining the response, ‘I don’t know’ or a shrug of the shoulders. So avoid these, at least initially.

It is important to keep in mind that in different cultures, questioning has different social functions. In some Indigenous Australian cultures, it is a strange behaviour to ask a question to which we might already know the answer. In an instance like that, Indigenous students may choose not to reply, because there may seem no logical reason to do so. In this case, statements may work better. In the example above, Ms Lim used statements rather than direct questions. This provides opportunities for responses and maintains the conversation in a more supportive way.

Smith et al. (2004, p. 410) found in their classroom communication research that open questions made up only 10 per cent of the questioning exchanges initiated by the sampled teachers, and that 15 per cent of the sampled teachers did not ask any open questions. Probing (an extended series of linked questions to encourage sustained teacher–student dialogue) occurred in only about 10 per cent of the questioning exchanges. Only rarely were teachers’ questions used to assist students to elaborate on their ideas. Most of the students’ exchanges were very short, with answers lasting on average five seconds, and were limited to three words or fewer 70 per cent of the time.

You will need to practise open questioning to develop your fluency and finesse. Otherwise, you might sound like you are interrogating or cross-examining your students. Practise with your friends first; at least they’ll tell you how they feel!

Strategy 3: Asserting and I-messages

If you improve your listening skills, you will improve your classroom communications and relationship-building, because these enhanced skills will enable you and your students to interpret each other’s messages more accurately. Because good listening skills assist in reducing noise from emotional interference, they also enable speakers to express their thoughts more clearly. In situations where it is necessary to reduce interference when sending a message (as opposed to receiving one), assertive communication methods are essential. These are methods that recognise the rights of the speaker without infringing on the rights of the listener.

The main reason you need to develop assertive communication methods is that people often send messages in ways that ignore or deny either the rights of the speaker (i.e. submissive messages) or those of the listener (i.e. aggressive messages). When this occurs, noise can result, which reduces the likelihood of the intended message being received openly. Asserting is one of many approaches to assertive communication. For more information, see Adler, Rosenfeld and Toone (1995).

Consider the following communicative interaction involving asserting.

**What are you laughing at?**

It’s lunchtime, and Shana and Julie are sitting under a large tree eating their lunch and chatting. Angelo walks past them, looking for a place to sit by himself. The girls suddenly burst out laughing.

_**Angelo:**_ What’re you laughing at?

_**The girls:**_ He’s laughing at him.

_**Julie:**_ What’ s up with you?

_**Angelo:**_ Drop dead!

Angelo picks up a handful of nuts that have fallen from the tree and throws them at the girls. The girls shield themselves and begin shouting at Angelo. Ms Parker, the teacher on playground duty, comes over to see what the commotion is about.

_**Ms Parker:**_ Angelo, stop throwing stones.

_**Angelo:**_ I wasn’t throwing stones. I haven’t touched any stones. Besides, they were laughing at me.

_**Ms Parker:**_ Angelo was under his breath at the girls.

_**Ms Parker:**_ Angelo, go and sit on the time-out seat until you calm down.

_**Angelo:**_ No! I’m not going to and you can’t make me!

_**Ms Parker:**_ Angelo, go and sit on the time-out seat. He walks away, mumbling something about teachers always picking on him and the girls being the teacher’s pets.

_**Ms Parker:**_ When you’ve calmed down, I am going to talk to you about this. Stay here until I come back.

_**Ms Parker leaves to continue her supervision of the playground. Angelo throws his lunch on the ground and throws it towards Ms Parker.**

Ms Parker could have been more submissive with Angelo when she saw him throwing things and responded by saying, ‘Angelo, please don’t throw stones; that’s very upsetting.’ She could have been more aggressive and said, ‘Angelo, you are a bully. Don’t you have enough sense to realise you can hurt people if you throw stones? Now go to the staffroom and hope I calm down before I see you again.’ Instead, she calmly asserted, ‘Angelo, stop throwing stones.’ If Ms Parker had responded submissively, Angelo may have interpreted it as weakness and continued his behaviour or attempted to manipulate her. Had she responded aggressively, the situation might have intensified, with Angelo reacting to the attacks on his character. With assertive communication, Angelo was more likely to react in response to the behaviour being addressed rather than to any interfering communication.

**I-messages** are a well known assertive communication method, and are relatively easy to employ. You use them to assert your position by describing a problem you have observed, how you feel about it and why you feel that way. I-messages assert the speaker’s wishes and give clear reasons as to why the speaker’s desires are important. They are called ‘I’-messages because the focus is on
the speaker's needs, rather than the listener's behaviour, and because they avoid the more accusatory use of 'you'.

The I-message strategy was developed by Gordon (1974) as part of his Teacher Effectiveness Training course, which we explore in Chapter 7. This strategy is evidence-based and has been successfully applied in school settings. For more information, see Dinkmeyer and Mackay (1982) and Dinkmeyer (1990).

IN PRACTICE

How to construct an I-message

1. When I . . .
2. . . . I feel . . .
3. . . . because . . .
4. Optional guided behaviour statement.
   For example:
   - When I get interrupted during a lesson, I feel frustrated because I have to keep stopping
   - When I find the classroom a mess, I feel disappointed because I try to keep it tidy.
   - When I see how much you've learned, I feel proud because my work has been successful.
   - When I hear you tapping your pencil loudly, I feel frustrated because I know others cannot concentrate properly.
   - Optional guided behaviour statement: I would rather you put the pencil down and listen quietly.

I-messages should be spoken in a calm, matter-of-fact tone, and should represent your experience and feelings without exaggeration. In this way, you do not impinge on the rights of listeners, and you leave the decision to act respectfully in their hands. I-messages are helpful when you have problems that require your student's cooperation to reach a solution. Rather than unilaterally forcing a solution, you can bring the problem to her/his attention, and in so doing demonstrate faith in their willingness to cooperate.

Note: I-messages are not just all about you! You can teach I-messaging to your students, too. With younger students, start by encouraging them to say, 'I don't like it when ...' If you see a deteriorating engagement, you can use the prompt, 'Remember to use your words.'

Strategy 4: Negotiating

Active listening, asserting and I-messaging are collectively brought into play in problem solving. Active listening assists your students to clarify problems, address conflict without internal noise from emotional interference and negotiate workable solutions. I-messages enable you to clarify problems and better explain these to the students involved. This helps them to understand the impact of their behaviours and makes them more likely to cease these behaviours. But, despite the collective use of these strategies, problems can still remain unresolved. In these situations, you can employ a negotiating process.

Negotiating relies on the principle of mutual respect and the removal of noise caused through emotion and message contamination. Negotiating is based on the reflective thinking method developed by acclaimed educationist John Dewey (described in Rodgers, 2002). Although this method has been applied across many disciplines, the process described in the following sections is based on adaptations made by Gordon (1974) and by Dinkmeyer and Mackay (1982). The negotiation process is the final component in a series of strategies recommended by these theorists, and incorporates the listening and asserting components described above. The six steps involved in the negotiating process are described in the following sections.

Step 1: Identify the problem

- **Student**: Active listening and open questioning are used until the student's emotional response is expressed and the true nature of the problem is identified.
- **Teacher**: An I-message format is used to clearly express the nature of the problem and active listening is used to understand the student's response.

Step 2: Identify possible options

- **Student**: The student lists possible options first, without censorship or evaluative comment.
- **Teacher**: Both the teacher and the student list ideas without elaboration or evaluative comment. If there are other options, the teacher then makes suggestions, again without elaboration or evaluative comment. An open questioning format is used.

Step 3: Identify the outcomes of each option

- **Student**: The student identifies how he or she will be affected by each option. The potential to solve the problem and any other outcomes are identified.
- **Teacher**: The outcomes for the teacher and the student are identified, along with each option's potential to solve the problem.

Step 4: Delete unacceptable options

- **Student and teacher**: If either the student or the teacher feels strongly that they have no wish to apply particular options (because of unacceptable outcomes listed in Step 3), these options should be deleted.

Step 5: Apply the agreed solution

- **Student**: The student is asked to choose the option that seems to be the best solution — that is, with the least risk of negative repercussions.
- **Teacher and student**: An agreement is made to apply and comply with the option that appears to have the best chance of success and the least risk of negative repercussions to either. A win–win solution is the aim. If either party feels dissatisfied, then commitment to the solution, and its potential for success, will be compromised.
Step 6: Identify a time for review

- Student and teacher: The teacher and the student agree to a trial run for a defined period of time: not too short, or the full effect of the new approach may not be noticed or new skills may not be mastered; but not too long, or unforeseen negative outcomes might compromise the solution. Usually, a few days or a week is necessary, but this depends on the frequency of the conflict. If the solution works, both parties agree to implement it indefinitely. If the solution is unsuccessful for either party, then the parties return to Step 2 to identify or modify new options. You can, and should, teach active listening, asserting, I-messages and negotiating to your students. This will empower them to potentially use these strategies with each other. This will, of course, involve lots of role-playing and leading by example. You should aim (when appropriate) to address issues as a whole class, to help your students to internalise and gain fluency in appropriate and effective ways of communicating.

Antoinette and Teresa have finished their main coursework and are looking forward to their impending internships, for which they have just received their school allocations. A conversation over coffee evolves into an argument over lunch about the best way to establish a positive classroom climate. They both agree that communication and relationships are important, but disagree on how to do it.

Antoinette intends to start her internship with her class on a very positive footing, emphasizing to students her friendliness, her approachability and her eagerness to 'get down to their level' and interact with them as a kind of 'equal'. Teresa argues that this is 'professional suicide' and that it will open her up to manipulation by students. Teresa's intended approach is to start her internship as a 'firm, friendly but distant' teacher. She says she can always loosen up later.

This is a common dilemma that pre-service and early career teachers face: 'Do I start off nice and easy and get them on side, or do I "not smile till Easter"?'

- In your opinion, and in view of your own emerging philosophy, is one approach better than the other? Is there any literature out there, or advice you can glean from experienced teachers, to help you decide?

Communication is a complex, two-way process that involves multi-channelled messages and feedback. Most people have little training in communication, and so are often unaware of the effect of their total communicative behaviour. Low personal awareness is particularly evident in the areas of non-verbal communication and listening skills. So make a concerted effort to build your repertoire of strategies for improving communication. We have explained four strategies to you. Learn them, practice them, and start to apply them when and where you can, so that when you do start classroom teaching, you will have these strategies at hand for you and your students.

PROFESSIONAL REFLECTION

Assuming you have gathered together and reflected on your thoughts and writings, and on other resources related to your professional philosophy of teaching (as per the 'Professional reflection' task in Chapter 1), you now need - at least in a preliminary sense - to identify the types of relationships and communication pathways on which you intend to focus in order to develop your classroom as a PLE.

Which theories and strategies best 'fit' with your emerging professional philosophy and early-draft CMP? Can you point to an evidence base for your decisions?

As you progress through the chapters in this text, you will be introduced to pertinent theory (as an explanation and evidence base for your philosophical and pedagogical decision making) and practical approaches, strategies and techniques to learn and select and/or modify to become part of your planning for teaching.

One output or artifact of this professional reflection task could be a second draft of your professional philosophy statement, with appropriate reference to selected strategies for developing relationships and communications around your students. This will add another layer of richness to your statement, and should also give you more direction with the early development of the preventative aspects of your CMP. Go for it!

When you have considered these things, go to 'Your philosophy for a positive learning environment' (see the 'Professional reflection' box in Chapter 1) and develop your position on classroom climate by responding to the guide questions.

SUMMARY

In this chapter we explained the nature and importance of classroom climate as the first of the four key components in taking a preventative approach to building your classroom as a PLE. The two interrelated subcomponents of relationships and communication were explained. Key types of relationships were then described, especially those relating to student engagement and learning, followed by introductions to practical strategies for developing relationships around students.

A model of communication was then explained, with equal emphasis given to verbal and non-verbal communicative behaviours. The four strategies of active listening, open questioning, asserting and I-messages, as well as negotiating, were described in the context of communicative events involving school students. The chapter closed with a professional reflection focused on strategy selection to suit your professional philosophy and classroom management plan and on selecting approaches to develop your classroom as a PLE.
Key terms

- 10: Component (or 10C) Model of Communication
- active listening
- classroom climate
- communication
- I-messages
- negotiating
- noise
- non-verbal communication
- open questions
- relationships

Individual and group activities

Activity 2.1
Refer back to this chapter’s ‘Starter story: An epiphany’.
- If you were in Karen’s shoes and ‘the penny dropped’ for you, how might you go about (re)building positive relationships with your students and a more positive classroom learning environment?
- How might you revisit and review your professional philosophy statement, classroom management plan and other strategies for building your classroom as a PLE?
- Drawing particularly on this chapter, what strategies might you employ?

Activity 2.2
Early ‘getting to know you’ activities are gold!
- Discuss what you might include in your ‘getting to know you’ activities and how you would plan out the early time with your class. Consider a negotiated selection of contexts, including student age, time of year and temporary versus permanent appointment.
- Discuss what you think you should share about yourself with your students in various contexts.

Activity 2.3
The building of relationships with your students will undoubtedly be enhanced if you also build relationships with their parents and/or carers.
- If you were going to send home a welcome communication to a student’s family, how might you do so, and what would you include in such a communication?

Activity 2.4
In pairs, have one person (‘the speaker’) act out one of the following statements. The speaker should use appropriate non-verbal communicative behaviours to accompany the statement to make it as realistic as possible. Then the other person (‘the listener’) responds with an active listening paraphrase. Alternate roles, and practise this skill development regularly.
Suggested statements: ‘I really can’t stand Ms John’s’; ‘I don’t know what to do’; ‘He’s a pig’; ‘She doesn’t like me anymore’; ‘I had a great time at the weekend’; ‘Netball was fun this week’; ‘I really hope I pass this test’; and ‘I’m hopeless at Maths’.

Activity 2.5
Review the example involving Ms Parker and Angelo. Imagine Angelo has been involved in this and other socially unacceptable behaviours many times, and that Ms Parker wants to reach a long-term solution.
- In pairs, develop and role-play scenarios that might achieve such a solution. (You might begin with Ms Parker saying, ‘Angelo, when I see children throwing things, I worry because someone might get hurt. I’d like to work out some ways you could play at school without getting angry.’)

Activity 2.6
First individually, and then in pairs, construct and discuss I-messages for the following problems:
- Annie repeatedly leans back on her chair and is in danger of falling.
- Amy repeatedly irritates the students around her and disturbs the lesson.
- Angelo is rude when you don’t respond to his calls for assistance straight away.
- Ahmed hands in untidy, incomplete work. He is quite capable, but lazy.
- Aaron is very noisy and disruptive, an aspect of his character you find disturbing.

Activity 2.7
Identify three communication episodes you have been involved in recently in which misunderstandings have occurred.
- To what extent were these misunderstandings the result of internal or external interference or sociocultural influences?
- How could these misunderstandings have been, at best, avoided, or at least been resolved?

Online resources

CENGAGE brain
Visit http://login.cengagebrain.com and search for this book to access the study tools that come with your textbook.

Weblinks

‘Active listening for the classroom: an important motivational strategy’ (About.com)
http://712educators.about.com/cs/activelistening/a/activelistening.htm

‘Cultural barriers to effective communication’ (Conflict Research Consortium, University of Colorado, USA)
http://www.colorado.edu/conflict/peace/problem/culturbar.htm

‘Classroom questioning’ (K Cotton, NW Regional Education Laboratory, 1988)

‘The knowledge of communication skills of secondary graduate student teachers and their understanding of the relationship between communication skills and teaching’ (S Saunders & MA Mills, Australian Association for Research in Education, 1999)
References


NSW Department of Education (1981). Personal development, Kindergarten to Year 12: Effective communication, Contact 19, Sydney: NSW Education Dept.


Learning outcomes

- Starting story: Due process
- Introduction
- What is classroom culture?
- Different perspectives
- Developing classroom culture
- Values-based approaches to classroom culture
- Chapter overview
- Professional reflection
- Summary
- Key terms
- Individual and group activities
- Online resources
- Weblinks
- References
Starter story: Due process

It was Rachel’s first temporary teaching day at her new school. Earlier in first term she’d attended the ‘temp. teacher briefing’ presented by the school’s deputy principal, and she was familiar with the school welfare and discipline policy and procedures. It was great, she thought, to get to work at a school that had its act together with regard to student discipline – this made the job of temporary teaching a lot easier. You knew just what to do when the kids behaved well, and just what to do when they didn’t. The deputy repeatedly referred to all of this as ‘due process’, and reminded participants in the briefing that students were familiar with due process too.

Rachel’s first lesson started well, but began sliding downhill soon thereafter. Joshua, who was shaping up as the ‘class clown’, had commenced his day, wired up to his headphones, by singing along to his private song, throwing around bits of paper and laughing loudly. What seemed like every time Rachel turned to write on the board, Rachel had engaged with him quietly and tried most of her ‘little tricks’ to get him back on track. Nothing worked for more than a few minutes. It was time for due process to apply; if he got three strikes, he was off to time-out.

‘First warning, Joshua,’ Rachel said, as she wrote his name on the board and marked a cross against it. Joshua at first said nothing, but then, when Rachel turned back to the board, he called out, ‘And so? Is that it?’ (Others giggled.) At this point, Rachel realised that this boy was more than just the class clown; he was the ‘alpha male’, and he was spoiling for a confrontation. Rachel was normally calm and level-headed, but this morning, for some reason, she saw red. ‘Get out!’ she called, ‘And get to time-out now!’

There was a silence in the room. Joshua rose slowly to his feet. ‘No,’ he said calmly. ‘It’s three strikes to time-out.’ He sat down and immediately began his work – quietly, with his headphones away and writing with his head down, but with a wicked smile on his face.

Rachel immediately realised she’d messed up – she’d failed to follow due process. Around the room, all eyes were fixed on Joshua and her to see what was going to happen next.

INTRODUCTION

By now, you know how important it is to consider elements of your classroom climate, such as communication and relationships, even before you start teaching. A feature of the classroom milieu that goes hand-in-hand with classroom climate is classroom culture. Classroom culture is another of the four key preventative components in our Lyford model (see Figure 3.1), along with classroom climate, physical environment and instructional practices.

Figure 3.1 Classroom culture in the Lyford model

WHAT IS CLASSROOM CULTURE?

Just as schools have cultures, so too do classrooms. Classroom cultures can reflect the prevailing school culture, but also have aspects that reflect the experiences and beliefs of teachers and their students. Classroom cultures are a key facet of students’ microsystem, in that they represent tangible aspects of school life with which students frequently interact. But what exactly is classroom culture?

Classroom culture, as used in this text, is about the way your classroom ‘works’. In recent times, there has been renewed interest in how classrooms function, and the use of the term ‘classroom culture’ has become more common as scholars attempt to put a name to this aspect of the classroom. While various descriptions of classroom culture are emerging from this recent research, several common elements are apparent.

On one level, classroom culture is a set of values and beliefs shared by the group (Birenbaum, Kinron & Shilton, 2011). These tend to coalesce into a ‘classroom ethos’ as the year progresses and students learn how their teachers prefer to do things, and teachers get to know the backgrounds, abilities and preferences of their students. On a more tangible level, classroom culture manifests as the rules, procedures, routines, rituals and established behavioural norms that can be observed in the class (Altun, 2013; Britain & Freeman, 2006; Chaplain, 2003).

Classroom culture has a variety of elements. A comprehensive list of these, based on the contemporary literature (see Chaplain, 2003; Charles, 2011; Emmner & Everston, 2009; Jones & Jones, 2013; Konza, Granger & Bradshaw, 2003; Pardhan, 2011; Rogers, 2011), is presented in Table 3.1. We will explain many of these elements throughout the remainder of this chapter.

Table 3.1 divides the elements of classroom culture into three levels. Elements at the theoretical level are what teachers and students bring to the classroom; they become the bases of interactions about behavioural standards, rules and routines. Discussions about values and beliefs regarding
Table 3.1 The key elements of classroom culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEVEL OF EXPERIENCE</th>
<th>ELEMENT</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theoretic</td>
<td>Values</td>
<td>Ideals and states of being that teachers and students deem important to life in the classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Beliefs</td>
<td>Students' and teachers' convictions about what classrooms should be like</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Expectations</td>
<td>How teachers want students to behave, and how students want teachers to operate in the classroom. Teachers may refer to behaviour standards, while students may refer to ideal teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Praxis</td>
<td>Classroom ethos</td>
<td>Commonly shared beliefs about learning, behaviour and other aspects of classroom life, forms as a result of the interaction of the above elements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rules</td>
<td>A set of directives and/or guidelines describing appropriate behaviour that is understood by teachers and students and that reflects values, expectations and the classroom ethos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rituals</td>
<td>Actions associated with ethos and rules that reflect an important aspect of class, such as 'freezing' on the bell or welcoming one another in the morning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operational</td>
<td>Routines</td>
<td>Step-by-step ways of doing things that are specified by the teacher - sometimes with student input - and that allow a class to run smoothly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Procedures</td>
<td>Routines or sets of routines that guide students and teachers, and that have become established classroom practice</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Learning, behaviour and other aspects of classroom life lead to a commonly shared 'idea' about how the class should run and provide the groundwork for culture-building at the praxis level.

At the praxis level, teachers and students are negotiating the classroom ethos and rules, which guide rituals. For example, an ethos that celebrates achievement might lead to a ritual involving weekly award-giving or nominations for 'Student Achiever of the Week'. Rules should reflect the class ethos, which comes from the sharing of beliefs and expectations of behavioural standards. For example, a classroom ethos that promotes dignity and tolerance of difference above other values might lead to sets of rules such as 'Respect others' and 'Treat everyone with fairness.' The praxis level is when teachers are doing the things that help to establish the classroom culture in a practical sense. This is where the theoretical 'rubber' of ideas and principles meets the road of applications and practice!

The elements at the operational level are the behaviours and other overt signs that occur naturally, with little teacher prompting, and that manifest the classroom culture. At this level, students demonstrate a good understanding of what is expected of them and what the consequences of inappropriate behaviour may be. Teachers appear well organised and consistent in their interactions with the class.

As you have probably surmised, classroom cultures are established through processes. Previous research and our own classroom experiences suggest that classroom cultures are established, in the first instance, through interaction with elements at the theoretic level, followed very quickly by application of these shared understandings into rules, and so on, which we call the praxis level. If things work well at the praxis level, the ultimate result is a classroom that runs smoothly, where everyone knows how things should be done. We call this last stage the operational level because in it, routines and procedures are effective and the class is operating well.

With all this in mind, we define classroom culture as how a class operates as evidenced through teachers' and students' shared understandings about the way things should be done, and established rules and procedures. In a well-established classroom culture, students (and teachers) are able to describe the rules and show others what the procedures are for various activities. They are also able to explain the consequences of doing the right and wrong thing, and why these consequences are necessary.

We introduced you to the link between classroom culture and classroom climate in Chapter 2. Recall that classroom climate refers to how a classroom feels. The teacher and students can influence how a classroom feels through the patterns of interaction established: by the teacher, as a result of their preferred way of communicating, and by the cohort of students, as a result of their previous experiences with teachers and other role models. Of course, the teacher influences these and vice-versa.

Classroom culture is also related to the other preventative practices. A teacher's preferred teaching style, whether this is student-centred, constructivist or teacher-centred, will become a part of the culture as her or his routines become established. Likewise, as we shall see later in this chapter, the routines and procedures established among class members may influence the classroom's physical environment. (We explore physical environment in detail in Chapter 4.)

If these values, routines and established norms are working well, the result will be a cohesive learning community. This is one of the main benefits of a strong and positive classroom culture. Relatedly, well-established classroom cultures have been shown to reduce off-task behaviour and promote student productivity; to minimise disruption and interruption; and to reduce confusion and uncertainty, and as a result provide a sense of predictability and safety (Brittain & Freeman, 2006; Charles, 2011; Di Tullio, 2014; Konza, Grainger & Bradshaw, 2003; Olsen & Nielsen, 2006). Note that, as is the case with classroom climates, classroom cultures can vary. Countless variations in values, beliefs and expectations mean that, while most classrooms may operate in a similar fashion generally (Gronn, 1979), every classroom has its differences.

Several studies have identified different 'types' of classroom culture. For instance, Squire et al. (2003) identified three classroom culture types: the collaborative community of inquiry; the individualistic, grade-seeking culture; and a libertarian, authoritarian, political culture. Each of these types was based on a given set of values, and each resulted in different student behaviours and attitudes. A later study, by Glover and Miller (2007), concluded that classroom cultures range from traditional, teacher-centred learning environments through to interactive, student-centred cultures.
Up to this point, we have defined and described the concept of classroom culture and given an initial explanation of how it is established. In the following sections, we will look at some of the key elements of classroom culture and describe how teachers set about establishing these.

To create and then maintain your classroom as a PLE, where your students are engaged and learning most productively, you yourself will have to develop a classroom culture that stimulates and promotes this. Remember from the outset, though, that you can only look at what happens in your own classroom in the context of what happens in your school. Teachers do not work ‘alone’ anymore, so collaborating with others and fitting in with schoolwide policy and practices are central to the business of your teaching.

Many considerations contribute to classroom culture at the theoretic level. Some of these are non-negotiable; some depend more on your professional philosophy of teaching; some depend more on schoolwide policy and procedures; and some are negotiable within your class. And some are all of the above! This complexity will become more meaningful as you work through this chapter, and as you continue to clarify your professional philosophy and prepare your first-draft classroom management plan. Of course, when you start teaching, your new school will have policies and procedures about student welfare and discipline and behaviour, so you will have this broader context to consider. We want you to be prepared with a classroom management plan that ‘fits’!

Considerations of classroom culture will relate closely to how you approach the use of interventions for inappropriate student behaviours. If you can develop a facilitative classroom culture, you will make great progress towards preventing inappropriate student behaviours. So let’s first look at behaviour standards, and then at different ways of viewing classroom culture.

**Behaviour standards**

*Behaviour standards* (or expectations) are central to classroom culture. They guide behaviour clearly and positively. When students know what kind of behaviour is expected of them, they feel more secure, because they know where they stand. When clear boundaries are set, anxiety associated with confusion about behavioural expectations is reduced; it is therefore more likely that students will behave appropriately. Different schools, teachers, parents and students often have different expectations about behaviour standards. At the beginning of the school year, your students are likely to be unsure about your expectations. To help them to become comfortable and cooperative as quickly as possible, the early establishment of behaviour standards is imperative.

There is a strong evidence base for the use of behaviour standards (see Porter, 2007; Walker, 2009; Zinpoli, 2008). A consistent point made in the research is that (strategic) positive reinforcement encourages positive behaviour (Good & Brophy, 2008; Manning & Butcher, 2013). Although theorists generally agree that behaviour standards are a necessity, disagreement exists with respect to how they should be contextualised, explained, established and enacted. Disagreement about rules mostly relates to the question of whether rules and their consequences should be negotiated with students, and how concrete or abstract rules should be.

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**STORY FROM THE FIELD**

**Matthew: ‘Boundaries, mate …’**

My internship was a challenging but fantastic experience. I learned a lot from my very supportive colleague teacher about curriculum, assessment and classroom management. My first three weeks went really well. It was a great class, and students engaged in most of their class work with enthusiasm. I simply ‘copied’ my colleague teacher’s approach to classroom management, because the class seemed to run so smoothly. It wasn’t until the fourth week, when I was allowed to be on my own with the class, that things started to ‘fall apart’ …

At first, I couldn’t work out what the problem was. It just seemed that the kids were now taking longer to pay attention and to get started on their work. Lesson changes were also taking longer, and we weren’t getting through our work. The kids had started to put their hands up repeatedly to ask me what they were supposed to do, whereas in the past, they would work quite self-sufficiently. I asked my colleague teacher to sit in for the next morning’s lessons to help me sort this out. It wasn’t long before he worked out what the problem was and how I could fix it.

‘Boundaries, mate; routines. It’s just the basics,’ he explained as we sat down together at recess. ‘The kids are used to my ways. I give them a little nudge here and a tweak there, and they know what I expect of them as far as listening up and starting and stopping work goes. Even though you’ve been here a few weeks now, and you’ve been teaching well, you’ve had me here to do the nudging and tweaking. It’s now up to you to make your expectations and boundaries explicit.’

The penny dropped. I could see I had to put my ‘stamp’ on running the classroom.

**Reflection …**

Matthew faced one of the classic challenges of practicum: how to ‘take over the reins’ of classroom management from the colleague teacher.

- What have been your experiences with regard to routines and procedures in your professional experience placements? Were you expected to ‘follow the leader’, or were you given room to set your own standards, routines and procedures?

Teaching another teacher’s class is challenging; starting your own, even more so. Think carefully about how you might negotiate ‘the basics’ of classroom management. A smooth-running and productive class doesn’t just happen, but is usually the outcome of a well prepared and organised teacher who builds these skills in their students.

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**DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES**

Classroom culture is generally viewed from three perspectives: the *rules and consequences* perspective; the *rights, responsibilities and due process* perspective; and the *code of conduct* perspective. We will outline these differing views in the following sections. We have our own thoughts on them, but it’s up to you to
The rules and consequences perspective

There is considerable agreement about the qualities or characteristics of good classroom rules and consequences. That is, rules and consequences should be reasoned, purposeful, logical and achievable; explicitly and positively stated and measurable; taught, at least initially, and referred to regularly; and age-appropriate. These qualities may seem obvious, but they need to be clearly understood.

For rules and consequences to be reasoned, purposeful, logical and achievable, they should meet a need or purpose, make sense, and be reasonably able to be followed by those to whom they apply. For example, if you have a rule that your students should do their individual deskwork without speaking, but your seating is arranged in groups so that students face each other across their desks, you would be setting an unachievable goal. The mores of social behaviour dictate that social engagement – and this includes talking – would occur, because of frequent student eye contact.

To be purposeful, rules and consequences need to address behaviours that are inappropriate and that disrupt engagement and learning. If a rule is inconsistent with other teaching practices or natural human behaviours, then it needs to be re-examined. Rules that large numbers of students have difficulty following are a waste of time – literally, since more time and effort are needed to enforce them than would be created by the problems they are supposed to solve.

A rule such as ‘Be good’ would transgress the expectation that rules be measurable; it would also be contrary to the expectation that rules be clearly stated. (What exactly is ‘good’ behaviour, and how often does a student need to exhibit it in order to comply with the requirements of the rule?) To be guided positively, students need to know how to tell when they are getting it right, not just when they are getting it wrong. A rule like ‘Listen when others are speaking’ enables students to know what the right behaviour is, and enables you to observe and respond appropriately.

Older primary and secondary students will quickly let you know if a rule is not age-appropriate. ‘Wash your hands after going to the toilet’ is generally an unnecessary rule for older students. (The tendency for it to engender laughter makes this abundantly clear) Older students commonly understand rules such as ‘Respect each other’s property’, whereas younger students would need this rule stated – perhaps as, ‘Be careful when using things that belong to others.’

The rights, responsibilities and due process perspective

The qualities or characteristics of ‘good’ rights and responsibilities can be compared to those suggested for classroom rules and consequences. They, too, should be reasoned, purposeful, logical and achievable; explicitly and positively stated; taught and referred to regularly; and age-appropriate. This perspective presents behaviour standards as being rights (individual entitlements) and responsibilities (mutual obligations) that are subject to due process (consistent responses). It is usual that specific rights correspond with particular responsibilities. Students (and others to whom these may apply) are expected to uphold their rights, and those of others, and to meet their responsibilities. Rights, responsibilities and due process should apply to all members of the class, and even to members of the broader school community, and they are usually negotiated rather than imposed.

This perspective differs from the rules and consequences perspective in that it claims a more sophisticated behavioural and moral scaffold negotiated on the grounds of equity and mutual benefit. Rights, responsibilities and due process are often less specific or explicit than rules, so, depending upon the levels of emotional, moral and intellectual maturity of the students involved, they will usually require a more robust explanation to ensure understanding.

The code of conduct perspective

The code of conduct perspective lies, philosophically, between the rules and consequences perspective and the rights, responsibilities and due process perspective. It is argued here that this perspective avoids the criticisms targeting the others – that is, that it is neither too specific or too general, nor too concrete or overly abstract. A code of conduct usually includes a values statement, a set of principles and a set of corresponding behavioural descriptors. The ‘In practice’ box below provides you with a sample class code of conduct.

A sample class code of conduct

| VALUES STATEMENT: WE RESPECT EACH OTHER AND HELP EACH OTHER TO LEARN |
| WE DO THIS BY: | WE KNOW WE ARE ON TRACK WHEN WE: |
| listening to each other | • are quiet when others are speaking |
| | • raise our hands when we want to speak |
| | • remember what is said |
| sharing materials | • allow others the same chance to use classroom materials |
| | • sometimes allow others to use our own things |
| taking turns | • raise our hands when we want help |
| | • let others do the things we’ve enjoyed |
| helping to make class decisions | • listen to other’s problems and offer ideas to help |
| | • let the class know what we are thinking |
| doing our best to learn | • try our hardest to do our work |
| | • ask for help when we need it |
| caring for each other | • speak to others in a friendly way |
| | • solve problems peacefully |

The values statement provides a focus for the principles. It should be a short, ‘simple’ statement. A sentence such as, ‘We do this by …’ precedes the set of principles. This reinforces that each principle upholds the values statement. Each principle is accompanied by one or more (ideally, observable)
DEVELOPING CLASSROOM CULTURE

We are now going to explain two important aspects of developing classroom culture. Regardless of which of the abovementioned perspectives you adopt, these aspects are essential. The first concerns building an agreement around various elements of classroom culture. You need to think through how you are going to go about this well ahead of time. The second relates to establishing procedures in your classroom; these also have to be thought through well in advance. To address both these aspects, you need to be well prepared before day one!

Building an ‘agreement’

Following is a general, seven-step procedure for developing various elements of classroom culture. These can come together as an ‘agreement’, this variously being a set of rules and consequences; a list of rights, responsibilities and due process; or a code of conduct. At each step, you will need to give consideration to schoolwide policy and procedures. A classroom-level agreement is only useful and authentic if it fits in and ‘works’ with schoolwide policy and procedures.

Step 1: Choose your approach to decision making

First, you will need to decide how you are going to make decisions about your agreement. Your decision-making process should be consistent with, and guided by, your professional philosophy. It should reflect the degree of control that you will give to participants (i.e. you, your students, their parents and even other community members) and how participants will be involved in developing various elements of your classroom culture (i.e. the principles, values statement, behavioural descriptors, rules, rights, responsibilities, due process and/or consequences, and so forth). In short, who is going to have what say in how things are done in your classroom?

Step 2: Choose your approach to reasoning

Next, you need to decide how your classroom discussion about classroom culture will proceed. You can choose to adopt an inductive and/or deductive approach to reasoning. An inductive approach is conducted from the ‘bottom up’; that is, by starting with the development of grounded, explicit rules or behavioural descriptors, then variously synthesising these into principles, rights and responsibilities, and ultimately into a ‘main rule’ or values statement. A deductive approach, conversely, is ‘top-down’, wherein a values statement or main rule is drafted first, principles follow and, finally, behavioural descriptors or explicit, specific (observable) rules are written.

An inductive approach is better if your students are younger, because it requires less abstraction. For example, you could begin by asking, ‘What should we all do to make our class a happy one?’ You could elicit behavioural descriptors like, ‘Share things,’ ‘Be quiet when others are talking’ or ‘Speak nicely to each other.’ Once a list has been built, you can group like items and ask, ‘What’s the same about letting others take turns in classroom games and letting others use our things?’ The aim is to elicit a generalised response such as ‘Sharing.’ If students have difficulty generalising, you can supply the appropriate guiding principle. This inductive approach can then lead to an overall direction statement, such as, ‘In our class, we help each other.’

A deductive approach (or even a combination of approaches) may be better if your students are older. This involves brainstorming a set of principles by asking your class, ‘How do we show respect for each other?’ and, ‘How do we help each other to learn?’ Once a set of principles has been agreed upon, behavioural descriptors can be developed through the use of questions – asking students, for example, ‘How will we know when we are listening to each other/sharing materials/taking turns/ helping to make decisions?’ It is important to note that at this point, you are at the theoretic stage, and so, whatever approach is taken, values, beliefs and expectations should underpin it.

Step 3a: Develop the principles, behavioural descriptors or specific rules (or 3b below)

Now we enter the praxis stage. If you choose to follow an inductive approach to reasoning, the development of behavioural descriptors or specific rules can be achieved first using a process of brainstorming. With younger students, whole-class brainstorming with considerable teacher guidance and input is appropriate, while older students can be involved in more independent, small-group brainstorming sessions.

Step 3b: Develop a values statement or main rule

If you choose to follow a deductive approach to reasoning, the development of a values statement or main rule – in the form of a phrase or short sentence, accompanied by only a few complementary principles – is suggested. Because of its abstract nature, we suggest that this statement or rule initially be developed by you, either as a focus for brainstorming negotiated principles or for synthesising negotiated principles.

Step 4: Develop consequences or due process

Children and young people have an increasing awareness of, and interest in, what is and is not fair and just – particularly when it comes to inappropriate behaviour. Students need to know what should happen, and how it happens, when they choose to behave appropriately or otherwise.

Consequences should apply both when students follow and do not follow rules. Remember that ‘consequences’ is in fact a neutral term; unfortunately, though, it is mostly used in a negative context. Similarly, due process should apply both when students uphold and do not uphold their agreed rights and responsibilities. As in the previous steps, you can develop consequences or due process alone or in collaboration with others. Natural consequences – i.e. those that should ‘naturally’ occur – are preferable to ‘contrived’ consequences, except when a risk of harm is associated. (We talk about natural consequences in Chapter 8 in our discussion of psychoeducational approaches.) Agreed acts
of restitution are often also appropriate. (Restitution will be explained in Chapter 9 when we explore social justice approaches.)

The emotional, social and cognitive maturity of your students are important factors to take into account. Older students are typically better able to engage productively in collaborative, deductive problem solving. With younger students, a more prudent approach is to use your own standards or rules, with clear explanations of their purpose. Regardless of the age group and how various elements of classroom culture agreement are negotiated, we urge you to come prepared with at least a scaffold for a draft agreement. If your scaffold is well thought through for your given context, there is a high probability that brainstorming will deliver a very consistent final agreement!

**Step 5: Teach the agreement**

If you want your students to learn, you teach them, and you should teach this agreement in the same way as you do any other curriculum material. All aspects of the agreement, and the interrelationships between them, need to be explained, discussed and confirmed as understood. During this step, further examples of behavioural descriptors can be brainstormed, and role-playing can be used to demonstrate more abstract concepts. Your aim should be to develop a collective focus on recognising, encouraging and ‘doing’ appropriate behaviours. Some negative role-plays can be useful, but keep these to a minimum, since there will always be some students who engage and learn inappropriately by copying negative modelling.

You can easily teach around your class agreement across the school day. Plan teaching time in each lesson or session for at least the first two weeks of the school year. Periodic ‘top-ups’ and reviews are recommended during at least the following school term, and strategically thereafter, depending upon observed need. It is important for your agreement on various elements of classroom culture to be a consistent, valued and functional point of focus for all.

Some students can behave appropriately, but won’t, whatever their motivation, due process must prevail! Other students can’t behave appropriately because they don’t know how to. Not all students come to school having been taught how to behave appropriately in a school setting. Positive, socially appropriate behaviours should be viewed as social skills that form part of the broader informal and formal school curriculum. There are a variety of evidence-based programs for teaching pro-social skills to students of all ages, some of which will be explained later in this text.

**Step 6: Implement the agreement**

Implementation of your agreement should occur as soon as possible. Whatever due process or consequences you negotiate, you should start recognising and encouraging appropriate behaviours, and responding to and correcting inappropriate behaviours, immediately and systematically. The inclusion of authentic, explicit behavioural descriptors will mean that appropriate student behaviours can be consistently and persistently recognised and encouraged.

**Step 7: Monitor and review the agreement**

You must monitor (i.e. formatively assess) and review (i.e. summatively assess and evaluate) your agreement around elements of classroom culture. This is a key role of the teacher during the operational stage of developing classroom culture. Is it ‘working’? What is my evidence? Evidence-based practices, exemplified by schoolwide systems such as positive behaviour support (PBS), emphasise the need to take a data-driven, systematic approach to developing and encouraging appropriate student behaviours.

Interestingly, research generally suggests that the way in which behavioural standards (variously contextualised as rules, rights, responsibilities, principles and/or behavioural descriptors) are established, whether by negotiation or not, seems to make little difference to behavioural outcomes (Everson et al. 2000; Good & Brophy, 2008). Rogers (2011), though, concludes that better learning outcomes are more likely when students participate in the establishment of behavioural standards, if only to learn how the process of negotiated problem solving works. This suggests that there are legitimately different ways in which to create and maintain agreements around elements of classroom climate – and so, too, to create and maintain PLEs. You just have to find a way that is synchronous with your professional philosophy and with school policy and procedures.

**Procedures**

Classrooms are very busy places. Without clear, simple and practical procedures (and routines), a single room containing 30 people with different and changing needs and requirements, and with much work to accomplish, is likely to deteriorate into chaos. People tend to be creatures of habit, and to like to know how to go about meeting their needs while complying with the requirements of different activities. Just watch the anxiety on the faces of people out of step at an aerobics class for evidence of this trait!

Even in well organised classrooms, the time taken to deal with routine daily requirements and lesson transitions is often quite high. In poorly organised classrooms, much more time is usually spent ‘getting things going’, and keeping them going. It is widely accepted that maximising academic learning time is important in helping best learning to occur, so any improvements in efficiency are well worth the effort. Rosenshine (1995), for example, found that in well-run Year 2 classes, an average of almost 20 per cent of each school day was spent on procedural activities. If you establish your key procedures as early as possible, you will find that most of your students will incorporate these into their day, freeing you to focus on teaching the curriculum and minimising disruption and inappropriate behaviours.

You should begin teaching your classroom (and some school) procedures as soon as they become relevant. This will usually be at the beginning of, and during, the activities to
which they apply. Good and Brophy’s (2008) research confirms that effective teachers generally have well-developed classroom procedures and manage transitions efficiently. They set aside time at the beginning of the school year specifically to teach procedures. This teaching would usually be achieved through the use of demonstration and modelling. Recognition and encouragement of appropriate behaviours should be frequent and consistent, and there should be regular practice. The way you teach your classroom procedures is up to you, but be mindful of school policy and procedures and your students’ levels of maturity. Whatever you do, though, you should start teaching and managing your procedures from the first day.

Haphazard routines and procedures are disrupting and time-consuming. It is facilitative to encourage your students to take responsibility for, and pride in, a safe, tidy personal workspace and classroom. Wherever possible, your students can (and are often keen to) take responsibility for classroom ‘housekeeping’ duties on a roster basis. If your students take responsibility for most of these, the procedures will be completed faster and transitions between activities will be accomplished more efficiently. This releases valuable time for more academic learning.

**YOU BE THE JUDGE**

Consider smartphones and tablets and their place in modern life. There is an argument that students should be able to have these devices working and available during class time, since they can be used to facilitate learning in ways that are motivating for students. There is also an argument that they are one of the biggest distractions to learning in contemporary classrooms. School policies differ markedly in supporting or denying students access to their phones during class, and even during school time, and attempted enforcement of a ‘no-phone’ policy is a growing, continuing nightmare for schools.

- Are these devices valuable and productive in all classroom settings?
- What rules and procedures need to be negotiated to manage the use of smartphones and tablets?

The next section explains six key classroom procedures. You will need to learn about these and teach them to your students – again, starting on Day 1!

**Gaining student attention for instruction**

First, you need a procedure for gaining your students’ attention for instruction. This is your most important procedure. Put simply: if your students pay attention to your teaching, they are likely to learn well; if they don’t, they won’t! When you first meet your students, you should establish a simple, easy-to-enact ‘ritual’ to draw their attention to what you have to say or show them.

Your ritual should commence with:

- a **verbal cue** – for example, saying, ‘Pay attention, class’ or counting backwards from five; and/or
- an associated **audio cue** – for example, a bell chime, a repeated desk ‘knock’, rhythmic hand clapping or music being turned on or off; and/or

- a **gestural cue** – for example, raising or pointing one hand, or having a routine, such as ‘hands on heads, shoulders, knees and toes’.

The use of multiple forms of cueing is up to you, but consider the age and level of maturity of your students, and the type of activity in which they are engaged – and, please, KIS: keep it simple! These rituals, once learned, become part of your procedures for attention-gaining.

You must make clear to whom the procedures apply (and this is usually the whole class); the desired degree of immediacy (such as an immediate response or within a five-second countdown); and the required attention behaviour (which could be anything, including sitting quietly and looking towards you). It is best not to start your instruction until all of the students involved are attending to you silently and without other distractions (such as handheld devices) taking their attention away.

**IN PRACTICE**

**Meredith and Bruce get attention**

Gaining the attention of all the students at a whole-school assembly can be such a challenge! Meredith, an excellent primary school teacher, gains the silent attention of more than 200 students in the initial rowdy after-lunchtime daily assembly by simply standing on the podium and delivering the ‘hands on heads, shoulders, knees and toes’ ritual twice – without a word. Call to attention, indeed! How could this be?

Similarly, Bruce, a wonderful high school deputy principal, enters classrooms around his school on his ‘rounds’ and is greeted by total silence and attention to his announcements within five seconds. How could this be?

The answer, in both cases, is effort and time: effort spent teaching students their expectations and modelling them, time to rehearse and remind, so that students know what to do, when to do it and how.

**Gaining student attention for behavioural prompting and cueing**

Effective teachers deliver lessons that ‘flow’ and spend much less time than others correcting and intervening around inappropriate student behaviours. This is, at least in part, because their behavioural prompts and cues work; that is, their students pay attention to these prompts and cues and know how to respond appropriately. You are strongly encouraged to set up a procedure to gain your students’ attention for the purposes of maintaining appropriate behaviours and a PLE.

Now, this is not a procedure about major disruptions or challenging behaviours, but more about ‘nudging and tweaking’ student behaviours to encourage students to continue on-task. You’re not just scanning to prompt students who are not engaged or learning well; you’re also scanning to prompt students who are engaged and learning well. Whenever you can, focus on ‘catching them being good’. In other words, you should have systematic procedures for recognising and encouraging your students for their appropriate behaviours.
A procedure can be as simple as a gesture (such as a thumbs-up or a nod); a short phrase (such as 'John, well done,' or, 'Class: thank you'); a touch (such as a handshake or a light shoulder touch); or a combination of the above. It can also be formalised as part of a token system of recognition and encouragement. For example, this could be the issuing of 'house points' or 'ticks' on the board as part of a cumulative points system for individuals or class groups. Your students need to know when you want their attention so that they can learn to do the right thing without major interruptions to the flow of the lesson.

**IN PRACTICE**

**Nudge theory**

The expression 'nudge theory' was coined in honour of Suzie, an exemplary, now-retired teacher colleague who was a most amazing classroom leader. Suzie taught a highly difficult group of students, all of whom had learning difficulties and challenging behaviours. If they 'got out of hand', there was mayhem in the classroom and around the school. In fact, it became almost impossible to find a temporary teacher to take the class in Suzie's absence. When she was away, the class of 18 students was broken down into pairs and distributed among the other classes in the school (divide and conquer!).

When the class was assigned individual deskwork, Suzie would invariably sit at her desk at the front of the room, watching over her 'flock'. If any student appeared to be dropping off-task in any way, she would simply say their first name quietly, once. The student would silently return to work. Suzie didn't interrupt engagement and learning with her behavioural cueing; she simply 'nudged' the individual student back on task — gently, efficiently and effectively. She was such an effective teacher, and her students loved her!

**Students gaining teacher attention**

Just as you need your students' attention at times, your students need to know how to get your attention in an equally practical, polite and fair way. This may be during whole-class instructions or during individual (or group) deskwork sessions. When 30 or so students are all engaged and motivated in challenging work (and, after all, this is what we all want!), it is likely that quite a few will seek your attention at the same time. This could be for direction, explanation or encouragement. How can you manage this delightful challenge in a timely and fair manner?

We know you are familiar with the formal, 'hands up quietly and wait' procedure for gaining the teacher's attention. But more often, older students and younger students with good social skills achieve engagements with teachers by informal means (for example, physical approach to the teacher) or through a polite, 'Excuse me, Ms/Mr...'. The choice, nature and evolution (from formal to informal) of this procedure is significant, because it can signal the development of more positive relationships between you and your students. For students to be able to gain your attention in a more informal way, and at the same time be polite and fair to you and to other students, they have to be able to share, to be patient and unselfish, to cooperate and to take turns. This will require you to teach your students at least some of these social skills.

Sometimes, especially when you are teaching a new or difficult concept, there might be many students seeking your attention at the same time. This can become quite challenging, and it can be difficult to maintain a reasonable equity. One strategy is to have the relevant students write their names in a descending list on the board. This means that students don't have to raise or keep their hand raised for an extended time. They also know where they are in the list, and can 'move on' to other work while they are waiting, and have a reasonable indication of how long it should be before you can directly assist them. If you are helping others in similar ways, and if you speak reasonably 'clearly', students in waiting often overhear what you say, after which the penny drops, and they move on. In that case, they should remove their name from the board. Sometimes students will take the initiative to ask their peers for help, and sometimes the problem is solved in this way. Importantly, your students need to have contingency work available; otherwise, they might deteriorate into inappropriate behaviours — so be clever and be prepared!

**Group and whole-class movements**

Procedures are invaluable for facilitating safe, efficient movements of groups around your classroom and school. There is usually a lot of movement around school environments, particularly between classrooms and activity areas, whether it is the movement of whole classes, small groups or individuals. Teachers need to decide if groups of students are mature, skilled and motivated enough to manage this movement without distracting or endangering others.

This decision, like many others, will need to be informed by observations over time. Start teaching and practising those group movement procedures with close supervision, and then relax this supervision (to the minimum required to prevent chaos) as students collectively demonstrate more self-direction.

Primary teachers might start by insisting that students line up outside the classroom door quietly. This not only ensures order and safety but also helps to calm down students 'hyped-up' from recess or lunch activities, so that they are ready for the next lesson. Secondary teachers might insist on certain entry and exit procedures in line with particular subject areas. For example, it is a rule in some schools that students should not enter labs for Science classes until the teacher has entered.

**Transitions between lesson segments and lessons**

A substantial history of research has highlighted the importance of efficient transitions between teacher-directed and student-directed activities — particularly 'packing-up' and 'setting-up' activities (Dunn 2009; Good & Brophy 2008; Kounin, 1970). Transition periods are 'high-risk' times for inappropriate behaviours, because some students take advantage of the fact that they are unlikely to have the oversight and individual attention of their teachers at these times. It is therefore important that effective procedures are established for transition periods, both to maximise learning time and to prevent the emergence of inappropriate behaviours.

For within-lesson transitions, prompts and cues should be established around your 'call to attention' procedure, to ensure that all students are proactively attending to the instruction you have set for the next learning activity/session. Prompts and cues should also be used in your 'set to task' procedure, to ensure that all students engage with the next learning activity. For between-lesson
transitions, there is the added requirement to pack up resources from the closing activity and set up resources for the next activity.

These transitions are critical to safe and efficient teaching and learning. It is imperative that you explain, teach, establish and consolidate clear and efficient procedures for making transitions within and between lessons, and for the beginning and end of teaching sessions throughout the school day. Response ‘latency’—giving students a set period of time in which to respond and complete a transition—is a useful strategy here. One logical consequence for whole-group failure is for students to ‘make up the lost time’.

**Context-specific procedures**

In different teaching/learning situations and settings, **context-specific procedures** are often required. For example, in peer tutoring sessions, your student tutors need to be pre-trained and regularly monitored. ‘Reading recovery’ sessions (see http://readingrecovery.org/) follow very specific procedures. Many teachers have ‘standard’ routines and, hence, standard procedures for the first work of the lesson or day (such as silent reading, self-directed fluency-building tasks or reflective writing sessions) and for reviewing and closing lessons. It is very important for you to make early decisions about any necessary context-specific procedures, and to plan for teaching these in the maximum amount of possible learning time.

There is consensus in the research that effective teachers routinely ‘scan’ their class to recognise and encourage students who are on-task, and to identify potential causes of disruption that can be corrected early. (Think back to Suzie and ‘nudge theory’ in the ‘In practice’ box above.) Good teachers use ‘withitness’ and ‘overlap’ (Kounin, 1970), which are explained in detail in Chapter 5. When deskwork is required, effective teachers routinely move about the whole room. While moving, commenting and monitoring, they assist students who are having difficulties, but only for short periods, before they re-commence monitoring. Leinhardt, Steinway and Hammond (1987) demonstrated that when only fragments of procedures were taught, or when established procedures were allowed to disintegrate, students did not respond to cues quickly or consistently. As a result, fluidity, and hence productive teaching and learning time, were lost for the teacher and students.

Some of these procedures may appear ‘over-controlling’. We do not advocate the creation of an over-regimented environment where students are subdued and lacking in initiative. Your intention should not be to subdue your students, but rather to develop, as a matter of routine, solutions for potentially time-wasting or conflict-producing disruptions to engagement and learning. Research into the practices of expert teachers clearly shows that almost all of them introduce procedures to support learning. (See, for example, Hattie, 2009.) Some teachers have found that involving students in decisions about the nature and purpose of valued procedures improves student commitment and enables students to feel more valued and empowered (Cooper & Boyd, 2016).

**VALUES-BASED APPROACHES TO CLASSROOM CULTURE**

You will recall that values are an important element in the development of classroom cultures. (Refer back to Table 3.1.) We have made it clear that they should underpin the rules, routines and procedures that comprise operational cultures. Indeed, in some schools and classrooms, values are ‘front and centre’, and obvious from the moment you walk into those learning environments.

Among several positive byproducts of the Australian Commonwealth-funded values education projects from the last decade was an improved focus on values in many schools, as well as a greater emphasis on how values relate to behaviour and, more broadly, how classrooms operate (Zbar et al., 2006). In many of the participating schools, values were explicitly taught and became the basis of successful school and class rules. In one school, a student was quoted as saying:

> Now that we have the values, like we have respect, and under that we have that it’s disrespectful to leave your things around for other people, people can kind of connect the rules to a value and see that it’s important. And so I think people are more likely to obey the rules now than they were before, because they can see how it’s important to other people.

(Handton et al., 2010, p. 39)

De Nobile and Hogan (2014) described how one teacher used values as the classroom rules; they included ‘We cooperate’ and ‘We respect one another.’ There are many examples of how teachers turn values into rules and procedures. The examples shown in figures 3.2 and 3.3 illustrate the ways in which values can be used to make rules, as well as to remind students of the standards of behaviour expected of them.

**Figure 3.2** Values-based rules

![Our five Cs](image)

**Our five Cs**

- Care for people and property
- Courtesy towards people
- Cooperation in all activities so that they run smoothly
- Consideration of other people’s feelings
- Common sense when making decisions
PROFESSIONAL REFLECTION

The classroom culture that you develop will (and should) reflect your values relating to education, as well as the values espoused by the school and its parent 'system' or community. Your beliefs generally reflect your underlying values.

How do you believe a classroom should be run? Consider the following points before answering that question:

* How rules will be developed
* Procedures that are most important to have organised (e.g. lesson transitions)
* Standards of behaviour and limits on inappropriate behaviour

Having considered the points above and answered the key question, your next step is to reflect this answer in your developing professional philosophy of teaching. It only needs a couple of sentences. Perhaps frame it generally in your mind first, then answer the following question: How much, or how little, should students be involved in the development of your classroom culture?

Once you have reflected on the questions above and perhaps jotted down some initial responses, go to ‘Your philosophy for a positive learning environment’ and develop your approach to classroom culture using the guide questions there.

SUMMARY

In this chapter we first explained the nature and importance of classroom culture as one of four key preventative elements in our Lyford model, along with an introduction to the notion of behaviours standards. Three different philosophical perspectives on classroom culture were then described. Two important aspects of developing classroom culture were explained in detail: first, the seven steps in building a class ‘agreement’ around various aspects of classroom culture, and second, six complementary key procedures for creating and maintaining a positive and facilitative classroom culture. A final section on values-based approaches to developing classroom culture rounded out a philosophical analysis of this element.

Key terms

- behaviour standards
- classroom culture
- context-specific procedures
- praxis level
- operational level
- procedures
- theoretic level
- values statement

Individual and group activities

Activity 3.1
Refer back to this chapter’s ‘Starter story: Due process’. 
- What was due process in this instance?
- If Rachel did ‘mess up’, what could she do to salvage her predicament?
- Alternatively, what could Rachel have done to avoid her predicament?
- Why is due process important, and how does it relate to behavioural expectations and boundaries, rules and consequences, and rights and responsibilities?

Role-play this story scenario as is, and then role-play alternative scenarios where the outcomes (for Rachel and the class of students) are better.

Activity 3.2
- Prepare for and conduct a three-way class debate on the philosophical, moral and practical qualities of each of the three perspectives on classroom culture.

Activity 3.3
- Draft and discuss a set of rules, a set of rights and responsibilities and a code of conduct for one teaching/learning context.
- Compare and contrast how these would work when applied to other contexts – e.g. an early or late primary or secondary setting or a permanent versus temporary appointment.

Activity 3.4
- Draft and discuss a set of consequences and a due process statement for one teaching/learning context.
- Compare and contrast how these would work when applied to other contexts – e.g. an early or late primary or secondary setting or a permanent versus temporary appointment.
Activity 3.5
Prepare for and debate one or more of the following topics:
• It is better to present a detailed ‘draft’ for a classroom culture agreement than to negotiate from scratch. (You might choose a specific teaching/learning context for this.)
• It is better to use an inductive rather than a deductive approach to collaboratively reason out a classroom culture agreement. (You might choose a specific age group for this.)
• What happens inside classrooms is ‘teacher business’ and what happens outside, in the school, is ‘whole-school business’.

Activity 3.6
• What differences might there be in preparing the classroom culture aspects of a classroom management plan with a new teacher appointed to different teaching/learning contexts – e.g. early or primary or secondary settings or practical versus permanent versus temporary appointments?

Activity 3.7
• Role: play one or more of the six key procedures for developing a facilitative classroom culture.
• Compare and contrast how your interpretations would work when applied to other contexts – e.g. an early or primary or secondary setting or a permanent versus temporary appointment.

Online resources
CENGAGE Visit: http://login.cengagebrain.com and search for this book to access the study tools that come with your textbook.

Weblinks
‘Our school: A safe and happy place for everyone: A code of conduct to promote respectful interaction on ACT Department of Education and Training premises’ (ACT Government, Department of Education and Training)

‘The code of school behaviour: Better behaviour, better learning’ (Queensland Government Department of Education, Training and Employment)

‘Developing our workforce capability’ (Queensland Government Department of Education, Training and Employment)
http://education.qld.gov.au/staff/development/

The Victorian Teaching Profession Code of Conduct (Victorian Institute of Teaching)

References
CHAPTER 4

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Learning outcomes

When you have worked through this chapter, you should be able to:

• understand and discuss the significance of physical environment as a key preventative practice in developing and maintaining your classroom as a PLE
• explain the relationship between preventative physical environment settings, your professional philosophy of teaching and your approach to developing your first classroom management plan
• explain a range of preventative physical environment settings relating to classroom floor space, storage space, wall space, ambience and safety
• draft a detailed drawing of a hypothetical classroom best suited to your professional philosophy and approach to classroom management for selected teaching/learning contexts
• explain safety considerations when organising classrooms, particularly with respect to accommodating the needs of students with various disabilities and additional needs
• explain the key concepts and discuss the summary at the end of this chapter.

Chapter overview

- Starter story: The well-organised classroom
- Introduction
- Physical environment
- Floor space
- Storage space
- Wall space
- Ambience
- Safety
- Professional reflection
- Summary
- Key terms
- Individual and group activities
- Online resources
- Weblinks
- References

Starter story: The well-organised classroom

Mike had been temporary teaching for six months. One morning, he received a late phone call from a local school deputy telling him to take a new class at very short notice. Arriving at school just as the students headed off to class was an ominous start, especially given this would be his first time with this class.

As Mike jogged up to the classroom, he was surprised to see the students in two straight lines outside the classroom door, waiting quietly. He was wringing it, because he had no time for preparation. "Well done, class," he said. "Now please go inside and sit at your desks." The students filed dutifully into the classroom, having already collected their homework books and pencil cases from their bags, which they hung tidily on their named hooks outside the classroom. All of the students sat quickly in their desk groups - each had a name tag on their desk - and began waiting quietly...

One student put up her hand. "Yes?" responded Mike, anxious that she might ask him about an aspect of the class routine with which he was unfamiliar. "Our teacher, Mr Organised, asked us all to put our name tags on our desks whenever he was away to help the replacement teacher get to know us quickly." 'Clever man, Mr Organised. Thank you, Sandra,' replied Mike. He was gobsmacked, and the students waited quietly.

Mike looked around for information on the day's lessons. At first, he was in a silent panic ... but it was all there! On the front wall beside the smartboard there was a laminated weekly timetable, on the small whiteboard was a day plan for that day, and on the teacher's desk were class sets of worksheets. I should be so lucky, thought Mike, and the students waited quietly.

Before Mike had time to start the morning literacy session, a student had her hand up. "Yes, Jasmine?" Billy, our homework monitor, collects the homework books and puts them in alphabetical order on Mr Organised's desk," said Jasmine. 'Mary, our attendance monitor, completes the draft attendance sheet to help Mr Organised to complete the roll while we are doing silent reading. Brian and James go to reading "buddy groups" with our friends in the class next-door. Everyone else does silent reading, then journal work for 30 minutes. Sarah, our busy worker monitor for today, records group points for the best busy workers. When Melissa and I finish, we help Frank and Greg to complete theirs. If anything is not clear during the day, sir, Mr Organised's "Routines and Procedures" book is in his top-right desk drawer. Can we all start our work now?" And the class waited quietly.

Mike couldn't believe his luck. This was the class from heaven. He couldn't believe that a teacher and class could be so well organised. "Thank you, Jasmine. OK class. Start your work." The day went quickly and came to completion in the same way it had started. The students were motivated and self-directed. They knew where everything was stored, and where to look..."
for things and return them. The seating was arranged in ways that made walking around the room easy, with little scope for students to distract their classmates.

As Mike farewelled the class at 3.30 p.m., he reflected. Were these just a ‘fluke’ fantastic bunch of kids, or was Mr Organised the most organised teacher ever? I’ve got to meet this Mr Organised, thought Mike; I could learn a lot from him.

INTRODUCTION

As Figure 4.1 suggests, organisation of the physical environment is one of the four interrelated preventative practices necessary to build a PLE and to help to minimise disruptive and unproductive behaviour. Your choice of physical environment settings will be influenced by your professional philosophy of teaching and theoretical approach to classroom management. Your organisation of the physical environment is an essential part of your classroom management plan, and should be subject to your cycle of professional reflection and plan-impliment-review (PIR) cycle (which we describe in detail in Chapter 5). In this chapter, we will describe and explain a range of aspects of physical environment generally, with particular emphasis on floor space (especially seating arrangements), storage and wall space, as well as on classroom ambience, comfort and safety.

Figure 4.1 Physical environment in the Lyford model

- ECOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE
- SOCIOCULTURAL PERSPECTIVE
- PSYCHOEDUCATIONAL PERSPECTIVE
- FOUR PREVENTATIVE PRACTICES
- INTERVENTION PRACTICES

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Organisation of the classroom’s physical environment is of fundamental importance to developing and maintaining your classroom as a PLE. Facilitative organisation sets the stage for a positive classroom ecosystem. Physical settings can have a powerful influence on expectations, attitudes and behaviour. In their classic ecological research, Weinstein and Mignano (1993) concluded that the physical classroom environment must provide and facilitate security, social contact, teacher–student interaction, group identification, task instrumentality, pleasure and growth. Many of these requirements correlate with those suggested by William Glasser (2010), who argued that productive learning would only occur when and where students were able to satisfy their basic needs for belonging, control, fun and freedom.

The classroom environment also contextualises a substantial amount of the non-verbal communication between teacher and students. Physical settings create a set of expectations about socially acceptable behavioural repertoires. These expectations are not as well governed in children and young people as they are in adults, but they are nevertheless effective for the majority.

Consider the behavioural expectations that you generate as you picture yourself entering varying physical settings, such as a lecture theatre, a club, a church, the local police station, a stranger’s home, your own lounge room, your classroom or the principal’s office. You know that there are different sets of behavioural expectations in each setting. Some of them may overlap, but each will involve some constraints on, or variations to, your behavioural repertoire. Most of the time, you will find yourself, as most adults do, behaving in accordance with these expectations.

Children and young people – depending on their age, social experience and maturity – are not quite as predictable. They are still learning many of the social mores that inform behaviour in different settings, and so may not respond appropriately. Some teachers of difficult students say things such as, ‘How can I expect my students to behave themselves at school when they are allowed to do anything they like at home? The different expectations at school and at home confuse them.’ On the contrary, students can, and do, restrict their behavioural repertoires according to the expectations that they interpret from a setting. It is important to teach, and to use, the behavioural expectations generated from the physical environment to promote behaviour consistent with best teaching and learning in the classroom for all students, and particularly for those who display challenging behaviours.

Müller (1990) examined the relationship between appropriate ‘student role behaviour’ and school achievement in the early years. It seems (not surprisingly) that students who meet teachers’ behavioural expectations in the classroom (that is, who generally listen, stay seated and on-task, and follow directions) perform better academically. Müller emphasised the importance of sensitising students to behavioural expectations provided by setting cues.

The classic work of Maslow (1987) explains that behavioural
problems are often actions that serve the purpose of satisfying basic human needs that other aspects of the student’s environment leave unsatisfied. It is important, then, that the setting’s features enable students to meet their basic needs, because people need to believe that these will be met before they are able to devote effort to achieving self-actualisation through learning.

Evertson and Emmer (2009) identified four key considerations for teachers when planning the physical arrangement of their classrooms: keeping areas of high student pass-through traffic congestion-free; ensuring that all students are visible; having frequently-used resources that are stored in such a way as to make them quick and easy to access; and ensuring that students can see important information. In this chapter, we explore five elements that comprise the organisation of the physical classroom: floor space, storage space, wall space, ambience and safety. Understanding these five elements will ensure that the considerations listed above are accounted for.

FLOOR SPACE

Floor space is about the way the physical room, within its boundaries, is arranged. Elements of floor space include work activity areas, central meeting spaces, and special spaces such as wet areas and class libraries. It also includes seating arrangements and the related furniture.

Every classroom is different, so it is difficult to recommend the ‘best’ arrangement of floor space. You should take a range of factors into account before furniture, particularly seating furniture such as chairs and desks, is arranged in your classroom. Clearly, the size of the room and the number of students will be major determinants. However, there is little doubt that classroom furniture arrangements should reflect teachers’ preferred instructional practices. It is important to ensure that furniture arrangements in your classroom facilitate your pedagogies, and also allow for the common elements of good classroom management, such as scanning, smooth transitions, organised deskwork and mobility.

Furthermore, your furniture arrangements should proactively assist your students to meet their basic psychosocial needs. In a major review of research concerning competent beginning teachers, Reynolds (1992) noted that they arranged classroom furniture and spaces in order to provide for both individual and group activities, to facilitate visual contact with students around the room, and to accommodate sociometric factors (that is, those relating to social relationships).

Workspace arrangements

The workspace refers to the combination of seating and other activity areas. Ultimately, your classroom seating, other learning spaces and related furniture arrangements are restricted only by your imagination, the room’s physical limitations, the number of students and the furniture available. While common arrangements are explained below, these are not the only options. In fact, the more creative the design, the better, insofar as it communicates, ‘This classroom is ours; it is different from others,’ and therefore establishes, from day one, unique behavioural expectations. Individualised designs also help to cement group identity and meet a need for environmental variation. We encourage you to experiment wherever possible.

Apart from student seating, which we talk about in detail in the following section, you will need to consider how other available space in the room might be used to optimise learning, to meet student needs and even to reduce inappropriate behaviour. Some teachers prefer the use of a central meeting space where they can address students and students can address one another in close proximity, perhaps at the start or close of lessons. This is often evident in classrooms arranged as a broad space (looking not unlike a dancefloor at a club!) in which there are no chairs, tables or other furniture, and where the whole class can stand or sit on the floor.

Sandy’s meeting place: Making use of space

Sandy has been teaching for over 10 years. Over that time, she has developed a use of classroom space that allows her to bring her classes together quickly for direct communication, clarifications and sharing. She calls it, simply, ‘meeting place’. It is an area of the classroom with no desks or other furniture in it. Depending on the room’s configuration, it is at either the front or the side of the room.

Sandy typically starts her class with ‘meeting place’: with all her students sitting on the floor facing her (also sitting on the floor). At this first meeting place, she greets her class, asks if there are any urgent issues, gives any schoolwide reminders, and then explains what will happen in the coming lessons. Students also get the chance to share exciting news or to express congratulations and (commonly) birthday wishes to classmates. If, while students are working at their desks, an issue arises and the solution to it might be of benefit to all, Sandy will call out, ‘Everyone: meeting place!’ The students will immediately stop what they are doing and settle into the meeting place, where the issue is then explained and solutions worked out among students. Sandy almost always ends her lessons with ‘meeting place’, as well. At this time, she may facilitate a debrief discussion and/or foreshadow things that will be happening next.

Sandy’s class is a ‘friendly’ one, and her students are respectful of each other. Arguments among her students are rare. There has been a marked increase in social cohesion in this group, and the stage coordinator has noticed fewer discipline referrals from some of her ‘regular customers’ over the last term.

Some teachers use part of the floor space as a break-out area where a group of students can collaborate or work with ICT while others are doing work at their desks. In our experience, noise is usually not as big a problem for the desk-bound students as teachers might imagine, so long as it is managed well via basic rules. Other non-desk uses of floor space include the provision of a class library (common in primary classrooms) and space for made objects, such as paintings and woodwork, to dry, set or be temporarily displayed.

The idea of the ‘quiet comer’ has become popular in some school systems. It is not uncommon for students, especially younger ones, to feel ‘all peopleed-out’ from a day spent in company, and to
want a private space where they can be by themselves and experience some quiet time. Fields and Fields (2006) suggest that such spaces can also be places where students can continue with their desk-based work for a time, and that such a space might be less distracting to students than a desk area surrounded by peers and associated distractions. Quiet areas might also be used for time-out (Jones & Jones, 2013).

Seating arrangements

Decisions related to seating arrangements often result in students being positioned in close proximity to each other for significant ‘chunks’ of lesson time. The seating arrangement helps to define the classroom as part of students’ ecologies, as well as to define ecologies themselves. Gest and Rodkin (2011) remind us that these arrangements become part of students’ microsystems. Awareness of this should help you to make decisions that encourage the development of positive interactions and, as a result, a positive classroom climate.

Consideration needs to be given to where each student should sit and work, and whether you and/or your students should make these decisions. Everton and Emmer (2009), for example, found that students seated towards the centre-front of the classroom (this having been the usual instructional focal point in a room, from which teachers primarily instructed from the front of the room, using the board) were better engaged with the teaching/learning interaction than those seated on the periphery. Where cooperative group work is expected, seating arrangements obviously need to accommodate temporary groupings—often of four to six students—and other sociometric factors.

Your input into seating choice would seem appropriate regardless of specific pedagogical groupings, or preferred teaching or learning arrangements. You might consider placing any students with learning difficulties or more challenging behaviours within your area of instructional focus, and separating students with more challenging behaviours or social skill deficits in order to construct equal, mixed-ability groups. Some student input is also advisable, especially with older students, since their needs for freedom, social interaction and belonging often become more pronounced.

We do advise caution, however, when considering how much choice students should have in their seating arrangements. In a recent study of upper primary students, students having choice of seating was associated with higher levels of inappropriate behaviour (Bicard et al., 2012). While this is only one study, and the story might be different in secondary grades, other research also recommends that the teacher assign seating, especially at the start of a school year (Cope, 2007; Rogers, 2011). On the other hand, giving students some say in their seating provides them with a sense of personal power, responsibility, and negotiation, and may reduce behavioural problems that can occur when students are placed next to peers who present problems for them (Jones & Jones, 2013; Marsh, 2010; Marzano et al., 2005). Depending on the class, perhaps assigning seating at first, and following this with some student negotiation or input a week later, represents a sensible middle path through this sometimes vexing issue.

Apart from physical constraints, seating arrangements should be compatible with, and facilitative of, your pedagogical preferences and instructional methods, taking account of the needs of your students and the level of assertive control required for particular groups of students. It can be facilitative to change seating arrangements from time to time in order to provide variety and novelty.

Changes to seating arrangements on a whole-class or individual-student basis are very useful if there is a need to re-establish control and/or more directly manage relationships and interactions in the classroom.

Your selection of furniture arrangements is aligned to best practice if it facilitates the best learning outcomes for your students. There is no one ‘best’ way to arrange seating. Your challenge is to organise classroom furniture, particularly student chairs and desks, to maximise student engagement and learning in every teaching situation. The four most common seating configurations are rows, groups, U-shapes and workstations. We will explore these in the following sections; but, before making any decisions on seating arrangements, we suggest that you consider where you, as teacher, will be operating.

Teacher area

If you can clarify in your own mind how you intend to teach and where you will likely be positioned at various stages throughout your lessons, you can then identify where in the room your teacher desk area should be located for maximum efficiency. This position might depend on how often you actually use your desk. We have observed hundreds of classrooms in our time in schools, and have found that teachers have placed their desk areas in many parts of rooms, with no one particular position being uniquely advantageous or problematic.

Placing your desk area at the front of your room allows students to see you when you are working there, but if individual students are likely to receive one-on-one assistance there, privacy might be problematic. Placing your desk area at the back or the side of your room allows you to see all of your students, and provides some privacy when individual students are receiving help. Many teachers go to their desks only infrequently during lesson times, and prefer to help students in their workspace. There are no hard and fast rules, but there are some general axioms recommended in the literature that we agree all teachers should consider.

Cope (2007) and Marzano et al. (2005), for example, emphasise the importance of teacher visibility and availability, and suggest that teachers should not get embroiled in administrative work or individual student matters to such an extent that the class is not well monitored. Other authors (Emmer & Everton, 2009; Everton & Emmer, 2009; Marsh, 2010) strongly suggest that if the teacher desk area is where instructional materials are stored, it should also be located near the presentation areas, such as near the smart/whiteboard. We suggest that your teacher desk area be away from high-traffic areas, in order to enable reasonable interactions between you and your students. It should be in a place that causes minimum distraction or safety risk due to classroom movements.

Classroom traffic areas, of course, depend on your organisation of the layout of the room.

Rows

Most of us have experienced classrooms arranged in such a way that all students are seated in rows of single or paired chairs and desks facing the front of the room, where most of the teaching takes place in front of the board or screen. The preferred pedagogy in these classrooms is transmissionist—that is, a teacher talks and students listen—and teacher-centred, and primarily involves individual deskwork. This seating arrangement may facilitate opportunities for teacher–student interaction,
but it inhibits student–student interaction, effectively restricting group work and collaborative learning opportunities. Consequently, you can likely see that it would be facilitative to have different seating arrangements for different teaching/learning activities.

Rows can promote positive behaviour by creating the expectation of order and individual on-task behaviour; enabling the teacher to efficiently scan and monitor activity; assisting with non-verbal correction, through eye contact; and restricting student–student eye contact, thereby inhibiting social interaction between students (which may reduce individual on-task engagement). Using row arrangements in the classroom can also be useful as a ‘fallback’ arrangement to assist in the re-establishment of control if it has been lost under alternative seating arrangements (Wannaraka & Ruhl, 2008).

On the other hand, rows may militate against positive behaviour by delineating power, and thus providing a setting for students who wish to challenge power, and by failing to provide for students’ social and freedom needs, resulting in a greater disturbance whenever group work is needed (Glasser, 1990). Figure 4.2 gives examples of a paired-row and a single-row seating arrangement.

**Figure 4.2** Paired-row and single-row seating arrangements

**Groups**

Group arrangements are somewhat the ‘opposite’ of row arrangements. Group arrangements are often found in primary settings, and to a lesser extent in secondary settings, where they are more often used in classrooms that are set up for ‘practical’ subjects. Group arrangements generally involve three or more chairs and desks being grouped together in a triangle or L-shape. The presuppositions in this arrangement are often that the teacher’s preferred pedagogy is more student-centred, that some social interaction is encouraged and that noise levels are not expected to be as low as in those classrooms where rows are used. If student-centred activities are not part of the teacher’s preferred pedagogical repertoire, then groups may not be the best arrangement.

The need for scanning visibility and eye contact is an important factor to consider when planning group arrangements. When it is necessary for you to instruct your whole class, to give demonstrations or to otherwise adopt a teacher-centred approach, it is clearly preferable for all of your students to see you, and the instructional focus, without physically turning. There should also then be at least one point in the room where you can have eye contact with all of your students, so that redirection in the early stages of off-task behaviour will be more easily achieved without disrupting your instructional flow.

Group arrangements can assist the promotion of positive behaviour by enabling more varied instructional strategies to be implemented.

While the potential problems associated with giving only teacher-centred instruction may be largely overcome by using a group instruction area (such as a mat or carpet space), this may not be age-appropriate, useful for intermediate instructions or behavioural cueing and prompting, or facilitative for redirection that usually requires eye contact. To achieve maximum visibility of the instructional focus, it may be necessary to relocate students to only one side of, or to either end of, group tables. This also has the effect of reducing eye contact among students and increasing their physical distance from one another.

Group arrangements can assist the promotion of positive behaviour by enabling more varied instructional strategies to be implemented, by meeting students’ basic needs for belonging and social interaction, and by meeting, to some degree, students’ needs for freedom, pleasure and control (Glasser, 1990). But group arrangements may also militate against positive behaviour by creating an expectation of power sharing and increased student–student interaction, by making student–student eye contact more easily established and by increasing the likelihood of off-task social interaction (Wannaraka & Ruhl, 2008). They may also reduce teacher–student eye contact, make the teacher’s attempts to redirect student behaviours more invasive and increase the possibility of hidden physical contact between students. Figure 4.3 shows sample seating arrangements for groups of four and six and for larger groups.

**U-shapes**

Single or double U-shape seating arrangements attempt to deliver the advantages, and minimise the disadvantages, of row and group arrangements. U-shapes are essentially teacher-centred arrangements, but with increased opportunities for student–student interaction. Small groups can be formed, when necessary, by moving desks together. Double U-shapes enhance the group function further, but reduce whole-class discussion, since students are less able to easily establish eye contact with each other. Eye contact with the instructional focus should be maintained. Figure 4.4 shows a typical U-shape and an angled double-U-shaped seating arrangement.
arrangements, though, the potential for teacher control is much reduced. Although whole-class instruction and discussion (in primary classrooms) probably require a 'mat' space, and students' needs for personally identifiable space are not readily met by this arrangement, workstations suit the application of cooperative learning models. Figure 4.5 shows two different workstation seating arrangements.

**Figure 4.5 Two workstation seating arrangements**

![Diagram of two workstation seating arrangements]

**Movement corridors**

Modern classrooms are busy places, usually full of teaching/learning resources and facilities. Long gone are the days of only a blackboard, 30 desks and chairs, and a few sets of textbooks and student workbooks! Most classrooms now also make space for laptop and desktop computers, a whiteboard and a smartboard, tablets and various other information and communications technology.

The location and arrangement of resources, storage facilities and alternative workstations, as well as the design and establishment of related movement corridors, need to be planned carefully in order to provide for their efficient, organised and safe access and use. The location and storage of students' work and belongings needs to be well organised, clearly labelled and easily accessible to several groups of students at a time (Lyons, Ford & Arthur-Kelly, 2011; Weinsteino & Mignano 1993).

You will have noticed the arrow flow symbols in Figures 4.2 to 4.5. These are meant to show movement corridors. Movement corridors need to be established in the classroom to allow access to equipment and entry/exit points that are used frequently. If access is only through narrow corridors, students will be distracted frequently. If only one or two students at a time can gain access to frequently used spaces and whole-class resources, it will increase the time required
for students to prepare for an activity to commence. Delays of this nature encourage disruptive behaviour.

Care also needs to be taken to ensure that incompatible activity areas are separate from one another. For example, science activity centres may need to be separate from silent reading areas, which in turn may need to be away from wet areas. Entry and exit points need to direct students away from others who might be working. Groups of tables or workstations tend to allow greater flexibility in the design of such corridors than rows of tables do. Teacher movement throughout the classroom also needs to be facilitated to allow for effective monitoring of deskwork and individual and small-group instruction.

Teaching resources

We have observed big differences between what is stored in primary and secondary classrooms. Teaching resources that are common to both levels (although still quite variable in secondary classes) include writing paper, scrap paper, scissors, glue, staplers, sticky tape and hole punchers. Resources that are found frequently in primary classrooms include art supplies like paint, paintbrushes, crayons and crepe paper, pencils, rulers, geometry sets, book sets and, of course, ordered stationery. Teachers will also need places to store assessment records, planning notebooks, a computer, and so on. The drawers of the teacher desk or a filing cabinet are the most common storage spaces for these items.

Some secondary classrooms will have storage for subject-specific resources in certain rooms: for example, for paint equipment and modelling styrofoam in art rooms, or sets of maps and atlases in rooms primarily used for geography and history. Purpose-specific rooms, such as science labs and design and technology workshops, also have their own specific storage areas appropriate to the materials kept within.

Storage of student work

The primary classroom might have bench drawers and shelves for the storage of student workbooks and artwork. Secondary classrooms cannot always accommodate this, due to the variable uses of some rooms, but purpose-specific spaces, such as art rooms, science labs, and design and technology workshops, often require storage spaces, such as benches and large tables, to store student work in progress.

Location of storage spaces

Where possible, and as a general rule, we recommend the placement of cupboards, bookshelves, filing cabinets and other furniture at the back and sides of the room, ensuring windows and connecting doors are not obstructed. This creates more available area for student traffic and workspaces, and reduces obstruction of vision, for both teachers wanting to supervise the class and students needing to see the teacher or class displays. However, larger storage units, such as cupboards and bookshelves, can be used as room dividers to create dedicated spaces (Marsh, 2010). We illustrate how one such space was created in the following ‘In practice’ box.

Different schools have differing storage preferences regarding student schoolbags and ICTs (such as tablets and laptops). It is not uncommon, however, to see schoolbags stored outside the perimeters of primary classrooms. There is far greater variability in secondary schools, with lockers in homerooms or outside areas, or spaces under desks, being used for this purpose. Because students move from room to room, their schoolbags frequently become a problem – one to which many a staff meeting has tried to find a solution.
IN PRACTICE

Tom’s ‘Chillspace’: Making use of available resources
Tom was in his third year of teaching when he had an interesting idea. He was one of the few classes at the school that had a collection of books. These were mostly donated by former students and teachers, but were in good condition. He noticed that his students would often, if they finished work early, take a book from the bookshelf and go to their desk and read it. This was nice, he thought, but those students always looked a bit uncomfortable reading at their desks.

One day, Tom saw one student take a book and squat down to lean against the bookshelf to re-tie his shoelace. It was then that he noticed the two large cupboards on either side of the bookshelf, and realised that, with some simple adjustments, he could create a space where students could sit and read in relative quiet and comfort.

The next day, Tom’s students entered the classroom to find an area at the back signposted with the word ‘Chillspace’. The cupboards on either side of the bookshelf had been moved 90 degrees, with ‘doors’ facing away from the space. The bookshelf was in between the backs of the two cupboards, which were covered with coloured felt cloth. There were two beanbags on the floor.

Tom’s ‘Chillspace’ became a big hit. Students would work even harder just to get an opportunity to be picked to have some free time quietly reading there. Once, Tom observed one student cleaning dropped papers from the area, apparently exasperated at the carelessness of a classmate. The ‘Chillspace’ had become a valued part of the classroom culture, and had influenced the classroom climate, too.

Before too long, ‘Chillspaces’ started appearing in other classrooms around the school!

WALL SPACE

The walls of a room offer space for material to be displayed. While it is true that storage areas often take – and indeed become – part of the wall space, other items, such as noticeboards, whiteboards, projector screens and undamaged walls also comprise wall space. Again, there are often differences between primary and secondary classrooms here. While it may be true that secondary classrooms are often occupied by many different teachers, Cope (2007) makes the point that the display of student work, rules or other materials that assist learning is possible, and is indeed a good way to make the learning environment more appealing and interesting. In general, wall space is used to display four types of material: classroom culture information; learning resources; student work; and items we will explain as ‘other’. We will describe these materials in the following sections.

Information about classroom culture
Aspects of classroom culture will be found on noticeboards and elsewhere on the room’s wall space. In Chapter 3, we encouraged you to place class rules on display for all to be able to see. Other aspects of classroom culture (and wider school information) that find their way onto walls include class mottos, reward charts, duty rosters, timetables and schedules, evacuation plans, reminders about upcoming events, and transport information. It is important to review and update these displays as things change.

Learning resources
Learning resources will often be placed on walls or hung on string across the room to help students with tasks or to stimulate ideas. It is not uncommon to see spelling hints and sentence writing scaffold posters in primary classrooms, or information about proper referencing and avoiding plagiarism in secondary rooms. Other common resources include maps, stimulus pictures relating to themes, and subject-specific learning information. Focus questions relating to topics being learned are also common, and are frequently accompanied by student work samples. These should be updated regularly, so that the classroom does not start to look ‘stale’.

Student work displays
The display of student work, attached to walls or strung up across parts of the room, is a way to make the classroom aesthetically pleasing, to generate a feeling that the room belongs to the class and to recognise the contribution and importance of students’ work. When setting up such displays, it is important to balance the display of works by students from across the class. For the sake of a positive classroom climate, every student should experience having their work on display at some time. It is also important not to obscure student vision of other information, or the teacher’s view of the class, with student work displays. It is important, too, to prevent displays from becoming a fire hazard or safety issue. If you can imagine a display catching fire or a string tripping someone, it is best to act on that feeling and remove the problem.

Other displays
Other materials that do not fit the above categories might include, say, a class clock, or, in the case of some faith-based schools, religious icons and pictures. Jones and Jones (2013) suggest two interesting ways to use wall spaces to reinforce classroom culture and climate. The first is a class photo album that shows classroom activities and events as the year unfolds. The authors have tried this in their own classrooms with great success. The second suggestion is constructing a class history. This involves students writing about events that have happened in class (for example, if the class comes first in a fundraising effort) as if they were historical or special events. These activities involve students in the development of the physical environment and remind them of the uniqueness of their group.

Displays of student work, photographs, silhouettes, handprints and similar identifying features assist in generating feelings of belonging to the classroom. Changing displays regularly provides variation over time. It is important, though, not to allow classroom displays to become so attention-grabbing that they interfere with students’ ability to concentrate on learning tasks. This may be a problem, in particular, for students with learning difficulties and/or attention deficits. Students who are likely to be distracted should face away from display boards and other colourfully variable areas.
Jennifer and well-organised physical settings

My name is Jennifer, and I am a deputy principal at an inner-city school. There is a lot to be said about the physical classroom setting and how it can prevent problem behaviour.

When I walk into a classroom, I gain a sense of how productive the environment is almost immediately. Certain qualities, common to all good classrooms, are easily recognisable. These concern the staff, the students and the atmosphere of the room itself.

In a good classroom, the classroom resources and materials are easily accessible and in good working order. Furniture, equipment, books, games, work areas and display spaces have been carefully chosen, planned and organised to allow for maximum utilisation and minimum behavioural disruption. The classroom is full of noise: good, productive, happy noise. The students are busily learning, moving about the room to use resources and share insights with one another. There are very few behavioural problems, and those that do occur can be identified quickly and ‘seen to’ before they become major disruptions. It helps that students are not pushed into tight spaces and can move around the room easily, because of the wide movement corridors. I find that if the classroom setting is comfortable and appealing, the mood in the room is correspondingly positive, and this translates to students being nice to one another – and to the teacher.

Reflection . . .

- To what extent do you think the physical arrangement of a room can influence student attitudes and behaviour?
- What are the most important aspects of classroom layout when it comes to preventing problem behaviour?

AMBIENCE

By ambience, we mean the impact of the physical classroom learning environment on class members’ senses, how the classroom feels, looks, smells and sounds. These factors influence how you and your students feel about being in the classroom, and can influence behaviour. During their school education, students can spend up to four to six hours a day, five days a week, for 40 weeks each year, in their home classroom. If this is an uninteresting or uninspiring place, they are likely to experience a kind of discomfort akin to stimulus deprivation, which may ultimately translate into difficulties for you, in terms of motivation or inappropriate behaviours. Teachers have similar needs for stimulus variation. It stands to reason that teachers react more positively to students, and experience less stress, in more pleasing, comfortable environments. In the following sections, we will explore six aspects of ambience: colour, lighting, temperature and humidity, smell, noise and appropriate facilities.

Colour

Teachers don’t often get a say in how their classrooms are painted or otherwise made to appear. Those decisions are usually made by people higher up in the hierarchy. However, when teachers do have a say, they expect common sense to prevail, and for rooms to be painted or otherwise adorned in light colours, which reduce the need for artificial lighting and make the room appear open and fresh. For this reason, light yellows and greys, very light blues, purples, greens and variations of beige tend to be used.

Research shows that room colour can arouse physical and psychological responses from students (Gaines & Curry, 2011; Hathaway, 1983). Some research relating to colour theory has been done in this area. For example, warm colours, which include reds, oranges and yellows, can result in increased blood pressure and sense of alertness, but can also increase aggressive feelings. Cool colours, such as blues and greens, are associated with reduced blood pressure, a sense of relaxation and calm and reduced aggression (Grangaard 1995; Wohlhifahr, 1986). However, the evidence in this area can be rather conflicting, since colour can also relate to the personal preferences of individuals (Gaines & Curry, 2011). Given this, we see a need for more research into the impacts of colours on attitudes and behaviour in students of all ages.

Having said this, there are things you can do to relate to student preferences, promote calm or create arousal and add colour variation to your room to prevent monotony. Covering a noticeboard with coloured paper or using felt cloth to add colour to display spaces are small touches that can brighten up a classroom. Involving students in the process creates a sense of belonging, power and ownership, and promotes positive culture and climate. Variety is a key factor in establishing pleasurable environments (Weinstein & David, 1987), and variations in colour, space and texture help to promote on-task motivation. However, Marsh (2010), while encouraging the use of colour to enliven the physical environment, warns that too much colour can be overstimulating and a source of distraction.

Light

Most modern school buildings enable natural (outside) lighting in classrooms through the use of high windows and skylights. There has been a trend away from the use of direct artificial light in schools; for example, it is not uncommon to see fluorescent lights turned to point up to a white ceiling in order to reflect the light down, thus diffusing it somewhat to soften its tone. Natural light is also preferred over artificial light for its ease of supply; just open a curtain, and it is there for the taking! However, one must be careful not to encourage heat build-up on hot days.

Light is, of course, important. Students must be able to see what they are reading, writing and making. There are times when the whole class is working on tasks that involve these activities, and bright lighting is needed. There are other times – perhaps when holding a discussion or reflection – when lower lighting might be appropriate.

Different types of lighting can have an impact on student behaviour. Grangaard (1995) found diffused fluorescent light to be associated with greater off-task behaviour than direct fluorescent light. However, teachers are rarely in control of the type of light in the classroom. Furthermore, at the time of writing there is no substantial research into optimal lighting levels for the different activities that happen in classrooms.
Temperature and humidity

*Temperature* refers to how hot or cold something feels; *humidity* refers to the moisture in the atmosphere. We usually feel high humidity more than low. On days of high humidity, the air feels ‘wet’, our skin feels clammy and the heat of the day seems magnified. If you have an air conditioner, temperature is more easily controlled than humidity. By cooling the air, we seem to feel the humidity less. On most reasonable days, room temperatures that are elevated by body heat from people can be moderated by opening windows. Indeed, cross-ventilation is generally desirable, so opening windows on both exposed sides of a room helps to clear the air of carbon dioxide and other gases that may build up in the room.

Most educational systems and schools provide recommendations about how to deal with extreme heat or cold. For example, if it is too hot or humid, you should minimise any planned physical activity. While guidelines about optimal classroom temperatures in particular school systems are hard to find, research recommends a comfort range of between 20°C and 24°C (Hansen, 1966; Kevan & Howes, 1980; Smith & Bradley 1994; Wynn, Anderson & Lundqvist, 1972).

When room temperatures are on the high side (above 25°C), students (and teachers) will feel more discomfort (Charles, 2011; Wynn, Anderson & Lundqvist, 1972). Student commitment to work decreases and a propensity to engage in off-task behaviour increases, as does the likelihood of aggression as temperatures climb higher (Kevan & Howes, 1980; Lagace-Seguin & d’Entremont, 2005; Smith & Bradley 1994). For optimal learning conditions and minimal temptation towards inappropriate behaviour, the temperature should be kept at the cooler end of the abovementioned temperature spectrum (Leung & Fung, 2005; Warner & Myres, 2010).

When making decisions about room temperature, it is important to use what we might call the *principle of ambient temperature*. This principle is simple. The ambient temperature influences the extent of your efforts to make the classroom temperature optimal. Let’s say the optimal temperature in a classroom in a particular place is 22°C, and you use an air conditioner to regulate the temperature because of the position of the room. On hotter days, you will need to give the air conditioner more time to do its work than on cooler days. The same is true with regard to heating if the ambient temperature is very cold.

Smell

The smell of a classroom is influenced by the level of heat and humidity in the room, and by the effectiveness of ventilation. Some teachers make the mistake of closing all windows on cool days to ‘keep the heat in’. Remember what we said about the buildup of undesirable gases earlier – these still build up even if it is cool, as does body heat. Cross-ventilation is essential at most times, and especially when students are inside rooms. Even opening two opposing windows by three centimetres each can do the job. A deodoriser emitting a neutral fragrance can help to control classroom smells in extreme circumstances, but these can also irritate the sinuses in some people.

Noise

Classrooms are often noisy places. Much of the time, this is totally appropriate, especially when students are working productively on various projects and a constructivist and quality pedagogy is being employed (see Chapter 5). As a teacher, you need to monitor the level of noise in your classroom, determine how much of it is and is not work-related, and develop procedures to regain class attention to control it. Rogers (2011) has suggested the use of a noise meter, which teachers can employ to indicate to the group in a non-confrontational way that the noise level is too high. Students can also use this information or create their own gauge of noise levels.

Marsh (2010) suggests that class background noise levels be kept under 50 decibels. However, different students and teachers have different preferences and tolerances for noise. We also caution that excessive noise may arouse stress and negative responses in students with ADHD and ASD (Loo & Feldman, 2007; Nguyen, 2009). In their study of students with Asperger’s syndrome, Menzinger and Jackson (2009) found noise levels to be by far the most problematic aspect of the class environment.

Appropriate facilities

Finally, in relation to ambience, students and teachers need to feel comfortable when they sit, stand and work, and to have facilities that meet their needs. It is your responsibility, and your duty of care, to ensure that chairs and desks are appropriate to the height of your students, that shelves and other areas that students will need to access do not require ‘gymnastic efforts’ to be reached, and that wet areas and toilet areas (if present) are in a clean and orderly state.

SAFETY

We finish this chapter with a word about safety. It is important to know that workplace health and safety (WHS) regulations mandate many aspects of the design of classrooms and schools. Details about regulations relating to classroom and school design can be obtained from your school’s WHS officer. School system bodies and support bodies, such as the State Departments of Education, the Catholic Schools Offices and the Association of Independent Schools, also provide information about best practice regarding risk, duty of care and keeping students and teachers safe. You have a duty of care to look after the welfare of your students. You should become familiar with the definition and meaning of ‘duty of care’, and learn about related legal concepts such as negligence, foreseeability and *in loco parentis* (or, ‘in the place of a parent’).

It is also important for you to remember that you have a broad responsibility to meet the educational needs of all of the students in your class/es. There are likely to be students with additional needs, particularly those arising from disabilities, enrolled in your school. The Australian *Disability Standards for Education 2005* and the New Zealand Disability Strategy are most relevant and informative here. Some students, particularly those with physical and/or sensory disabilities, have relatively ‘apparent’ additional needs in the area of classroom physical organisation. For these students, adjustments are likely to be needed in order to facilitate reasonable access to, and participation in, curriculum, pedagogy and assessment activities. For others with less apparent additional needs, who might have various learning difficulties and/or mental health conditions, there are also likely to be additional needs. Comfort and safety are often central considerations here. Be mindful of the diverse additional needs of your students.
PROFESSIONAL REFLECTION

How do you envision the physical organisation and layout of your ideal classroom?

Okay, realistically, it will be just about impossible to get the physical classroom you have pictured in your ideal world. You probably realise that this will be a compromise when you start teaching. However, that shouldn’t stop you from having a conceptualisation of a classroom’s ideal layout. Whether working in the primary or the secondary context, you will get opportunities to implement some — if not all — aspects of your vision. Here are some questions to ponder as you develop your ideal classroom physical environment:

- How would you prefer the classroom space to be organised? Do you, for example, want only deskwork space, or will you use other parts of the room for different purposes?
- How would you want student seating to be organised? Will that arrangement be permanent, or will you mix things up according to certain activities?
- How will you display stimulus materials or student work?
- What elements are important to maintaining a comfortable classroom ambience?
- What are the most important classroom safety considerations?

Having thought through all these things, you also need to consider how you will describe and justify the organisation of your classroom environment in your professional philosophy and be able to express this in a couple of sentences.

Now that you have considered the possibilities for the physical arrangement of your classroom, go to ‘Your philosophy for a positive learning environment’ and complete the relevant section. When you have done this, you will have a statement that outlines how you will use space and what you will do to ensure comfortable ambience.

SUMMARY

In this chapter we introduced the third of our four interrelated preventative practices: organisation of the physical classroom environment. We described and discussed organisational options about floor space (focusing on seating arrangements and movement corridors), storage space and wall space. We also explained classroom ambience, comfort, safety and access issues. Although this topic is a very ‘basic’ one, many classrooms (and, indeed, schools) are not organised in such a way that teaching and learning outcomes are best facilitated and supported. Changing pedagogies in contemporary classrooms, particularly related to the use of ICTs, are having a substantial impact on the nature and function of many physical classroom environments.

Key terms

- ambience
- floor space
- physical environment
- seating arrangements
- storage space
- teaching resources
- wall space
- workspace
- workstations

Individual and group activities

Activity 4.1
Refer back to this chapter’s ‘Starter story: The well-organised classroom’.
- Reconcile the aspects of (preventative) organisation of physical environment referred to in the ‘Starter story’, with those referred to in this chapter. What other aspects might be relevant, and how might this scenario have turned out even better?

Activity 4.2
Design an arrangement of floor space, storage space and wall space for your ideal classroom. Address ambience and safety issues. Make sure that these match your preferred teaching styles and complement intended teaching/learning activities.
- What challenges might result from your arrangement, and how might you address these?

Activity 4.3
Individually or as a group, brainstorm a comprehensive checklist of routines and procedures relating to chairs, shelving and other furniture that you could use to establish a classroom.
- From this list, identify and justify the five most critical routines and procedures and how you would establish these at the very beginning of the school year.

Activity 4.4
Engage in some extra reading on additional needs and Universal Design for Learning (UDL) in a specialised text — for example, Inclusion in Action (Foreman & Arthur-Kelly, 2017) or a research paper found online. Then consider, with respect to physical environment, the wide range of potential additional needs of students with various disabilities in your preferred teaching/learning context.
- How might you accommodate these needs, and how might these accommodations affect the design of your ‘ideal’ classroom?
- What are the implications of UDL with respect to classroom physical environments and practices that engage all students?

Activity 4.5
Individually or in groups, draft, say, five outline drawings of various primary and secondary classroom settings.
- Discuss how these might have ‘fallen short’ of your ideal, and how they might have been improved.
Activity 4.6
Many teachers use various combinations of group work (in addition to individual work) to enhance learning opportunities for students at different stages of lessons.
• How can teachers best facilitate transitions between these settings?

Activity 4.7
The emergence of the widespread use of classroom ICTs (i.e., laptops, tablets, smartphones and smartboards), as well as pedagogical initiatives like ‘flipped’ classrooms, are having a significant impact on how classrooms (and schools) and teaching and learning contexts are designed.
• Discuss your knowledge of the implementation of such initiatives, and how you think these affect classroom organisation generally and teaching and learning specifically.

Online resources
CENGAGE brain
Visit: http://login.cengagebrain.com and search for this book to access the study tools that come with your textbook.

Weblinks
‘Developing our workforce capability’ (Queensland Government Department of Education, Training and Employment)
http://education.qld.gov.au/staff/development/

‘Creating a climate for learning’ (Education World)
http://www.educationworld.com/a_curr/curr155.shtml

‘Classroom management’ (Teaching Ideas)
http://www.teachingideas.co.uk/more/management/contents.htm

References
Learning outcomes

When you have worked through this chapter, you should be able to:

- define and explain the relationships between the key instructional practice dimensions of curriculum, pedagogy and assessment, and how these impact on the creation and maintenance of your classroom as a PLE
- discuss the features of curriculum that facilitate student engagement and learning, and the creation of your classroom as a PLE
- discuss the features of pedagogy that facilitate student engagement and learning, and the creation of your classroom as a PLE
- discuss the features of assessment that facilitate student engagement and learning, and the creation of your classroom as a PLE
- explain the chapter's key concepts and discuss the summary at the end of the chapter.

Chapter overview

- Starter story: Asking students what they think
- Introduction
- Curriculum
- Pedagogy
- Quality pedagogies
- Technical pedagogies
- Assessment
- Professional reflection
- Summary
- Key terms
- Individual and group activities
- Online resources
- Weblinks
- References

INTRODUCTION

We now come to the fourth and last of our preventative practices. Instructional practice is the term we have chosen to represent the various facets of how teachers deal with curriculum specifically, and the teaching process more generally. Instructional practice incorporates three dimensions: curriculum, pedagogy and assessment. Our use of the term instructional practice to represent curriculum, pedagogy and assessment is the result of an attempt to find a simple term that could evoke those three concepts, as well as be easy to remember. Our decision was also informed by the fact that the term has been used to a similar end in a wealth of literature over the last decade or so (Carter, Stephenson & Hopper, 2015; Grossman, Cohen & Wyckoff, 2013; Hogan et al., 2013; Martinez, Borko & Stecher, 2012; Mayer, 1999; McAliffe, 1993; Quick, Holtzman & Chaney, 2009; Wenglinsky, 2004).

Wenglinsky (2004), for example, refers to instructional practice as the combination of pedagogy, assessment techniques and time spent on topics. Martinez, Borko and Stecher (2012) define instructional practice as the content (curriculum), pedagogy and assessment processes that support these. More recently, in the Australian context, Carter, Stephenson and Hopper (2015) referred to instructional practice as a range of strategies that include pedagogical approaches, curriculum planning, goal setting and assessment of student performance.

This chapter focuses on the three dimensions of instructional practice - curriculum, pedagogy and assessment - that impact on student learning and promote positive behaviour. As Figure 5.1 shows, instructional practice is one of the four essential interrelated positive practices in the Loford model, which, as we have discussed, is necessary to build a PLE and to help to prevent disruptive and unproductive behaviours. Your ability to develop and apply appropriate and motivating curricula, quality pedagogy and suitable assessment will be influenced by your theoretical perspectives, which will be consistent with your worldview. Curriculum, pedagogy and assessment are, then, essential components of your classroom management plan.
The three dimensions of instructional practice form a trifecta of processes which depend on one another to work well. Our view of instructional practice is illustrated in Figure 5.2. On the left-hand side are the three dimensions and their shorthand definitions; on the right are how these dimensions might actually play out in the classroom as a lived experience for your students. We will explain how each part of the trifecta works in the relevant sections of this chapter.

Figure 5.2 The trifecta of instructional practice

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CURRICULUM

At the simple definitional level, curriculum is what your students are taught. This includes the content of lessons, units of work and courses. We have a broader view, which we will explain shortly, but before we do, it will be timely to give a reminder about some basic terminology – particularly in the context of classroom management and student behaviour. We summarise the main component units of curriculum in Table 5.1.

**Table 5.1 Components of curriculum**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CURRICULUM COMPONENT</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>A task or connected tasks organised around the achievement of a goal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson</td>
<td>A short period of time, usually a part of the school day, devoted to a topic and/ or related activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson sequence</td>
<td>A number of lessons planned consecutively and devoted to a topic or theme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit of work</td>
<td>An extended sequence of lessons, often lasting up to a term (but this can vary) based on a topic or theme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrated unit of work</td>
<td>An extended sequence of lessons involving two or more key learning areas, or strands within a learning area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class program</td>
<td>A document that includes all teaching sequences and units of work (as well as other classroom organisation materials, such as classroom management plans) Class programs should reflect school scope and sequence documents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School scope and sequence</td>
<td>A school-based plan of learning, including units of work, that stipulates what content and skills are to be taught by what stages and years over the year. These reflect the requirements of the various syllabi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syllabus</td>
<td>A description of material to be taught and learned in a subject or learning area, often designed by a state or national curriculum body*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum framework</td>
<td>A description of the learning areas, skills and knowledge acquired across learning areas, and information about the organisation of overall curriculum in a jurisdiction</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* In Australia, there are state syllabi, but all are based on the Australian Curriculum, while in New Zealand, syllabi are designed and implemented directly by the Ministry of Education.

Since the late 1990s, some Australian states have sought to simplify what should be taught as curriculum by reducing the content of the various syllabi (now including the Australian Curriculum and, in New Zealand, the New Zealand Curriculum) down to overarching concepts that must be taught across learning areas. It is not appropriate to expand on these here, but if you are interested, you might explore the New Basics proposed in Queensland, the EsseNTial Learnings put forward in...
the Northern Territory (and similar ones in South Australia), or the Victoria Essential Learning Standards (VELS) – all examples of wider curriculum frameworks. We have included links to some of these in the ‘Weblinks’ at the end of this chapter.

So far, we have described the planned curriculum – that is, the official, ‘on paper’ curriculum, which sets out what students are to learn in their schooling. However, the lived experience of curriculum can often be quite different from the planned one. Students might learn things in lessons that the teacher did not plan for or intend to teach. Often, this ‘hidden’ or ‘unplanned’ curriculum comes in the shape of attitudes and values that students glean from the way in which teachers behave or how they approach topics. Classroom climates, and even culture, can often develop from hidden curricula: the things teachers do, which become model behaviours, shaping the minds of students and influencing how they behave.

In order to understand how curriculum influences student behaviour as a dimension of the instructional program, one must study both the planned curriculum and the lived experience of that curriculum. To explore how curriculum and behaviour are related, we will first discuss how curriculum normally operates.

The plan–implement–review (PIR) cycle

In general, curriculum is planned, implemented and reviewed on a regular basis by teachers and also by schools. This usually focuses on class or stage programs, which include units of work and other teaching and learning structures. The curriculum process that we refer to as the plan–implement–review (PIR) cycle is based on the principles and processes adopted by various educational authorities (Department of Education & Training Western Australia, 2007; New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2007; Northern Territory Government, 2009; Queensland Studies Authority, 2014), as well as on the writings of experts (for example, Brady & Kennedy, 2014; Marsh, 2010). This model of curriculum is illustrated in Figure 5.3 and explained in the following sections.

**Figure 5.3 The PIR cycle**

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**Planning phase**

Classroom curriculum starts with an assessment of what students need to learn and what syllabus content will help them to learn it. You, as the teacher, will use your knowledge of syllabi and the specific school scope and sequences to design topics, themes and teaching/learning experiences that will cater for students’ individual learning needs. The duration of learning sequences and the amount of time spent on tasks will also be planned out. Additionally, you will consider how evidence of progress and achievement will be gathered – and this leads, of course, to the design of assessment tasks. Your planning will also include listing and gathering the resources that will be used to support teaching and learning. The results of the planning phase are teaching programs, such as units of work and lesson plans.

**Implementation phase**

The implementation phase is where the ‘rubber’ of the planned curriculum hits the ‘road’ of the lived experience of the curriculum. You deliver your lessons, and your students engage with them. Your role will include explicit teaching, facilitating independent learning, monitoring student performance, and providing feedback to students on how they are going, sometimes as a result of an assessment task, sometimes not. This phase is where your pedagogy goes to work.

**Review phase**

The review phase is when you make judgements about how well the curriculum was received, how well students learned and how effective your pedagogy was at setting all this in motion. The review phase can be triggered in two ways. First, it may occur as a result of concerns you notice in your monitoring during the implementation phase, which lead you to replan and redesign the curriculum to be more effective. Second, it may occur at the end of the teaching and learning sequence, when results of assessment tasks and your other measures of student performance are used to inform your evaluation of the curriculum.

**Curriculum for PLEs**

Many aspects of curriculum influence the behaviour choices of students. Much of the time, problem behaviours are precipitated because of decisions made by teachers (or schools) about what form the curriculum takes, and its suitability to student learning needs and interests. In the following sections, we focus on five aspects of curriculum that can be used to promote appropriate behaviours, and to develop and maintain PLEs.

**Relevance**

You might recall that in this chapter’s ‘Starter story’, Aimee came to realise that her students’ perception that her curriculum lacked relevance was likely behind their inappropriate behaviours. It is widely acknowledged that if students do not see the point of doing an activity or learning a concept, they will tend to disengage and be tempted to participate in off-task behaviour (Fields & Fields, 2006;
Many aspects of curriculum influence the behaviour choices of students. Sugai & Horner, 2002). Making the content of lessons relevant to the lives and interests of students is an effective way to promote learning (Brady & Kennedy, 2014) and encourage student engagement (Sugai & Horner, 2002). Connection of activities to the real, present world and to future learning needs will increase the propensity of student interest and engagement. We recommend two curriculum strategies in particular:

- **Deal in the real.** Choose real-world problems for students to solve. Include materials from the real world as resources for teaching and learning. For example, when teaching the maths concepts of perimeter and area, you could use house design brochures, which are readily available from the showrooms of home building companies and the Internet.
- **Integrate curriculum areas.** Curriculum integration connects learning areas around common themes to make learning more meaningful for students. It has been shown to be an effective curriculum strategy for promoting student success (Fields & Fields, 2006; Hattie, 2009). This is, of course, harder to do in secondary than in primary schools, but is still possible and desirable.

**Level of difficulty**

Concepts that are too hard to grasp, or activities that are too difficult to complete, will eventually frustrate students and lead them to off-task behaviour. On the other hand, making things too easy leads to boredom and off-task behaviour. Matching the curriculum to the abilities and learning orientations of students is effective practice, because it promotes student engagement (Cope, 2007; Jones & Jones, 2013). At times, you might need to consider differentiating teaching/learning activities and content to suit groups of students in your class, since, as we know, students will have differing abilities and knowledge bases.

Beyond differentiating, it may be necessary to modify tasks specifically for individual students. These types of accommodations might include breaking down tasks to smaller component subtasks, modifying reading materials or altering the required product. These kinds of curriculum adaptations have proven effective at reducing behavioural problems (Foreman & Arthur-Kelly, 2017; Grossman et al., 2013; Sugai et al., 2000; Warren et al., 2006), and have been especially helpful for students with ASD and emotional problems (Sugai & Horner, 2002; Kern et al., 2001).

**Differentiation**

Mrs. Boyd uses a differentiated curriculum when she teaches some mathematics concepts. This week, the students are learning algebra, and after some prior learning revision, the class has settled into ability-based group work. We notice one group devising and solving complex algorithms (which looks like work for the next grade, actually). While another group is performing simpler solutions (that one might find in the grade below). All six groups are working well. Her students are very engaged and look like they are enjoying the work.

**Clearness**

By **clearness**, we mean your ability to make the curriculum clear, explicit and meaningful to your students. This is done by communicating the goals and objectives of the lesson or activity, and ensuring that your students understand the significance of what they are learning. Clearness is also achieved when learning occurs in a logical sequence of activities, where each activity builds on the others to allow students to make sense of the knowledge and skills they develop (Cope, 2007; Grossman et al., 2013).

**Timing**

If an inadequate amount of time is allocated to learning content, and particularly new and challenging concepts, students will begin to feel (rightfully) that they do not understand things well enough. Alternatively, spending too much time can be 'flogging a dead horse' and can lead to boredom, in what Kounin (1970) refers to as 'overdunning' (p. 102). Both decisions usually lead to frustration and off-task behaviour. The allocation of time to all learning experiences is an important curriculum consideration (Brady & Kennedy, 2014).

As a teacher, you should be looking for 'the sweet spot': that is, where there is enough time for students to achieve success, and time is used wisely to accommodate both slower and faster learners (Fields & Fields, 2006; Wenglinsky, 2004). In addition, you will need to consider the quality and nature of time spent on learning content, and especially whether your students are getting the practice or instruction they need (Hattie, 2009). The learning stages of acquisition, fluency, maintenance and generalisation (sometimes known as AFGM) are very pertinent here. Have you allocated the right amount and quality of time for students learning at these stages? Foreman and Arthur-Kelly (2017) provide an explanation related to this consideration.

**Interest level**

If you address the four aspects above, you will likely make the curriculum more engaging for your students, and they will be more interested in learning than in chasing off-task pursuits. However, there are times when you might need to consider being more creative or innovative about the
presentation of your curriculum (Cope, 2007). It is not unlikely that some students may lack interest in your lessons and the focus topics, so you will have to find ways to arouse student interest and engagement. You should use task variety and incorporate more frequent feedback to avoid student satiation and boredom (Foreman & Arthur-Kelly, 2017; Koumin, 1970). We will explain this in more detail in a following section on technical pedagogy.

**PEDAGOGY**

*Pedagogy* can be defined, simply, as how students are taught. It is the art and the science of teaching. The art is in how teachers use their knowledge and skills to craft instruction and student learning. The science is in the way teachers analyse their teaching in light of theory and emerging research. It is a process of honing skills through forming ideas, testing them and then reflecting on the results. Pedagogy has a number of dimensions. It refers to the strategies used and approaches taken, but also to teacher philosophies about the way in which students learn and how best to teach them.

Conceptions of pedagogy have existed for a long time. John Dewey (1916), in response to the ‘factory-style’ schooling prevalent at the time (and which some might contend still exists today) advocated a democratic pedagogy requiring students to have a say in what is learned and how, and that learning should be connected to the real world. The Ignation Pedagogical Paradigm (Kolvenbach, 2008) is one of many teaching philosophies. It holds that teachers should get to know students’ backgrounds; create opportunities for learning experiences that expand student knowledge; encourage students to reflect on new learning; act on their new perspectives; and lead discussions on how they have grown.

Since the mid-1990s, there has been a research-driven push to encourage teaching practices that are most effective in improving student achievement. The Authentic Pedagogy movement in the US (Newman & Associates, 1996) influenced similar movements in Australia, New Zealand and many other countries. Several other pedagogical frameworks have emerged, from work done in the early 2000s, as guidelines, if not overt standards, for best practice in pedagogy. These include, for example, the NSW Quality Teaching Framework, Queensland’s Productive Pedagogies and New Zealand’s Effective Pedagogy.

It is not within the scope of this chapter to describe all these guidelines. However, it is a goal of the chapter to identify pedagogy that promotes appropriate behaviour and/or minimises propensities for inappropriate behaviour. Because student engagement and achievement are the logical byproducts of appropriate behaviour, such as being on-task and working cooperatively, we have focused our attention on pedagogies that promote these. The current body of literature suggests that there are two main categories of such pedagogies: quality pedagogies and technical pedagogies.

**QUALITY PEDAGOGIES**

Let's look first at what we call *quality pedagogies*. These are an amalgam of the various pedagogical frameworks developed since the 1990s. They focus on improving student achievement, and reflect research-proven strategies that teachers would generally use in planning and enacting their teaching. The frameworks considered in this chapter include: Authentic Pedagogy from the US (Newmann & Associates, 1996); Productive Pedagogies, developed in Queensland (QSRLL, 2001); the New South Wales Quality Teaching Framework (DET, 2003); the Teaching for Effective Learning framework (TEL), from South Australia (DECD, 2010); the Principles of Learning and Teaching pedagogical framework, from Victoria (State of Victoria, 2004); and the effective pedagogies framework, from New Zealand (Hopkins et al., 2002). John Hattie’s more recent research (Hattie, 2009, 2012), and Hayes et al.’s (2006), are also influential here.

**Quality pedagogy for intellectual stimulation**

Pedagogical approaches that promote intellectual stimulation are those that require students to develop deeper knowledge and understandings about topics – and, indeed, about knowledge itself. They encourage reflective thought and action, and require students to develop oral or written explanations and descriptions. Intellectual stimulation results from the use of higher-order cognitive skills, such as analysis, synthesis, evaluation and creation. Some examples include:

- concept mapping
- critical evaluation of a product or idea
- conducting investigations involving testing, observation and analysis
- explaining what was learned during an investigation
- metacognitive strategies (see below).

From both his own research and the research of others, Hattie (2009) identified a number of metacognitive strategies that teachers can use to help students to learn – or, as the TEL framework puts it, ‘teach students how to learn’ (DECD, 2010, p. 8). We describe three of these below.

**Rehearsal strategies**

Despite sometimes being negatively associated with groups of children chanting tables or repeating lists of names, rehearsal strategies are very effective. Teachers often need to explicitly train students in the use of task-approach strategies through clear demonstration and verbal rehearsal of the steps required to complete the set task/s. Students are then able to silently and independently rehearse the steps for similar future tasks.
Organising/transfoming

Organising/transfoming is a way of helping students to develop their own processes for organising information. Typical examples would be to have students develop a diagram that shows relationships (such as a flow chart or a knowledge or mind map) or to develop a summary of materials.

Self-questioning

Self-questioning involves students questioning themselves as they work through materials, asking questions of other students and/or writing daily summaries. This is in addition to students completing set questions at the end of a task.

YOU BE THE JUDGE

We have mentioned differentiation a few times in this chapter. Good teaching must take into account different levels of learner proficiency. One of the most complex challenges for teachers is to effectively address the range of skills, interests and knowledge among their students. When you are introducing a new topic, whether to five-, 10- or 15-year-olds, there is likely to be a range of proficiencies, so it will be necessary to establish these at the outset. Some teachers endeavour to differentiate their curriculum and assessment tasks at every opportunity, whereas others target certain areas, such as reading tasks or steps in number calculations. (You might also like to investigate Universal Design for Learning and how this approach might dovetail with differentiation.)

- Is it really feasible to differentiate instructional practices in the course of a normal school day? What are the opportunities and challenges?
- Is differentiation more useful in primary or secondary schools? Why?

Quality pedagogy for significance

Students will be more engaged, and will learn more effectively, when they are able to connect their existing knowledge to new ideas, and when they know that what they are learning can help them in the real world. This is the core of significance as a pedagogical approach. As we mentioned in our discussion of curricula, teaching must be connected to the real world of students and have utility beyond the immediate activity or lesson. Significance is encouraged by:

- using advance organisers and stating learning objectives/outcomes
- basing topics or related activities on real-world scenarios
- utilising the cultural knowledge and values that students bring to class, including connections with the wider community
- integrating curriculum areas and skill sets
- differentiating instruction and making other accommodations to cater for diverse student needs and interests.

Quality pedagogy for student involvement

Student involvement is an important contributor to engagement in learning, motivation to learn, and self-esteem. Student involvement occurs when teachers share power with their students and involve them in decision making about topics and activities. Students are encouraged to take responsibility for their learning and to regulate their own behaviour. While promoting all this, teachers also assist by enunciating high expectations of student performance, and making these expectations known via explicit criteria and goals. Examples of quality pedagogy for student involvement include:

- mastery learning
- student-directed learning formats, such as problem-based and inquiry learning
- negotiating learning or achievement goals
- giving students the choice of topics within a learning sequence
- detailed and negotiated assessment task rubrics.

IN PRACTICE

Giving students choice

Ms Andrews has been using activity contracts in her English classes. The typical contract is a sheet with 10 activity descriptions, such as, for example:

Write a description of the main character, including her personality and relationships with other key people in the story.

Students must choose to do any six of the 10 activities, and must complete them by the due date.

At this late stage of the year, students have completed a full range of activity types, so Ms Andrews feels they are ready for the next step. The next contract will be co-constructed: Ms Andrews will have a say in the important tasks to go into the contract, so that key skills will be covered, while her students can influence the type of activity to suit their preferences.

Quality pedagogy for social interaction

Pedagogical approaches based on social interaction are about student access to social support and opportunities for collaboration in learning. Positive relationships should be cherished! Teachers should build a community of learners by modelling supportive communication, showing trust, and being approachable and open to students. Teachers should provide support to students, promote dialogue among them, and value group work as a teaching strategy. Some examples of pedagogies that promote social interaction include:

- peer tutoring and mentoring – within and between classes/grades
- group-based activities – with facilitative seating arrangements
- cooperative learning (more about this below).
A strong research base supports cooperative learning as an efficacious pedagogical strategy for teaching social skills and responsibility, while at the same time focusing on academic content (Hattie, 2012; Jenkins et al., 2003; Johnson & Johnson, 2003). Students operating within cooperative learning-oriented classrooms are typically absorbed in an activity as they work together in small groups towards achieving a common goal. While the overt focus is on a formal curriculum topic, there is usually a second focus on explicit social skills—for example, ‘One person speaks at a time’—and on developing the competencies required for effective group operations, through the giving of designated roles such as reporter, recorder, leader, clarifier and encourager.

Another feature of cooperative learning-oriented classrooms is the greater amount of student control over the learning process. The teacher maintains a guiding, facilitative and empowering role, while allowing students to share the responsibility of learning. This teacher role is important in maintaining a focus on the academic and social purposes of the lesson, and in monitoring individual students as they progress towards achieving set goals within group activities. A necessary feature of cooperative learning activities is that they include both group goals and individual accountability.

There are many models of cooperative learning. A representative few are described in the following sections.

The think–pair–share model

The think–pair–share model involves only two students, so it is ideal for getting started. Each pair is provided with a question to answer—for example, ‘What would happen if you found a winning Lotto ticket?’ Students think of an answer individually, and then share their response with their partner. The pair then decides on one answer to share with the rest of the class (Davidson & O’Leary, 1990).

The jigsaw model

The jigsaw model centres on developing individual ‘expert’ roles based on a group topic. The process consists of dividing a task into sections, with one student in each home group being given a task or topic on which to become an ‘expert’. These experts then meet according to their selected areas and assist each other in the exploration of that aspect of the task. The experts then return to their home groups and teach the other members about the area for which they were responsible (Aronson et al., 1978).

The Johnson model

The Johnson model provides a framework for teaching the processes involved in developing both effective group participation and the academic content. A topic is introduced to the group, and a time frame is given for its completion. A specific social skill is identified as the focus of the activity, and students select roles within their groups. The teacher’s role is to monitor progress and provide feedback as groups work towards achieving the academic and social goals. Evaluation is based on the goals set at the start of the lesson, and further goals are identified for future cooperative learning activities (Johnson & Johnson 2003).

Quality pedagogy from feedback

Feedback given to students provides a key link to maintaining a positive approach to behaviour and to the curriculum materials being presented. Feedback can take the form of monitoring student responses and maintaining a focus on attaining specified goals. When a student provides a correct response, feedback acknowledging this is important to the student’s motivation for further learning. Feedback communicates to students that the teacher is recognising their efforts and progress, particularly when it is given frequently, in relation to the set goals, and linked to the individual learning needs of each student. Feedback that provides information about individual competencies and progress greatly influences students’ long-term motivations to participate in the learning process, whereas feedback that serves only to compare one student’s responses with those of others has not been found to have the same motivating effect (Good & Brophy 2008).

Feedback that is encouraging of individual and group efforts, and that recognises strengths, indicates to students that the teacher is taking notice and is willing to listen to what they have to say. Students who believe that they are respected feel comfortable in taking risks, without fear of being criticised for making mistakes. They can then concentrate on achieving success, rather than on avoiding failure. In addition to communicating to students that they are valued, teacher-modelled behaviours demonstrate a positive expectation that students will be able to complete the set tasks.

Hattie (2009) reminds us, however, that feedback is not a ‘one-way street’. While it is important that teachers provide feedback to students, teachers do not really know how students are learning until students provide them with feedback about their understandings, mistakes, level of engagement, and so on. When feedback is bi-directional, the curriculum and pedagogy can be better tuned to student needs and aspirations. Examples of feedback-based pedagogy include:

- student self-evaluations and learning journals
- use of assessment ‘for’ and ‘as’ learning (see the following section)
- teacher–student learning conferences.

TECHNICAL PEDAGOGIES

Technical pedagogies are teaching strategies that aim to optimise effective teaching time and to minimise the propensity for inappropriate student behaviour. We call them technical pedagogies because they include very specific teaching techniques, and are focused on what the teacher does at the lesson or activity level. In the following sections, we present two well known technical pedagogical frameworks: Kouin’s skills for managing whole-group instruction, also known as effective teaching, and Gagné’s nine events of instruction.

Kouin’s effective teaching

Jacob Kouin (1970) noted that the most effective teachers were those who could maintain a steady lesson pace, avoid distractions or time-wasting, and gain student attention and commitment to work quickly. The work of Kouin and his associates identified nine teacher “tricks of the trade” that may promote
on-task student behaviour in lessons. We outline these nine strategies, and provide examples of each of them, in the following sections.

Ripple effect

A ripple effect occurs when stopping one incident of inappropriate behaviour leads to the prevention of other inappropriate behaviours. Kouin (1970) observed that when teachers chose the right moment to direct students to desist with their behaviour, such as when the rest of the class could hear, and used appropriate wording and tone, such as clearly and firmly identifying the inappropriate behaviour, subsequent inappropriate behaviour was reduced. The key to successful ripple effect is the clarity of the instruction to desist. Let’s take a look at this in action in a brief scenario:

During her lesson, Mrs Baines notices Peter making beeping noises. She faces him and says in a firm voice, ‘Peter, I need you to stop making those noises.’ Peter stops; and subsequently, incidences of unexplained ‘noise’ from other students also stop.

An I-message would likely have a similar effect as Mrs Baines’ direction above, but a less clear “Stop!” or the use of a less assertive vocal tone would not have been as successful.

Overlapping

When a teacher overlaps, they are dealing with two or more things at once, and at the same time maintaining control of the lesson and its flow. Effective teachers can manage off-task behaviour in one part of the room while working in another part of the room. Consider the example in the scenario below:

Mr de Barros’ class is doing an independent research task. He is helping Juan to find suitable sources on the Internet. At the back of the room, Carlo and Christian start telling jokes and laughing. Mr de Barros turns to the back, and delivers an I-message in a clear voice to the two boys. They immediately return to task and Mr de Barros quickly resumes helping Juan.

‘Withitness’

‘Withitness’ is often associated with the saying, ‘She/he has eyes in the back of her/his head’; indeed, Kouin himself used this expression to illustrate the concept (1970, p. 81). Withitness is a teacher’s ability to know what is going on in the room during class time, and making their students aware of this. Withitness comes from knowing the students well, and consequently knowing what they are likely to do if they think the teacher is not looking. For example:

While Mr Frost is doing a board demonstration, he notices noise coming from the other side of the room, where Lisa, a talkative student, sits. Without stopping the demonstration, he asks, ‘That wouldn’t be you chatting back there, would it, Lisa?’ Lisa looks surprised, but responds, ‘Sorry, sir,’ and does not talk to her friends for the rest of the lesson.

Momentum

Momentum refers to a teacher’s ability to keep lessons following a brisk but manageable pace. Positive momentum depends on the teacher avoiding the slowdowns that Kouin calls dangles, flip-flops and overlappings. (More about these later.) The key to keeping a positive momentum is knowing the content matter well, having a well planned lesson, and knowing when to move to the next activity. For example:

Mrs Abercrombie notices that the explanation of a relatively minor concept is taking too long and distracting attention from the primary focus of the lesson. She makes a mental note to go more deeply into this concept in tomorrow’s lesson, and moves on to the next part of the lesson.

Smoothness

The ability of a teacher to stay focused on lessons and carry them through without distractions is referred to as smoothness. The opposite of smoothness is jokiness, which refers to lessons with manifest slowdowns (as referred to above). Threats to smoothness often come at transition points in lessons. For example:

While Mr Smythe is demonstrating how to read coordinates on a map, in preparation for an activity about locating places in Asia, Veruga asks, ‘Sir, have you ever been to India?’ Mr Smythe responds, ‘We can discuss my travels in Asia some other time, Veruga. Right now, we need to get through this.’ He continues with his demonstration.

Group alerting

Group alerting refers to a teacher’s ability to maintain the attention of the class and to keep students ‘on their toes’ (Kouin, 1970, p. 117). Teachers often do this by ‘catching them being good’ (i.e.}
occasionally using positive reinforcement for good behaviours) and introducing ‘surprises’ or changes to routines, in order to avoid overpredictability. Be careful with surprises, though, since these might not go down well with students who have ASD or ODD. Group alerting can also be enacted through questioning practices. For example:

Louisa always pays attention in Miss Carney’s class because she can never predict when Miss Carney will ask her a question, or what will happen after a task is completed.

**Accountability**

*Accountability* refers to what teachers do to hold their students accountable for participating in lessons and achieving stated lesson goals. Accountability can be easily achieved by requiring students to produce something at successive points in a lesson. For example:

At the start of the geography lesson, Mr Sheen explains to his students that they are going to have a short oral quiz on the topic of significant national places. He gets each student to take a number from a container. When all the students are back in their seats with a number, the quiz begins. Mr Sheen calls out a number and the student with that number responds.

**High-participation lesson formats**

*High-participation lesson formats* are well structured lessons in which all students have something to do, even if it is listening to other students. High participation is maintained across lessons through the use of a variety of activities to combat satiation and boredom, and through the giving of feedback on student efforts and performance to maintain enthusiasm. For example:

Mr Shorten employs a cooperative learning strategy during his maths lessons. Each student had a role, and every role was required for the activity to be able to continue. Mr Shorten periodically visited each group and provided them with encouraging feedback.

**Ineffective teaching and ‘jerkiness’**

Kounin and associates identified a number of pedagogical behaviours that resulted in ‘jerkiness’ — that is, lessons not being smooth and off-task behaviour being encouraged. These behaviours are essentially a list of pedagogical ‘don’ts’ for teachers. They are summarised in Table 5.2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5.2</th>
<th>Kounin’s pedagogical ‘don’ts’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>INEFFECTIVE PEDAGOGICAL BEHAVIOUR</strong></td>
<td><strong>DESCRIPTION</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dangle</td>
<td>The teacher ‘changes focus’ mid-lesson to focus on something else</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Truncation</td>
<td>Like a dangle, but the teacher does not return to the interrupted activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flip flop</td>
<td>After a new activity has started, the teacher tries to bring students’ attention back to the previous activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thrust</td>
<td>The teacher intrudes on a current activity with information that is unrelated to it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stimulus bound</td>
<td>The teacher is distracted by something unrelated to the current activity to the extent that students are also drawn off-task</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overdwell</td>
<td>More time is spent on an activity, or on behaviour issues, than is necessary or worthwhile</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**Gagne’s nine events of instruction model**

Gagne (1985) developed his ‘nine events of instruction’ as an instructional design model to encapsulate the stages of a lesson or learning sequences that promote learning. This model aligns to behavioural theory, and has been proven to be quite effective, especially in classroom environments that are technology-rich (House, 2002; Kutlu & Menzi, 2013) and for students with learning difficulties (Ozmen & Unal, 2008).

The nine events (or steps) provide a structure for a teacher-centred but student-participative learning process. Even though the steps are prescriptive, what the teacher actually does at each of them is limited only by imagination! Rather than explain each step at length, we present the model in Table 5.3 along with some examples that we have observed in classrooms.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5.3</th>
<th>Gagne’s nine events of instruction model</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>STEP (OR EVENT)</strong></td>
<td><strong>EXAMPLES</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Gain the attention of the students.</td>
<td>• Ask a thought-provoking question.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Show stimulus images of the topic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Students pose questions about a topic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Inform students of the goals of the lesson.</td>
<td>• Tell students what they will be investigating.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• List goals for the lesson.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Negotiate what constitutes achievement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STEP (OR EVENT)</td>
<td>EXAMPLES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Stimulate recall of prior learning</td>
<td>• Ask students what they know about the topic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Discuss previous learning in the topic area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Mind-map what is known about a topic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Present the stimulus material.</td>
<td>• Show examples from the real world.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Use websites (e.g., WebQuest) and learning objects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Use audio and video presentations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Provide guidance about what is to be learned.</td>
<td>• Use an activity scaffold.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Explain steps or group roles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Use worked examples.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Elicit the student performance.</td>
<td>• Students conduct the investigation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Students design and make a product.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Students draft their written work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Provide feedback about performance.</td>
<td>• Indicate how students are progressing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Provide encouragement and affirmation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Provide constructive feedback and advice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Assess student performance.</td>
<td>• Finished work is marked according to criteria.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Students peer-review and share results with the teacher.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The teacher observes the students at work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Enhance retention and transfer.</td>
<td>• There is a class discussion about what has been learned.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• There is student reflection on learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Students consider a new problem.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>


ASSESSMENT

Receiving grades is often a stressful part of the learning cycle for students. Nearly all of us have received a grade for an assignment that was disappointing. Some may be able to shrug it off; others find external reasons for poor performance, such as that there was too much work, that all their assignments came at once, that they were sick, that the grading was unfair, and so on. Some people take disappointing grades personally, seeing them as a slight, which reinforces their belief that they are not good at the subject. In other words, assessment is emotionally fraught. Whether you are dealing with kindergarten students or senior secondary classes, if your assessment task or the subsequent feedback or grade are seen by students to be unfair or not in line with their expectations, you are likely to know about it rather quickly!

The question for you—and, indeed, for all teachers—is, 'How can I provide constructive assessment, as well as make clear what has been done wrong?' The questions for your students are:

'How can we best accept constructive criticism?' or 'How can we deal with negative criticism?' In this next section, we will discuss types of assessment, finishing with some suggestions about giving and handling criticism in ways that promote positive attitudes and appropriate behaviour. We will explore the purposes of assessment, the types of assessment available to teachers and the principles of assessment that encourage appropriate attitudes and behaviour.

Types and purposes of assessment

Assessment is a critical part of the PIR cycle. We do it formally to evaluate how suitable the curriculum was and how effective our teaching was. We do it formally and informally to inform our teaching through the cycle. Ultimately, we want to know how well our students are achieving or have achieved, and how effective the curriculum we presented and the pedagogies we used were in helping them to achieve.

The purposes of assessment relate to how the information will be used. You are likely familiar with such terms as formative and summative assessment; we refer to these below. Figure 5.4 illustrates the in-for-as conceptualisation of assessment purposes, which has been adopted in several countries (Department of Education & Training Victoria, 2013; New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2011; Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010).

Formative assessment

Formative assessment usually occurs at the start of, and during, a sequence of teaching and learning. It is the use of data on student progress to inform teaching (Gronlund & Waugh, 2009). Going back to the chapter 'Starter story': Aimee had used an informal formative assessment—observation—to make a judgement about how her students' learning was progressing, and was considering adjustments to her teaching as a result. In this sense, formative assessment can also be 'assessment for learning', since a curriculum adjustment will often result.

Formative assessment can also serve as 'assessment as learning'. That is, if students are given a task that requires them to self-assess or peer-assess, and to report on what was learned from that experience, they are likely to learn about the topic from slightly different perspectives. In addition, opportunities for deeper understanding and metacognitive analysis (which is linked to quality pedagogy) are broader with this kind of task.

Diagnostic assessment

If adjustments have been made and students are still experiencing difficulty, diagnostic assessment is called for (Gronlund & Waugh, 2009). Diagnostic assessment is tasks that help teachers to understand why students are not learning or reasonably progressing (Brady & Kennedy, 2014). Teachers sometimes use the results of grade- or stage-based diagnostic assessments to plan curriculum in subsequent terms, and to stream cohorts for more targeted teaching (i.e., assessment for learning). These results can be used for reporting (i.e., assessment of learning). They can also be used as metacognitive tools for students to gauge and reflect on their own progress (i.e., assessment as learning).
Figure 5.4 The of--for--as conception of assessment purposes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING</th>
<th>Teachers use data to measure student achievement against criteria, standards or outcomes.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING</td>
<td>Teachers use data to gain insights into student learning and adjust curriculum and/or pedagogy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASSESSMENT AS LEARNING</td>
<td>Teachers use assessment to encourage students to learn deeply about the topic and about how they learn.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summative assessment

Summative assessment is used primarily at the completion of a sequence of teaching (Gronlund & Waugh, 2009), such as at the end of a unit of work. It is concerned with a comprehensive evaluation of all learning outcomes over a longer period, usually weeks. Summative assessments naturally serve as assessment of learning. However, they may also be used as assessment as learning if self-reflection or reviews of the work of peers is required.

Norm-referenced assessment

If the purpose of an assessment task is to compare the achievement of students with others in the cohort, it is described as norm-referenced (Gronlund & Waugh, 2009). Ranking and placing is usually the output. The results can be demotivating if, for example, a student has achieved a personal best score of 14 out of 20 in English, only to find that their score is the fifth-lowest among the class of 30 students. On the other hand, the opposite might be true with a score of 11 out of 20 and ranking in the top 10 per cent of the class. Norm-referenced testing is sometimes used as a tool to identify weakest and strongest performances, but it should never be confused with diagnostic assessment, which identifies specific issues. However, it is possible for assessment tasks to have properties of both norm-referenced testing and diagnostic assessment (and to function as both assessment of and for learning).

Criterion-referenced assessment

If the purpose of an assessment activity is to identify specific things that students know or can do, then it is most likely a criterion-referenced assessment (Gronlund & Waugh, 2009). Such tasks usually involve comparison of student work with a standard, such as a syllabus outcome or a performance standard. Because of this, students receive two kinds of feedback: written comments and (likely) a grade, as well as an indication of the extent to which they achieved the standard – this is often shown on a descriptive rubric. In these cases, grades and marks often have less meaning to students than the comments and the wording of standards they achieved. Criterion-referenced assessments can be formative or summative, depending on the intentions of the teacher in setting the task.

IN PRACTICE

Criterion-referenced diagnostic assessment

At Newford School, results in national testing for mathematics have been improving steadily for three years. The teachers attribute this to the needs-based groups that they use to teach the subject in all grades. A criterion-referenced test based on previous stage outcomes is administered and marked early in term one. Students are assigned classes according to needs, and the curriculum in those classes is designed to help students to progress. The teachers have also noted that off-task and disruptive behaviours are rare in these sessions – a big change from three years ago.

Assessment strategies

When you begin teaching, you will have a number of assessment strategies at your disposal. Gronlund and Waugh (2009, p. 17) identified two main kinds of assessment strategy: tests and performance tasks. They make the point that performance tasks, because of their versatility, have the potential to relate better to real-world situations. Indeed, assessment associated with quality pedagogy is likewise connected to the real world. (More about this later.) Performance tasks often require more time, but they can allow for deeper levels of learning to be demonstrated, and enable the teacher to observe the process of learning, which provides data on how students behave on-task. Tests, though, are time-effective, and can also provide valuable assessment data.

Brady and Kennedy (2014, p. 178) identified two more kinds of assessment: product assessments and self-assessments. Product assessments require students to design and make something, or to collate a number of related works. These are then assessed according to set criteria. Self-assessments require students to report on what they feel they have achieved in relation to set criteria or a task description. Sometimes self-assessment becomes a component of the larger assessment, which therefore makes it assessment as learning as well as assessment of learning. We have summarised assessment task options in Table 5.4. The list is not exhaustive, but it does provide examples for each.
Table 5.4 Examples of the four kinds of assessment strategy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TEST</th>
<th>PERFORMANCE</th>
<th>PRODUCT</th>
<th>SELF</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Multiple-choice</td>
<td>Narratives/reports</td>
<td>Portfolio</td>
<td>Learning journal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>True/false</td>
<td>Play an instrument</td>
<td>Display/exhibit</td>
<td>Rating scale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short-answer</td>
<td>Oral presentation</td>
<td>Research poster</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matching</td>
<td>Group project</td>
<td>Working model</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Close passages</td>
<td>Inquiry project</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online quizzes</td>
<td>Problem solving</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Oral quizzes</td>
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Our experience in classrooms suggests that, while tests provide valuable information, they are not always completed with enthusiasm by students, and indeed they can be a cause for some anxiety. This may, in turn, lead to behaviour issues. On the other hand, we have witnessed students looking forward to performance- and product-oriented assessments and demonstrating a greater commitment to staying on-task as a result of them. In fact, one of the authors knew of one class of students who were usually off-task in the afternoons, but essentially fully on-task when certain afternoons were devoted to performance assessment!

We therefore encourage the use of performance- and product-oriented tasks as part of a prevention strategy for instructional practice. Mindful of Koumi's (1970) suggestions about using a variety of activities to promote high participation, and cognizant of the importance of having multiple sources of data on which to make judgements about achievement (Brady & Kennedy, 2014), we encourage you to employ a mix of assessment tasks and procedures.

**Phyllis: Finding the ‘baseline’**

As a 'revved-up' first-year teacher, I was somewhat shocked to be faced with the difference between the theory and the practice of teaching in my new school. I am a support teacher for students with intellectual disabilities at a K-12 central school. I have students across all years. My first few weeks at school were challenging, because I was struggling just to find my feet.

To start with, I searched through student records to find assessment data to begin my program and lesson planning. While there were some data on a few of my primary students, I really struggled to find anything helpful on my high school students. I started assessing all of my students to get baseline data so that I could find out what they already knew and understood. This baseline data was to be the guide for developing all of my individual programs and their content.

I have found baseline assessment to be one of those topics that many more experienced teachers refer to as 'something that you learned at uni that doesn't apply to real teaching'. I'm sticking to my guns. I believe that assessment should be the first thing that every teacher does. First, at the end of each semester, my supervisor and principal will ask me what I have been doing.

with my students. I will show them the results of my baseline, formative and summative assessments. More importantly, I will be able to monitor my own progress and ascertain whether and how my pedagogical practices are working for my students. Baseline assessments come in a variety of forms, including formal numeracy and literacy tests and other practical assessments based on observing students' life skills.

I don't want you to get the wrong impression: doing quality assessments is time-consuming and hard. It's been difficult to do so many assessments with my students, but I am very glad that I have done so, because I can now confidently measure and evaluate both my teaching and my students' learning.

**Reflection . . .**

Philippa clearly learned (at least) one very valuable lesson in her undergraduate special education courses: the importance and value of timely, thorough assessment.

- How much of your programming is about assessment?
- Is assessment relegated to a small column or comment space at the end of your programs, units of work and lesson plans?
- Quality assessment is a prerequisite for quality teaching. What assessment practices and procedures are you intending to incorporate into your planning for teaching?

**The need for quality assessment**

Assessment impacts on student attitudes, and influences student behaviour, in ways that are not necessarily obvious. Students could develop low self-esteem or low efficacy in some subjects as a result of an accumulation of assessment tasks, especially tests. Many students are able to tell teachers how they are going in specific areas, and will also predict (often accurately) how they will perform on an upcoming test due to accumulated experience. Hattie (2009) makes a strong point by questioning the need for the quantity of tests that students sometimes have to endure, and encouraging assessments that are more aligned to quality pedagogy (i.e. assessment as learning tasks), such as self-assessment and self-reporting.

**Quality assessment** is assessment associated with the quality pedagogies we described earlier. It produces valid and reliable data (Darling-Hammond et al., 2013). Quality assessment is significant because it is connected to the real world — students' worlds. It is intellectually stimulating because it requires higher-order thinking skills and drives deep learning. It encourages student involvement and social interaction, and it can elicit a lot of useful feedback — in both directions. As a result of all this, quality assessment is also more likely to encourage cooperation and to minimise inappropriate behaviour, especially if students have some say in the direction of the task and teachers are able to cater for individual needs.

**Rich tasks** are an embodiment of quality pedagogies (Hayes et al., 2006). They are typically large, performance- and/or product-oriented tasks that often have an element of self-evaluation built into them. Rich tasks can involve more than one learning or curriculum area, or more than one
knowledge or skill strand within a learning area. They provide a mix of data on achievement and performance across several areas. Hayes et al. (2006, pp. 119–20) provide an example of a rich task for upper primary students involving the design of a theme park. The task required students to learn about concepts in science (materials), mathematics (budgeting) and English (reporting).

Quality assessment means other things, as well. Students can quickly lose motivation if they do not see the need for a task or if they feel a task is not a fair one. Other factors will also increase the propensity for inappropriate behaviour. The following is a list of assessment features that we suggest should characterise your classroom assessment program, based on suggestions from some of the pertinent literature (Brady & Kennedy, 2014; Darling-Hammond, et al., 2013; Department of Education Victoria, 2013; Emmer & Everson, 2009; Everson & Emmer, 2009; Gronlund & Waugh, 2009; New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2011; Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010).

Quality assessment tasks:

- reflect the curriculum and are based on the taught curriculum
- inform teachers’ decision making about the quality of curriculum and pedagogy, and about how to move forward
- are fair, valid and reliable, and inspire student trust and confidence in their transparency and purpose as learning experiences
- encourage opportunities for assessment ‘of’, ‘for’, and ‘as’ learning – especially the last two
- develop students’ understanding of their learning strengths and needs
- provide feedback that is clear, constructive, timely and meaningful, and that helps student to improve
- are well structured, and expectations/standards for them are communicated clearly to students
- have been (at least partly) negotiated or co-constructed with students
- have clear directions about standards of presentation, format, due dates and other organisational aspects
- are assessed on a grading or other system that provides feedback that students can readily understand
- allow students to self-check, self-reflect and self-assess
- should be interesting and fun.

**PROFESSIONAL REFLECTION**

The curriculum you teach is generally predetermined, but you still have decisions to make about content and emphasis. Besides syllabi, curriculum frameworks and school plans, what will drive your curriculum choices?

- The pedagogies you use will reflect your prevailing philosophy of teaching. This means that you are more likely to use certain teaching and learning strategies than others; but don’t forget the technical skills proffered by scholars like Kounin (1970). What pedagogical approaches will you favour?

- Assessment, of course, has a number of purposes. But even so, you will have preferences for certain types of assessment, and these will usually reflect your philosophy of teaching and theoretical leanings. How will you assess your students’ learning – and, while you’re at it, how will you evaluate your teaching?

It is now time to consider how you will describe your approaches to curriculum, pedagogy and assessment for your philosophy of teaching. Go to ‘Your philosophy for a positive learning environment’ and respond to the guide questions. The result should be a broad statement about how you will teach and assess.

**SUMMARY**

In this chapter, we explained the three components of instructional practice that contribute in a preventative way to positive learning environments. Curriculum was defined and explained in terms of its components and processes. We also described how it can contribute as a preventative practice to minimising behaviour problems through relevance, level of difficulty, clarity, timing and interest. Pedagogy was defined and explored as consisting of two areas of scholarship: quality pedagogy and technical pedagogy. We explained aspects of quality pedagogy that can also be viewed as preventative practice through student involvement, intellectual stimulation, significance, social interaction and feedback. We explained how technical pedagogy strategies can be used to minimise behaviour problems. Assessment was then discussed as a process that can facilitate better curriculum and pedagogy, as well as provide students with encouragement and a more positive view of themselves.

The overall focus of this chapter has been the integration of approaches to managing student learning so that best attention can be given to academic learning, social interaction and the promotion of positive behaviour.

**Key terms**

- assessment
- cooperative learning
- curriculum
- feedback
- instructional practice
- pedagogy
- plan–implement–review (PIR) cycle
- quality assessment
- quality pedagogies
- social interaction
- student involvement
- technical pedagogies
Individual and group activities

Activity 5.1
Refer back to the chapter ‘Starter story: Asking students what they think’.

- Given your current (state or national) curriculum, how can Aimee (and, indeed, any teacher) negotiate to change course content?

Activity 5.2
Conduct a search of the curriculum and professional standards documents on the website of your educational jurisdiction to find examples of the promotion of high-quality instructional practices.

- In light of these, and of the concepts and strategies we have covered in this chapter, can you identify, prioritise and justify some professional development goals relating to your instructional practices?

Activity 5.3
In small or class groups, discuss and/or debate the relative merits of each of the following statements:

- What we teach, how we teach and how our students learn are critical and related considerations in the challenge to achieving positive learning environments.
- Quality student learning produces much more than just academic outcomes; it also encourages social, functional, emotional and communication skills, knowledge and values.
- Effective teachers make a huge difference in the lives of their students.
- When the instructional practices taking place in classrooms is high-quality, the potential for student misbehaviour is reduced.

Activity 5.4
Assemble and review a collection of lesson plans, scopes and sequences, units of work and/or teaching/learning programs.

- What place does assessment have in and across these documents?

Activity 5.5
Engage in a whole-class discussion on the following statement:

- ‘Differentiation or Universal Design for Learning (UDL)? One, or both, and why?’ (Some prior additional reading about UDL may be beneficial.)

Activity 5.6
Jacob Kounin’s widely known effective teaching (1970) is a technical pedagogy based on watershed research.

- In small groups, prepare a role-play of one of Kounin’s ‘tricks of the trade’. Collectively present these role-plays to the whole class.

Activity 5.7
Gagné’s nine events of instruction model is widely adopted in practice.

- In, say, three smaller groups, prepare and deliver to the whole class a 10-minute role-play of a teaching/learning session that showcases the nine events (or steps) in Gagné’s model.
- In groups, choose the ‘best’ three events or steps. Present these to the whole class, defending your decisions.

Online resources

-CENGAGEbrain.com Visit http://login.cengagebrain.com and search for this book to access the study tools that come with your textbook.

Weblinks


‘Teaching for effective learning’ (Government of South Australia Department for Education and Child Development) http://www.learningtolearn.sa.edu.au/tefl/pages/tefloverview/teflintro/?eFlag=1

Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) http://www.acara.edu.au


References


Learning outcomes

When you have worked through this chapter, you should be able to:

- describe and explain the key elements of behavioural theory as it relates to classroom and behaviour management
- describe and explain four behavioural approaches to the creation and maintenance of PLEs
- describe a range of behavioural strategies that can variously be used for prevention and intervention
- compare and contrast a strategic selection of the behavioural approaches presented, and make judgements about their application to, and utility for, familiar teaching/learning contexts
- explain how different behavioural theories, approaches and strategies can contribute to enhancing a classroom management plan.

Chapter overview

- Starter story: Perhaps ...
- Introduction
- The behavioural perspective
- Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA)
- Functional Behaviour Assessment (FBA)
- Assertive Discipline
- Positive Behaviour Support (PBS)
- Behavioural theories as prevention and intervention
- Professional reflection
- Summary
- Key terms
- Individual and group activities
- Online resources
- Weblinks
- References

INTRODUCTION

Over the course of the previous five chapters, we have defined many key concepts and explored what we consider to be the key components of prevention with regard to building PLEs. In this chapter, we begin our exploration of the various theoretical approaches to creating and maintaining PLEs.

While the theoretical approaches described here (and in chapters 7 to 9) can influence the preventative practices you use to manage your classroom, they are also often associated with intervention processes. As Figure 6.1 shows, intervention practices are one part of the Lyford model, and are sometimes employed to maintain PLEs and to minimize disruptive and unproductive behaviours when preventative practices fail short. Intervention practices, like any other part of a model of classroom management, should be subject to your cycle of reflection and the plan-implement-review cycle (which we described in Chapter 5).

Warning! This is a big chapter. It's not an overnight read, and it's not a chapter you can reasonably surface-read. The pool of behavioural theory is deep and wide, so perhaps scope the chapter-opening and end-of-chapter material first, and then read and think about one chapter section at a time.

Figure 6.1 Intervention practices in the Lyford model

- ECOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE
- SOCIOCULTURAL PERSPECTIVE
- PSYCHOEDUCATIONAL PERSPECTIVE
- FOUR PREVENTATIVE PRACTICES
- INTERVENTION PRACTICES

'Starter story: Perhaps ...'

'Another class, another drama,' thought Alicia as the bell rang and she headed for her classroom. Her bodily reactions — sweaty palms and slight nausea — were a real worry. Granted, teaching Japanese to disinterested students was challenging enough, but why did her lessons seem to always end up with students becoming quite rowdy, and Alicia having a sense of failure and a headache?

After thinking about this for some time, Alicia had an intuition. 'Could it be that by reacting to every student's misbehaviour, I'm 'making a rod for my own back'? Perhaps I should stand back, take a good look at myself and my students, and work out what my behaviours and their behaviours are really telling me. Perhaps then I can avoid the problems I'm having and help my students to take more responsibility for their own behaviours. Perhaps ...'
At the outset, it is vital to recognise the central place of theory in the Lyford model. The theory underpinning behavioural approaches has a long history dating back to early psychologists such as Edward Thorndike, John Watson and BF Skinner. In this chapter, we will describe some of the more common behavioural approaches and explain them in relation to prevention generally, and intervention specifically.

THE BEHAVIOURAL PERSPECTIVE

In the chapter ‘Starter story’, Alicia recognised the need to look at what was happening in her classroom environment. She planned to look for the causes of inappropriate student behaviours in order to identify aspects of the environment that appeared to encourage this. Alicia started by reflecting on what happened in her classes, but ultimately, she would need to observe her class (or get someone else to observe it) and record what happened before, during and after inappropriate behaviours.

Behavioural approaches to classroom management focus on the observable. This is because of the underlying assumption that behaviour is influenced by environment. More specifically, behavioural approaches assume that aspects of the environment promote and/or reward certain behaviours, inappropriate or otherwise.

Two key terms you will need to understand and learn to use are antecedent and consequence. An antecedent is the circumstance that precedes behaviour, while a consequence is what happens as a result of behaviour. To understand what is causing and maintaining inappropriate behaviour, you must observe it in its context to identify its antecedent/s and consequence/s. Hence, in order to change behaviour, it is vital to gather data through observation and questioning.

Classroom teachers are central to the use of behavioural approaches in schools. Teachers variously manage antecedents, deliver rewards and impose consequences to influence student behaviour. While the overall goal of any classroom management plan is to promote appropriate behaviour, and student self-regulation and responsibility, behavioural approaches place the teacher firmly ‘in control’ of, and make them responsible for, broader aspects of the classroom environment.

Behavioural approaches (also known as behaviourist approaches and, collectively, as behaviourism) are generally underpinned by five basic principles: antecedent control, positive reinforcement, negative reinforcement, punishment and extinction. Taking a closer look at each of these will help you to better understand how a behavioural approach could work in your classroom.

Antecedent control

Some students are easily distracted off-task when visitors enter the classroom or when there is ‘action’ outside the classroom windows. These students are often directed to sit where these activities are less likely to distract them. This is an example of antecedent control. The teacher has reduced the chances of the student being distracted and engaging in inappropriate behaviour by removing them from the source of the distraction (i.e., the antecedent). Antecedent control can also work in another way: by sitting an easily distracted student next to a more focused one. The focused student can act as a reminder of appropriate behaviour and lessen potential distractions. The aim of antecedent control is to encourage appropriate behaviour or reduce inappropriate behaviour by manipulating environmental conditions (Miltonberger, 2008).

Positive reinforcement

Positive reinforcement, in simple terms, happens when a consequence of a behaviour results in more of that behaviour occurring. Positive reinforcers are anything that a student perceives to be desirable or of value. Inappropriate behaviour followed by a positive reinforcer (such as approval from other students) will lead to repeated instances of that behaviour. The same applies for appropriate behaviour (Alberto & Troutman, 2013).

Classroom teachers often use positive reinforcement to increase the likelihood of appropriate behaviour and, at the same time, reduce the power of competing impulses for inappropriate behaviour. It is probably the most commonly used consequence-based tool in the behaviourist arsenal, and may include tangible rewards, such as stickers, certificates, prizes and time on an enjoyable activity or some tangible reward, such as a smile from the teacher or verbal affirmation. But positive reinforcers are idiosyncratic; that is, what is reinforcing for one person may not be for the next. Positive reinforcers range across a wide variety of items, experiences and events. Therefore, although we can categorise reinforcers, the individualisation of preferred consequences is a key to encouraging appropriate behaviour.

Positive reinforcers can be considered either standard or additional. Standard reinforcers are pleasant and/or desirable, for example, food, drink, praise or any item which children naturally like. In contrast, positive reinforcers that are deliberately made available or highlighted in order to promote appropriate behaviour. They are part of a plan, and they need to be withdrawn as soon as possible after they are used to prevent students from becoming dependent on them. Table 6.1 shows some examples of standard and additional positive reinforcers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 6.1 Types of positive reinforcers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>STANDARD POSITIVE REINFORCERS</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A teacher incidentally praises Nicholas for working consistently in music lessons.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amy is allowed to assist in the library at lunchtimes due to her responsible class behaviour.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A pre-service teacher completes a subject in classroom management and discipline, and feels more able to recognise and deal with students' needs when on a professional experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ADDITIONAL POSITIVE REINFORCERS</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicholas receives five bonus points he can put towards attaining a prize from 'the mystery bag'.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having achieved her contract agreement to behave responsibly in class for a set period of time, Amy may use the class computer during lunchtime.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A pre-service teacher who receives outstanding grades in the classroom management subject and internship is nominated for a special award.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Negative reinforcement

Negative reinforcement involves the removal or reduction of an unpleasant consequence - such as the withdrawal of a threatened punishment - that leads to an increase in certain behaviour (Alberto & Troutman, 2013). The aim of negative reinforcement is to reduce the frequency of inappropriate behaviour through the avoidance of unpleasant consequences. For example, suppose a student is told that he will not be kept in at recess if he ceases calling out during the morning period. In order to avoid being kept in, the student behaves well and does not call out. But be careful! This type of reinforcement is often confused with the concept of punishment, but these are not the same. Indeed, as we will now see, negative reinforcement is effectively the opposite of punishment.

Punishment

Punishment is the imposition of an undesirable consequence (also termed a punisher or an aversive stimulus) following inappropriate behaviour that results in reduction of that behaviour. In the example of calling out used in the previous section, the teacher keeps the student in at recess as a consequence, aiming for better behaviour the next day. Punishments are designed to reduce the likelihood of inappropriate behaviours, or even to make them extinct. (More about this later.) They are only effective if they ‘fit the crime’, are not excessive and are actually perceived as a punishment.

What makes punishment effective? This is an interesting question, and one that we get regularly from our pre-service teaching students. We hear stories about school students doing the wrong thing in order to receive a school-sanctioned punishment such as lunchtime detention. Punishment is effective only if it is unpleasant or undesirable to the student, and if it results in reduced inappropriate behaviour (Alberto & Troutman, 2013; Miltenberger, 2008).

Punishment comes in two forms. A positive punishment occurs when an unpleasant experience is imposed - such as, in the case of the student who called out, five minutes of ‘bin duty’ at recess. A negative punishment occurs when something that the student perceives as desirable is taken away - such as missing out on sports or having reduced social time at recess. The differences between positive punishment, negative punishment and negative reinforcement can be confusing, so work through these concepts thoroughly.

Extinction

In the context of behavioural theory, extinction refers to a process that results in a problem (or target) behaviour stopping, usually as a result of the removal of whatever was reinforcing that behaviour (Alberto & Troutman, 2013). In classrooms, extinction is often used to reduce attention-seeking behaviour, such as calling out. Tactical ignoring (sometimes called planned ignoring) is one example of an extinction procedure. The time taken to extinguish a behaviour can be reduced through the associated use of positive reinforcement of alternative positive behaviours.

To conclude this section, it should be noted that the five abovementioned principles have been very successfully applied, over a long period of time, to a wide variety of inappropriate classroom behaviours, but have found only mixed success when applied to bullying. For example, Olweus and Limber (2010) implemented a bullying prevention program based largely on behavioural principles. This approach did lead to reduced bullying, but only in the short term. Rigby (2007) explained that these approaches are unlikely to deter more hardened bullies, and are not successful in reliably reducing bullying over the longer term. Campbell (2005) came to a similar conclusion in relation to cyberbullying, suggesting that online incidents on desktop computers or mobile devices are difficult to monitor, and that strategies congruent with behaviourism may not work well to address them. Nevertheless, as we shall see through this chapter, there are a number of different behavioural approaches, and we will address their respective potentials for dealing with bullying in the relevant sections.

The five principles we have introduced in the preceding sections are used differentially across various approaches to classroom management. We will now describe four of the major approaches to using behaviourism in schools and classrooms: Applied Behaviour Analysis, Functional Behaviour Assessment, Assertive Discipline and Positive Behaviour Support.

APPLIED BEHAVIOUR ANALYSIS (ABA)

Applied Behaviour Analysis (widely known as ABA) is closely linked to all of the five principles described in the previous sections. ABA is based on the seminal work of BF Skinner, and underpins the more recently refined Functional Behaviour Assessment (or FBA) and Positive Behaviour Support (or PBS) approaches, which are described later in this chapter. ABA posits that behaviours are simply controlled by their antecedent conditions (i.e. the environment) and their consequences. That is, reinforcing consequences increase the frequency, intensity and/or duration of behaviours, while punishing consequences decrease their frequency, intensity and/or duration.

In schools, ABA is synonymous with a good number of the basic classroom management practices used by many teachers, but more often applies when teachers respond to students who manifest more challenging behaviours. ABA interventions involve defining, observing and recording focus behaviours in the context of their antecedent conditions and consequences. Teachers then manipulate antecedent conditions and, if necessary, use reinforcing consequences (using a hierarchy of reinforcers) to increase or decrease targeted behaviours.

The philosophy of behaviourism underpins ABA. Behaviourism maintains a strictly authoritarian approach to behaviour change, holding that all learned behaviours are voluntary and may be modified by the manipulation of antecedent conditions and reinforcing consequences. Furthermore, the actions of children are determined by the same outside forces as those of adults; that is, children learn to behave by being rewarded for model behaviour and punished for misbehaviour. Behaviours are seen as verifiable (i.e. observable), functional and purposeful, in that they are intended to achieve or avoid consequences.

The classroom learning environment (as a broad antecedent milieu) should be changed, according to preference, to improve behaviours. If necessary, consequences can then be changed to improve behaviours. Reinforcers and punishments may vary in terms of intrusiveness (i.e. impact on learning) and restrictiveness (i.e. level of control), but ABA must be implemented in the least intrusive and least restrictive ways.

The due process involved in conducting ABA is rigorous and closely prescribed, and modified consequences (defined by their effect and not their intent) must only be delivered when target behaviour/s occur. ABA can inform teachers' preventative practices, but generally speaking, teachers use it to inform their intervention practices.
The process of ABA

Elements of ABA are often used to enhance the development of positive behaviours in students incidentally and opportunistically, but ABA can also guide the development of specific planned interventions that are designed to increase and/or decrease focus behaviours. All teachers use some elements of ABA in their everyday practice. For example, a teacher who praises a student for good work is using the ABA principle that if a desired behaviour is rewarded with a pleasing consequence, the behaviour is more likely to recur.

When student behaviours are more challenging, and regular classroom management plans fail to moderate them, the learning environment is compromised. An intervention based on ABA is an option in such a case. These kinds of interventions generally have seven steps, each of which we will now describe in detail.

**Step 1: Conduct a preliminary observational analysis**

ABA is grounded in specific definitions of behaviour and the quantitative measurement of behaviour. Its focus is on demonstrative behaviours, rather than on people's reports of what they were thinking or feeling at a certain time. The first challenge facing teachers who use ABA interventions is to adequately define a target behaviour. Some behaviours can be described relatively easily – for example, in-seat behaviour could be described as 'bottom remains on designated seat'. Others are considerably more complex – for example, specifically describing a student's repertoire of annoying behaviours, each of which functions to unsettle her/his peers and, ultimately, the teacher.

The main reason for clearly defining target behaviours is to achieve consistency across observations. In order for you to decide whether a particular intervention has been effective in increasing or decreasing a behaviour, you need to be able to accurately refer to and measure it. Behaviour is best defined through observation. One technique is to informally (and usually briefly) observe the setting in which the behaviour typically occurs, and make notes about everything you see. This is called an anecdotal record; an example is provided in the 'In practice' box below.

**IN PRACTICE**

**Taking an anecdotal record**

**Student(s):** Brana, Nicholas  
**Class:** Year 4 Music  
**Time:** Friday, 2:15 p.m.

It’s Friday afternoon, and John is taking my class for a music lesson. As the class enters, Nicholas pokes Brana in the ribs. Brana makes a face and swears out loud. John reprimands Brana, and the class laughs. Nicholas grim and grabs a ruler from Jack. This is exactly what I thought I noticed in our classes: Nicholas setting up others for the fall. The teacher glares at Jack, who is now protesting about his ruler. Nicholas covers his face to hide a smile and looks away, denying all responsibility when questioned by John. Five minutes later, Susannah cries after Nicholas hits her with no apparent provocation.

A second observational technique is to break down what happens in front of you into three specific divisions: the events that occur before (antecedent), during (behaviour) and after (consequence) the behaviour is observed. This is called an ABC record. A sample ABC record is shown in the following 'In practice' box.

**IN PRACTICE**

**Taking an ABC record**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANTecedent</th>
<th>BEHAVIOUR</th>
<th>CONSEQUENCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Teacher asks class to listen to a recorded tune</td>
<td>2. Student X groans loudly</td>
<td>3. Class laughs; teacher chastises X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Teacher resets tape player</td>
<td>5. X grins at peers</td>
<td>6. Class laughs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Teacher waits for silence</td>
<td>8. X bursts into a wild song, mimicking the singer</td>
<td>9. Teacher places X in the corner facing the wall</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Both the anecdotal record and the ABC record can generate useful information. The anecdotal record provides a broad picture of events in the classroom (or elsewhere) that may allow you to focus more specifically on the target behaviour(s). Then, by using an ABC record, you can identify what occurs before the behaviour (i.e. the antecedent), what the behaviour looks like (i.e. an action) and what consequences follow the behaviour. As well as helping to define target behaviours, information regarding the events that accompany the behaviour will likely be valuable later. It is best to make short observations across a number of settings and/or days, perhaps discussing what you see with colleagues.

A third observational technique, a scatter plot, can be used to pinpoint when behaviours occur. To record a scatter plot, a time period (such as a day or a lesson) is broken into equal intervals and a note made for each interval during which the target behaviour is (or is not) observed. The visual map that results is often helpful in determining 'hot spots' throughout the designated observational period. For example, a scatter plot may indicate that most problems are occurring after lunch, in unstructured situations or in particular lessons.

**Rating charts or checklists** provide a possible fourth source of data. These are often in the form of questionnaires; respondents are asked to rate behaviours in terms of variables like frequency, severity, duration and topography (more on this later).

Of course, there are often other contributory factors in the larger life experiences of students that predispose them to particular behaviours. Consistent with the ecological perspective, these considerations, which are sometimes referred to as setting events, may not be alterable. However, by identifying them, we may be able to accommodate or modify them. For example, a student who has
been awake through the night because of family problems will need additional understanding and support in class the following day.

**Step 2: Modify antecedent conditions**

Your use of anecdotal records, ABC records, scatter plot observations and rating charts or checklists can highlight a number of aspects of classroom operation that, if changed strategically, may result in improvements in student and class behaviour, and in the learning environment overall. These aspects are (variably) antecedents to the target misbehaviour (and many of these considerations have been previously explained in chapters 2, 3, 4 and 5). In the best-case scenario, changes to these antecedent conditions could be so effective that the targeted misbehaviour is diminished to the point that it no longer requires an intervention. It is, however, more likely that the target misbehaviour would be moderated but still require an intervention. In such a case, continue to follow the steps described below.

**Step 3: Define the target behaviour/s and establish baseline measures**

Once you have broadly identified the behaviour/s you wish to observe, you should get a more detailed look at what is happening. By now, you have changed some of the antecedents, but the problem behaviour is continuing. More focused use of anecdotal and ABC records and scatter plots can assist you to define the behaviour in precise, observable terms. It is important to then describe exactly how the behaviour happens.

Behaviours are best described primarily by verbs. The rule of thumb is to ask whether, using your definition, another person could accurately observe the targeted behaviour. A definition of a behaviour such as, for example, ‘Appreciates the value of placing rubbish in the bin’ is impossible to measure. In contrast, ‘Throws rubbish in bin’ is clear and easily measured. Similarly, the descriptor ‘on-task’ could be interpreted in many ways; ‘performing written task while seated at desk’ is a more useful working definition.

Unlike much of the academic work that students do, social behaviour is usually transient, often taking place without the sort of permanent ‘product’ generated in a pencil-and-paper test or a writing activity. There is usually no environmental effect or tangible outcome of social behaviour (with obvious exceptions such as holes in the wall, bruises on classmates, and the like). Often, the sort of behaviour we may wish to change is quickly upon us, and then gone. How, then, do we measure it?

Alberto and Troutman (2013) suggest that behaviours should be described using one or more of the following dimensions:

- **Rate:** how often per unit of time the behaviour occurs
- **Duration:** how long the behaviour lasts
- **Force:** how intense the behaviour is
- **Topography:** what the behaviour looks like
- **Latency:** how long it takes for the behaviour to occur once a cue is given

These dimensions give us accurate ways to measure behaviours. But there are other challenges in defining a behaviour: Does the problem only occur in the playground when a student is in the company of particular peers? How can we successfully collect information about the behaviour, in a range of situations, without changing the natural routines that are present in those situations?

How can we reliably rate behaviours such as tantrums in terms of how intense they are, and if we can, will this information be helpful to us when we are planning and delivering support programs?

ABA requires the collection of a pre-intervention measure, generally referred to as baseline data, which is used for comparison once an intervention is implemented. Observational information (data) can be collected using one or a number of the following techniques: an event count; a duration measure; or latency measure. The technique(s) you select depend on the nature of the target behaviour.

An event count is a tally of how many times (i.e. frequency) a behaviour occurs, usually within a specified time period. Although an event count is a very useful and common technique, it may not be possible or meaningful to establish frequency if the target behaviour occurs over time. That is, in order for events to be counted accurately, they must have a clear beginning and end. Two variations on an event count are the interval and time-sample techniques. Neither of these methods yields a direct measure of frequency. Rather, using periods of time, they allow you to calculate the percentage of the total number of time periods (or samples) in which the behaviour occurs.

In an interval measure, you observe for a specified period of time and make a judgement as to whether or not the behaviour of interest, or perhaps a predominant behaviour, occurred during that time interval. In a time sample, you look at the student’s behaviour only at the end of each time period, judging and recording whether the behaviour of interest takes place at the moment you look. Although not as accurate as event counts, time samples and interval measures may prove to be more practical and more appropriate for the behaviours you encounter in classroom settings.

A duration measure is simply how long a particular behaviour lasts. If a student appears to cry ‘constantly’, you may wish to note the onset and cessation points across the day and calculate an average duration for this behaviour over a day or week.

A latency measure refers to how long it takes for a response to occur once a cue has been given. For example, when asking a class to line up for music, how long (on average) do the students take? (Maybe compare with their latency when the lunch bell rings!?)

**Step 4: Establish long- and short-term behavioural objectives**

Once you have clearly defined your target behaviour/s and gathered baseline data as a pre-intervention measure, you can decide on the intervention’s long-term behavioural objective, and then on its short-term behavioural objectives. Interventions have a stated commencement date, a planned duration and a completion date – that is, when the long-term behavioural objective is expected to be achieved. Successful ABA-based interventions, as previously mentioned, can achieve significant results in a relatively short time. It is possible for an intervention (implemented daily) to achieve its long-term objectives within five to 10 weeks. Short-term objectives should then be set on a daily or weekly basis. Obviously, there will be considerable variation in results here. Interruptions to the consistent implementation of interventions, including incidental disruptions and weekend and holiday periods, generally extend the time needed to achieve objectives.
Step 5: Modify consequences

This step is the 'action' part of your intervention, wherein you implement your selected strategy/ies to increase replacement behaviours and/or decrease target misbehaviours. A clear understanding of reinforcers (i.e. the 'consequences' in the ABC chain of events), and of how you modify and manipulate these to change behaviour, is central to the success of any ABA-based intervention.

As we noted earlier in this chapter, reinforcing consequences and positive reinforcers are often very individual. The success of a preferred consequence or positive reinforcer is defined by its effect on behaviour. It is often necessary to introduce additional reinforcers to assist in the achievement of behaviour change, so the correct selection of reinforcer/ies is crucial. Some strategies to consider in identifying effective consequences and positive reinforcers for an individual include: conducting a reinforcer sampling exercise using a 'menu' that contains examples of possible items or experiences; asking students to prioritise their preferred consequences; observing students in a variety of settings; and making anecdotal records about the way students use free time and the types of activities they choose to engage in.

Stronger reinforcers must be motivating, contingent and, usually, immediate. A preferred consequence must be an item, experience or event that is, on each and every occasion, considered by the recipient to be desirable. For example, even if you have sampled reinforcers with your class and noted that for a certain student, time on the computer is the first preference, the effectiveness of this potentially reinforcing experience will be affected by the overall amount of time that student has recently spent on the computer. Similarly, a student who loves stickers may view being awarded a 'usual' plain sticker in a different light if he/she has just received a glamorous gold sticker from another teacher. This is why it is important that the reinforcer be powerful, and that the person receiving it be in a 'relative state of deprivation', so to speak, to enhance his/her motivation and interest in gaining it.

The phrases 'if ... then' and 'if and only if' are very important in designing and implementing interventions. The notion of contingency – that is, a certain reward or consequence being given on the condition of a certain type of behaviour being displayed (Miltnerberger, 2008) – is often forgotten, as typified by the parent in the clothes shop who says to their child, 'Sit still while I try on this shirt and I will buy you an ice-cream,' and who then proceeds to buy the child the treat despite the fact that the child ran around the shop pulling clothes off racks and generally being disobedient. In this situation, the parent has actually reinforced the inappropriate behaviour. Individuals must associate the reinforcer (or preferred consequence) with the behaviour that precedes it if the reinforcement program is to be effective. If there is a delay in delivery, the individual may link another (undesirable) behaviour with the preferred consequence they receive.

As part of the process of designing an intervention based on ABA, the teacher will need to give close attention to the timing and scheduling of reinforcement. A long-term objective of most interventions is to encourage the development and maintenance of positive behaviour in the presence of natural cues and reinforcers. It is vital that the teacher has a schedule to reduce the use of additional positive reinforcers over time, a process referred to as thinning. In the early stages of learning a replacement behaviour, it is usually useful to reinforce its presence each time it occurs (this is also known as a continuous 1:1 schedule). As the replacement behaviour achieves dominance, additional positive reinforcement need only be delivered intermittently (for example, every third time, and/or after a specified period of time). Eventually, it may only be necessary for the replacement behaviour to be reinforced occasionally for it to be maintained.

Thinning, the shift from intense schedules of reinforcement to the natural encouragement of positive behaviour, is a critical part of promoting positive behaviour change. In the real world, behaviour is maintained by natural rather than contrived consequences. It is inappropriate for an individual to be dependent on artificially scheduled reinforcers to behave appropriately. This is likely to lead to a diminished ability to take personal responsibility for behaviours, a loss of independence, reduced self-actualisation, and a belief that one's life is controlled by others.

The pairing of additional and standard reinforcers is the key to encouraging sustained and independent behaviour patterns. For example, when a teacher gives a student a stamp or a token (i.e. an additional positive reinforcer), the teacher will usually also deliver some low-key verbal praise (i.e. a standard positive reinforcer). This is the pairing of reinforcers. As the delivery of the token economy is thinned, the naturally reinforcing verbal praise remains to encourage the replacement behaviour. Pairing is essential to the systematic withdrawal of additional positive reinforcers, and to the encouragement of positive behaviour.

Unfortunately, pairing is an aspect of programming that is often neglected. It has been claimed that students become 'hooked' on reinforcement systems, and that their positive behaviour is conditional on the permanent delivery of unrealistic consequences. A systematic plan to shift student focus to typical naturally occurring positive reinforcers is integral to the design of an effective intervention.

Step 6: Monitor progress using accumulated data (and modify strategies if required)

When you have modified consequences and reinforcers by choosing strategies to increase and/or decrease target behaviours, and scheduled these consequences/reinforcers for thinning and pairing, you should commence your intervention. Once commenced, it is critically important that you monitor the progress of the intervention (i.e. the increase and/or decrease in target behaviours) and reconcile this against your short- and long-term objectives. Your baseline data is the reference point for measuring the amount and rate of progress toward the intervention's objectives.

If progress is reasonable (and as expected), you should continue the intervention as planned. Remember that one useful reference point for monitoring progress often occurs about two weeks into the intervention. By around this time, you can reasonably expect to be able to measure a significant behaviour change trend. If by this point there is no indication that the intervention has had an effect, you should revisit and reconsider your hypothesis and/or reinforcement choice and schedule.

By regularly monitoring progress toward intervention objectives, you can make informed and timely decisions about the need to review, modify or discontinue the intervention.

Step 7: Evaluate the intervention

Subject to regular monitoring of progress (as outlined in Step 6 above), eventually – and hopefully sooner rather than later – your intervention will reach either the end of the scheduled implementation
period and/or its long-term behavioural objectives. It is imperative that you conduct a rigorous summative evaluation of the intervention. The design, development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of an intervention is a 'costly' exercise. Your responsibility (or that of your collaborating learning support team) is to judge both the efficacy and the 'efficiency' of the intervention.

To judge the efficacy of the intervention, you simply review whether or not it achieved its long-term behavioural objective/s. As previously mentioned, this involves comparing the final quantitative performance data against the baseline performance data. Since behavioural interventions are based on quantifiable data, this should be a reasonably straightforward task. Simply put: the intervention worked or it did not. Other judgements might be that the intervention worked, but only in part, or that reasonable progress has been made, but the long-term behavioural objectives have not (yet) been achieved.

Judging the efficiency of the intervention is somewhat subjective, and more complex. This really means answering the question, 'Given the resources committed to the intervention (time, effort, expertise, money), was the intervention “worth it”?' This can be a difficult question to answer, and in situations where there was a collaborative effort around the intervention, there may be different views. Given, too, that often, much of the effort and resources are committed by classroom teachers, and the decision to initiate or to continue an intervention lies primarily with classroom teachers, we strongly encourage you to give considerable thought to this matter.

It is worth noting that this chapter offers only an introductory explanation of ABA and its application in schools. For further information, we recommend that you refer to Alberto and Troutman (2013); O’Neill et al. (2015) and/or the Center for Effective Collaboration and Practice (CECP) website, which is listed in the end-of-chapter ‘Weblinks’.

The research on ABA

ABA has been used extensively in assisting students with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and/or developmental disabilities. Indeed, much of the published research on ABA concerns subjects in these two groups; and what we know from this research is that ABA can be very effective in reducing inappropriate behaviours and/or in promoting appropriate behaviour (Axelrod, McElrath & Wine, 2012; Foran et al., 2015; Ross, 2007).

Although a healthy evidence base does exist, a comprehensive (meta)analysis of ABA research across a variety of subjects (e.g. students with ASD, students with developmental disorders, students in neither category who have challenging behaviours, and so on) could better inform ABA’s strengths and limitations for each student cohort. Given the large number of possible strategies (more on these later), this work would need to differentiate between efficacy for antecedent control versus reinforcement strategies. Boutot and Hume (2012) suggest that such differentiation in the research would help teachers to identify the most appropriate strategies for their particular circumstances. The following ‘Story from the field’ box gives an account of how one teacher managed students with learning difficulties and disabilities in her classroom.

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**Story from the field**

**Rachel: Not all kids are the same**

I teach a support class of seven boys who are challenged by a variety of learning difficulties and disabilities. It took me a long time to develop a good classroom management system that works for them. I eventually developed a colour-coded system with steps. All the students start each new day on the bottom colour, no matter what happened the previous day. When they do something wrong, they move up a colour. (We also have a merit system for those who do the right thing.) The top colour is red, and students know that when they get to this colour they get a ‘consequence’. The seven boys have never been on red, because they know when to stop.

Kevin is particularly tricky. He was moved out of two other support classes because of his behaviour. He can be aggressive and violent, and he sometimes removes all his clothes. He does, though, have a fantastic mother, who is very supportive and does anything she can to help.

After a few weeks with Kevin, I found that the best way to handle his behaviour was to use distraction. Kevin loves drawing and computers. If his behaviour begins to escalate, I ask him if he would like to draw. More often than not, this stops him, and he seems to forget why he was angry in the first place. If he is past reasoning with, I find the best thing to do is to ‘let him go’ and leave him somewhere where he can’t hurt himself or others. He usually throws objects and kicks and screams, and then eventually calms down. He is highly motivated by extrinsic rewards, so we use this to our advantage. The experts often tell you not to rely on extrinsic motivation, but if it works, I say go for it. When you have very challenging behaviours, this is sometimes the only strategy that works.

In my opinion, it is best to take a whole-class approach, but you must make sure that you have individualised aspects to meet all your students’ needs. When it comes to behaviour management, not all kids are the same (especially in Special Ed.), so make sure you think carefully about what works for each of your students.

**Reflection...**

Rachel’s story demonstrates clearly how she found a successful balance between whole-class positive practices (built on behavioural and, possibly, cognitive behavioural theory) and her interventions, which are very individualised and which variously apply strategies based on behavioural and psychoeducational theory. Rachel took an intuitive approach to the development of her interventions, but she also took care to spend enough time observing and testing strategies before confirming these and applying them systematically.

- What do you think about Rachel’s assertions in her final paragraph?
- How can you ‘individualise’ aspects of a whole-class classroom management plan and still keep it ‘fair’?
- What would it take for you to consider or implement an individualised intervention?
Some people criticise ABA as being mechanistic and inhumane, and as serving only to focus on changing behaviour rather than on taking an interest in why the behaviour occurs in the first place (Johnson et al., 2006). In relation to bullying, some have observed a lack of application of ABA to this problem, and suggest that when it is applied, it may have limited efficacy in the longer term (Colvin et al., 1998). The prevailing view suggests that the benefits of such an immediate and powerful set of strategies outweigh concerns regarding the larger philosophical issues that underlie the approach (Ross & Horner, 2009).

Impartial observation of target behaviours is often difficult and costly, and it arguably represents an oversimplification of complex classroom behaviours. The use of punishment (notwithstanding its various forms) is too often poorly done in complex classroom settings, and its effective use requires the teacher to have considerable skill and training (Lerman & Vorndran, 2002). (Obviously, it should be noted that physical punishment is illegal in many school settings.) Efficacious ABA does evidently deliver shorter-term behaviour change, but there is far less evidence for generalisation and sustained behavioural change without its continuing use (Boutot & Hume, 2012; Matson et al., 2012).

ABA is grounded in specific definitions of behaviour and the quantitative measurement of behaviour.

FUNCTIONAL BEHAVIOUR ASSESSMENT (FBA)

One highly regarded development of ABA over the past 20 years is Functional Behaviour Assessment (widely known as FBA). In school settings, teachers study the contexts in which a student operates, and the actual behaviours that are observed, in order to identify possible reasons for, and functions of, the student's inappropriate behaviour. FBA is a process of establishing the likely reasons for inappropriate behaviour using data gathered through a variety of methods, the results of which may be used to design and implement interventions that aim to reduce those behaviours and promote appropriate behaviours (Gable et al., 1998; Umhret et al., 2007).

Originally used to assist in the design of interventions for individuals with intellectual disabilities and very challenging behaviours, FBA is now widely used across all school contexts (O'Neill & Stephenson, 2010).

By looking beyond descriptions of behaviour and more closely at the reasons why inappropriate behaviour occur, FBA delves into the student's microsystem in far greater depth than ABA does. This results in more accurate explanations for inappropriate behaviour and, potentially, in intervention strategies that are better tailored to reduce it. Like ABA, FBA is data-driven and looks for evidence to become the basis for decision making.

Briefly, in FBA, the teacher first collects information about any broad contextual, ecological factors that may set the scene for a behaviour problem (these are known as setting events), and then about the antecedents (or triggers) to a behaviour, the nature of the behaviour itself and the consequences that follow it. Through analysis of this data, and ensuring that multiple sources are involved, hypotheses about causation are developed and tested. This phase is usually referred to as functional analysis. This is followed by the development and implementation of a behaviour improvement plan (Gable et al., 1998; 2000).

By understanding why people act as they do, we are more likely to be able to replace or improve certain behaviours. Similarly, if we can identify factors such as when, where, with whom or at what time a problem occurs, there is much that we can adjust or modify in order to support more adaptive skills. The principles and strategies of FBA are consistent with the themes of ecological complexity and interrelatedness that are discussed throughout this book. FBA is also considered a team effort, with assistance and support from colleagues throughout the process (Gable et al., 1998).

The process of FBA

The process of FBA comprises steps that are comparable to those of ABA. We describe them briefly here, but more detail about what is involved in each step, and the options for action, are available at the Centre for Effective Collaboration and Practice (CECP) website (see the end-of-chapter "Weblinks") and in O'Neill et al. (2015). In the following sections, we explain a general nine-step process that is consistent with the contemporary literature. (See, for example, Barnhill, 2005; Neitzel & Bogin, 2008.)

Step 1: Describe and verify the problem behaviour

The first step is to determine whether a student's behaviour is indeed problematic, negatively influencing the learning environment, unique to that particular student and not occurring due to cultural or other ecological factors. The severity of the behaviour and the effectiveness of preventative and other measures are also considered. Data on the behaviour are usually collected both directly—through observations of the student in various settings—and indirectly—through interviews with peers, other teachers, and parents and siblings, and school records.

This step usually leads to a description and initial definition of the inappropriate behaviour of concern, such as, for example, 'Mike is aggressive to his classmates.' Sometimes the problem behaviour can be moderated, or even eliminated, through simple changes to the setting events or triggers, in which case the FBA process need not proceed (Davey & Kraft, 2005).

Step 2: Refine the definition of the problem behaviour

The description of the problem behaviour becomes deeper and more precise through further observation, and perhaps through follow-up interviews. In the case of Mikey introduced above, aspects of his aggressiveness—such as with whom he is aggressive, and the timing, duration, location, circumstances, types of activity and even weather conditions associated with his aggression—will be included in the data collection to achieve a more accurate definition of the behaviour to be targeted.
The deeper working definition might then be: ‘Mikey is aggressive to his classmates by cursing them and then hitting them for no reason when sitting in close proximity to them after breaks. This is more prominent on hot days.’

Step 3: Collect data on possible functions
The deeper working definition of the problem behaviour allows for a more accurate assessment of the ecological factors that might be causing it, and of what the student is trying to achieve by engaging in it. The key question being asked at this stage is: Why is the student engaging in this behaviour?

In order to answer this question, previously gathered data may be referred to, but it will also be necessary to gather further data that are more closely related to the behaviour: for example, such medical records and psychologist reports as are available from the school administration office, or further observations in contexts where the behaviour was previously prominent. Antecedents and consequences are examined more closely, and additional data is collected, often via ABC charts and scatter plots (as used in ABA), to variously determine behaviour frequency, duration, severity, time of occurrence and setting. Interviews and questionnaires focused on these aspects of the behaviours (a refinement of earlier surveys) may also be required.

Step 4: Analyse and triangulate the data
All of the information gathered from direct observations, interviews, questionnaires and records are put together (or triangulated) and patterns of behaviour are identified, along with possible reasons for the behaviour. It could be that the student is trying to achieve something, like class recognition or avoiding work. If so, this relates to the function of behaviour. However, students may also engage in inappropriate behaviour because they do not have certain skills, such as conflict resolution skills, or because they have the skills but choose not to apply them for some reason. The analysis helps the teacher and the team involved to figure out what is the likely reason (or reasons) for the behaviour.

Step 5: Form a hypothesis about the behaviour
A hypothesis describes the behaviour and suggests the most likely reason/s for its occurrence. It can be used to predict what the student will do in certain situations, which is important for the following step and for devising interventions. In the case of Mikey, a hypothesis might be: ‘Mikey is aggressive to his classmates by cursing them and then hitting them for no reason when sitting in close proximity to them after breaks, especially on hot days, because he prefers independence and has low conflict resolution ability.’

Step 6: Test the hypothesis
The hypothesis is used as the basis for the next brief collection of data. Relevant aspects of the student’s ecology are manipulated to encourage the inappropriate behaviour to occur, or to encourage appropriate behaviour. In the case of Mikey, the teacher might sit him among a large group of students on a warm day and see how long it takes for him to start cursing. Conversely, the teacher may sit Mikey away from other students, teaching him some simple conflict resolution strategies. In this case, if Mikey were still to start cursing or acting aggressively, we would know that the hypothesis was wrong. If he did not engage in aggression, though, we would know it was correct and could start to consider strategies for intervention. Testing the hypothesis can be a difficult step to take in classroom settings, and care should be taken when doing so. You would not, for example, test to see if a student hurts others.

Step 7: Design and implement the behaviour intervention plan (BIP)
There are many possible strategies for addressing the targeted behaviour/s through intervention, ranging from the use of reinforcement/reward schemes, to manipulating antecedents, to adjusting curriculum (such as through social skills training), to a combination of these. We outline suggested strategies later in the chapter, when we talk more about behavioural approaches to intervention. Regardless of specific strategies, though, the intervention should be focused on the reason/s for the inappropriate behaviour, and should result in the student choosing appropriate behaviour more often – if not always! A behaviour intervention plan (BIP) that incorporates the chosen strategies should be devised. It will be implemented with the cooperation of the school learning support team, the school’s leadership, the student’s classmates and/or the student’s parents, as appropriate. The duration of the BIP may range from days to weeks, depending on the severity and strength of the targeted behaviour.

Step 8: Monitor/modify the BIP
The BIP and its strategies are monitored using checklists or other means of recording (i.e. formatively assessed) to ensure that they are being carried out correctly. This monitoring includes ensuring that the teacher and others playing a part in the BIP know what their roles are and are performing those accurately. Monitoring is best done by periodically collecting (sample) data that can be compared to the baseline data. If data sampling indicates that the BIP is on track toward its long-term goal (as indicated by successive achievement of short-term goals), then continue as is. If data sampling suggests no significant change or deteriorating behaviour, the BIP must be modified, so go back to Step 7 – or even earlier!

Step 9: Evaluate the effectiveness of the BIP
At the end of the BIP period (or earlier, if monitoring indicates the achievement of long-term goals), data is finally gathered to identify goal attainment; that is, to see if the inappropriate behaviour has reduced or disappeared as projected. It is imperative that the measures used for collecting this final data are identical to those used to establish the baseline data, so that the two data sets can be authentically compared. If the intervention is successful, it is likely time to focus on maintenance strategies (i.e. keeping things on track) or on other behaviours of concern.

The research on FBA
As with ABA, there is an enormous body of research that describes the effectiveness of FBA in reducing or eliminating problem behaviour, both across age ranges and in various settings.
Unlike the research literature on ABA, though, there is less focus on ASD (for example, see Reeves et al., 2013) and a rather prominent focus, across contexts, on improving the behaviour of students with emotional disorders and intellectual disabilities (see Gable, Park & Scott, 2014; Gage, Lewis & Stichter, 2012; Kern et al., 2006; Lane et al., 2009; Wadsworth, Hansen & Wills, 2015). A large number of these studies focused on students with challenging behaviours not otherwise diagnosed (Davey & Kraft, 2005; Kamps, Wendiand & Culpepper, 2006; Losinski, Maag & Katsyanis, 2015; Umbreit & Ferro, 2015). A smaller number investigated the impacts of FBA on students with ADHD (see Miller & Lee, 2013).

The field of FBA has also benefited from the insights of longitudinal studies (Kern et al., 2006) and meta-analyses and reviews of previous research (Gable, Park & Scott, 2014; Gage, Lewis & Stichter, 2012) confirming its effectiveness. Despite this corpus of international research, O’Neill and Stephenson (2010) found that no significant study of FBA has been conducted in Australia, and our recent investigations reveal that this situation remains unchanged.

Interestingly, while the literature on FBA lists bullying among the challenging behaviours it purports to address (Anderson, Rodriguez & Campbell, 2015; Crone & Horner, 2000), no significant body of FBA research focuses directly on bullying. There is a need for research that pinpoints impacts of FBA on bullying in schools.

This issue notwithstanding, there is no doubt that FBA interventions work. Several comparison studies have shown FBA to be more effective at reducing inappropriate behaviours than non-FBA treatments (Ingram, Lewis-Palmer & Sugai, 2005; Miller & Lee, 2013; Newcomer & Lewis, 2004). A well-documented strength is that FBA provides teachers with a clear framework for measuring and changing behaviour (Barnhill, 2005; Davey & Kraft, 2005; Wadsworth, Hansen & Wills, 2015). This is particularly helpful when trying to establish a classroom that is centred on recognising and encouraging positive behaviour.

Some critics, however, suggest that FBA’s success is dependent on the continued delivery of additional preferred consequences, rather than related to shifts in an individual’s ability to manage and take responsibility for his/her own behaviour (Gresham, Watson & Skinner, 2001). This program dependency may be evidenced in the maintenance and generalisation phases of a behaviour change intervention; that is, over time or under new conditions, the student may not perform in the manner expected due to a lack of programmed contingencies over the longer term (Hanley, Iwata & McCord, 2003; McIntosh & Av-Gay, 2007). This finding suggests that teachers should more deliberately focus on self-management and on pairing and thinning the provision of reinforcement to the point at which natural consequences will maintain and encourage the behaviour (Umbreit et al., 2007).

FBA can be time consuming, labour-intensive and costly (Gable, Park & Scott, 2014; O’Neill & Stephenson, 2014). Kern et al. (2006) suggested that efficacy monitoring be used for all FBA interventions to avoid unnecessary effort and cost. It has also been pointed out that teachers and participant colleagues who will be using FBA need to be properly trained in the techniques of this behavioural approach (Gable, Park & Scott, 2014; Kern et al., 2006; O’Neill & Stephenson, 2010).

**ASSERITIVE DISCIPLINE**

The Assertive Discipline program was pioneered in the US in the 1970s by Lee and Marlene Canter, and is still in use internationally, including in Australia (Charles, 2011). **Assertive Discipline** emphasises teacher control and regulation of student behaviour in classroom and other settings, with the underlying goal of allowing teachers to get on with teaching and students to fully engage in the learning process. Teachers who use Assertive Discipline articulate very clearly to their students their beliefs about what is acceptable and what is unacceptable behaviour, and deliver consistent positive and negative consequences aligned to these expectations (Canter & Canter, 1990).

Assertive Discipline draws heavily on behavioural theory, and it and similar programs have been criticised for taking a mechanistic, unemotional approach to teacher-student engagement (Bear & Manning, 2014). The procedures prescribed in the original Assertive Discipline program were unequivocally authoritarian, and did not explicitly account for student thoughts, feelings or emotions. In their later work, however, Canter and Canter did emphasise the importance of care and trust in the classroom environment (2001).

Several principles underpin Assertive Discipline. First, students need clear behavioural limits and adults to exercise control over them, so teachers must be assertive and exercise their rightful duty to control students. External control teaches children to develop self-discipline. Second, classroom order requires clear behavioural limit-setting, and then rewards and sanctions for compliance and non-compliance. Teachers must understand that inappropriate behaviour can never be regarded as acceptable for whatever reason. Third, Assertive Discipline requires good teaching, which in turn requires both quality curriculum and quality pedagogy. Fourth, compliance (i.e. obedience) provides psychological safety for students. Finally, much of the disruptive student behaviour in schools is a product of relatively unstable, unsupportive and ill-disciplined home lives and resulting poor self-esteem and self-responsibility (Canter & Canter, 1990).

Assertive Discipline embraces schoolwide and family support for the consistent use of defined consequences following the demonstration of various behaviours. Teachers use an assertive style in communicating with students, including informing students about their right to choose particular behavioural pathways. Students who ‘do the right thing’ are reinforced, just as students who are ‘out of line’ need to learn from the consequences that follow their misbehaviour. The following ‘In practice’ box gives a simplified explanation of one teacher’s approach to classroom management based on Assertive Discipline.

**IN PRACTICE**

**Implementing Assertive Discipline**

**Step 1**

Ms Smith outlines the class rules. Students are provided with a very clear description of how they are expected to behave, and of the positive and negative consequences that will accompany particular behaviours. For example, three marks against a student’s name will mean loss of lunchtime play time, while three stickers will result in a bonus period of time using the class Internet-linked computer.
Step 2
Ms Smith conveys behavioural expectations using an assertive style (for example, a very definite tone in her voice) and strategies such as reminders, hints, questions and demands. Positive and negative behaviours are counted in some way (for example, in marks on the board, or with stamps on a group chart that lead to shared rewards) and appropriate consequences are consistently and immediately delivered.

Step 3
Ms Smith ensures that the same expectations of students are held by other members of the school community. Although the approval of the principal and parents to run the program had been sought prior to its implementation, at this stage, Ms Smith is concerned to achieve a consistency of expectations held by other staff members for students in the various school contexts of the playground, canteen, library and classrooms. Limits, rules and consequences are introduced to these new situations.

Assertive Discipline involves establishing a class discipline plan to maintain 'order', with the goal of facilitating the best teaching and learning. This requires clear limits and for rules to be set and taught. The teacher is expected to adopt an assertive style while at the same time remaining approachable and supportive. Compliance should be rewarded with formal recognition and incentives. Non-compliant disruptive behaviour invokes the enforcement of rules within discipline hierarchies that invoke consequences which increase in severity as inappropriate behaviour is repeated. Individual discipline plans may be negotiated, with the support of the school leadership and parents, but individual counselling should only occur outside of class time. Classroom rewards and sanctions do not necessarily equate to those that apply outside the classroom.

Observations conducted during the Canters’ ongoing research in primary and secondary classrooms (Canter & Canter, 1990) identified three types of teachers. Hostile teachers try to maintain control through gaining an 'upper hand', and respond strongly to misbehaviour. They tend to seem mean-spirited, and will often engage in putdowns or nag and cajole to gain compliance. Non-assertive teachers, on the other hand, commonly fail to back up their stated expectations with decisive actions. Often, they do not follow through on threats. Students in their classes get mixed messages about what is appropriate behaviour and what is not. Students of these two types of teachers are often dissatisfied, and inappropriate behaviours may occur frequently. Assertive teachers are the ideal teachers. They clearly communicate expectations, follow up on threats, give explicit directions and are perceived by students to be persistent and consistent. Inappropriate behaviour is not so common in these classrooms.

Key practices of Assertive Discipline
The Canters suggest various key practices to use to promote a PLE. We describe some of these in the following sections, drawing on a selection of the available literature (Canter, 1988; Canter &
Discipline hierarchy

A discipline hierarchy is a type of response hierarchy (see Chapter 1). It comprises a series of increasingly severe negative consequences as a contingency for repeated misbehaviour. At the lowest level of the hierarchy there is usually a warning, followed, perhaps, by the student’s name being written on the board (although this practice has been criticised). This may be followed by a more intrusive sanction, such as time-out. The final action might be removal from the room or a letter to parents.

As inappropriate behaviour is repeated, the teacher invokes negative consequences and escalating sanctions in a calm, matter-of-fact, systematic way. The student is reminded that their choices, and not the teacher’s choices, are the reason why they are experiencing negative consequences. Severe or dangerous behaviours should be immediately referred to the school leadership.

Deliberate repetition

When a student contravenes a rule, it is important to ask them firmly, but with a positive tone, to do what is expected instead. This instruction may have to be repeated until the student complies. Canter and Canter (1990) refer to this deliberate repetition as the broken-record approach. The instruction is repeated with words added as the context changes. When the student complies, they are recognised and thanked. If they do not comply, then the discipline hierarchy is invoked. The following is an example of the broken-record approach at work.

IN PRACTICE

Implementing the broken-record approach

Mrs High: Joan, please stop talking to Billy and get back to your seat.
Joan: But, Miss, I just want to ask him for his calculator.
Mrs High: I understand, that Joan, but please get back to your seat.
Joan: It’ll just take a minute. He always lends me his calculator.
Mrs High: That is very nice of him, but I would like you to get back to your seat and follow the rule about seeking help from others.
Joan: That’s not fair. I can’t finish my maths without it.
Mrs High: I get that, but you need to get back to your seat. Do you know what the consequence will be if you don’t?
Joan: Yes, Miss.
Joan sits down and asks her neighbour for a calculator.

Record-keeping

Teachers are encouraged to keep records of consequences invoked so that behaviour can be tracked, and consequences adjusted accordingly, if behaviour persists. Record-keeping also allows teachers to identify patterns of behaviour and to tailor their use of positive reinforcement to maximum effect. Additionally, it provides a record of behaviour when evidence is required at the most severe levels of the discipline hierarchy, such as a parent interview or a meeting with an executive teacher. Many school systems now use electronic databases to record misbehaviours that warrant systemic intervention.

The research on Assertive Discipline

A number of independent studies have reported Assertive Discipline to be effective at reducing levels of inappropriate behaviour (Desiderio & Mullennix, 2005; Feldman, 1994; Mandlebaum et al., 1983; Swinson & Cording, 2002). Some of these, though, have also reported caveats. For example, Feldman (1994) noted that a standard Assertive Discipline program had stronger effects on general classroom populations than on students with more challenging behaviours, and that students’ behaviour problems significantly declined when Assertive Discipline was combined with positive reinforcements more closely related to their preferences. Swinson and Cording (2002) cautioned of the potential for inappropriate behaviours to return once positive consequences for good behaviour are removed. From his study of a secondary school, Martin (1994) stated that Assertive Discipline needs to be implemented and supported properly in order to be effective in dealing with problem behaviours.

Render, Padilla and Krank’s (1989) review of research conducted up to the end of the 1980s concluded that the evidence for the effectiveness of Assertive Discipline was not strong. They cited the quality of the research designs as the main problems, and claimed that studies tended to examine the Assertive Discipline approach on its own, without comparison. Later reviews (Lake, 2004a; Robinson & Maines, 1994) concluded that, while Assertive Discipline may be effective in the shorter term, the lack of longitudinal research precludes judgements about its longer-term efficacy. In their study of schoolwide intervention based on Assertive Discipline, Lane and Menzies (2003) reported no significant effects on behaviour.

Critics say that Assertive Discipline does not account for the wider school community culture and other aspects of students’ ecosystems (Palardy, 1996). It presumes an absolute authority for teachers, with little consideration for democratic principles and/or student rights, and provides no pathways for the development of student self-discipline (Lake, 2004a; Robinson & Maines, 1994). Structure and limit-setting become indistinguishable from rule-setting. Other critics claim that both students and teachers are widely constrained by Assertive Discipline, and that, although it may control student behaviours, it does little to change the reasons for misbehaviours occurring (Gartrell, 1987; Palardy, 1996). The rigidity of the approach may leave little, if any, room for teachers to use professional discretion and to accommodate individual differences (Palardy, 1996; Robinson & Maines, 1994).

There is a need for more research into the effectiveness of Assertive Discipline in dealing with the problem of aggressive behaviour; especially bullying. The little pertinent literature on this subject suggests that Assertive Discipline, may not work well in relation to bullying, as either a preventative or an interventionist measure (Oliveus, 1995; Zottis et al., 2014). The research of Lake (2004b) and Rigby (2007) is representative in this regard.
Another major criticism directed at Assertive Discipline is its potential for allowing the humiliation and stigmatisation of students through the range of recommended negative consequences. Measures such as 'names on the board', removal to another room and detentions in public view have been identified as contributing to student 'notoriety' and embarrassment (Gartrell, 1987; Robinson & Maines, 1994). Canter responded by suggesting that if one method appears demeaning or humiliating, other, less overt strategies do exist, and that it is important that consequences are invoked calmly and consistently (Canter, 1988).

POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR SUPPORT (PBS)

Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) is a system that originated from wide concern in the educational community (predominantly in the US) that behavioural problems were on the rise despite the development and implementation of various initiatives in classroom and behaviour management over the preceding decades. It was argued that 'softer' approaches, such as the talk-based psychoeducational approaches and the 'tough', punishment-oriented approaches, were not consistently effective in reducing inappropriate behaviours, and especially challenging behaviours, either in the longer term or, in some cases, at all (Sugai & Horner, 2002; 2006).

PBS (along with Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports and Schoolwide Positive Behavior Support) was developed in the mid-1980s by George Sugai and his associates as an evidence-based, data-driven, whole-school approach designed to improve student behaviour, and to sustain positive outcomes over the longer term (Dunlap et al., 2009; Sugai et al., 2000). PBS is rooted in the ABA and FBA behavioural approaches (Sugai & Horner, 2002), but, like FBA, moves beyond pure consequences to inform both prevention and intervention practices.

The PBS approach is informed by the behavioural sciences, including developmental, social, cognitive and environmental psychology. These theoretical bases are used to explain the origin of inappropriate behaviour, as well as to design classroom management practices that help to reduce the problem behaviour. A number of strategies, such as ABA, FBA and environmental design, are utilised to inform both prevention and intervention practices.

Informed by behavioural science

The PBS approach is informed by the behavioural sciences, including developmental, social, cognitive and environmental psychology. These theoretical bases are used to explain the origin of inappropriate behaviour, as well as to design classroom management practices that help to reduce the problem behaviour. A number of strategies, such as ABA, FBA and environmental design, are utilised to inform both prevention and intervention practices.

Applies practical interventions

PBS refers to various practices as practical interventions. In this text, we refer to some of these as preventative measures. (We will address this topic in the sections following the heading 'A three-tiered approach'.) PBS offers a wide range of practical interventions, most of which are behavioural in nature. The involvement of key stakeholders — including the focus student/s, their parents and teachers, and specialist professionals, such as psychologists — is important to, and expected, in the PBS process so that interventions will be acceptable to all. The collection of data is essential to measuring both the extent of problem behaviour and the design and success of any intervention. Teachers are central to assisting students to change their behaviour, particularly through explicit instruction. The characteristics described here tend to make interventions more practical, better suited to the context in which the problem behaviour occurs and more successful in the longer term (McIntosh et al., 2013; Sugai & Horner, 2006).

Committed to lifestyle outcomes

The ultimate goal of any PBS intervention is to produce long-term behaviour change that makes the life of the focus student better. Improved behaviour should result not only in greater social acceptance, but also in better academic results and psychological and emotional health. This is feasible because PBS interventions are based on data, involve the student and other stakeholders, and use strategies that are proven to work. The use of humiliation or of any form of pain (such as corporal punishment) is not acceptable (Sugai et al., 2000). The language and the approaches to intervention used in PBS focus clearly on support for the student.

Adopt a systems perspective

Notwithstanding the key role of teachers, addressing inappropriate behaviour does not just involve the teacher in the classroom. Other teachers, school leaders, parents and the wider community are also involved. The use of a team approach, combined with support from school leadership and policy, ensures consistent implementation. The involvement of parents and specialists also optimises the chances of the intervention's success (Simonsen, Sugai & Negron, 2008). Recent research conducted in primary and secondary schools highlights the importance of this team approach to the sustained success of PBS interventions (McIntosh et al., 2013).
A three-tiered approach

PBS comprises three tiers (or levels) of behavioural support: the primary, secondary and tertiary tiers. In PBS, these tiers are referred to as 'interventions', but, since prevention is such a significant element, we use different terms here. The three tiers provide a continuum of schoolwide behaviour support, from minimally intrusive strategies designed for all students, through to intense individual programs. The general idea is for schools, and therefore classrooms, to have smooth-running contingency measures across all levels of severity of inappropriate behaviour.

According to Sugai and his associates, about 80 per cent of students respond well to primary-tier measures, in that inappropriate behaviours are largely prevented through these. When inappropriate behaviours do occur, quick action stops them from happening again. About 15 per cent of students require secondary-tier interventions for persistent or higher-level inappropriate behaviours, and up to 5 per cent may require more intense tertiary-tier interventions (Simonsen, Sugai & Negron, 2008; Sugai et al., 2000; Sugai & Horner, 2006).

Primary tier

The primary tier of behaviour support comprises strategies that are applied to all students in the school. Many of these are what we refer to in this text as 'preventative strategies'. Primary-tier interventions emphasize key aspects of classroom culture and climate, such as by establishing clear rules and expectations, establishing procedures for rewarding appropriate behaviour and consequences for inappropriate behaviour, teaching about appropriate behaviour, and establishing positive relationships. PBS advocates themselves describe these as intervention measures that help to prevent problem behaviour. (See, for example, Sugai & Horner, 2006.)

The terms 'intervention' and 'prevention' might become somewhat confused in this PBS context, so we suggest that you think of primary-tier strategies as preventative practices, in the knowledge that in many schools, PBS would be implemented as a whole-school intervention brought about by behaviour concerns. Going on from this point, other primary-tier measures involve putting systems in place across the school for measuring and recording behaviour, establishing a support team and coordinator, designing school policy, and building staff capacity (George, Kincaid & Pollard-Sage, 2009).

Secondary tier

The secondary tier of behaviour support resembles intervention as it is explained elsewhere in this text. Students at this tier have continued to behave inappropriately despite the use of primary-tier strategies. FBA is often used to determine the origins of the behaviours and to select the most suitable intervention strategies for them. Secondary-tier interventions involve a small number of students, but each intervention may require different activities, since many possible intervention strategies are suitable for this tier. Many of these have been in existence for decades, such as mentoring programs like Check & Connect and behaviour programs like Check-in, Check-out. Table 6.2 summarizes five of the most common secondary-tier interventions. The goal of each of these interventions is to support the student to engage in more appropriate behaviour and to make better choices (Hawken et al., 2009; Hoyle, Marshall & Yell, 2011).

Table 6.2 Five commonly used secondary-tier PBS interventions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INTERVENTION</th>
<th>SUMMARY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Check &amp; Connect</td>
<td>• Purpose: Improve student engagement and completion of schooling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Process: Students are assigned trained mentors who build a relationship with them and monitor their attendance, performance and behaviour (i.e. 'check'), while also providing support to help students solve academic or social problems (i.e. 'connect').</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Useful website: <a href="http://checkandconnect.umn.edu/">http://checkandconnect.umn.edu/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Check-in, Check-out</td>
<td>• Purpose: Promote appropriate behaviour choices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Process: Students are provided with regular feedback on their behaviour.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>As they come to school, they receive their checksheet with daily goals (i.e. 'check in') and receive feedback on these from teachers throughout the day. At the end of the day, the sheet is scored and rewards given out if goals are met (i.e. 'check out').</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Useful website: <a href="http://mibls.org/practices/behavior/tier-2-behavior/check-in,-check-out">http://mibls.org/practices/behavior/tier-2-behavior/check-in,-check-out</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Steps to Success (FSS)</td>
<td>• Purpose: Prevent school failure and delinquency in students with challenging behaviours.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Process: Students, identified through a screening process, work with an FSS coach who teaches them how to behave in appropriate ways. Parents are encouraged to be involved and to support these strategies at home.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Useful website: <a href="http://firststeptosuccess.org/index.html">http://firststeptosuccess.org/index.html</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social skills training</td>
<td>• Purpose: Improve student social interactions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Process: This is not a single program, but an umbrella term for strategies that enable the student to learn how to interact with others more competently and positively.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Useful websites: <a href="https://www.temel.ucla.edu/peers">https://www.temel.ucla.edu/peers</a>; <a href="http://www.ldonline.org/article/14545/">http://www.ldonline.org/article/14545/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Think Time</td>
<td>• Purpose: Minimise negative interactions between students and teachers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Process: Teachers and students are trained in how to respond when an interaction has the potential to become heated. The teacher responds calmly and directs student to the 'Think Time' room, where they can cool down, then debrief with another teacher and plan future steps with them before rejoining the class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Useful website: <a href="http://cecp.air.org/resources/success/think_time.asp">http://cecp.air.org/resources/success/think_time.asp</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tertiary tier

A small number of students—perhaps only a few in a medium-sized school—are likely to require tertiary-tier interventions. These are usually individualised and designed on the basis of data from a functional behaviour assessment (FBA). The role of these interventions is usually to manipulate the student's microsystem, or their responses to it. Antecedents, reinforcers and other environmental factors are considered by a collaborative team (including teachers and specialists) in order to design and implement an individual behaviour intervention plan (Horner, Sugai & Anderson, 2010; Sugai & Horner, 2006).

Steps in the PBS process

The process of setting up secondary- and tertiary-tier interventions is similar to that of FBA, so we will not explain these in detail. Sugai and Horner (2002) have also outlined the steps for setting up PBS across a whole school. In dealing with the inappropriate behaviour of one or a group of students, Sugai et al. (2000, pp. 131-43) suggest the following six steps:

1. Collect information about the behaviour and the conditions in which it occurs.
2. Formulate hypotheses that can be tested with data.
3. Collect direct observational data relating to the problem behaviour.
4. Design the behaviour support intervention.
5. Develop implementation scripts that specify when, how and with whom the intervention is to occur.
6. Evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention using new data.

The research on PBS

There is a substantial, growing body of research on PBS and its impacts on behaviour in schools and other contexts. Much of the school-based research reports that PBS reduces behaviour problems and delivers improvements in outcomes for students, such as reduced suspensions, and better academic results and school completion (Flannery et al., 2013; Sugai & Horner, 2006; LuiseUi et al., 2005; Scott & Barrett, 2004; Vincent & Tobin, 2011). Sometimes it takes a while for the effects to be felt, since PBS takes time and effort to implement (Flannery et al., 2013). Some studies have found that the success of PBS interventions vary according to the ethnic backgrounds of the student body (Fallon, O'Keeffe & Sugai, 2012; Vincent & Tobin, 2011).

PBS was developed in response to increased rates of aggressive student behaviour in schools, including bullying (Sugai & Horner, 2006). A number of studies into the effectiveness of PBS have reported reduced instances of bullying and other aggressive behaviours where PBS has been used (Dunlap et al., 2010; LuiseUi et al., 2005; Ross & Horner, 2009). Ross and Horner (2009) identified a number of intervention strategies and programs that have been used successfully as part of PBS to reduce bullying, including the Check-in, Check-out intervention (see Table 6.2) and the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (see http://violencepreventionworks.org). It will be interesting to see if follow-up and longitudinal studies provide evidence of the longer-term impacts of PBS on student behaviour. There has been some concern that PBS relies on a common school vision, and on consistent implementation across the whole school (Fallon, O'Keeffe & Sugai, 2012; Simonsen, Sugai & Negron, 2008). However, instruments to measure the level of implementation are available that can provide school leaders and teachers with the ability to monitor how PBS interventions are working at any tier (Horner et al., 2004; Lane et al., 2009).

What is particularly valuable to discerning educators in this body of literature is the substantial number of meta-analyses and reviews of research that have been conducted since the early 2000s. Most of these unreservedly report PBS to have positive impacts on student behaviour. Across sectors, though, results, while quite promising, have been modest, and more research is needed in certain sectors (Chitty, May & Chitty, 2012; Goh & Bambura, 2012; Solomon et al., 2012). Interestingly, a recent wide-ranging analysis of various behaviour management approaches showed PBS to have modest effects on student behavioural and academic outcomes compared to other approaches (Koepershoeck et al., 2016).

While a large number of the available studies of PBS have been conducted by the approach's originators and several associates (Horner et al., 2010), the good thing about this research is that it has been self-critical. There seems to be a focus on making PBS better, rather than on simply promoting it, and as a result, shortcomings (such as an overabundance of short-term studies) have been identified, and areas requiring more research have been made clear (Dunlap et al., 2010; Horner, Sugai & Anderson, 2010; Sugai & Horner, 2006).

BEHAVIOURAL APPROACHES AS PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION

Teachers who adopt a behavioural perspective to develop PLEs align to the theoretical principles we described earlier in this chapter because of their conviction that most student behaviour is stimulated by factors in certain environments. Their preventative practices will be focused, in the main, on manipulating the environment in such a way that appropriate behaviour will be reinforced. Therefore, in these teachers' classrooms, one is likely to see positive reinforcement mechanisms, such as reward systems or incentives for satisfactory performance, in use.

Teachers strive for an ordered and productive classroom culture so that good teaching and learning will flourish. One would expect that clearly stated rules and the consequences for breaking them would be widely displayed in classrooms, and well-known by the students. The word 'punishment' might or might not be used, but consequences for inappropriate behaviour will involve aversive activities that most students try to avoid. The classroom climate will likely feature high levels of order and control, and a strong orientation to academic goals.
Teachers will engage in relationship-building and in getting to know their students’ interests and characteristics. However, in line with behaviourist theory, students will have limited input into how the class is organised, since the leadership of the teacher is central to the development of PLEs.

A behaviourist learning environment focuses on student academic progress over any other aspects of development, and direct instruction may be a more prevalent form of pedagogy compared to constructivist forms. The curriculum in behaviourist classrooms is likely to include explicit teaching about appropriate values, attitudes and behaviours alongside the regular curriculum. The classroom might be organised in such a way as to minimise student interaction (rows or a U-shape may be the chosen seating arrangement; see figures 4.2 and 4.4 in Chapter 4), which can encourage off-task behaviour; except where groupwork is required.

In the following sections, we outline nine common strategies to be used in the manipulation of consequences to influence behaviour across the four approaches presented in this chapter – but especially ABA. Typically, teachers adapt and combine strategies, so this is simply an overview that is intended to encourage you to take a closer look at rationalising and designing your interventions. Strategies 1 to 4 are designed to increase appropriate behaviours; strategies 5 to 9 are designed to decrease inappropriate behaviours.

**Strategy 1: Token economies and positive levels systems**

Token economies and positive levels systems are systems designed to allow students, through the demonstration of targeted behaviours, to earn cards, vouchers, points or other tokens that are redeemable for positive consequences. Students may accumulate and trade tokens for higher-order reinforcers.

**Strategy 2: Contracting**

A contract is a written agreement between the teacher and the student (or group of students) that outlines behavioural expectations, consequences (if expectations are either met or not met) and a timeframe. The key element of a contract is the clear statement of the ‘if … then’ relationship. The teacher may also indicate in the agreement what he/she will do to assist the student/s to achieve a goal.

**Strategy 3: Shaping**

Shaping is the selective reinforcement of increasingly more accurate demonstrations of a target behaviour. Over time, the teacher provides reinforcement only for behaviours (or chains of behaviours) that are (progressively) similar to the targeted behaviour. For example, a student learning to wait his/her turn to speak by raising his/her hand to gain attention may first be reinforced for listening to another student, or for using appropriate eye contact. These behaviours need not be reinforced again, but a hesitant attempt to raise the hand without calling out will be.

**Strategy 4: The Premack principle**

The Premack principle, applied to education, asserts that students will engage in activities they like more frequently than those they do not like. (You are perhaps thinking, ‘How obvious!’) The principle is used as a tool to promote appropriate behaviours. In the case of difficult academic tasks, a teacher using the Premack principle as a prevention strategy will universally require students to engage in the tasks and/or produce work before they can engage in more enjoyable activities. You might remember a teacher in primary school saying something like, ‘If you don’t finish your long division, there will be no art this afternoon.’ Believe it or not, some teachers do operate this way, although we would discourage the use of curriculum areas as aversives or rewards.

While it can get results, this approach can also entrench negative attitudes toward some areas, such as maths. Alternatively, the Premack principle can be used as an intervention for individual students. For example, a student who is reticent to complete academic tasks may be directed to complete them in order to have some free computer time later in the day.

**Strategy 5: Differential reinforcement**

Differential reinforcement is a strategy wherein the teacher selectively reinforces alternative, incompatible or other behaviours with a view to those targeted for reduction. This positive strategy emphasizes the development of appropriate behaviours simultaneously with decreases in troublesome behaviours. For example, a student who is very frequently out of her or his seat will be contingently reinforced for sitting down.

**Strategy 6: Tactical ignoring**

Tactical ignoring, also called planned and systemic ignoring, is a form of extinction (a concept we discussed earlier in this chapter) that works well on low-level inappropriate behaviours. A classic example is the teacher who ignores a student’s attention-seeking and calling out. Tactical ignoring is best used in combination with a reinforcement program for appropriate behaviour (e.g. in the example of the student who is very frequently out of his/her seat, when the student behaves acceptably—perhaps by waiting their turn and raising their hand), either for the target student specifically or for others in the immediate context who are behaving in a socially appropriate manner.

**Strategy 7: Overcorrection**

In overcorrection, when a student behaves inappropriately, she/he is required either to restore the situation to better than its original condition (this is known as restitutinal overcorrection) or to practice the acceptable (i.e. replacement) behaviour repeatedly (this is known as positive practice overcorrection). An example would be lining-up practice.

**Strategy 8: Response cost**

Response cost involves the removal of a positive reinforcer, or a part of it (such as token economy points), as a direct consequence of undesirable behaviour.

**Strategy 9: Time-out from positive reinforcement**

Time-out from positive reinforcement is the temporary removal of an individual’s (or a group’s) opportunity to receive reinforcement. The definition used in ABA is different from Glasser’s notion of time-out as a chance to calm down, work through feelings and make a plan (see Chapter 7).
Time-out from positive reinforcement is viewed as being neither punitive nor positive. Before implementing time-out, the teacher must first consider whether reinforcement is likely to occur in the classroom. If time-out is implemented, the teacher must carefully consider the student's welfare—for example, where the student is going to be placed, and for how long, and their physical safety.

Interventions based on behavioural theories are very structured and procedural; they are focused on changing observable behaviours, and have little interest in the beliefs or feelings of individual students. The primary notion underpinning this approach is that all behaviour is learned, and so can therefore be replaced by another behaviour, subject to appropriate reinforcement.

Learning, here, is best explained in terms of the stimulus–response–reinforcement paradigm. Challenging behaviours tend to emerge in students if they are repeatedly given inappropriate reinforcement, or if they are repeatedly reinforced for these behaviours. The negative cycle of misbehaviour and reinforcement can, at worst, become an entrenched, self-reinforcing ritual, for both the student and the teacher.

A teacher-directed intervention aimed at breaking such a ritual seeks to interrupt the negative stimulus–response–reinforcement chain. Interventions based on behavioural theories are almost always driven by the teacher, with little student input, but the more recent influence of cognitive behavioural theories and FBA practices has precipitated a shift towards involving students in some decision making and consultation.

A general five-step procedure for conducting a behavioural intervention is outlined in Figure 6.2. Note that these steps are quite similar to those described in ABA and FBA, so we do not explain them in detail again here.

**Figure 6.2 Conducting a behavioural intervention**

1. **Establish the need for a behavioural intervention.**
   - Note the problem behaviour/s.
   - Collect first evidence (usually observations).

2. **Identify the inappropriate (target) behaviour.**
   - Obtain baseline data on the problem behaviour.
   - ABA or FBA may be used.

3. **Identify an appropriate (replacement) behaviour.**
   - Based on data gathered.
   - In line with expectations and climate/culture.

4. **Implement an intervention to change behaviour.**
   - Set objectives for behaviour change.
   - Using behaviourist principles, design an intervention that is likely to reduce the target behaviour and increase the replacement behaviour.

5. **Review the intervention.**
   - Collect new data.
   - Evaluate the intervention.

---

**YOU BE THE JUDGE**

Teaching in Australian schools is increasingly being informed and driven by evidence-based practice. This means strategies that have been proven to work, preferably through empirical research and not just anecdotally. We would like you to decide for yourself which of the behavioural approaches described in this chapter you think would be the most effective in dealing with the range of inappropriate behaviours—from low-level forms to extremes such as violence and vandalism—in a classroom.

We would like you to come to this decision via the following two-pronged process:

1. Go over our descriptions of each of the approaches we have presented in this chapter, and ask yourself: 'Which one "feels" like the best approach for me?'
2. Take a close look at the research findings for each of the approaches, and decide for yourself which of them is likely to be the most effective according to what the research has found. You might want to follow up on some of the studies we cite, or use the 'Weblinks' at the end of this chapter for more information.

After doing these two things, which approach is, in your view, the best and why?

**Response hierarchy for a behavioural approach**

The response hierarchy shown in Figure 6.3 is based on Assertive Discipline. Sarah, has been telling jokes to her friend Lisa, despite receiving little attention, and despite the class rule about paying attention when the teacher is speaking. Her behaviour is starting to distract other students. In the first instance, the teacher pauses, looks at Sarah, and instructs her to pay attention to the lesson, or her name will be put on the board. Sarah tries to argue, but the teacher simply repeats the demand. When Sarah tries to argue again, the teacher places her name on the board. Sarah responds with appropriate behaviour for two minutes, but then resumes whispering to Lisa. The teacher instructs Sarah to go to the time-out area for five minutes. When Sarah returns, she is attentive and quiet for a few minutes, but then is observed talking to Lisa again, while trying to cover her mouth with her hand. The teacher places her on lunchtime detention.

**Figure 6.3 Response hierarchy for Sarah using Assertive Discipline**
PROFESSIONAL REFLECTION

In this chapter we described a number of behavioural approaches to the establishment and maintenance of PLEs. Having read the chapter, perhaps one or more of these approaches particularly appeals to you. The development of your professional philosophy of teaching should incorporate at least some of these approaches. The purpose of this reflection is to get you thinking about how the theoretical approaches might work for you. Consider the following questions:

1. Have you seen any of these approaches, or aspects of them, being used in a classroom or a school? If so, how well did they work?
2. Of the approaches presented in this chapter, which one/s do you feel most comfortable using in the classroom, and why?
3. Would you adapt the approaches? If so how?
4. If you listed more than one approach in Question 2, how might these two (or more) approaches work together as a behaviour management strategy (or sequence of strategies) in a classroom management plan? If you listed one approach in Question 2, how might you combine it with another behaviour management strategy?
5. Now think of a common inappropriate behaviour (not too challenging!), and imagine that you are facing this in your classroom right now. How would you deal with it in light of your answers to Questions 1–4?

Having considered behavioural approaches, it is now time to see how these might apply to your philosophy of teaching. Go to ‘Your philosophy for a positive learning environment’ and respond to the guide questions.

SUMMARY

In this chapter we explored a variety of behavioural approaches to the creation and maintenance of PLEs. We began by explaining the philosophical and methodological underpinnings of behaviourism, and then explained in some depth four approaches that are prevalent in schools: Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA), Functional Behaviour Assessment (FBA), Assertive Discipline, and Positive Behaviour Support (PBS).

We provided an overview of how behavioural approaches would play out as preventative practices and as interventions. At the end of the chapter, we asked you to make a judgement call regarding the most effective behaviour management approach according to your own emerging professional philosophy of teaching and the research.

It is important to note that we have described each approach in its ‘pure’ form, and it is worth thinking about how the approaches may complement one another. Indeed, two of the approaches described in this chapter (FBA and PBS) use elements of one another, as well as parts of other theoretical approaches that we will look at in the next few chapters.
The point here is that you must learn what is, and what is not, reinforcing for your students – individually and collectively as a class. List some innovative ways of doing this.

Activity 6.5
Table 6.1 lists a few standard and additional types of positive reinforcers.
- Add to each column at least five reinforcers that are relevant to your preferred teaching/learning setting.

Activity 6.6
Reflect on your days as a school student. Identify a teacher who best demonstrated a psychoeducational approach to, or strategy for, classroom management.
- Compare and contrast this teacher’s approaches and strategies with a peer.
- Would you like to use an approach like the one your teacher used? Give reasons for your answer.

Activity 6.7
This chapter’s section on Assertive Discipline outlined Canter and Canter’s (1990) reference to hostile, non-assertive and assertive teachers.
- Can you recall teachers who match such a profile?
- How might you view your approach to teaching in these terms?
- What is the relevance of these terms to your professional philosophy of teaching?

Online resources
CENGAGE Visit http://login.cengagebrain.com and search for this book to access the study tools that come with your textbook.

Weblinks
‘Getting to know ABA’ (Applied Behavioural Strategies)
http://www.appliedbehavioralstrategies.com/what-is-aba.html#2

Video: ‘Introduction to applied behavior analysis (ABA)’
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yCx-OIzgJW

Center for Effective Collaboration and Practice (CECP)
http://cecp.air.org

‘Assertive discipline: a systematic approach’ (Canter’s assertive discipline model wiki, 2012)
http://assertivedisciplineclassroommanagement.pbworks.com/w/page/54424891/Canter%27sAssertive%20Discipline%20Model

Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports (US)
http://www.pbis.org/

Missouri Schoolwide Positive Behavior Support (US)
http://pbs.missouri.org/

‘Positive behaviour support (PBS)’ (Government of Western Australia Department of Education)
http://pbis.org/

References


Learning outcomes

When you have worked through this chapter, you should be able to:

- demonstrate a clear understanding of the cognitive behavioural perspective on classroom management
- compare and contrast this approach to classroom management with other approaches covered in this text
- briefly describe and explain the nature of rational emotive behaviour therapy (REBT) and the ‘Talk sense to yourself’ and ‘Stop Think Do’ programs
- discuss cognitive behavioural methods and social cognitive strategies in the context of behavioural prevention and intervention in schools and classrooms
- demonstrate a basic understanding of each of the key terms listed at the end of this chapter.

Chapter overview

- Starter story: An angry young man
- Introduction
- The cognitive behavioural perspective
- Cognitive behavioural approaches
- Rational emotive behaviour therapy (REBT)
- The ‘Talk sense to yourself’ program
- ‘Stop Think Do’
- Social cognitive theory
- Cognitive behavioural approaches as prevention and intervention
- Professional reflection
- Summary
- Key terms
- Individual and group activities
- Online resources
- Weblinks
- References
INTRODUCTION

By this point, you have developed a knowledge of behavioural approaches to classroom management, and should have considered the strengths and weaknesses of these approaches. Cognitive behaviourism emerged as an approach to managing behaviour out of some dissatisfaction with the behaviourist way of doing things. You will recall that earlier behaviourist approaches, such as ABA, focused on observable behaviours and addressed inappropriate behaviour by manipulating variables external to the student, such as antecedents and consequences. FBA and PBS, which came later on, were a little different.

Behaviourist theory was for some time the accepted theory of behaviour. However, another school of thought, known as cognitive theory, arose around the proposition that behaviour is the result of processes that occur in the minds of individuals. The work of Jean Piaget was influenced by, and contributed to, this theory. Cognitive theory ‘makes sense’ in that people generally think about what they do before they act. Not dissimilarly, though, behaviourism also contends that behaviour is influenced by external stimuli, such as antecedents and consequences.

Eventually, a theoretical consensus evolved that behaviour originated not only from antecedents and consequences, but also from an individual’s thought processes. The behaviourist preoccupation with observable, ‘overt’ behaviour had neglected this aspect of human psychology. At the same time, cognitivists tended to be preoccupied with the ‘covert’ processes of thinking, perceiving, imagining, and so on. Cognitive behavioural theory united and integrated both perspectives, and in so doing presented educators with a fuller picture of why students (mis)behave the way they do!

In this chapter, we will explore cognitive behavioural theory and congruent approaches to establishing PLEs. We will start by describing and explaining the purely cognitive behavioural approaches to behaviour and classroom management, and then progress to the more recent social cognitive approaches.

THE COGNITIVE BEHAVIOURAL PERSPECTIVE

Recall this chapter’s ‘Starter story’. George had issues with self control and anger management. The antecedents to his outbursts are events that many students encounter daily, and are too varied to allow specific causality to be attributed. Behavioural consequences have been ineffective. Clearly, there is something beyond what can be seen that is driving George’s behaviour. Cognitive behavioural theory can offer an explanation for this behaviour, and provide George’s teacher, Stephen, with tools to manage it.

Cognitive behavioural theory is based on certain principles, including:

• that individuals have the capacity for both good and bad, and make choices about their behaviour
• that individuals are self-directed and not merely passive responders to external influences
• that behavioural choices are influenced by consequences and social context, values, motivations, problem-solving skills, self-organisational skills and interpretations of feedback from others
• that discipline should be both managerial, creating order for learning, and educational, developing self-discipline as internalised compliance.

Cognitive behavioural approaches to classroom management address both observable and unobservable aspects of behaviour. As the introduction to this chapter suggests, approaches to establishing PLEs that are influenced by cognitive behavioural theory recognise the influence of environmental factors on behaviour. However, and more importantly, they also recognise that thinking processes, including attitudes, influence behaviour. We will examine these processes a little more closely later on.
Cognitive behavioural theory, as applied to education, contends that students can be empowered to recognise how their thinking influences their actions, and can be taught how to control those actions themselves. Inappropriate behaviour is viewed as a problem that can be solved using a combination of environmental manipulation (such as antecedent control or reinforcement) and mental strategies (such as self-talk or thinking through alternative actions).

Cognitive behavioural theory focuses on restructuring aspects of students’ worldviews, and this influences how students relate to others. The relationship between emotions (feelings), thoughts (beliefs/cognition) and behaviours (acts) is central. Life experiences involving the microsystem (in this context, in the class and school environments) variously influence thinking, feelings and actions. Negative life experiences tend to ‘program’ negative thinking and feelings, and these frequently lead to inappropriate behaviours.

Cognitive behavioural theory generally posits that there are four main processes involved in cognition: the basic thinking processes; imagery; inner speech; and metacognition (Chaplain, 2003). Let’s take a closer look at these in order to understand how they relate to behaviour.

Basic thinking processes

Basic thinking processes are the processes that individuals use to organise their conceptual understandings of the world. This includes how they perceive what they see, how they remember objects, events, feelings and other experiences, and what schemas they construct to represent those experiences. Basic thinking processes also include the attitudes and feelings that individuals develop towards those experiences.

For example, a younger student’s conception of ‘sport’ might include activities like cricket and football but not tennis, due to lack of experience with tennis. For her/him, certain emotions might be connected with certain sports if those emotions were experienced at a previous time of engagement. An older student, alternatively, may have a wider conception of sport as a result of having had more diverse experiences over time.

Imagery

Imagery refers to the way in which individuals visualise the things they experience. This is often influenced by past experiences. Imagery is frequently the result of basic thinking, in that the way a person perceives something is generally how they will remember it – and, therefore, how they will visualise it in their mind when they recall it. For example, continuing the example of sport introduced above: when thinking about sport, the younger student might visualise a person kicking a football and/or someone batting at the crease.

Inner speech

Inner speech is an internal dialogue that a student engages in as they think through a situation or learn how to do something. It is usually a conscious process, in that individuals are (or can be) aware that they are doing it as they do it. Inner speech can direct behaviour, or direct behaviour that is being rehearsed before it is actually performed. Using the example of the young student again: when asked to describe sport, she/he might ‘talk through’ the possible explanations mentally before actually opening her/his mouth to explain or picking up a pen to write.

Metacognition

Metacognition is thinking about thinking. It can include many processes, such as evaluating the validity of a belief or idea; considering alternative ways of perceiving a situation; choosing different ways to respond to a situation; or simply thinking about how thinking is done. The ability to think about how one thinks is the key to self-regulation.

COGNITIVE BEHAVIOURAL APPROACHES

Classroom management strategies that are based on cognitive behavioural theories have characteristics, qualities and methods drawn from both behavioural and cognitive theories. Cognitive behavioural theories are sometimes regarded as adaptations of, or extensions on, behavioural theories; but interventions based on cognitive behavioural theories are clearly identifiable with certain discernible features. Strategies based on cognitive behavioural theory may also incorporate elements of psychoeducational theory (see Chapter 8). Prevention and intervention strategies tend to be more procedural and ‘formularic’ than in psychoeducational theory, but much less so than those based on behavioural theories. In their discussion of how these techniques have evolved, Hart and Morgan (1993) state that ‘these approaches were designed to preserve the best of clinical behavioural interventions while recognising the “inner” (cognitive) experiences of the individual’ (p. 2). That is, thoughts and behaviours are not incompatible, and effective cognitive behavioural interventions recognise and accommodate them both.

Cognitive behavioural interventions seek to ‘reprogram’ the way that students perceive and interpret their experiences. Cognitive behavioural strategies applied in schools are generally adaptations of cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT) that do not require qualified therapists and that teachers can implement with less formal training. The focus here is on changing the individual student’s worldview – specifically, their thinking and feelings about their experiences – in order to change their behaviours.

Classroom management strategies based on cognitive behavioural theories have the potential to address a number of challenges that teachers commonly experience when attempting to promote appropriate behaviour. They are useful in bridging the gap between student reliance on external
consequences for appropriate behaviour and the internal regulation of performance. Instead of waiting for somebody else to establish goals and encourage appropriate behaviour, the student may learn to self-instruct, self-monitor and self-reinforce his/her own actions. This results in increasingly independent and responsible behaviour, enhancing the student’s self-perception. This belief or expectation is developed through individual experiences, and can be a powerful determinant of future behaviour patterns. Accordingly, teachers need to identify methods to actively improve the efficacy of their students. Interventions based on cognitive behavioural theories also assist generalised behaviour change by enabling students to generate solutions to problems under new and varying conditions.

Cognitive behavioural theory seeks to develop student self-management skills to the point of (behavioural) independence (Kaplan & Carter, 1995). Competent self-management increases student motivation to comply with instruction and directions, and gives the student ‘portable’, readily generalisable metacognitive skills. These skills can also enhance the efficacy of other behavioural interventions. Cognitive behavioural theory is mostly used for students with more challenging behaviours, particularly those exhibiting low self-esteem, disruptive behaviour and underachievement, but it has also proved facilitative in improving a range of regular academic skills through student self-talk. Our search of the literature revealed no significant cognitive behavioural programs specifically targeting bullying, but this is likely because bullying behaviour is often subsumed under the label of challenging or aggressive behaviour. Advocates of this approach also argue that enhancing cognitive skills through training can improve an individual’s mental health (see Banks & Zionts, 2009; Ellis, 2001; Petersen, 1995).

What does the cognitive behavioural approach mean for the classroom teacher? Essentially, a teacher using interventions based on cognitive behavioural theory may incorporate the use of strategies such as antecedent control, reinforcement and measurement of behaviour change alongside, and complementary to, the development of a student’s use of strategies such as self-instruction, cognitive problem solving and self-regulation. The teacher assists the student to generate and use thinking strategies to modify behaviour, and modifying behaviour remains the focus of defined consequences.

The role of the teacher in cognitive behavioural interventions is to take a person-centred, counselling-type approach; to ‘reprogram’ or reconstruct some of the student’s thinking. The development and implementation of these interventions can be quite demanding, and combines the knowledge and skill demands of cognitive, psychoeducational and behavioural interventions. Strong listening skills (as explained in Chapter 2) are critical. A cognitive behavioural intervention involves taking time to meet with the student, hearing his or her worldview, and to help them back on the path towards positive well-being. Some people are intuitively ‘good’ at this form of intervention, but we recommend that you read further before engaging in interventions based on cognitive behavioural theory. Interventions of this kind can also be very successfully applied to groups of students (Briesch & Chafouleas, 2009), but we encourage you to focus on an individual student in the first instance.

Consider the example given in the following ‘In practice’ box, which outlines the four steps of a cognitive behavioural method that one teacher used in her class.

### IN PRACTICE

**Miss Moore: Using a cognitive behavioural method**

**Step 1: Observe students.**

Miss Moore has identified five students in her PE class who consistently disrupt their peers. A lot of antecedents, such as the nature of learning activities and the clarity of teacher directions, have been adjusted in an effort to address the problem. An ABC observation record – completed by one of Miss Moore’s colleagues during a free period – suggests that most of the disruption occurs during the ‘independent practice’ phase of activities on the school oval. The disruptive behaviours include making inappropriate noises, grabbing and tackling others, and hurling gear down the hill adjacent to the oval.

**Step 2: Discuss situation with students.**

Having defined the target behaviours and collected data over several days on how often each of the five individuals displays these behaviours in class, Miss Moore has an informal individual chat with each student and discusses possible objectives. She suggests three strategies: (a) that, following several training sessions with Miss Moore, each student self-instruct silently whenever the impulse to disrupt peers occurs, (b) that each student keep a written record of instances when this strategy is used, and of the result in each case (i.e. continued appropriate participation or disruption to others); and (c) that each student compare daily with Miss Moore records they have kept in relation to instances of disruption and self-regulation. If an individual reaches her or his specific objective, a positive consequence, such as supervised computer time, is made available.

**Step 3: Monitor individual progress.**

Miss Moore provides ongoing instruction on self-instruction and tracks student progress, as well as supervising student access to positive consequences.

**Step 4: Focus on maintenance and generalisation.**

Dependent on individual progress, Miss Moore may increase the amount of time with reduced or no disruption (for example, every two days or weekly) that is required before access to agreed preferred consequences is provided to students. Students also receive specific encouragement and support in order to generalise the application of this self-instruction strategy into other settings.

Those of you who wish to use cognitive behavioural interventions should refer to the practical manual by Kaplan and Carter (1995) and a paper by Swaggart (1998). The *Cognitive Behavior Therapy Journal* is another excellent source of relevant papers (note that ‘behavior’ is the American spelling for behaviour). We will now look at three well known, widely used cognitive behavioural approaches. Following these, we will explore social cognitive approaches.
RATIONAL EMOTIVE BEHAVIOUR THERAPY (REBT)

Albert Ellis’s rational emotive behaviour therapy (or REBT) – a development of his rational emotive therapy from the late 1950s – focuses on challenging irrational (negative, counterproductive and anxiety-producing) thoughts and replacing them with rational (positive and productive) thoughts (Ellis, 1969; 1995). This approach was initially used by cognitive behavioural therapists, but aspects of it have been adapted for use in schools by teachers and support staff working with students who demonstrate challenging or concerning behaviours (Watter, 1988; Wilde, 1996).

REBT is based on the assumption that individuals prefer to experience happiness with their lives and satisfaction with their circumstances rather than not be happy and experience dissatisfaction with their lives. We know, of course, that happiness and satisfaction are not experienced by people all of the time. We also know that some individuals do not deal well with a perceived lack of happiness. Some students in our care may be quite prone, due to irrational thinking, to turn to inappropriate behaviour as a way to cope. The goal of REBT is to teach individuals to think more rationally about the things that upset them, and as a result behave more appropriately (Ellis, 2001).

Ellis theorised that irrational thinking and consequent inappropriate behaviour stem from beliefs about the situation that are causing negative emotions (1995). This notion is commonly held outside the world of psychologists and therapists. For instance, in an article concerning the long-awaited, much anticipated motion picture Star Wars: The Force Awakens, actor Mark Hamill addressed the possible disappointment of some fans with the film by reminding them that it was ‘only a movie’. He later said, ‘I was trying to appeal to the rational, sane people who know movies don’t really change your life, and if you really think we can make you feel like you’re 10 years old at 38, you know what’s gonna happen. So just don’t think that and you’ll be fine’ (Hiatt, 2015). This example illustrates how individuals can feel disappointment or frustration from life events not because of the events themselves, but because of how they perceived they ‘should’ have happened.

Explaining behaviour: The ABC model

The development of negative emotions from experiences is explained by Ellis (1969; 2001) through his ABC model. In this model, A is the experience or activating event; B is the individual’s belief about the event or situation; and C is the emotional reaction or consequence emanating from B. Based on prior experiences or on other factors, individuals will hold either rational beliefs, leading to healthy emotional consequences, or irrational beliefs, resulting in unhealthy emotions. It is the unhealthy emotions that lead to inappropriate behaviours. We illustrate how this works in Figure 7.1, using the example of George from our ‘Starter story’ as well as with another student from his class, Richard, who is experiencing the same situation.

As Figure 7.1 suggests, if teachers can understand students’ beliefs about situations, they can also understand why students behaved in the way they did. If the teacher wants to help students to behave more appropriately, the key, then, is to understand the nature of students’ emotions and the drivers behind their emotions. Proponents of the REBT approach would argue that inappropriate behaviour stems from psychological disturbances (arising from irrational beliefs) and resulting unhealthy emotions.

Rational and irrational beliefs

**Rational beliefs**, also known as functional beliefs, are those that do not lead to disturbances, and emotions that can be positive or negative. (Note that negative emotions are reasonable in particular circumstances.) Rational beliefs tend to promote appropriate adaptive behaviours.

For example, a student may feel annoyed at a classmate (i.e. a negative emotion) for moving in front of him and disrupting his view of a teacher’s demonstration, and respond by politely asking that student to move. As Ellis (1969, p. 13) notes, some rational beliefs held by such a student might include:

- I want to be accepted by people, but you cannot always please everybody.
- I should achieve good results, but if I tried my best, I have still done a good job.
- I do not like feeling pain or discomfort and should get some help if it gets too much.
- Other students should do the right thing, but sometimes they make mistakes.
- Things that are scary or that worry me may not necessarily come true, and if they do, I can get help.

**Irrational beliefs**, also known as dysfunctional beliefs, are so called because they are not normally attainable, and represent a thought-out ideal rather than practised reality. They place demands on...
themselves, on other people and on the wider world, and these cannot be met all of the time. Ellis (1969, pp. 10-13) suggested a number of irrational beliefs which underpinned psychological disturbances, unhealthy emotions, and, ultimately, inappropriate (or 'maladaptive') behaviours. Some that may apply to students are expressed in the following statements:

- I need love and must be accepted by everyone, so I must avoid disapproval.
- I must achieve good results and make no mistakes, otherwise I am a failure and worthless.
- Other students should do the right thing and if they don’t they should be punished.
- I should not have to feel pain or discomfort and if I do it cannot be tolerated.
- Things ought to be the way I want them to be and I cannot stand it when they are not.
- Problems must have a solution and I cannot take it when things are not sorted out.
- I am unhappy because things are not in my control and there is nothing I can do to feel better.
- I should worry about dangers and things that frighten me because if I don’t they might happen.
- I cannot handle life’s difficulties, problems and responsibilities and therefore should avoid them.
- Things that have happened in the past are causing my problems in the present.

**Psychological disturbances**

Ellis (1969) posited two types of psychological disturbance that occur when irrational beliefs are challenged by a life event: ego disturbance and discomfort disturbance. Ellis argued that these lead to the development of unhealthy emotions, which in turn motivate inappropriate behaviours.

**Ego disturbance**

Ego disturbance occurs when irrational, normally unattainable, ideals about oneself are challenged by an event (Froggatt, 2005). A situation such as failing a test or not being picked for a team may prove too challenging to a student’s self image, and may result in negative emotions. For example, when a student who holds the belief that they must make no mistakes fails to successfully complete a forward roll at Physical Education, he/she is likely to become angry for not having lived up to her/his ideal.

**Discomfort disturbance**

Discomfort disturbance, also referred to as frustration intolerance (Filippello et al., 2014) occurs when irrational beliefs about other people are challenged. Discomfort disturbances can include a low tolerance, or an absence of tolerance, for unfair treatment/decisions; uncertainty and confusion; and physical or emotional discomfort. For example, George from our ‘Starter story’, may hold the belief that people should either do the right thing or be punished, which may explain his anger and subsequent aggression.

**Unhealthy emotions**

We have seen from Ellis’ ABC model that certain situations trigger students to assess their beliefs about the situation, which in turn leads to an emotion and to subsequent related behaviour. We know that when irrational beliefs are challenged, this leads to unhealthy emotions. While healthy emotions are those that are appropriate to a situation and that normally lead to appropriate behaviour responses at C (the emotional action or consequence emanating from B), unhealthy emotions would be deemed inappropriate or unhelpful to a situation and would lead to inappropriate behaviour (Collard & O’Kelly, 2011). Some examples of unhealthy emotions include anger, anxiety, depressed mood, guilt, hurt and jealousy.

**Adaptive and maladaptive behaviours**

Most aspects of REBT have been researched in various contexts, including schools. Links between disturbances, unhealthy emotions and inappropriate behaviour are well established (Filippello et al., 2014; Flanagan, Allen & Henry, 2010; David, 2014). The literature on REBT posits that healthy emotions (provoked by rational beliefs, or rBs) lead to adaptive behaviours, while unhealthy emotions (provoked by irrational beliefs, or iBs) lead to maladaptive behaviours. These relationships, based on the ABC model, are shown in the equations below.

\[
A > rB > C \quad \text{(Healthy emotions and adaptive behaviour)}
\]

\[
A > iB > C \quad \text{(Unhealthy emotions and maladaptive behaviour)}
\]

**Adaptive behaviours** are those that help the student to deal with the situation occurring at the A stage (i.e. the experience or activating event) in the ABC model. They are regarded here as appropriate behaviours. In terms of ecological theory, this stage would entail positive interactions within a student’s microsystem and mesosystem, such as a teacher acknowledging a student’s refusal to be distracted by taunts from peers.

**Maladaptive behaviours** are those that students claim represent an attempt to deal with a situation, but that in reality do not help it, and in fact often make things worse. In the case of George from our ‘Starter story’, he may have punched Richard in an attempt to sort out the situation, but he has made things worse by this action. He broke a class rule, and created a negative interaction within his microsystem. When the teacher gets involved, this leads to negative interactions within his mesosystem.

**REBT in the classroom**

The aim of REBT is to replace irrational thought processes with rational, self-helping ones (Flanagan et al., 2010). REBT techniques have been employed quite widely as interventions for challenging behaviours. Students are guided through a process of change: from unhealthy emotions and maladaptive behaviours to healthy emotions and adaptive behaviours (Collard & O’Kelly, 2011).

A key practice that students can learn is to deliberate before taking action, and be more conscious of what they are doing and why. An important outcome of the process is for students to deal with their irrational beliefs and come closer to a position where they are accepting of themselves and of others (McMahon, 2011). Ultimately, students should have greater control over their emotions, and so eventually over their behaviour (Ellis, 1969; 2001; Froggatt, 2005).
As with behavioural approaches, the teacher is central to the REBT process. He or she must facilitate the process through directive questioning and by providing suggestions that foster more adaptive behaviours (the behavioural element). However, the student is also involved, to the extent that he/she must explain what they are thinking and feeling (the cognitive element) and eventually are required to implement their new skills and behaviours without direct teacher presence.

Several classroom strategies and programs have been developed from REBT techniques originally used in clinical practice. A general procedure for responding to students’ maladaptive behaviours (adapted from Chaplain 2003, pp. 180–1) is to identify specific observable misbehaviours; identify student strengths and accomplishments; challenge irrational self-beliefs; identify actual and potential areas for increased self-control and minimised negative self-talk; guide the rationalisation (‘reprogramming’) of thinking and emotions; and set measurable behavioural objectives. In the following sections, we describe some specific REBT strategies. The first three are individual interventions, while the final two are curriculum-based programs that can be used with individuals, small groups or whole classes.

**Distraction**

Distraction is regarded as a stopgap measure to enable students to ‘cool down’ before unhealthy emotions get the better of them. They do not solve problems, as such, but can be effective in the short term, prior to enabling the engagement of other strategies (Wilde, 2008). Distraction involves getting students to pick a scene or event that inspires positive emotions and/or calm, and to go to that ‘picture’ every time they feel they are getting angry, jealous, hurt, and so on. Having an actual picture (such as from a favourite birthday party) or memento (such as a trophy won at netball) close at hand will help students to focus. Sometimes the teacher needs to guide the student through a process of finding and choosing the distraction.

**Rational emotive imagery**

Rational emotive imagery is a counselling-style technique that puts the student into the situation that led to inappropriate behaviour, attempts to help the student to realise what was happening to them emotionally at the time, and then encourages the student to consider alternative beliefs and feelings or to explore ways to calm down the next time these emotions occur (Ellis, 1995; Wilde, 1996). The teacher asks the student to close their eyes and ‘go back’ to the situation, describing what they saw, felt and otherwise experienced. At this point, the teacher asks the student, while they are still mentally engaged with the situation, to calm down. Later, the teacher identifies what the student uses as a calmative for future use. Alternatively, the teacher may ask the student to explore the emotions they felt and why they felt them, and then, upon revealing the relevant irrational belief, have the student think about alternative beliefs. This step can also be done after the imagery experience described above to form the basis for conducting a ‘questioning irrational beliefs’ strategy.

**Questioning irrational beliefs**

Questioning irrational beliefs involves asking students what they are feeling and what they think about themselves, and helping them to realise that the worst-case scenario is not as catastrophic as they think. This can help students to moderate their beliefs about situations. The teacher can help the student to adopt a belief that ‘mistakes mean you are human’, rather than one of ‘mistakes mean you are a dunce’. Ellis (1969) claimed that even students who only observed this questioning benefited by learning to better deal with their own beliefs and emotions.

Chaplain (2003, p. 180) explained a similar approach. In this, once a teacher has talked a student through a behaviour issue, and clarified the belief that was behind the behaviour, she/he asks questions to promote cognitive restructuring. These might include:

- ‘What evidence is there that this is true?’ (Designed to get the student to see that what she/he believes is irrational)
- ‘What is another way of thinking about this situation?’ (Designed to open the student to alternative beliefs)
- ‘So what if what you believe is true?’ (Designed to challenge the irrational belief by mentally playing it out)

A teacher can maintain the challenge to irrational beliefs by asking other students what they think, by suggesting alternative beliefs and by calmly pointing out that the current behaviour is causing more of the problems that it intended to solve.

**Rational emotive education**

The rational emotive education program is a curriculum-based intervention. Several variations on it have been used in schools. The one we present here is representative, and was developed and used by Wilde (1996). The program consists of four 30-minute lessons conducted over a period of two weeks:

- **Lesson One** aims to help students to realise that feelings about experiences come from what we believe about experiences, not from the experiences themselves. Under teacher direction, students discuss a move to another place. Those who have positive attitudes state why. Those who have negative attitudes state why. The ensuing discussion leads students to realise that their positive or negative feelings come from what they believe about moving to the new place.
- **Lesson Two** is a teacher-led discussion, and follows on with the topic of Lesson One. Students explore rational and irrational beliefs, and the usefulness of evidence and fact over opinion. At the end of the lesson, students should be able to discern between these elements.
- **Lesson Three** provides students with opportunities to question some irrational beliefs (either written down or verbalised). They use their better understanding of evidence and logical thinking to change irrational beliefs into more rational beliefs.
- **Lesson Four** is game-based. Students play a board game much like ‘Snakes and Ladders’. Certain squares require certain tasks. According to which square they land on, students might be required to explain the logic of, or prove, a rational statement; provide an affirming statement that identifies a positive quality about another player; describe a conflict situation they experienced; recount the best thing that happened to them this week; and so on. The teacher moves informally about the room, assessing what students have learned.
Cognitive behavioural strategy to manage emotions

The cognitive behavioural strategy to manage emotions is a more recently developed curriculum-based intervention originally designed to help with students’ emotional issues (Banks & Zionts, 2009). The program comprises 20 lessons conducted in three phases:

- **In Phase I (‘Cognitive preparation’ – 10 lessons)**, students progress through a process of establishing rapport and an initial sharing of experiences to an exploration of feelings. As part of this exploration, they label different feelings and rate their intensity. The second half of this phase helps students to discern fact from opinion and how facts relate to rationality.

- **In Phase II (‘Skill acquisition’ – five lessons)**, students learn about REBT, including the ABC model, and how it applies to their lives. They are invited to share situations and deconstruct them into ABC sequences. This phase integrates knowledge about feelings, facts and opinions to help students to a better understanding about what caused them to behave in inappropriate ways.

- **In the final phase, Phase III (‘Application training’ – five lessons)**, students revisit problem situations and identify their ABC sequence’s As, question the legitimacy and rationality of their Bs and identify more rationale and successful alternative Cs.

The research on REBT

REBT has been extensively used both clinically and in schools, and a sizeable body of research exists on the topic. Its conclusions, while encouraging overall, can really only be described as mixed in relation to behaviour change. Many studies have examined relationships between REBT’s component variables. A lesser number of studies have attempted to examine its effects on three key elements: beliefs, emotions and behaviour.

A study involving patients awaiting hospital treatment found a positive link between irrational beliefs and unhealthy emotions (David et al., 2005). However, it is difficult to find empirical studies of the same variables in school settings. A study of US college students reported a positive relationship between unhealthy emotions and low-level maladaptive behaviours (Filippello et al., 2014). However, an earlier study found no link between behaviour and emotions in younger-aged students (Gossette & O’Brien, 1993).

As an intervention, REBT has been found to be effective at reducing felt anger in upper primary school-aged students, especially when combined with an anger management program (Flanagan, Allen & Henry, 2010). We found three meta-analyses that provide further insight into the effectiveness of this therapy. Lyons and Woods (1991) reported, from their analysis of 70 studies from various contexts (including school-aged students), that rational emotional therapy (the progenitor of REBT) was effective at addressing emotional and behavioural problems, but worked better when applied over long periods of time (weeks rather than days). A similar analysis by Engels, Garnefski and Diekstra (1993), reported, based on 28 studies, that rational emotional therapy was generally effective at improving the wellness of individuals, but no better (or worse) than other types of behavioural or cognitive interventions. A more recent meta-analysis of 19 studies involving school-aged students found REBT to be effective at reducing irrational beliefs and unhealthy emotions, and especially effective at reducing disruptive behaviours (Gonzales et al., 2004).

The results of research into rational emotive education are similarly mixed. Wilde (1996) noted increases in rational beliefs, but only in three of the five classes he examined. A meta-analysis of 21 studies reported that rational emotive education was associated with reduced irrational beliefs and lower levels of behaviour problems (Hajzer & Bernard, 1993). However, a larger meta-analysis published the same year (Gossette & O’Brien, 1993) showed rational emotive education to be effective at reducing irrational beliefs and unhealthy emotions, but to have no effect at all on behavioural problems.

THE ‘TALK SENSE TO YOURSELF’ PROGRAM

Although it was introduced into Australian schools over 25 years ago, Jeffrey Wragg’s ‘Talk sense to yourself’ (TSTY) program (Wragg, 1989), is still (in our opinion) an example of an excellent school-based intervention based on cognitive behavioural theory. TSTY found ready, wide application in Australian primary and secondary schools, both as a program for groups of students with challenging behaviours and for individual students with challenging behaviours (Linfoot, Martin & Stephenson, 1999). Like in other well implemented commercial programs, delivery quality was maximised by requiring participating teachers to engage in structured, accredited professional development.

The TSTY program focuses on developing the self-control and self-management skills of children and young people who manifest behaviour problems, poor concentration and hyperactivity, and it includes individual, small-group and whole-class activities. The three units of the program variously focus on different but complementary sets of practical approaches and skills for teachers to assist students to achieve greater self-control and self-management. The common key focus is on assisting students to be active agents of change.

Wragg (1989, p. 12) explained a number of reasons why interventions based on cognitive behavioural theory are effective and valuable:

They do not directly rely on external rewards or agents but concentrate on internal direction. They provide coping strategies which permit transfer to other situations. They focus the learner as the active agent of change rather than a passive participant. They permit the creation of clearly defined goals and plans of action. They allow the learner to evaluate performance and progress against plans or goals. They may in certain circumstances be regarded as portable coping strategies. They enhance and promote awareness for the need of self-control and self-management skills.

The TSTY program is based around sets of (short) lessons taught to students by trained teachers variously in one-on-one, small-group and sometimes class-group situations. A first set of lessons focuses on the development of cognitive skills. A second focuses on developing skills in behavioural rehearsal. A third set focuses on building students’ on-task performance. Along with these student-focused lesson sets are others designed to provide guidelines for teachers to monitor and cue students towards developing and applying these skills and behaviours.
The TSTY process

Students are selected to engage with one or more of the three complementary teaching/learning units, depending upon their needs and motivations. The first unit, titled ‘Talk sense to yourself’, focuses on helping individuals or smaller groups of students (from early primary to high-school age) to learn, understand and use cognitive self-instruction and behaviour-rehearsal techniques. The second unit, titled ‘Monitor and cue for behaviour change’, focuses on helping students to recognise and respond to specific cues from teachers to moderate their impulsive (and then often disruptive) behaviors. This is particularly relevant in classroom settings. The third unit, titled ‘On-task training for children with ADHD’, focuses on helping students with ADHD to improve their self-control and attention span, and hence their academically engaged time and on-task performance.

The TSTY program involves five main stages. In the first stage, students are asked to analyse their own inappropriate behaviours. The teacher will ask them what they are doing, and question the effectiveness of their inappropriate behaviour by asking whether it is helping them in any way. In the second stage, a desire for change is established (as a result of the questioning in Stage 1), and teacher and students work together to set goals for the following week. In the third stage, students learn new strategies related, generally, to behavioural self-control. These include knowing whether their behavioural choices ‘help’ them; recognising the need for (teacher) help to change these behaviors; recognition of emotional temperature and levels of rationality; goal-setting; and so on. In the fourth stage, the students practice the strategies learned in Stage 3.

The amount of time needed to practice these first four strategies to the point of mastery varies, and is most influenced by the age/level of maturity and levels of motivation of the students. A key ingredient in the TSTY program is teaching students to use (covert) self-talk statements that operate to moderate or even eliminate inappropriate and unproductive thoughts and responses, and to substitute these with more acceptable responses.

In the fifth and final stage, teacher and students review and evaluate their learning and the students’ behaviour changes. This is the point at which they assess how things have changed (or not changed) and discuss plans for the future, if more help is needed.

The following ‘In practice’ boxes provide two lesson examples, each of which focuses on different cognitive skills.

Emotional temperature chart and discomfort scale

Time required: 20 minutes

The object of this lesson is to teach students to be aware of and monitor their emotional temperature (or level of arousal/anger). The teacher introduces and explains the emotional temperature chart, a graduated scale (from 1 to 10) wherein students annotate their levels of emotional temperature – from ‘Calm’ to ‘Loss of control’ through to ‘Angry’. Emphasis is placed

Cue cards

Time required: 20 minutes

The object of this lesson is to help students to develop and use their own annotated cue cards to prompt themselves to lower their emotional temperature before they reach the ‘loss of control line’. Students prepare three pocket-sized cue cards. One lists a few ‘calm thoughts’, one a few ‘control and confidence’ thoughts and one a few ‘consequences for behaving out of control’. These are to be used in conjunction with students’ self-monitoring of emotional temperature. If this process is applied while a student is below the ‘loss of control line’, over-arousal and anger can be avoided, along with the consequences of loss-of-control behaviours.

The research on TSTY

TSTY has been identified in the literature as one of a diversity of successful cognitive behavioural strategies (Hay, Byrne & Butler, 2000; Linfoot & Stephenson, 1999; Lyons, Arthur-Kelly & Ford, 2015). A major strength of the program is its versatility: it can be used as an individual, small-group, class-group or whole-school behaviour management program (Lyons, Ford & Slee, 2014). Interestingly, a study of behaviour management strategies used by Australian teachers (published a decade after the program was developed) reported TSTY to be one of the least-utilised among a selection of whole-school strategies (Stephenson, Linfoot & Martin, 2000). This study used a small sample in one geographical area, so its findings are by no means conclusive of the effectiveness of TSTY. Nevertheless, there remains a paucity of research into this Australian-developed program.

‘STOP THINK DO’

‘Stop Think Do’ is a popular social skills training program developed in Australia by Lindy Petersen (1991). The program is based on the principle that students have the ability to recognise social cues, control their emotions, organise their thoughts and orient their behaviour so that it is socially
appropriate (Petersen, 1995). The aims of the program are to prevent students from experiencing the negative life outcomes that result from poor social relationships and to promote positive classroom climates.

Through one-on-one training, or through a formal, scheduled, curriculum-based activity delivered by teachers (with support from parents), students with behaviour problems are taught ways to recognise when they are feeling negative emotions that may lead them to engage in inappropriate behaviour, or even to be violent. Once they demonstrate greater awareness of these emotions, the teacher can work through a range of alternative behaviours with them, and teacher and students can together identify responses that are more appropriate to the situations to which students are reacting. An important skill that students learn is to delay inappropriate responses by using thinking and self-talk as calming and reasoning tools. This then allows them to choose more appropriate responses to situations that arouse those negative emotions.

‘Stop Think Do’ has found wide application with mainstream students with challenging behaviours. It is also valuable for students with specific conditions, such as ASD, ADHD, gifted underachievement and anxiety (Petersen, 2001). It works best as a whole-school program, with teacher training and parental involvement and training being key factors in the method (Petersen, 1995).

The ‘Stop Think Do’ process
In the ‘Stop Think Do’ process, a traffic-light symbol (see Figure 7.2 below) is used to provide students with cues to help them to control their own behaviour, and therefore learn to self-regulate. Red (‘Stop’) reminds students to stop as soon as they become aware of negative emotions they are feeling.

Yellow (‘Think’) reminds students to think about alternatives to the inappropriate behaviours that they would normally have engaged in. They should also consider the possible consequences of each choice. Green (‘Do’) reminds students to choose an appropriate behaviour response. The range of appropriate response behaviours could include not reacting to peers, walking away, verbalising how they are feeling, or engaging in a pre-mastered conflict resolution strategy (Petersen, 1991).

The research on ‘Stop Think Do’
Petersen (1995, p. 2001) has presented the results of a number of independent studies of the ‘Stop Think Do’ program conducted in Australia and in the UK, and the data suggested that ‘Stop Think Do’ can produce better behaviour outcomes for students. Of particular note were reductions in aggression, attention-seeking and other disruptive behaviours. While some more recent studies have reported improved behavioural, emotional—behavioural and psychological outcomes in students (Othman et al., 2015), others have not (Preece & Mellor, 2009), and there is a need for more empirical research on ‘Stop Think Do’ in a number of different school settings.

STORY FROM THE FIELD

Yasmin: Keeping cool
I realised after about five weeks with my new class that there was a definite need for a positive change. I was perplexed as to why all my attempts to improve Max’s behaviour had not worked; and I accepted that the implementation of an intervention was needed if I was going to establish a positive learning environment.

Max repeatedly disrupted others, and he required much of my time. This hindered his and his peers’ learning. His behaviour became progressively more uncontrollable and his outbursts more frequent and sustained, leading to his alienation from other students. Max seemed to have deep emotional problems. He did not seem to care about the consequences of his actions.

Because my priority was a healthy classroom learning environment, I decided to consult with my teacher colleagues, the school counsellor and Max’s mother. I discovered that Max’s decline in behaviour had begun when his father left to work overseas several months ago. Max had had a close relationship with his father. He has no siblings, and his mother had been working long hours. He had no close peer friendships.

After careful observations, measurements and discussions over a number of weeks, I enlisted the help of my colleague, Mr Fisher. We formulated an intervention based on the information gathered. We conducted an overall analysis and decided on long-term behavioural objectives.

This requires them to recognise what they are feeling and know the reasons why they are feeling that way. Yellow (‘Think’) reminds students to think about alternatives to the inappropriate behaviours that they would normally have engaged in. They should also consider the possible consequences of each choice. Green (‘Do’) reminds students to choose an appropriate behaviour response. The range of appropriate response behaviours could include not reacting to peers, walking away, verbalising how they are feeling, or engaging in a pre-mastered conflict resolution strategy (Petersen, 1991).
that an intervention based on cognitive behavioural theory would best decrease Max’s negative behaviours.

I maintained running records to assess and plan my strategies. Antecedent conditions, such as curriculum and instruction, were modified. ‘Keeping cool’, a metacognitive strategy designed to improve anger control and avoid conflict, was selected. This was expected to help Max to develop his ability to self-monitor and manage his feelings. Max was able to recognise his losses of control and how they led to his angry outbursts. He was able to discuss these with me when he calmed down. After much discussion and resistance, Max and I negotiated long-term objectives and the selection of a reinforcer (computer time, since he did not have a computer at home). The principles behind the ‘Keeping cool’ game were also discussed with Max’s mother, and met with welcome acceptance.

I monitored and reinforced Max’s behaviour change closely over the following weeks. As his behaviour improved, I praised his ability to self-monitor and to manage his anger. A scoring system on a personalised card helped him to monitor his ‘emotional temperature’. Points were tallied for predetermined daily, weekly and long-term rewards.

Max’s initial reluctance soon became cooperation. Outbursts became less severe as he began to accept the routine of the game. Perseverance on my part began to take effect as Max could see that I was willing to take the time to help him. He was starting to take control of his anger, which surprised and pleased him. Computer time became more frequent. Other students could see the positive changes, and he started to rebuild peer friendships.

With Max’s regular self-monitoring of his classroom behaviour and his newfound skills, his self-esteem developed, leading to a happier and more capable student. In time, Max had developed his self-control skills, and his self-esteem had improved remarkably. What an outcome!

Reflection . . .

Yasmin’s description of this individual intervention includes the essential elements of a cognitive behavioural intervention. She did struggle with the choice of a theoretical approach, and her original, “simple” theoretical approach ultimately shifted to a more “hybrid” approach.

- Do you think Yasmin might need to revisit her professional philosophy of teaching and/or theoretical approach to classroom management?
- What might your response be if your professional philosophy and theoretical approach to classroom management were so tested?

SOCIAL COGNITIVE THEORY

Social cognitive theory is a development of social learning theory, and has its origins in the research of Albert Bandura (1986), whose work was based on that of earlier theorists. Social learning theory had recognised that behaviourism’s explanations for behaviour did not account for thought processes and environmental factors, which might also motivate action. Social cognitive theory recognises the interplay of social influences, cognitive processes and reinforcement in explaining why individuals behave the way they do. This theory can be used to design behaviour management programs that focus on self-regulated learning. A comprehensive explanation of the theory and its evolution can be found in most psychology texts; however, a brief explanation follows.

According to social cognitive theory, behaviour is learned through a process of observation, reflection and action. Students learn appropriate behaviours, as well as inappropriate behaviours, as a result of observing others (i.e. models), thinking about the effects of the behaviours they observe, and then reproducing the behaviour/s themselves – usually to elicit the same effect. Research has shown that aggressive behaviour, in particular, can be influenced by violence observed in the community, community attitudes in the exosystem, and perpetrated by peers in the microsystem (Cavanaugh, 2009). Let’s take the example of a student and one inappropriate behaviour, bullying, to explain this further.

A student who seeks recognition from his peers observes that students who bully other students from lower grades are regarded as popular. After seeing this behaviour several times, the student does the same. There are several things going on here. First of all, this student has learned bullying behaviour through observing others (i.e. vicarious learning). After seeing the positive impacts this has on classmates, the student is motivated to behave in a similar fashion, because he has developed some confidence (i.e. self-efficacy) in his ability to bully and because he expects positive reinforcement through acceptance from his peers. This acceptance from peers is an example of factors in the environment responding to the learned behaviour. The student is impacting the environment by hurting others. In this way, observation, self-confidence, motivation and the environment interact in what Bandura (1986) called reciprocal determinism. If there was a negative consequence, such as a reprimand from a teacher, the student might reassess his behaviour and decide not to bully again. The teacher’s action is another example of the environment reacting to the learned behaviour.

There are other ways in which social cognitive theory can account for inappropriate behaviour. For example, low self-efficacy in academic work may result in a student engaging in off-task behaviour. This is especially likely if other students are observed to do the same with success. A student might know what an appropriate behaviour for a certain situation is, but not have the confidence to actually do it, resulting in poor social interactions (Bandura, 1993).

Social cognitive theory for behaviour management

Teachers who use social cognitive theory to manage their learning environments are often looking for ways to break cycles of socially learned (mis)behaviour. Classroom management strategies based on social cognitive theory tend to promote positive modelling from which students observe and learn...
suggests that it can be effective at reducing levels of disruptive behaviour and bullying (Durlak et al., 2000). The research on SEL evidence across studies. A review by Howard, Flora and Griffin (1999) suggested that these programs were more effective in primary schools than in secondary schools. The Students for Peace program targets student violence. It is a whole-school intervention that comprises a curriculum as well as modifications to school environment, peer leadership structures and parent education (Orpinas et al., 2000).

The GREAT Program (Guiding Responsibility and Expectations for Adolescents for Today and Tomorrow) is based on a series of lessons aimed at helping students learn to be calm in tense situations; avoid aggressive impulses; identify feelings; take appropriate action in accordance with rules; accept consequences; and build relationships (Meyer et al., 2003). A major goal of the program is to reduce social tolerance of, and to prevent, bullying (Orpinas & Horne, 2004). There is also a GREAT program for teachers that helps them to understand the nature of aggression in schools, and offers techniques to deal calmly with aggressive student behaviours (Orpinas & Horne, 2004).

Social—Emotional Learning (SEL) is an intervention program developed to cultivate positive attitudes in students and to reduce problem behaviour. Social—Emotional Learning focuses on developing five skill areas that can assist students to make better decisions about how they behave: self-awareness, social-awareness, self-management, relationship-building and responsible decision making.

The research on social cognitive approaches

The research on social cognitive theory-based approaches delivers mixed evidence for the use of this approach as a base from which to design PLEs. For example, a study of middle schools in the US (DuRant et al., 2001) showed that the Peaceful Conflict Resolution and Violence Prevention program reduced incidences of violence and student self-reported intentions to use violence. Research into the GREAT programs also suggests some impacts on longer-term behaviour patterns (Simon et al., 2008). But a study of the Students for Peace program in eight US middle schools revealed that the program had no effect on violent behaviour (Orpinas et al., 2000).

More optimistically, two reviews of research—a meta-analysis of many studies across all grades by Hahn et al. (2007), and a review by Howard, Flora and Griffin (1999)—reported that social cognitive programs generally had positive effects, particularly with reductions in student violence across studies. A review by Howard, Flora and Griffin (1999) suggested that these programs were more effective in primary schools than in secondary schools. The research on SEL evidence suggests that it can be effective at reducing levels of disruptive behaviour and bullying (Durlak et al., 2011; Espelage, Rose & Polanin, 2015).

You be the Judge

Teaching in Australian schools is being increasingly informed and driven by evidence-based practice. This means using content and pedagogy that have been evidenced to work, not just anecdotally, but through empirical research. We would like you to decide for yourself which of the behavioural approaches described in this chapter would be the most effective at dealing with the range of inappropriate behaviours, from low-level misbehaviors to the extremes of vandalism and violence.

We would like you to come to this decision via the following “two-pronged” process:

1. Go over our descriptions of each of the approaches we have presented in this chapter and ask yourself: "Which one “feels” like the best approach for me?"

2. Review the research findings for each of the approaches and decide for yourself which is likely to be the most effective. You might want to follow up on some of the studies we cite or use this chapter’s “Webinks” for more information.

After doing these two things, which approach is, in your view, the best and why?

COGNITIVE BEHAVIOURAL APPROACHES AS PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION

Teachers who align to cognitive behavioural theory build PLEs preventativey, by explicitly teaching students constructive thinking skills and habits, helping students to understand their thinking processes and developing students’ self-control skills. An active collaboration with students in the selection of behavioural goals, due processes and respect facilitates the development of authority without coercion. Teachers should try to build a facilitative learning environment where students can be guided and encouraged to learn to manage themselves. To do so, they should concentrate on student motivation by building expectations of success, individual appreciation of the value of success and a social (classroom) milieu that values success. The teaching pedagogy in such classrooms will most likely align to constructivism.

Cognitive behavioural intervention strategies have already been described in detail in this chapter. In general, however, teachers who align with this theory often intervene with more challenging students by identifying those who might best benefit from this more intensive intervention. Such students are more likely to give evidence of an internalised motivation to improve poor social skills, anger management skills and/or attention deficits. This requires teachers to conduct a substantial initial analysis to ascertain which skills and strategies are needed by the focus student/s to most successfully engage with cognitive behavioural training. These skills and strategies usually include skill demonstration, rehearsal and opportunities for in-situ skill transfer, accompanied by negotiated reinforcement for successful rehearsal and application.

Although there is a paucity of research on the application of cognitive behavioural interventions for bullying, social cognitive approaches hold some promise as interventions against bullying. Certainly,
poor social conditions, such as acceptance of bullying behaviour by peer groups, high status being accorded to bullies and prevalent discriminatory social attitudes towards some minorities, reinforce bullying behaviour (Prati, 2012; Salmivalli, 2010). Programs that focus on changing these conditions through school-based education with community engagement can reduce bullying (Kama et al., 2011; Swearer et al., 2014).

PROFESSIONAL REFLECTION

In this chapter we described a number of cognitive behavioural approaches to the establishment and maintenance of PLEs. Having read this chapter, perhaps one or more of these approaches appeals to you. The purpose of this reflection is to get you thinking about how the theoretical approaches might work for you. Consider the following questions as if no other theories exist except cognitive behavioural ones:

1. Have you seen any of these approaches, or aspects of them, used in a classroom or school? If so, how well did they work?
2. Of the approaches presented in this chapter, which one/s would you feel most comfortable using in the classroom, and why?
3. Would you adapt any of these approaches? If so, how?
4. If you listed more than one approach in Question 2, how might the two (or more) approaches work together as a behaviour management strategy (or sequence of strategies) in a classroom management plan? If you listed one approach in Question 2, how might you combine it with another behaviour management strategy?
5. Now think of a common inappropriate behaviour (not too challenging!), and imagine you are facing this in your classroom right now. How would you deal with it, in light of your answers to Questions 1–4?

SUMMARY

In this chapter, we explored the basic tenets of cognitive behavioural theory and described three approaches: rational emotive behaviour therapy (REBT), 'Talk sense to yourself' and 'Stop Think Do'. We explained the underpinning philosophies of each of these, and described how they are relevant to, and how they play out in, classroom practice. We also explored approaches aligned to social cognitive theory. While acknowledging that most of the approaches included in this chapter are interventions, we also explained how cognitive behavioural theory can influence preventative practices.
Activity 7.6
Thinking about the cognitive theories and strategies we have covered in this chapter, reflect on your days as a school student, and identify a teacher who best demonstrated one or more of these strategies in the classroom. Discuss this with a peer.

- Would you like to emulate what your teacher did? Give reasons for your answer.

Activity 7.7
Read back over and reflect on the 'in practice' box 'Using a cognitive behavioural method'.

- Presuming that you, too, wish to take a cognitive behavioural approach, how might you have gone about solving the problem experienced by Miss Moore? Set this challenge in your own teaching/learning context.

Online resources

CENGAGE Visit http://login.cengagebrain.com and search for this book to access the study tools that come with your textbook.

Weblinks

The Albert Ellis Institute
http://www.albertellis.org

Stop Think Do
http://www.stophinkdod.com/background_information.php

References

CHAPTER

PSYCHOEDUCATIONAL APPROACHES

Learning outcomes

When you have worked through this chapter, you should be able to:

• describe and explain the key elements of psychoeducational theory as it relates to classroom management
• compare and contrast this approach to classroom management to other approaches covered in this text
• describe and explain five psychoeducational approaches to the creation and maintenance of positive learning environments
• describe a range of psychoeducational strategies that can variously be used for prevention and intervention
• compare and contrast a strategic selection of the psychoeducational approaches presented, and make judgements about their application to familiar teaching/learning contexts
• explain how different psychoeducational theories, approaches and strategies can contribute to enhancing your classroom management planning, implementation and review.

Chapter overview

• Starter story: The noisy four
• Introduction
• The psychoeducational perspective
• Goal Theory
• Choice Theory
• Teacher Effectiveness Training
• Systematic Training for Effective Teaching
• The Pain Model
• Psychoeducational approaches as prevention and intervention
• Professional reflection
• Summary
• Key terms
• Individual and group activities
• Online resources
• Weblinks
• References
INTRODUCTION

In chapters 6 and 7 we explored behavioural and cognitive behavioural approaches to classroom and behaviour management. Those approaches are based, to varying degrees, on behavioural theories. Establishing and maintaining positive learning environments using those approaches places the teacher in a prominent, and often controlling position. Behavioural approaches focus mostly on observable behaviour, while cognitive behavioural approaches focus on mental processes as well as on observable behaviour. Both approaches rely on measuring and comparing, and the use of highly structured programs. In these approaches, the welfare of the student, while important, is less of a focus than behaviour change in itself.

Psychoeducational approaches are different in that they originate from humanist theories. Two major influences of the humanist movement in psychology were Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers. Humanist theory prioritises the welfare of the individual, and this includes consideration of needs, desires and aspirations (Porter, 2008). In relation to the individual, humanism holds that people are essentially good, capable of achieving their full potential through setting their own goals, and able to make decisions of their own.

This philosophy extends naturally to the behaviour of individuals, and to what drives this behaviour. Rather than viewing external stimuli or thought processes as being responsible for behaviour choices, humanists instead point to goals and needs. Of course, these are bound up in thought processes and are also influenced by stimuli; but humanist theory ascribes needs and goals as the main reasons why people do the things they do and make the choices they make.

Psychoeducational theory has been further developed by two main progenitors, Rudolph Dreikurs and William Glasser, who were influenced by the work of Alfred Adler, the founder of what is sometimes called individual psychology. Adler proposed that, with guidance, individuals can learn to make better choices about the ways in which they set out to achieve their goals or meet their needs. The key to understanding psychoeducational theory is in its name. Specifically, approaches aligned with the theory seek to help the individual to better understand themselves and others (the psycho-element), as well as help them to learn the best ways to achieve their goals or satisfy their needs (the educational element). The focus is on developing positive regard for oneself and healthy relationships with others.

Two major psychoeducational approaches that have been applied in schools and classrooms are Goal Theory and Choice Theory. These approaches are explained in this chapter, along with approaches that were developed in their wake, such as Teacher Effectiveness Training, Systematic Training for Effective Teaching and the Pain Model. Before getting into these approaches, however, it is worth exploring the common underlying principles of the psychoeducational perspective as a tool for building PLEs.

THE PSYCHOEDUCATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

Assumptions underpinning psychoeducational approaches to classroom management include the notions that humans are essentially good and desire to achieve good things, rational in how they approach things, and capable of directing their own lives and destinies. Psychoeducational theory also assumes that people will strive to achieve what they perceive to be their full potential, and to become the kind of people they want to be (Chaplain, 2003; Petersen, 2005).

As a result of the assumptions above, psychoeducational theories posit that students (and, indeed, all people) have needs and goals that they strive for, such as belonging, acceptance and autonomy. Inappropriate behaviours are attempts to meet these needs and goals, often when appropriate behaviour has not worked or when students simply do not know better ways to accomplish them.

Teachers should strive to create learning environments that best meet these needs and goals, and should guide students through the process of making better behavioural choices. This is best done through regular positive interactions with students, and through the experience of consequences that relate to the behaviour choices students have made. Rather than refer to external environmental stimuli as the motivators of all behaviour, as behaviourists might do, the psychoeducational teacher looks for motivators within the student.

As is the case with behavioural and cognitive behavioural approaches, in psychoeducational theories, rules and the consequences of breaking them are important foundations for classroom management. In congruence with cognitive behavioural approaches, there is a clear cognitive element to psychoeducational approaches, because of its focus on student thinking in relation to goals and needs, as well as satisfactions and other related emotions.

What sets psychoeducational approaches apart from others, however, is the allocation of responsibility for decisions to the student/s, and the paramount importance of the teacher–student
POSITIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

Chapter 8  Psychoeducational approaches

Goal Theory (and the related classroom management model known as democratic discipline) requires teachers to seek out goal-based explanations for why their students are motivated to misbehave, and then to negotiate alternative ways for these goals to be achieved through appropriate behaviour. This requires teachers to separate individual students from their behaviours. To implement Goal Theory, a teacher must engage the whole class in discussion about goals and behaviour; provide choices (particularly about rules, consequences and academic work); model consistent, considerate and responsible behaviour; provide explicit instructions, expectations and boundaries; build class trust and self-responsibility; use natural and logical consequences (and not punishment); and encourage effort, not achievement, as the primary means for students to meet goals and counter discouragement.

Democratic discipline

Teacher personality and ‘style’ – particularly how a teacher reacts to student behaviours – strongly influence student behaviour. A democratic teacher, rather than a permissive or autocratic teacher, has a greater capacity to support students to become personally responsible learners. Democratic discipline requires that teachers involve students in decision making about expectations, rules, consequences and behaviour choices. This cannot work without a positive, open classroom climate and a teacher who works with students to facilitate such a PLE. The teacher’s power in the classroom stems not from their position but from their expertise, wisdom and demonstrations of respect for themselves and their students (Porter, 2008).

Encouragement

A key element of democratic discipline is the use of encouragement as a tool to build students’ self-confidence and ability to behave appropriately. Using generous amounts of encouragement will minimise discouragement and meet students’ primary social needs to belong and be valued, hence making inappropriate behaviour a less attractive option. So what do we mean by ‘encouragement’ in this context?

Encouragement is an acknowledgement of effort that aims to motivate individual students to persevere with appropriate behaviours, such as staying on-task, completing assignments and working cooperatively. Encouragement indicates appreciation and acceptance, and promotes (as mentioned above) the separation of student from behaviour. When teachers encourage students, they usually make specific comments about positive aspects of work and/or behaviour.

Key proponents of Goal Theory, such as Dreikurs and Balson, have drawn attention to the difference between encouragement and praise (Edwards & Watts, 2008; Tauber, 2007). They define praise as a reward for achievement, and make the point that not everything students do is praiseworthy, but that just about anything appropriate can be encouraged. Praise is short-lived and focuses on an endpoint. Encouragement helps to maintain student motivation over the longer term, and is therefore considered to work better than praise. We provide some examples of encouragement and praise in the following ‘In practice’ box.

GOAL THEORY

Goal Theory, a neo-Adlerian theory, has its origins in the work of Rudolph Dreikurs, a psychiatrist who extended the work of Adler by proposing that behaviour was always purposeful and geared towards the achievement of a set of goals. These goals are usually oriented towards addressing personal needs for social acceptance and self-determination. When students are unsuccessful at this, they engage in inappropriate behaviour based on mistaken goals related to recognition and status (Dreikurs, 1987; Edwards & Watts, 2008). Dreikurs proposed that four mistaken goals drive student misbehaviour: attention, power, revenge and escape. Misbehaviour will only improve when students understand their motives and learn alternative, appropriate ways to achieve their goals.

There are other factors that differentiate psychoeducational approaches from behavioural and cognitive behavioural approaches. Psychoeducational approaches are generally not focused on the measurement of behaviour (although we remind you that in some behavioural approaches, such as FBA, psychoeducational strategies could form part of a broader investigation of inappropriate behaviour and subsequent intervention). Psychoeducational approaches do not rely on interventions that are as highly structured and procedural as the behavioural and cognitive behavioural approaches, but place a high priority on positive, productive and humane interaction between teachers and students. Facilitative relationships and communication are keys to the operation of psychoeducational approaches. A positive, warm classroom climate that values social interaction and relationships, and that has a negotiated, clear classroom culture and an approachable, open teacher, is a vital ingredient. Externial stimuli, such as rewards and sanctions, are not used on their own to influence student behaviour, but (if they are used) might be among the natural or logical consequences of misbehaviour – and it is up to students to choose whether they experience those consequences.

There are two main perspectives on psychoeducational practice in classroom management. Both hold students to be the centre of all efforts to create PLEs, but there are subtle differences between them. The ‘student-oriented’ perspective focuses on strategies to help students to make better behaviour choices. These include Goal Theory and its derivatives, Choice Theory and the Pain Model. The ‘teacher-oriented’ perspective focuses on teacher training in the skills of negotiation and relationship-building, and in other skills that promote PLEs. Advocates contend that if teachers are suitably skilled at creating and maintaining the basic conditions for psychoeducation, then appropriate behaviours will follow. Teacher-oriented perspectives include Teacher Effectiveness Training and Systemic Training for Effective Teaching.

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Goal Theory (and the related classroom management model known as democratic discipline) requires teachers to seek out goal-based explanations for why their students are motivated to misbehave, and then to negotiate alternative ways for these goals to be achieved through appropriate behaviour. This requires teachers to separate individual students from their behaviours. To implement Goal Theory, a teacher must engage the whole class in discussion about goals and behaviour; provide choices (particularly about rules, consequences and academic work); model consistent, considerate and responsible behaviour; provide explicit instructions, expectations and boundaries; build class trust and self-responsibility; use natural and logical consequences (and not punishment); and encourage effort, not achievement, as the primary means for students to meet goals and counter discourage.
Examples of encouragement versus praise

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ENCOURAGEMENT</th>
<th>PRAISE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>'You are working really hard on your story, Louise; keep it up.'</td>
<td>'Excellent story, Louise!'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Michael, I see you have been able to stay in your seat for the whole lesson.'</td>
<td>'Good on you, Michael!'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Angelica, I appreciate your efforts to help keep the class tidy.'</td>
<td>'Well done for cleaning up, Angela!'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Mistaken goals**

Some students are so discouraged, and their behaviour so challenging, that encouraging positive behaviour provides insufficient motivation. Goal Theory posits that inappropriate behaviour originates from four possible mistaken goals: attention, power, revenge and escape. Students may escalate through these as stages if each proves unattainable.

**Attention**

Students who have the goal of attention are easy to identify, and quite common, in classrooms. Their behaviour may range from persistent seeking of teacher approval, frequent questioning and being excessively helpful to the teacher through to ‘acting the clown’, distracting others, interrupting games and showing off. Consequent attention from the teacher or from peers appear to meet the goal in the short term, but not to gain the student the acceptance and sense of belonging they crave in the longer term. Consequently, the attention-seeking behaviour recurs.

**Power**

If attention-seeking behaviours do not work, students escalate to a goal of power. They engage in more serious and disruptive behaviours, such as arguing with the teacher or other students, losing their temper easily, being deliberately disobedient and rebelling against rules and directions. They may also engage in ‘go-slow’ tactics as a part of disobedience and rebellion. Bullying also stems from the desire for power. Such behaviours will obviously gain attention, but inevitably, the underlying needs for acceptance and belonging will not be met.

**Revenge**

If the power-seeking behaviours do not work, students may develop the view that life has treated them unfairly, and escalate to a goal of revenge. This goal manifests in behaviours even more severe than those motivated by power, because the student wants to hurt others. Behaviours may range from sullenness, to destruction of property, to theft and even to violent aggression.

**Escape**

If the revenge-seeking behaviours do not work, Goal Theory posits that students will likely ‘give up’. Their goal is now to escape their situation through displays of inadequacy. Behaviours related to this goal include withdrawal from social interaction, giving the appearance of being apathetic and avoiding work, complaints like ‘I can’t do this’ and ‘I’m not smart enough’, and daydreaming (about a better life outside of the classroom and school).

**Goal Theory and challenging behaviour**

While a democratic, positive learning environment and the use of encouragement may prevent much inappropriate behaviour, there will always be students who do not respond positively to these preventative measures. In such cases, a student-focused intervention using the following sequence of six steps is suggested.

**Step 1: Identify the goal**

The teacher’s first step is to identify the goal of the student’s misbehaviour. Goal Theory contends that this is revealed by examining the teacher’s own emotional reaction to the student’s behaviour, and then examining the response the student makes to the teacher’s normal method of correction. Table 8.1 summarises the links between the four goals of misbehaviour, teachers’ typical feelings and reactions, and students’ typical responses.

**Table 8.1 Typical reactions to the four goals of misbehaviour**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STUDENT’S GOAL</th>
<th>TEACHER’S FEELINGS</th>
<th>TEACHER’S REACTION</th>
<th>STUDENT’S RESPONSE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attention</td>
<td>Annoyed</td>
<td>Reminds and coaxes</td>
<td>Temporarily stops but later resumes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power</td>
<td>Angry; challenged</td>
<td>Overpowers, fights or yields</td>
<td>Misbehaviour intensifies or student submits, often using passive aggression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revenge</td>
<td>Hurt; personally threatened</td>
<td>Becomes defensive, retaliates</td>
<td>Behaviour intensifies or changes to a new form of attack; teacher’s reaction used to justify behaviour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Escape</td>
<td>Frustration; sense of hopelessness</td>
<td>Keeps trying; eventually gives up, whatever is done</td>
<td>Gives up and makes no genuine attempt</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Step 2: Break the cycle of the first reaction

Most people will behave in ways that mirror the kinds of reactions described for each goal shown in Table 8.1. That is, adults will generally remind and coax attention-seekers, try to overpower students seeking a power goal, and so on. This is how students learn that certain behaviours are effective in getting the responses they want. The crucial point here is that students want the anticipated reaction. Even if the teacher’s response is seen as a negative one, assume that the student is aware of the consequences and wants the teacher to react in that way. For the student, this is fulfilling a need; it makes the student ‘matter’. When the teacher responds in the predictable way, the student achieves her/his goal, and the negative behaviour, and the beliefs on which it is built, are reinforced. Hence, the cycle continues. The teacher needs to choose an alternative way of responding, one that is unexpected and that neither further discourages the student nor enables the goal to be achieved through inappropriate behaviours.

Step 3: Disclose the goal

Goal Theory contends that students are largely unaware of the goals of their misbehaviour; that they simply respond to feelings of discomfort, with the true purpose of their behaviour being held subconsciously. Dreikurs (1987) noted the phenomenon of the ‘recognition reflex’ when students are made aware of their goals. The recognition reflex can be many things, but often takes the form of a quick, involuntary smile that occurs in most people when their hidden purposes are disclosed. Such a response provides further validation of the teacher’s correct assessment of the student’s goal.

Goal Theory says that the goal should be disclosed to the student at the appropriate time, which might be immediately following the next action for an attention-seeker, or may be more appropriately done at another time for a revenge-seeker. The goal should be disclosed in a tentative manner (‘Could it be . . . ?’) and not be an ‘I caught you out’ response. Dreikurs (1998) suggests the use of ‘Could it be . . . ?’ as the stem for most disclosures; however, it may be effective to vary the approach to prevent its becoming stylised. Following are some examples of disclosure questions.

### IN PRACTICE

**Goal-centred questioning**

The goal of an attention-seeking student could be disclosed by the teacher asking:
- ‘Could it be that you want some attention?’
- ‘Could it be that you want me to notice you?’

The goal of a power-seeking student could be disclosed by the teacher asking:
- ‘Are you telling me that you’ll do as you like?’
- ‘Are you telling me that you won’t be told what to do?’

The goal of a revenge-seeking student could be disclosed by the teacher saying:
- ‘It sounds like you feel unfairly treated.’
- ‘It sounds like you want revenge’
- ‘It sounds like you want me to think you can’t do it . . . ?’

Disclosing the goal helps students to become consciously aware of the purposes of their behaviour, and lets them know that the teacher is also aware of the goal. It brings what is often held secret out into the open, and may enable the real problem, rather than the surface behaviour, to be dealt with. Further steps may not be necessary. Students often react surprisingly when their goal has been disclosed, and many cease their misbehaviour and begin to behave productively. This is when encouragement comes into play.

### Step 4: Assert the social reality

Since misbehaviour is aimed at achieving a social response, a clear statement delineating the real social impact of the misbehaviour should lead the student into making a more productive choice. If the student continues the misbehaviour after the goal is disclosed, an assertive statement indicating the effect of the misbehaviour should be used. The I-message format (see Chapter 2) is recommended.

The principle at this stage is to be mutually respectful. Students may be unaware of the effect that their behaviour is having on you. When made aware of it, they may cease the behaviour because they respect you. If an I-message fails to deliver the desired response, the teacher moves to the next step without much further discussion.

### Step 5: Give choices

Step 5 is based on the principles of mutual respect and encouragement. The idea is that the student becomes alerted to the consequences that automatically follow further misbehaviour. The student is also made aware of the consequences that would follow cooperative behaviour, and is asked to make a choice. The consequences referred to here are natural or logical consequences, as opposed to punishments.

Providing choice is seen as respectful and encouraging, because the student is empowered at all times. A verbal response from the student is not necessary. The teacher should be guided by the student’s behaviour. If the student responds by behaving cooperatively, an encouraging response could follow.

### Step 6: Consequences

If, however, the student continues to misbehave, the teacher should assume a choice has been made and allow the student to experience the consequences. It is important that the responsibility for the choice is given to the student, so that the result is seen as a logical consequence (see the following section) rather than an imposed punishment. Another time can be identified when the student will be able to reverse the situation. This time should be far enough into the future that the student will have sufficient time to experience the social implications of the consequence, but soon enough to enable a reasonable escape.

Logical consequences

Goal Theory draws a clear distinction between logical consequences and punishment. Punishment is seen as an arbitrary response to misbehaviour imposed by a higher authority, and as not being based on the principle of mutual respect. It is seen to be disrespectful because it places the student in a subservient position. Hence, the student is disempowered and thus discouraged. In addition, punishment may not be logically related to the misbehaviour, and may enable students to avoid accepting responsibility for their actions by attributing the punishment to the teacher's mood or dislike of the student. This attribution could fuel further misbehaviour through revenge-seeking.

Students who pursue goals of misbehaviour do so because they have learned from experience that misbehaviour normally produces a response that (at least temporarily) satisfies a need. These experiences have very often been punishments applied by parents, teachers and other adults. Punishment may be what the student actually desires. In other words, as negative as punishment might be, it may be better than feeling ignored, or experiencing social or academic shame. If students are so discouraged that they believe appropriate behaviour will result in shame or being ignored, then punishment for inappropriate behaviour could be their preferred option, since it may help them to feel more significant.

Logical consequences, however, connect cause and effect. They logically relate behaviours to the expectations of social reality. Dreikurs et al. (1974) contended that logical consequences are not imposed, and so do not invite rebellion, since students have the power to choose consequences through their behaviour. Goal Theory emphasises that the connection between cause and effect is clearer where consequences for inappropriate behaviour have been previously negotiated with the class through democratic group discussion, perhaps during the process of establishing class rules or codes of conduct (see Chapter 3). The use of democratic principles also imbeds the consequences in social reality and emphasises their automatic, non-discriminatory application (Tauber, 2007). These factors reduce students' ability to avoid responsibility for their behaviour by blaming the teacher's mood or personality. Consider the following list of possible logical consequences:

- Not finishing set work or being late to class may result in participation in another activity being delayed until the missed work is completed.
- Fighting with another student may result in social isolation.
- Damage to property will create the expectation that the student repair or replace the items.
- Failure to tidy materials away will mean the student's access to the materials is restricted on the next occasion they are used.
- Unruly behaviour during an activity will mean the student is denied the right to participate in the activity the next time it is done.
- Constant interruptions will result in the student being removed from the lesson.
- Assignments that are submitted late will not be corrected.

An important quality of logical consequences is that they enable students to experience the results of their own decisions, to learn from their experiences and to make better decisions. Giving choices and using logical consequences are thus seen as teaching sequences. They are designed to redirect future behaviour, and are not to be seen as retributions designed to punish past behaviour. Logical consequences should be applied without the teacher displaying anger or other negative emotions. If logical consequences are delivered in an angry way, students can easily interpret them as punishments.

Balson’s understanding of classroom behaviour

Maurice Balson (1992) extended Dreikurs’ psychoeducational theories into a comprehensive approach to classroom discipline. On the premise that people’s basic need to belong was paramount, Balson sought to assist teachers to identify the goals, purposes and motivations for inappropriate behaviours. Other key principles include:

- that teachers need to accept that many classroom misbehaviours arise because they do not have an adequate psychological understanding of these behaviours
- that students will (ultimately) use any means to achieve belonging and social place, so teachers must focus on changing the beliefs that lead to the emotions that lead to these inappropriate behaviours
- that competitive school and classroom cultures and practices are counterproductive, and so the development of democratic values and practices, collaborative learning practices and student self-discipline must be central to the educative process.

The research on Goal Theory

Some of the literature (Dreikurs-Ferguson, 2001; Soheili et al., 2015) provides evidence of the strength of Goal Theory interventions: namely, that they are soundly based in psychoeducational theory, and can provide for significant change in beliefs, attitudes and behaviour. However, not all studies show this. For example, Porter and Hoedt’s (1985) study of teacher–student interactions revealed that a Goal Theory–oriented treatment had no effect on behaviour. Porter and Hoedt conducted the study in response to a lack of empirical research into the effectiveness of Goal Theory on behaviour change. Others, too (McDonald, 2013; Porter, 2008), have noted a lack of research in this area.

Nevertheless, Goal Theory interventions are generally well regarded for promoting positive behaviour due to their emphasis on encouragement, empowerment and democratic principles (Edwards & Watts, 2008). One weakness, though, is that they are less efficacious in the short term, especially for disruptive students, since they can take considerable time to produce significant behavioural change (Lyons, Ford & Slee, 2014). They may also be problematic with some power-seeking students, and effective guidelines on dealing with defiance in the immediate situation are limited. The methods used also require a higher level of reasoning on behalf of the student, which may limit their use with younger students and with those who have an intellectual disability (Lyons et al., 2014). Some scholars have argued that the four mistaken goals are not the only explanation for all inappropriate behaviour. Trauma, anxiety and unstable family life may also contribute directly to behaviour problems (Porter, 2008).

CHOICE THEORY

William Glasser’s Choice Theory has been widely adopted across Australian schools, primarily as the basis for developing and improving schoolwide behaviour management practices. In most cases, the impetus has been whole-staff concerns over student behaviour. When Choice Theory has been
adopted as the driving theoretical approach, whole school staffs are systematically trained in understanding and applying theory into practice.

Glasser developed control theory and reality therapy some 40 years ago, and these found considerable appeal among school administrators and classroom teachers in many countries. The use of time-out, level systems and rights and responsibilities for defining class and school rules, and defined procedures for dealing with individual misbehaving students can all be attributed to Glasser’s influence, though some writers suggest educational systems over the years have not taken full advantage of the theory (Tauber, 2007).

Glasser, however, became disillusioned with the way in which his theories were being implemented in schools. He believed that students were being coerced to behave. His disillusionment led him to reconceptualise his approach to managing students in schools as Choice Theory. Choice Theory was not intended to be a theory on which to base individual-student intentions. Glasser (1990, p. 277) stated, ‘the only effective time to fix them is when they are not broken ... Any approach that defines the problem as internal to the student is likely to lead to the application of external control psychology’. He contended that this makes the problem worse, and that the problem was not within the student but within the learning environment or the student’s interaction with that environment.

Choice Theory is based on the notion that all behaviours are an individual’s best attempts to satisfy present and future needs; that is, survival, belonging, power, freedom and fun. In the educational context, it is primarily a preventative approach to classroom management that guides teachers to lead (rather than dominate) their students by developing classrooms, and preferably whole-school environments, which align with students’ ‘quality worlds’ — that is, memories of past people, places and events, which together are perceived as the most satisfying and ‘ideal’ life. The pursuit of a quality world in schools and classrooms (and particularly the most pressing unmet need/s at that time) directs and drives student behaviours (Glasser, 1998).

Another basic principle of Choice Theory is that poor relationships lead to mental unwellness and subsequent psychological symptoms. We can foster better relationships if we can make better behaviour choices. If we have more control over our own behaviour, we can become mentally healthier and happier. Choice Theory also posits that all behaviour is ‘total behaviour’. Total behaviour includes our thoughts and actions, which we can control, and our feelings and physiology, which we cannot directly control, but can influence through changed thoughts and actions in relation to our needs.

First, we will explain Glasser’s five basic needs and his concept of a ‘quality world’. We will then explain three pathways towards building a quality world for students at school. These pathways — becoming a ‘lead’ teacher, building a ‘quality’ classroom and building a ‘quality’ school — are the bases for constructing focused interventions. Finally, we will provide you with an overview of Glasser’s reality therapy and ‘keys’ to building and maintaining positive teacher–student relationships.

Five basic needs
It was Maslow, of course, who developed the well-known hierarchy of needs theory to explain human behaviour as driven by needs. Glasser’s theory is congruent with Maslow’s in that it starts with a need for survival; but its structure involving the other four needs then differs. In the following sections, we explain Glasser’s five basic needs: survival, belonging, power, freedom and fun. In the ensuing section on quality schools, we outline how teachers and schools might help to satisfy these needs in their students.

Survival
Survival refers to the physiological need for food, shelter, safety and security. When students’ survival needs are met, they will engage in learning more readily. When students feel unsafe, fearful, hungry or tired, they are more likely to be disengaged and more likely to make self-centred behaviour choices.

Belonging
Belonging refers to the emotional need to share affection, experience social acceptance and be loved. Each of these aspects involves attention from a valued other. If students do not get this attention, they are more likely to engage in inappropriate behaviours to get it. These behaviours include showing off, calling out and oversensitivity to peer pressure.

Power
Power refers to the need people have to achieve and to be successful. It is linked to self-esteem and the notion that one’s contributions are valuable. Students who achieve well at school and are acknowledged for it usually have this need met. Students who do not may resort to dominating peer relations or bullying. Vandalism and dangerous behaviour may also result.

Freedom
Freedom refers to the need for independence and autonomy. Most people have this need met by being (reasonably) able to do what they want to do when they want to. Students who feel constrained and lacking in independence may resort to power plays, truancy and other harmful behaviours, such as drug-taking.

Fun
Fun refers to the need for happiness and enjoyment. This need is generally met through opportunities to play, laugh, relax and be entertained. When schooltime generally, and class time specifically, are fun, students enjoy them and are more likely to work well and accomplish more.
problems many people experience following the break-up of a relationship as an example of the previous ones, or if our continued pursuit of old images ceases to satisfy us. For the most part, we will perceive these as sources of needs satisfaction. According to Glasser (1990; 1998a), these students school and their teachers within their quality worlds. When this is the case, students will seek to maintain positive relationships with their teachers and to achieve academic successes, because they will perceive these as sources of needs satisfaction. According to Glasser (1990; 1998a), these students will seek to satisfy their needs for survival, belonging, power, freedom and fun through an active engagement with the education process, and pursuing this pathway to needs satisfaction will become a lifelong endeavour.

Glasser contends that most students hold representations of teachers and schools in their quality worlds during their early education. During the middle years, many students remove these images, because they experience school as an unsatisfying place. In their high-school years, this level of dissatisfaction with school increases, and for many students the education process becomes a permanent disillusion. Attempts to coerce disruptive students into behaving the way teachers and schools want them to behave often lead to those students increasing their resistance and removing any residual images of school from their quality worlds. This is akin to students 'divorcing' school, which can be accompanied by their replacing images of education with those of new, more satisfying relationships, such as with a peer group. The peer group chosen in such circumstances is unlikely to endorse school as a valuable place (Glasser, 1998a; 1998b).

Glasser explains an unfortunate conjunction between disruptive students' personal ecologies and those of many teachers. Teachers also hold in their quality worlds images of those students who are likely to provide a sense of professional satisfaction. Teachers will naturally seek to build and nurture relationships with students represented in their quality worlds, but such students are unlikely to be the ones considered seriously disruptive. Thus, many teachers naturally avoid one of the main tools for intervening with difficult students: that of rebuilding teacher-student relationships. Teachers, not surprisingly, often behave differently with students who are considered to be successful in school and with those who are disruptive. Glasser contends that, as a direct result of teachers' different reactions, the behaviour of these two groups of students (cooperative and uncooperative) diverges progressively from middle schooling onwards.

**Understanding the quality world**

Glasser's explanation (1990; 1998a) for why students become seriously disruptive is best understood through his concept of the 'quality world'. He sees people as developing an individual sense of their quality world by retaining images of people, places and experiences that have led to satisfaction of needs in the past. These images represent to people the way that they would like to live and the things they would like to repeat or regain in order to feel the greatest satisfaction of needs. Glasser suggested that, usually, images of people's mothers, best friends, partners and special teachers, as well as happy images of school, work and other enjoyable experiences, are all usually represented in their quality worlds because these relationships and experiences have been particularly and repeatedly satisfying. Once we place such images in our personal quality world, we see recreating them as the surest way to satisfy our needs, and we thus strive to relive satisfying experiences and re-engage with significant people or activities.

The images contained in our personal quality world are not permanent, though. They can change as further experiences inform us that new relationships or activities are more satisfying than previous ones, or if our continued pursuit of old images ceases to satisfy us. For the most part, however, Glasser contends that images from our early years are the most durable, and that by middle school, images in our quality world take some greater effort to adjust. He cites the problems many people experience following the break-up of a relationship as an example of the difficulty we have in replacing images of significant others. Once individuals are able to remove images of their previous partner and replace them with images of someone else, their unsettled period is over.

Clearly, within this frame of reference, it is in everyone's interests for students to hold images of school and their teachers within their quality worlds. When this is the case, students will seek to maintain positive relationships with their teachers and to achieve academic successes, because they will perceive these as sources of needs satisfaction. According to Glasser (1990; 1998a), these students

**Become a ‘lead teacher’**

To provide greater needs-satisfaction potential in school environments, Glasser contends that many teachers need to change their perception of what teaching means, and move from the position that teachers should direct and control to one where teachers lead and facilitate learning. The former is referred to as ‘boss teaching’ and the latter as ‘lead teaching’ (Glasser, 1998b).

Boss teachers believe in their own authority and generally hold a transmissionist view of the teaching process – that is, they believe their role is to transmit knowledge and skills according to a set curriculum. They believe that students should be motivated to learn by reward and coercion. They retain control of what is taught – its structure, presentation and assessment.

Lead teachers see themselves as learning facilitators. They recognise, in line with Choice Theory principles, that you can't make anyone do anything, but you can help them to make choices about how to behave. Lead teachers involve students in decision making about teaching and learning. Learning methods are discussed openly, with an emphasis on quality. Students also contribute to decisions about what constitutes evidence of quality learning, and are encouraged to evaluate the quality of their own learning. Where conflict arises, lead teachers assist students to find rational means to reach solutions; and, above all, they build positive respectful relationships with each student (Tauber, 2007).
Vastly differing classroom ecologies emerge from these alternative constructs of the teacher's role and relationships. Glasser’s contention (Glasser, 1998b; 1998c) is simply that students in classes with lead teachers are much more likely to be able to satisfy their basic needs through normal classroom practices. He argues that they are therefore more likely to be motivated to engage in quality learning and choose appropriate positive behaviours, simply because, in this environment, it is rational to do so.

**Build a quality classroom**

Glasser argued that emphasis should be placed on constructing classes (and schools) where choosing productive behaviour is sensible and fulfilling. Needs satisfaction should be possible without students having to resort to misbehaviours. When choice is between (a) behaving appropriately and being condemned to daily boredom; and b) misbehaving and satisfying needs, the rational choice is to persist with it if they believe and expect that in doing so, they can influence future activities. That is, they will take their needs into account.

Some of the needs-fulfilling practices of the quality classroom include the use of class meetings as an avenue for resolving minor problems as well as for sharing good news, and the use of non-academic, ‘fun’ activities that involve social interaction between or within lessons (Glasser, 1998c). These activities – classroom meetings in particular – could be used to prevent or minimise bullying and aggression through the sense of belonging they promote (Wubbelsing, 2007).

**Build a quality school**

For Glasser, the problems that cause difficult students to become disillusioned with school are exacerbated by the ‘boss’ teaching style adopted by many teachers, the external-control psychology used by many schools to manage behaviour, and the deteriorating student–teacher relationships that students perceive throughout their schooling. Glasser asserts that in their early years, most students experience school as a rewarding, successful and satisfying place because they form caring relationships with teachers and are required to undertake enjoyable activities that lead to the development of useful skills, and because skill development is measured by growth in their personal competence.

In the middle years, Glasser contends, an emphasis is placed on the aggregation of information that many students think of as having little overt use. This view is often developed through students engaging in repetitive tasks that are likely to be assessed on a competitive basis. Teacher–student relationships may still be caring at this stage, but less so than in the earlier school years. As a result, many students begin to feel dissatisfied with school and to place less emphasis on it in their quality worlds. During this phase, teachers can still reinforce images of school in students’ quality worlds through a return to earlier, more rewarding approaches to teaching and learning. Where this restructuring occurs, the deterioration of student behaviour can be arrested.

In secondary schools, many students become widely disillusioned with, and disengage from, their education. Once images of school are removed from students’ quality worlds, recovering lost enthusiasm can be extremely difficult. Glasser does, however, assert that this is still possible – for as long as students continue to attend.

Glasser explains that interventions with difficult students at any of these stages must involve major change – in the way schools work, how learning is conceived and how behaviour is managed – to bring the system into line with students’ conceptions of a quality school. He claims that any intervention that sees the problem as being centred only on the students will be unsuccessful.
At the very least, teachers need to focus on rebuilding their relationships with difficult students, because the strength of one’s relationship with another person is the most important feature affecting the inclusion of one’s image in that person’s quality world. The stronger a teacher’s relationship with a difficult student, the more likely that residual images of these teachers will remain in that student’s quality world, and thus that the teacher’s personal influence will be greater. In other words, to maintain any ongoing influence, teachers must care about their students, and communicate this. In such situations, teachers will be in a position to intervene with intermittent problems by helping students through a negotiation process similar to that explained in Chapter 3.

Glasser (1998b; 1998c) puts forward a convincing argument for establishing a productive psychoeducational theory, and aims at easing tensions and preventing conflicts by making classrooms and schools satisfying and rewarding places for all. His distinction between ‘lead’ and ‘boss’ teaching, which we outlined above, clearly delineates his view of productive and unproductive teaching behaviours. The accessibility of Glasser’s approach – in terms of the language used, the concepts themselves and the availability of related information, resources and professional support – makes Choice Theory very relevant to, and useful for, many teachers.

Choice Theory is best applied on a whole-school basis (Glasser, 1998b). Problems may occur when it is implemented in the absence of a schoolwide plan, because students’ experiences in one class might be incompatible with their experiences in other classes and other school activities. Implementing quality whole-school approaches in single classes is, however, still considered preferable to continuing with other methods, because providing a quality classroom environment might (despite its limitations) encourage students to retain at least some images of teachers and education within their quality worlds. The Choice Theory approach requires considerable time to plan and implement, as do many constructivist educational approaches. This time investment should, however, be weighed against the time required to deal with classroom interruptions and other broader social consequences that difficult students cause.

Remember, though, that there are no ‘quick fixes’ with Choice Theory. There are no intervention strategies for seriously disruptive students other than the purposeful rebuilding of damaged teacher–student relationships. Glasser does offer considerable hope that positive engagement with learning can be encouraged and that major behaviour problems can be avoided for most students throughout their schooling experience.

Realism therapy

Glasser developed reality therapy, a particular type of counselling based on his Choice Theory, to help his clients to improve their relationships. Reality therapy has been adapted for teachers to use in school settings as a process to help students to build more realistic quality worlds and to make better behaviour choices when trying to satisfy unmet needs. Teachers should only use reality therapy if they have established a warm, supportive and accepting classroom climate and have a positive, trusting relationship with students (Glasser 1998a; Wubbolding et al., 2004). Based on our critique of the literature (Glasser, 1998, Petersen 2005; Wubbolding et al., 2004; Yarborough & Thompson, 2002), we suggest five steps for a classroom reality therapy process.

Step 1: Establish the unmet need

The teacher acknowledges a problem and asks the student, depending on the situation, either (a) What are they trying to get from from behaving the way they are? or (b) What has made them so upset? The teacher does not lay blame or find fault. The aim here is to find out what thoughts and feelings (or ‘total behaviour’) are causing the student to act in this way and what need is not being met.

Step 2: Clarify what the student is currently doing to meet their need

Once the need is apparent, the teacher asks the student what she/he is currently doing to solve their problem. At this point, the teacher may need to prompt the student with their own observations. This is also the time to get more of the ‘story’ from the student. If, for example, it is a friendship conflict, some delving into the history might be needed to better understand that relationship. In cases such as theft or vandalism, it is likewise important to explore this.

Step 3: Help the student to evaluate their current behaviour in relation to their need

The teacher asks whether the student’s current actions are helping or hurting the situation. Students may, in the first instance, be defiant and justify their actions. The teacher needs to remind them that this is not what is really happening, and might need to explain what they are seeing happening in terms of damaged relationships, then follow up by asking, ‘Is that what you really want?’ and ‘Do you want something different?’

Step 4: Help the student to consider other choices

The teacher should then ask the student to think about, or brainstorm, alternative actions that he/she could have taken to deal with their feelings. A discussion around pros and cons should follow. The teacher and the student should emerge with some workable alternatives that will help that student to meet their needs and feel better.

Final step (5): Help the student to commit to future action

In this final step, the teacher leads the student through a process of decision making on future action, and around the consequences of a failed commitment to change.

Reality therapy has been used to deal with bullying. Beebe and Robey (2011) describe the case of a secondary school student who, with the assistance of a school counsellor and the involvement of parents, worked out a plan to fulfill his needs through behaviour changes that would enable him to rejoin a school sports team. One of the important factors here was regular follow-up meetings to keep track of his progress.

There are times when a teacher can engage a student in reality therapy ‘on the fly’ during an episode of inappropriate behaviour. A teacher can simply acknowledge that the student is having a
While some may argue that the teacher is ceding a lot of power to the student, Glasser argues that the teacher is referring to the traditional role-based notion of power, and not the expert-knowledge power that is envisioned by psychoeducational theorists. The key to reality therapy, lead teaching and, indeed, to all aspects of Choice Theory, is keeping relationships healthy. We will now explain what this does, and does not, mean.

Keeping relationships healthy

Healthy relationships are maintained by positive, thoughtful communication that does not try to control or impose external judgements. Glasser (1998a) lists seven communication practices, which he called ‘connecting habits’, to promote healthy relationships between people. We similarly refer to these as positive communication practices. Glasser also identified seven disconnecting communication practices that harmed relationships, calling these ‘deadly habits’. We refer to them as negative communication practices. These 14 habits are summarised in Table 8.2.

Table 8.2 Glasser’s 14 communication habits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SEVEN CONNECTING HABITS</th>
<th>SEVEN DEADLY HABITS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supporting: Saying and doing things that help</td>
<td>Criticising: Indicating negative judgement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>others</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouraging: Giving hope and inspiring</td>
<td>Blaming: Suggesting someone caused a problem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening: Being attentive to someone’s message</td>
<td>Complaining: Showing dissatisfaction/frustration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accepting: Being non-judgemental</td>
<td>Nagging: Repeatedly criticising, blaming, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trusting: Having confidence in the other person</td>
<td>Threatening: Coercing someone using negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>consequences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respecting: Showing genuine interest</td>
<td>Punishing: Imposing a negative consequence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negotiating: Working towards mutual agreement</td>
<td>Bribery: Coercing someone using rewards</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The research on Choice Theory

Choice Theory, despite its widespread adoption in schools across the world, lacks a strong, systematic research base. There are, though, a small number of studies that have measured impacts on student attitudes and behaviour. In their study of a small sample of primary students, Yarbrough and Thompson (2002) found that reality therapy led to increased on-task behaviour. A later, larger study of secondary students gave evidence of a link between reality therapy and improved behaviour through the use of better choices in relation to needs (Loyd, 2005).

Other studies have also reported positive results from the application of Choice Theory more generally in school settings (Kim, 2002; Walter, Lambie & Ngazimbi, 2008). In their case study, Shillingford and Edwards (2008) reported reduced aggressive behaviour subsequent to the application of Choice Theory. That research notwithstanding, our earlier point about a limited research base stands. There are wide gaps in the research, and none more so than investigations into any effects that reality therapy or other aspects of Choice Theory might have on bullying and delinquent behaviour.

TEACHER EFFECTIVENESS TRAINING

Teacher Effectiveness Training is the first ‘teacher-oriented’ approach we will explain. This approach was developed by Thomas Gordon in the late 1960s, and was based on his earlier parent effectiveness training program. Gordon developed these programs while working closely with Carl Rogers in the US, and was strongly influenced by humanist theory (Tauber, 2007). Both programs went on to become popular behaviour management training programs in the US, Australia and elsewhere.

Teacher Effectiveness Training is first and foremost a professional development program designed to make teachers more effective classroom managers through positive communication techniques and relationship-building. However, its key elements, such as active listening and I-messaging, have become widely used classroom management and conflict resolution strategies in schools and other settings.

A key principle of Teacher Effectiveness Training is that it is better to teach students how to manage their own behaviour than to (simply) impose punishments. A number of assumptions underpin this principle. First, and in line with humanist thinking (and similar to Glasser’s view), Teacher Effectiveness Training assumes that people are self-regulating, and therefore can learn to manage their own behaviour. Indeed, students eventually resist teachers’ attempts to control them because they feel their autonomy is threatened. Second, the key to managing student problems is communication. Teachers should listen to student problems, and also let students know how their (mis)behaviour is affecting them. Third, external motivators can be ineffective; rewards and praise may undermine intrinsic motivation, and punishments do not motivate students to change in the longer term and can damage teacher–student relationships (Gordon, 1974; 1989).

To further our exploration of Teacher Effectiveness Training, we will describe and explain its key ideas and processes. These focus on the quality of teacher–student relationships, and on communication techniques and conflict resolution. We will then conclude this section with a look at the pertinent research evidence.
Teacher–student relationships

Thomas Gordon (1974) stressed the importance of the classroom environment as an influence on student behaviour. He referred to its psychological and physical characteristics, and many of the suggestions he made for optimising classroom environments are in line with our suggestions in earlier chapters about positive classroom climates, classroom organisation and teaching. Gordon (1974; 1989; 2011) emphatically emphasised the prime importance of positive teacher–student relationships, and identified five elements that contribute to these. These are summarised in Table 8.3.

Table 8.3 Gordon’s five elements of positive teacher–student relationships

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ELEMENT</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION (WHAT TEACHERS AND STUDENTS DO)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Openness</td>
<td>T and S are honest and direct with each other.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caring</td>
<td>T and S respect and appreciate one another.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interdependence</td>
<td>T and S depend on each other.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separateness</td>
<td>T and S recognise each other’s uniqueness and individuality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mutual needs</td>
<td>T and S meet each other’s needs without one missing out.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


You may have noticed that these five elements appear to contradict a more traditional view of teacher as leader and source of power. Teacher Effectiveness Training (and also parent effectiveness training) assert that the power does not in and of itself help relationships between children and adults. Indeed, it is contended that the overt use of power, such as bossing and being pushy, could be role modelling for students who engage in bullying and other forms of aggression (Gordon, 1974).

‘Windows’ on teacher–student relationships

Gordon (1974) developed the idea of ‘windows’ as a way of viewing various aspects of teacher–student relationships. Using these windows, teachers can examine their responses to types of behaviour and their responses to the student. The basic idea is shown in Figure 8.1. We explain this idea in terms of acceptable and unacceptable behaviours (which are congruent with, but not exactly the same as, appropriate and inappropriate behaviour). To illustrate it, we have used the example of two teacher’s perceptions (or windows) on a typical student named Kevin. In our example, Ms Lane is having problems with Kevin’s behaviour and is very critical of him. Ms Kelly occasionally has to talk to Kevin about behaviour, but is not too concerned overall.

Ms Kelly and Ms Lane both teach Kevin, but, as you can see, Ms Lane’s experience of Kevin is that most of his behaviour is unacceptable. She is having a difficult (negative) relationship with him. On the other hand, Ms Kelly seems to have a more balanced view of Kevin. What could be causing these differences, and therefore relationship differences, with the same student? Gordon suggests a number of reasons, including:

- Ms Lane has less tolerance of some behaviours compared with Ms Kelly, leading to more confrontations between Kevin and Ms Lane. Ms Kelly might allow more of some behaviours (e.g. low-level inappropriate behaviours) than Ms Lane does.
- Ms Lane might have a preconceived idea of Kevin — having taught his naughty older brother or having heard ‘gossip’ from other teachers. Ms Kelly might not have this information, or if she does, she might focus on using the five elements listed above.
- It might be that Ms Kelly teaches Kevin in the mornings while Ms Lane teaches him in the afternoons, when either Kevin is more off-task or Ms Lane is more tired (or both!).

Of course, there could be many other reasons. Generally, though, the problem appears to be that Ms Lane is not as accepting of Kevin’s behaviour as Ms Kelly, and this could be leading to further behaviour problems as Kevin responds to Ms Lane’s more critical and, as we will see later, unaccepting communication. It is also worth remembering that the windows might be different if the teachers had Kevin at opposite times of the day. The important thing that Gordon stresses is that teachers must examine their relationships with students before they can begin to understand what the relationships are like and what might be driving student behaviour (appropriate or inappropriate) or their perceptions of it.

False acceptance

In his studies of teachers in classrooms, Gordon (1974) observed a third aspect of teacher windows on student behaviour; he called this false acceptance. False acceptance occurs when teachers pretend to accept behaviour, or pretend to disapprove of behaviour, because of pressure from their colleagues about standards, fear of not being perceived by students as ‘cool’, or some other reason. Sometimes this may be necessary if teachers want to work in line with prevailing school policies and culture. False acceptance should be discouraged, since it is inauthentic and can lead to teacher frustration and subsequent mixed messages to students when body language and spoken words don’t match (Gordon, 2011).

Problem ownership

Windows can be used to determine what Gordon (1974; 1989) refers to as problem ownership. When a student is unhappy about something and expresses this, but neither the situation nor the student’s response affects the teacher, then the student owns the problem. They are simply expressing
frustration that a need has not been met, but they are behaving acceptably given the situation. Alternatively, when a student is unhappy and behaves inappropriately to the point where it is unacceptable to the teacher, the teacher is affected—and so the teacher owns the problem. It might be that the teacher is personally affronted, or she/he might be concerned about disruption to learning. Either way, the teacher is affected, since her/his need to be able to teach without interruption is not being met. There are, of course, times when neither the student nor the teacher is experiencing a problem. It is hoped that this is most of the time; otherwise, a look at the teacher–student relationship is needed. Figure 8.2 uses a window to show problem ownership.

![Figure 8.2 Problem ownership window](image)

The locus of the problem will determine what the teacher needs to do to help the situation return to the ‘no-problem’ state. If the student owns the problem, the teacher can help them to address their need by actively listening and offering advice. If the teacher owns the problem, the teacher can address their need using an I-message (see Chapter 2 and later this chapter). In each case the teacher and student need to interact to solve the problem. These interactions depend on effective and positive communication skills.

**Teacher–student communication**

Teacher Effectiveness Training identifies five communication techniques that build teacher–student relationships because they show acceptance, and are positive and constructive. We outline these in Table 8.4. The first four are best used when students own the problem. The last is advisable when teachers own the problem. We refer to all of these as positive communication practices, because they promote PLEs. In using these practices, teachers are modelling good communication for students, and the students can in turn use this to deal more constructively with disturbances in their microsystems (Overstreet & Mazza, 2003) and to build better interactions within components of their mesosystems (Johnson, 1994).

While I-messages can be confronting and can lead to conflict (we will explore this when we talk about conflict resolution), I-messages are positive and constructive, and still signal acceptance to the student—even though the student might not recognise this right away. You-messages, on the other hand, are accusatory, assume a power relationship and direct blame at the student. Consider these you-messages:

- ‘You should have done it that way.’
- ‘You’re not acting your age.’
- ‘You’d better put those down.’

How would you feel if these were directed at you? How might you respond as a result? Do these messages help relationships? What have you seen students do when confronted with these kinds of messages?

Now consider the following I-messages, and answer the same questions:

- ‘I am concerned that you will keep making mistakes if you continue.’
- ‘When I see you teasing other students, I feel disappointed, because I expect more of students in this class.’
- ‘I need you to put those down so that we can get on with the lesson.’

You-messages are examples of negative communication practices. Gordon (1974) had a name for these types of interactions: roadblocks to communication. These are damaging to relationships; make people feel unlike, disenfranchised and inadequate; and lead to negative emotions such as hurt, resentment and anger. We count you-messages among the negative communication practices that teachers should generally avoid. In Table 8.5, we list these and provide examples that we have adapted from Gordon’s explanation of communication roadblocks (1974, pp. 48–9).

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**Table 8.4 The five positive communication practices of Teacher Effectiveness Training**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STUDENT HAS THE PROBLEM:</th>
<th>WHAT TO DO:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Passive listening</td>
<td>Teacher does not speak, but lets the student explain what is happening without interrupting. Mostly non-verbal. Body language to show focus on the student is helpful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledging response</td>
<td>When the student pauses, teacher can nod their head or use other non-verbal cues to show understanding. Phrases such as 'I see' can be helpful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Door-opener</td>
<td>Teacher encourages the student to say more or clarify with prompts such as, 'That's curious; do you want to go on?' or 'Do you want to talk more about that?'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active listening</td>
<td>Teacher expresses empathy and paraphrases, or tries to clarify, events as well as student feelings about them. Non-verbal communication showing interest is important (see Chapter 2).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TEACHER HAS THE PROBLEM:</th>
<th>WHAT TO DO:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I-message</td>
<td>Teacher asserts how he/she feels and what he/she needs or describes the appropriate behaviour that will resolve the problem (see Chapter 2).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Table 8.5 Negative communication practices**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NEGATIVE PRACTICE</th>
<th>CATEGORY AND EXAMPLES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ROADBLOCKS 1–5</td>
<td>COMMUNICATING UNACCEPTANCE TO STUDENTS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Ordering, commanding and directing</td>
<td>• ‘Stop that this instant!’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• ‘You will give me that tennis ball now.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Warning and threatening</td>
<td>• ‘You’d better give me that tennis ball if you don’t want trouble.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• ‘Unless you try harder you will not do well.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Moralising, preaching and giving ‘shoulds’ and ‘oughts’</td>
<td>• ‘You should leave your personal issues at home.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• ‘You ought to know better, Philip.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Advising and offering solutions</td>
<td>• ‘If you concentrate on the work, you will get better marks.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• ‘The thing you need to do is stay away from Nicola so that she cannot bother you.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Teaching, lecturing and giving logical arguments</td>
<td>• ‘Let’s face the facts. You are getting into trouble because you don’t know how to handle your anger.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• ‘Can you see that you have missed homework all week? You must know that you will fail if this continues.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROADBLOCKS 6–8</td>
<td>COMMUNICATING JUDGEMENT ABOUT STUDENTS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Judging, criticising, disagreeing and blaming</td>
<td>• ‘You are lazy, Ron.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• ‘That is the wrong way to think about it, Maria!’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Name-calling, labelling and stereotyping</td>
<td>• ‘You are acting like a kindergartener.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• ‘You are just like your brother, Melissa.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Interpreting, analysing and diagnosing</td>
<td>• ‘You’re just avoiding doing the subtraction activity.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• ‘The work is not done because you are not paying attention when I teach.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROADBLOCKS 9–10</td>
<td>COMMUNICATING TO MAKE PROBLEMS GO AWAY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Praising, agreeing and positive evaluations</td>
<td>• ‘You will be okay, Melissa.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• ‘I am sure you will figure it out, Peter.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Reassuring, sympathising, consoling and supporting</td>
<td>• ‘I feel like that sometimes, too.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• ‘It won’t be too hard once you get into it.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROADBLOCK 11</td>
<td>REQUESTING MORE INFORMATION AS HELP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Questioning, probing and interrogating</td>
<td>• ‘How much time did you spend on this?’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• ‘Why did you wait so long to do something about it?’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Teacher–student conflict

Conflict is a natural phenomenon in relationships. This is because when two or more people are together, over time, their needs will eventually compete and inevitably clash. This is to be expected. Teacher–student conflicts in the classroom happen when students resist teachers’ initial attempts at communication. Gordon (1974) identified three methods that teachers commonly use to address conflicts with students.

When teachers use **Method I** they try to persuade the student to comply, and when they resist, use direct power to get a result. This is a teacher win–student lose solution that is often used by authoritarian teachers. Students might comply, but it is likely to make them resentful and even angry, and may lead to further conflicts later on. When teachers use **Method II**, they initially make their expectations known to the student, but when the student resists, the teacher gives in to the student, perhaps to keep the peace or to save face. This is a teacher lose–student win solution that eventually leads to teacher resentment and dissatisfaction, and a likelihood that students will engage in even more inappropriate behaviour.

There are times when the employment of one of these two methods is acceptable or even necessary. However, Gordon (1974) asserts that the fix will usually only be short-term. Win–lose approaches usually lead to more problems down the track. Some teachers fluctuate between using Method I and Method II. They are sending mixed messages to students, and are likely to generate even more behavioural conflict.

**A no-lose approach to conflict resolution**

It is possible to resolve conflict in a way that creates no losers. **Method III** is a no-lose (or win–win) method that involves teachers interacting with students to arrive at solutions and commitments that are agreeable to both sides. In Method III, teachers may use a broad range of positive communication practices (see the previous section). Gordon conceptualises Method III as a six-step process, an example of which is shown in the 'In practice' box below.

**IN PRACTICE**

**Albert’s six-step approach**

Albert has recently been to professional development on Teacher Effectiveness Training strategies. In his classroom management plan he has the following chart, which explains, step by step, how he responds when a conflict with a student looks to be developing.
A significant portion of the research into the efficacy of Teacher Effectiveness Training focuses, naturally enough, on teachers rather than on students. For example, an early study reported an increased use of active listening and I-messages by teachers after the training program, but did not examine impacts on student behaviour (Pedrini et al., 1976). Later studies reported increased teacher use of positive communication practices and large reductions in negative practices (Talvio et al., 1982) discussed two well designed studies that reported improved student behaviour generally. General reviews of classroom management impacts after the implementation of I-messages in schools. General reviews of classroom management have certainly recognised the positive benefits of approaches like Teacher Effectiveness Training that emphasise interaction and working with students over more assertive ones (Brophy, 1988; Roache & Lewis, 2011).

No studies specifically examining the impacts of Teacher Effectiveness Training (either as a program or in any of its specific techniques) on bullying could be found. However, Rigby (2007) saw benefit in humanistic approaches that focused on the needs of all concerned — including the bullies. The no-blame approach to bullying adopts a problem resolution process that is similar to Gordon’s Method III. The method of shared concern approach is also similar. Both have achieved positive impacts on bullying in schools (Rigby, 2011; Rigby & Griffiths, 2011), although both have also been criticised for their idealist perspectives (Rigby, 2007).

We did not find any recent studies to contradict these findings. However, there are some criticisms levelled at Teacher Effectiveness Training. On problem ownership, teachers might disagree with ‘who owns what’. Gordon (1974) cedes this possibility, but still defends his theory. Teacher Effectiveness Training might fall victim to its own driving assumption — that is, that if you cannot force students to do things, then it follows that you cannot force them to engage in Method III negotiations or even in less intensive interactions. Edwards and Watts (2008) raise concerns over time — that is, Method III and other kinds of interactions require time, of which teachers do not often have a lot.

**SYSTEMATIC TRAINING FOR EFFECTIVE TEACHING**

The second teacher-oriented approach we present in this chapter is the Systematic Training for Effective Teaching program. This program (along with the associated systematic training for effective parenting program) was developed by Dinkmeyer and his associates from the late 1970s. It is based on Dreikurs’ Goal Theory, and similarly emphasises teacher training.

Not surprisingly, the principles that underpin Systematic Training for Effective Teaching reflect both the psychological theories of Adler and Dreikurs and the communication ideas of Gordon. The program asserts that inappropriate behaviour is often explained away as being related simply to age or maturity, environment, gender, and so on; but these explanations leave teachers with no useful responses. Teacher training in the goals of misbehaviour — as well as in how to address them — is helpful and necessary. If behaviour is goal-directed, and driven by a need to belong, change can happen if the student believes she/he is capable of change. Systematic Training for Effective Teaching also recognises that goals can come into conflict, causing teachers to perceive behaviour challenges and students to feel they don’t belong. For example, teachers who value order and control may respond quite drastically to student behaviour that appears to reflect a power goal (Carlson, Dinkmeyer & Johnson, 2008; Dinkmeyer & Dinkmeyer, 1980).

The Systematic Training for Effective Teaching program promotes strategies that help teachers to build relationships with their students. Most of these have been described previously in this chapter. However, this program and its proponents do explain extensions to these strategies, explanations of which now follow.
Communicating encouragement

Like democratic discipline, Systematic Training for Effective Teaching recommends encouragement over praise, because praise implies to students that they are only accepted if they do things well. In some cases, students may perceive praise as being inauthentic, in light of their own perception of their abilities. However, if students feel that they cannot do something, simply encouraging them is unlikely to help. Alternatively, offering to complete a difficult task with the student, and to ‘get them going’ with encouraging words, can be quite effective, and can build students’ sense of autonomy (Kottman & Johnson, 1993).

Encouragement can take a number of forms, according to the needs of students (Hawes, 1989; Kottman & Johnson, 1993). Teachers can encourage student feelings of acceptance with compliments such as, ‘I enjoyed chatting with you’ or ‘I like the way you did that.’ They can inspire self-confidence with statements such as, ‘I am sure you will do the best you can’ and ‘This is a new problem, but I believe you can work through it.’ Teachers can show appreciation by saying things like, ‘Thank you for helping me with that’ or ‘Thanks for cleaning your desk.’ Of course, recognition for effort is a key form of encouragement, and this can be expressed in comments such as, ‘You have worked very hard on that project’ or ‘I am impressed with the amount of work you did in Maths today.’

The Systematic Training for Effective Teaching program recommends that teachers be mindful of the impact they can have on students when they communicate encouragement. Hawes (1989) urges teachers to:

- emphasise the positives of their effort and their apparent abilities
- play down weaknesses and failures
- support effort as well as success
- show the student that they care about them
- spend time with students, especially those who are discouraged
- implement structures and scaffolds that promote successful work and behaviour
- avoid talking to students if those students have made them frustrated or angry
- make efforts to understand students’ feelings and perceptions
- understand and accept that students have ‘bad’ days (too!)
- model positivity.

Reflective listening

Reflective listening is similar to active listening. The focus is on a teacher paraphrasing what a student has said, so that the student knows that he/she is understood and ‘heard’. This paraphrasing should reflect the teacher’s understanding of what happened to the student, as well as the student’s feelings about it (Kottman & Johnson, 1993). A typical paraphrased comment would be, ‘You were upset with Joe because he called you a name, so you got him back. Is that what happened?’

I-messages

We have, of course, already explained the communication technique of I-messaging (see Chapter 2). One thing that the Systematic Training for Effective Teaching program emphasises is that I-messages assume that students respond sensibly. They sometimes do not, in which case a more involved discussion is required.

Problem-solving conferences

Problem-solving conferences involve one-on-one meetings between a teacher and a student. They work in a similar way to the Method III conflict resolution used in Systematic Training for Effective Teaching. However, in the initial stages, the teacher may use questioning to disclose the goal behind the inappropriate behaviour which sparked the conference. The teacher then helps the student to find solutions to the problem, as well as to develop a plan for better future behaviour (Konza, Grainger & Bradshaw, 2003).

Class meetings

Class meetings are larger conferences held among a teacher and groups of students or the whole class. They might be used to address commonly occurring inappropriate behaviours or to share ideas to help students to solve their problem in a similar way to the circles we described in Chapter 2. Konza, Grainger and Bradshaw (2003) describe some useful elements that can be used to maximise the chance of success:

- setting and keeping to time limits and topics
- teacher having an equal role to students in the conference
- insistence on reaching a whole-group consensus
- ensuring that no one person monopolises discussions
- not letting the meeting develop into a gripe session
- quickly stopping personal attacks.

Natural and logical consequences

As is the case with democratic discipline, Systematic Training for Effective Teaching recommends and trains teachers in the use of natural and logical consequences as a way to prevent behaviour problems. If students know that the teacher will allow them to feel the effects of their actions, they will be less motivated to engage in inappropriate behaviour. Natural consequences, such as an assignment not being marked as a result of late submission, should be used first. Logical consequences, such as students having to clean the mess they made, should be used when (less intrusive) natural consequences do not work or are not sensible for the given situation (Carlson, Dinkmeyer & Johnson, 2008).

The research on Systematic Training for Effective Teaching

While some of the literature concerning Systematic Training for Effective Teaching (and its derivative programs) has suggested promising outcomes for student behaviour (Orwell & Mulls, 1997; Villares, Brigan & Peluso, 2008), the approach can be criticised, like other psychoeducational approaches, for its lack of a large body of empirical study investigating its effectiveness. This criticism was first noted by Hudson in 1997, and it continues to be an issue today. A recent wide-ranging review of school-based behavioural interventions did not include Systematic Training for Effective Teaching because of
a lack of evidentiary empirical research (Whear et al., 2013). Given the origins of Systematic Training for Effective Teaching, it might be possible to draw evidence from the broader research around the strengths and limitations of Goal Theory.

**THE PAIN MODEL**

The Pain Model of behaviour management is the 'youngest' approach to classroom management that we present in this book. It was developed in Australia in the early 2000s by a team led by psychologist Patrick O'Connor. The model was developed to help schools and teachers to deal with students who exhibited (or were at risk of presenting) extremely challenging behaviours. At the heart of the model is a belief that extreme behaviour can be caused by physical and psychological pain, and that these two types of pain are linked. To minimise extremely challenging behaviours and avoid stress, teachers need to understand this belief, and respond to these students in ways that address the underlying problems. Although clearly intended for use with high-risk and challenging students, the Pain Model has considerable potential to find wider application in Australian schools, particularly in a preventative context.

Five core assumptions underpin the Pain Model. First, if a student feels good, she/he will act that way, and if they feel bad, they will act so. Second, behaviour is a form of communication, and students who behave badly are likely to be letting others know that they are in pain. Third, teachers and schools often misread such behaviour and engage in traditional, authoritarian behaviour management methods, such as punishment. Punishment does not 'work' on these students. Fourth, students with extremely challenging behaviours often have poorly developed relationship, social and problem-solving skills. These skills must be taught to them. Finally, some students may desire punishment and use a school discipline system to establish notoriety — that is, to be known for their behaviour (Edwards & Watts, 2008; McDonald, 2013).

Two basic principles guide action in the Pain Model. First, pain (physical or psychological) needs to be acknowledged. This means that teachers must be sensitive to the needs of these students and try to help them to deal with pain in more positive ways. To do this, teachers must be aware that physical and psychological pain have comparable impacts on student learning and ability to cope in a classroom and school environment. Teachers must engage with parents, carers and other contributing professionals to understand the underlying problems, and to help to design sensitive interventions. Second, the student must be valued. This means that teachers (and other students) need to be respectful of the student and patient in dealing with their needs. It also means that schools need to devote (more) resources to help these students.

Physical pain may arise from abuse and/or chronic illness. It may also arise from concomitant substance abuse and/or psychological pain. Psychological pain may arise from domestic violence, relationship problems in the microsystem, and the social and other impacts of various (clinical) disorders. On top of this, psychological pain may result in physical symptoms (such as headaches, nausea and tremor), which, of course, make the situation even worse. We know from humanist theorists such as Maslow that if the basic need to be/feel healthy is not met, then motivation for school engagement and learning will be depressed as students struggle just to survive. Some of the very strong feelings generated in these students include fear, anxiety, powerlessness, insecurity, loneliness, frustration and anger (Long, 2014; Wright, 2009).

Extremely challenging behaviour results when the pain conditions persist and the individual does not develop the necessary coping skills. These behaviours range from outrageous attention-seeking, to moodiness in social situations, to aggressive lashing out, and to stealing and vandalism. Two of the authors of this text have observed primary-aged students drawing cartoons indicating suicidal ideation — which can be viewed by students who feel overwhelmed by pain as a solution to their problems. The Pain Model offers preventative and corrective strategies to help students to deal with their pain; these are explained below.

**Preventative strategies**

O'Connor emphasised three key strategies to be used to minimise episodes of extremely challenging behaviour. The first is to develop and maintain positive relationships. Many of the relationship-building ideas presented in the other psychoeducational approaches are applicable here. The Pain Model also advocates teacher accessibility outside of formal learning times, such as during recess or lunchtimes (if class groups sit together to eat) or at organised ‘picnic’ or sports events, where teachers could participate in games and other activities with students. This creates opportunities for informal chats, and even for discussions about problems.

The second key strategy is provision of clear instruction. By this, we mean clear and well explained (preferably negotiated) expectations of appropriate behaviour, class rules and procedures, and safety. This strategy includes giving clear instructions during teaching so that students experience less uncertainty and related anxiety.

The third strategy is teacher support. This is provided by the school. Teachers might be anxious or stressed about what to do with challenging students. They will require the assistance of support staff, as well as professional development on the origins of challenging behaviours and how to best deal with those. Access to mentors and other helpful peers, including time set aside to meet with them, should be encouraged and facilitated by the school executive. The school community should play its part to make itself a welcoming place for students in pain, rather than be a further source of pain.

**Corrective strategies**

There will, of course, be times when preventative strategies do not work fast enough, particularly for students with very challenging behaviours. In these circumstances, corrective strategies and interventions are required, and the Pain Model outlines a number of corrective strategies that could be used strategically, and also to address very challenging behaviour that persists in spite of preventative actions. We will briefly describe five of these as part of an encompassing process. We call these five strategies the five REs of correction.

**Relieve**

Students need to be calmed down during or after an outburst, or if a teacher sees danger signs associated with anxiety and stress. There are a number of ways in which students can be helped to
calm down, including deep-breathing exercises, muscle tensing and relaxation repetitions, and using
diversional activities, such as playing a video game. It might be necessary to treat any physical
manifestations such as nausea, headache, hunger and thirst.

Reskill

Reskilling students means teaching (missing or maladapted) social, relationship and problem-solving
skills. Strategies from other approaches, such as social skills training, Think Time and Stop Think Do
(described in the previous chapter), can be implemented. Teachers might need to talk through
incidents with students and work through plans for what to do next time.

Reconstruct

Teachers can help students to reconstruct their sense of self-esteem and self-worth by using
encouragement, getting them to learn a new skill or constructing positive slogans like 'I am a good
person' or 'Things are getting better.'

Redress

To redress is to attempt to correct or make right a current pattern of behaviour. This includes
developing plans and agreements with students (and perhaps with the school support team or a
collaborating professional) that set objectives for more appropriate future behaviours. O'Connor
recommends the use of a self-managed behaviour log, which allows students to be rated on their
progress on a scale from 5 (no problem) to 1 (major disruption). Scores at 2 or below trigger referral
to a key staff member or collaborating professional for remedial help. The log can also act as a
behaviour record that can be analysed (much like behavioural scatter plots) and the information used
to inform the improvement of corrective interventions.

Refer

As noted above, a referral to another person might be necessary. This could be a member of the
school support team, the school psychologist or another collaborating professional. This might
require removal from class for a short time for therapy followed by graduated re-entry. The aim is to
provide extra support to help the student to deal with pain and related emotions.

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**STORY FROM THE FIELD**

**Manjul: Dealing with emotional disturbance**

Ramona was a student in my class. She was a quite capable student. However, her grades did not
always equal her abilities, and she was by far the 'naughtiest' girl in the class. It was common to
hear her calling out inappropriately and getting into arguments with her classmates during group
work, and especially during breaks.

During third term, I became increasingly worried about Ramona. Her behaviour was
becoming even more challenging. She lashed out unexpectedly at other students, and on one
occasion took a backhand swipe and yelled 'F_ _ off!' at a male desk partner just because his arm
was encroaching on her desk area. This was extreme behaviour for Ramona. She was not a big
smiler, but I could not remember her smiling for a while.

One day, while I was marking bookwork, the edge of a very crudely drawn cartoon caught my
eye. I went to the back-inside cover of the book to look at it and found a picture of a coffin
resting on what looked like black clumps of grass. It was captioned, 'I want to die. It was
Ramona's book.

That afternoon, I asked Ramona if I could see a couple more of her workbooks. I found more
'cartoons'. Some were just ordinary pictures typical of her age group, but all drawn only in black
pen. I found three more worrying ones, though. One, in particular, gave me chills. It was a
cartoon of a girl lying on the ground - apparently dead. Again, this cartoon was drawn in black,
but she had added red to depict blood around the body. The caption written underneath read,
'I'm gonna kill myself.'

The next day, I spoke to Ramona about the drawings, trying to find out what she meant by
them. Ramona refused to give an answer beyond 'They're nothing' and 'I was just kidding.' I
explained that if Ramona was feeling bad about anything she could talk to me, any time, and
Ramona exclaimed that she knew that and thanked me. I wasn't happy with her answer, so I
sought advice from my deputy principal, who suggested a meeting with Ramona's parents. The
deputy suggested not raising the issue of the cartoons right away, but just asking the parents if
they noticed anything unusual about their daughter's behaviour.

At the meeting a few days later, it was revealed that Ramona's parents had been going
through relationship difficulties for some time and were seriously discussing separation.
They had assumed that Ramona was playing up at school because of this, and also because
they did not spend much time with their kids because of work. I then informed them about
the cartoons, and showed them an example. They were shocked. They had no idea how much
their problem appeared to be affecting Ramona. Her mother said, 'We know Ramona is our
"dark child" - she always has been. But this is dark!' They were keen to help in any way they
could.

Over the rest of the term, Ramona, her parents and a member of the school support team
worked out and put into place a collaborative 'Ramona strategy'. The parents agreed not to
thrust out their relationship problems in front of their children, and to spend some time with
Ramona each evening to talk about things that concerned her. The support team member
taught Ramona ways to deal with anxiety, including deep-breathing exercises and some anger
management techniques. By the end of the term, I noticed significant changes in Ramona's
behaviour, including improved relationships with her classmates. I even saw her smile for the first
time in what seemed like ages!
Reflection . . .
Manjul’s preventative measures were in line with what the Pain Model recommends, in that he had a positive relationship with his students (Ramona was able to reflect this), was accessible and promoted discussions with students about issues. His actions in seeking help from the deputy principal in the first instance, and the support team subsequent to the parent meeting, are examples of the idea of referral.

- What other aspects of the Pain Model, and of other psychoeducational approaches, did you notice in Manjul’s story?

The research on the Pain Model
We have been unable to locate any empirical work evidencing the efficacy of the Pain Model. However, there is plenty of literature that supports the assumptions behind the approach, as well as its strategies. For example, the link between physical pain and psychological pain, as well as their relationship with increased propensity for extremely challenging behaviours and conflict, is widely recognised (Allen, Mathews & Shriver, 1999; Long, 2014; Wright, 2009). Many of the preventative and corrective strategies, and the rejection of punishment as a viable option, are also supported as examples of good classroom management (Emmer & Evertson, 2009; Jones & Jones, 2013; Marzano & Marzano, 2003; McDonald, 2013; Oden & Nielsen, 2006).

The Pain Model can require a great deal of resourcing in terms of personnel and time (Edwards & Watts, 2008). However, this is a common issue with many psychoeducational and other approaches. Teachers who hold a more traditional, authoritative philosophy of classroom management may criticise the supportive and accommodating nature of the model as pandering to difficult students (Marzano & Marzano, 2003; Wright, 2009). However, doing something proactive to help students is far better than punishing them for things that may be beyond their control, or even than doing nothing at all.

PSYCHOEDUCATIONAL APPROACHES AS PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION
Preventative practices influenced by psychoeducational approaches are likely to focus on satisfying the needs of students. An aligned classroom culture is likely to be characterised by student responsibility and self-direction. Rules, expectations and procedures are likely to have been negotiated and agreed upon by the whole class. Consequences for rules will also have been discussed with students, and would logically suit the targeted behaviours. Classroom climate would be characterised by mutual respect, and the use of positive communication practices that foster openness and trust and maintain good relationships. Indeed, relationships will be what define the class. Teachers are likely to be actively involved in supporting students to solve their problems, and to be encouragers of their students and advocates for their rights.

The prevailing teaching style would likely be more democratic, with the teacher adopting a facilitator-guide role, allowing student input wherever possible, and more often than in other approaches. Many needs are catered for through cooperative learning (see Chapter 5). Cooperative learning strategies utilise learning teams to solve problems through an approach of their choosing, and embrace team members’ interests and talents. Task performance is regularly evaluated by team members, as are the decision-making and conflict-resolution methods employed. Authentic assessments are prevalent. It would not be surprising to see classroom seating being in groups, and the physical layout being focused as much as possible on comfort and student aesthetics.

Manjul’s ‘Story from the field’ embraces both prevention and intervention strategies. There is, though, a general pattern with psychoeducational interventions. First, there is a dependency on talk-based solution-finding, with meetings facilitated by the teacher and student input. Teachers adopt the role of mentor, and coach and guide students to learn how to meet their needs and achieve their goals using appropriate behaviours. The teacher is an encourager; students are responsible and learning to self-regulate.

Interventions based on psychoeducational theories (unlike those based on behavioural theory) are not rigidly procedural. These types of intervention focus more on the thinking, feelings, beliefs and attitudes of individual students than on students’ observable challenging behaviours, and seeks to nurture and develop a more satisfying psychological learning environment for each student.

Psychoeducational interventions are generally preferred by teachers who emphasise the value of warm relationships with their students and intend to focus on improving student self-esteem. Generally, these interventions involve engagement in a series of meetings (with individual students, and sometimes groups of students) wherein the focus of discussion is on exploring the student’s worldview — how they think about themselves and their world.

For psychoeducational interventions to be successful, the participating teacher needs to be self-aware and reflective of their own worldview. The role of the teacher in intervening is to take a person-centred approach by (re)building positive relationships with students to facilitate the re-emergence of self-esteem, rebuild the self-concept and stimulate re-engagement in the pursuit of self-actualisation. The teacher, as a helper and mentor, must unconditionally value their students, be genuinely warm and honest, and accept the student’s worldview.

YOU BE THE JUDGE
Teaching in Australian schools is being increasingly informed and driven by ‘evidence-based practice’. Compare and contrast the research evidence-base for the various strategies explained in this chapter.

- Can you see yourself implementing these strategies in your classroom? Why or why not?
- Is the evidence for any or all of these strategies convincing enough to you that psychoeducational approaches are worthy of consideration and implementation in various school settings?

You be the judge . . .
Response hierarchy for psychoeducation

The response hierarchy presented here refers to the students in this chapter’s ‘Starter story: The noisy four’. Mr Younes’ first response is to use proximity, standing close to the group. If he needs to address the problem again, he will give a warning, and that step will be followed by a group conference to solve the problem. At the conference, it is agreed that a sensible consequence of further disruption will be that the group must split up and do other work.

Figure 8.3 A response hierarchy for Mr Younes’ ‘noisy four’ based on psychoeducation and Teacher Effectiveness Training

PROFESSIONAL REFLECTION

In this chapter we described a number of psychoeducational approaches to the establishment and maintenance of positive learning environments. Having read this chapter, perhaps one or more of these approaches appeals to you. The purpose of this reflection is to get you thinking about how the theoretical approaches might work for you. Consider the following questions as if no other theories existed except psychoeducational ones:

1. Have you seen any of these approaches, or aspects of them, used in a classroom or school? If so, how well did they work?
2. Of the approaches, which one(s) do you feel most comfortable using in the classroom and why?
3. Would you adapt the approaches? If so, how?
4. If you listed more than one approach, how might the two (or more) approaches work together as a behaviour management strategy (or sequence of strategies) in a classroom management plan? If you listed one approach in Question 2, how might you combine it with another behaviour management strategy?
5. Now think of a common inappropriate behaviour (not too challenging!), and imagine you are facing this in your classroom right now. How would you deal with it in light of your answers to questions 1–4?

Psychoeducational approaches will provide a contrast with the previous two approaches we have discussed. Did your reading and reflection about this approach influence your preventative approaches to classroom management or your approach to intervention? Do you need to adjust your theoretical approaches to classroom management? Go to ‘Your philosophy for a positive learning environment’ and respond to the guide questions.

SUMMARY

In this chapter, we presented five psychoeducational approaches to establishing positive learning environments. We explained the theoretical perspectives of, as well as the practical applications for, each approach. We then described and operationalised Goal Theory, Choice Theory, Teacher Effectiveness Training, Systematic Training for Effective Teaching and the Pain Model as approaches to classroom and behaviour management. Preventative and intervention practices were discussed. You will have noticed that psychoeducational approaches are about communication and relationships, and in particular about talking through issues to solve problems. At the end of the chapter, we asked you to make a judgement call on the utility of these approaches.

Key terms

- Choice Theory
- democratic discipline
- encouragement
- Goal Theory
- logical consequences
- mistaken goals
- Pain Model
- psychoeducational approaches
- ‘quality world’
- reality therapy
- Teacher Effectiveness Training
- Systematic Training for Effective Teaching

Individual and group activities

Activity 8.1
You have been appointed to your first school, and on arrival you are told that the school’s discipline system adheres strictly to the behavioural model. You much prefer the psychoeducational model.

- Put a case to your principal outlining why you wish to underpin your practice with psychoeducational theories.
- Outline the advantages and disadvantages of each model in relation to the classroom by creating a dialogue with a peer.

Activity 8.2
On your first day at Rigid Heights School, your principal asks you what intervention you will use to ‘control’ the behaviour in your classes. You explain that you will take a psychoeducational approach to classroom and behaviour management, and will apply whichever model is appropriate. Your principal asks you to explain this.

- Role-play this situation with anyone who is prepared to adopt a limited view on the issue of behaviour management. You, of course, will play the new teacher.
Activity 8.3
Reflect on your days as a school student and identify a teacher who best demonstrated a psychoeducational intervention in the classroom. Discuss this with a peer.

• Would you like to emulate this? Give reasons for your answer.

Activity 8.4
As a class group, reflect back on Goal Theory, Choice Theory and the Pain Model.

• Form groups to prepare for and conduct a three-way debate arguing for the utility of each in a particular teaching/learning context.

Activity 8.5
As a class group, reflect on Teacher Effectiveness Training and Systematic Training for Effective Teaching.

• Discuss how elements of the content of these programs might be embedded into pre-service teacher training programs (like yours!) to improve your readiness to teach.

Activity 8.6
Refer back the the case of Ramona in this chapter’s ‘Story from the field’.

• Discuss how you would broach the issue of suicidal ideation with Ramona’s parents.

• Role-play the interview in groups of four (Manjul, deputy, two parents).

Activity 8.7
Outline the similarities and the differences between Goal Theory and Choice Theory.

Online resources
CENGAGE Visit http://login.cengagebrain.com and search for this book to access the study tools that come with your textbook.

Weblinks
‘Alfred Adler: Theory and application’ (Adler Graduate School) http://alfredadler.edu/about/theory
William Glasser Institute http://www.wglasser.com/
Gordon Training International http://www.gordontraining.com/

References
Learning outcomes

When you have worked through this chapter, you should be able to:

• explain the key features of the social justice perspective and the situations in which it best applies
• compare and contrast the nature and application of the three social justice approaches explained in this chapter
• understand and discuss the relationships between social justice approaches, prevention, intervention, and bullying
• express and justify your opinion on the application of social justice approaches to classroom management and building PLEs in various school contexts
• design strategies for classroom management using one or more of the approaches described in this chapter.

Chapter overview

• Starter story: Trouble in paradise
• Introduction
• The social justice perspective
• Restorative justice
• The Responsible Thinking Process
• Values education
• Other social justice approaches
• Social justice approaches as prevention and intervention

• Professional reflection
• Summary
• Key terms
• Individual and group activities
• Online resources
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• References
Starter story: Trouble in paradise

It is recess time at Paradise Central School, and in every corner of the playground, students are enjoying their break time. Many are playing ball games on courts that have been marked out for this purpose. Blake and his friends are playing handball on one court, but there is trouble brewing.

As Blake is moving backwards to return a serve, he bumps into Lexie, a female classmate who was walking through the corner of Blake’s side of the court at that moment. They collide gently, and neither is physically hurt, but Lexie stumbles and is startled. This soon turns to anger as she rounds on Blake and screams, ‘Watch where you’re going, loser!’ Blake, clearly incensed, responds with an expletive curse and tells Lexie she was not supposed to be in his square during a game. An argument ensues, and Blake’s friends start getting involved.

Jeff, an older student, becomes aware of the conflict and approaches the group, telling them firmly to calm down and ‘cool it!’ He then asks them, one at a time, to explain what happened – Lexie first. Blake is rather upset that Jeff appears to be favouring Lexie, but calms down as he gets his opportunity to tell his side of things. Jeff, who has learned about active listening in his studies, then relates their stories back to them. It seems that Lexie, who had her mind on a coming exam, had not realised that she was walking through the court, and expected an apology from Blake when they collided. Blake was upset that Lexie had, in his view, carelessly wandered into the court and then had the gall to abuse him because of the ensuing collision.

Jeff then says, ‘It looks like you two had a misunderstanding. Lexie didn’t know she was walking into a game, and Blake didn’t realise that she didn’t know that. Would that be what’s happening?’ They both nod in agreement. Jeff then asks them, ‘Is this a good thing that’s happening?’ They both indicate that it is not. So Jeff then asks them both to propose a way to make sure it does not happen again. Lexie agrees that she will walk through the courts more carefully in future, while Blake proposes to explain his side of things rather than retaliate with verbal abuse right away. At Jeff’s suggestion, they shake hands and apologise. Lexie goes her way, and the boys resume their handball game.

INTRODUCTION

So far, we have discussed the application of behavioural, psychoeducational and cognitive behavioural theories and strategies for the development of PLEs. In this chapter, we explore a fourth category of approaches. We distinguish these as a separate category because they have a different perspective on how behaviour should be managed, and because they present a different set of implications for the establishment of PLEs. In Chapter 6 we explained how behaviourist approaches focus on the observable and measurable with a view to influencing behaviour through manipulation of external conditions, such as removing antecedents or imposing consequences. In Chapter 7 we explained how cognitive behavioural approaches bridge behaviourist approaches and psychoeducational approaches through the development of cognitive and metacognitive strategies in students. In Chapter 8 we explained how psychoeducational approaches focus on the needs and goals that drive behaviour with a view to guiding individuals to make better decisions based on altered thinking.

In this chapter, we introduce five social justice approaches to classroom management. Like behaviourist approaches, social justice approaches may use external conditions, such as consequences, to influence behaviour, and like psychoeducational approaches, in these there is a drive to guide the individual to make better decisions. What sets social justice approaches apart from other approaches is a focus on core values such as responsibility and compassion (to name just two), and a focus on healing, forgiveness and a corresponding requirement to right wrongs.

The five approaches presented here are ‘younger’ than the behavioural, cognitive behavioural and psychoeducational approaches; they have generally emerged only over the last two or three decades, and their implementation in schools has been even more recent.

Restorative justice (which is associated with the broader notion of restorative practice) emphasises the importance of repairing harm caused by inappropriate behaviour, with a focus on the respect and dignity of offenders and people affected by their actions. The Responsible Thinking Process emphasises the importance of respect and responsibility when interacting with others, and the need to be accountable for actions. Values education has been an area of increasing popularity in the last decade, but is really a redevelopment of an older idea: the use of universal values such as respect, responsibility, care and tolerance to underpin behaviour choices, as well as their consequences. Judicious Discipline and Friendly Schools are programs that have a more recent history. All five social justice approaches have the common goal of building positive, productive and meaningful relationships among students, and between students and teachers. So, first, let’s explain the social justice perspective in more detail.

THE SOCIAL JUSTICE PERSPECTIVE

This chapter’s ‘Starter story: Trouble in Paradise’ was not a utopian vision dreamed up by the authors: it really happened, as reported by a teacher in a school that had implemented a social justice approach to student behaviour management. What is demonstrated in the story is an example of what proponents of social justice approaches would see as an appropriate and desirable outcome of the philosophy they apply to schools. Blake and Lexie’s conflict was sorted out through informal peer mediation. Through this, they were learning appropriate social skills, a sense of responsibility and ways to enact fairness and justice.
Social justice approaches treat inappropriate behaviour as a sign that an individual lacks the knowledge, skills or attitudes to maintain positive social relationships, has little self-awareness, and lacks the capacity to deal reasonably with problems such as conflicts or compulsions. This situation may have arisen due to life experiences, psychological problems or both. Whatever the case, there is a need for remediation so that inappropriate behaviours are less likely to happen and, importantly, so that the impacts of the inappropriate behaviours are addressed.

At the heart of social justice approaches in schools is the assumption that students have the ability to understand how their behaviour can impact on others, and that this awareness can help them to regulate their own behaviour. These approaches place the teacher in the role of a firm, patient, questioning guide who leads students through a process of development. So far, this seems very close to psychoeducational theory. But there’s more!

A common principle among social justice approaches is that students should be accountable for their actions, and be required — indeed, obligated — to help to fix the problems they created through their inappropriate behaviour. The focus of this behaviour management exercise is not just on getting students to realise their mistakes and to change. This is important, but the focus is also on separation, healing and resolution, and, ultimately, forgiveness and the development of more positive relationships. The expectation is that students must address the impacts of their behaviour on others directly.

Relationships are important to social justice approaches. Inappropriate behaviour damages relationships among students, or between students and teachers/other. Students who engage in inappropriate behaviour are expected to face the consequences of their actions. This is similar to behaviourism, but there is a point of difference in this process which characterises the social justice perspective: in confronting those consequences, there needs to be active engagement between the student/s who behaved inappropriately and the people affected by that behaviour. This engagement is required to resolve problems and to start the process of relationship-healing.

Social justice approaches repudiate the more traditional, retributive approaches to classroom management that involve the imposition of punishments, such as detention, as a consequence of inappropriate behaviour. In such a system, it is often the case that the student behaving inappropriately experiences a consequence, and the people affected by the behaviour are expected to be satisfied that justice is done. There is no guarantee that anyone has learned anything from the experience, and no guarantee that the underlying issues, as well as those resulting from the inappropriate behaviour, have been resolved. Social justice approaches support the recognition of the need for the offending student to have an opportunity to see the impacts of their actions on others, as well as the need for those affected to be involved in the resolution of the problem.

Finally, social justice approaches are steeped in values. Key values like respect, dignity, tolerance, understanding and responsibility underpin them. We will make reference to these and to other values as we explain the three well recognised social justice approaches explained in the first three sections of this chapter: restorative justice, responsible thinking and values education.

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

The concept of restorative justice originated in the 1970s in North American criminal justice systems. There were serious concerns that those systems, as they had existed, were not effective at changing the behaviour of offenders and did not provide opportunities for victims to express their hurt or to engage in any form of resolution with offenders (Umbreit, 1998). Practices we see in today’s judicial systems, such as victim impact statements and circle conferences, are the results of innovations brought about through the concept of restorative justice. These are collectively known as Restorative Practices, and are aimed at looking after the needs of both offenders and victims to drive better, less punitive societies.

When we look at history, it becomes apparent that the idea behind restorative justice is not so new. While the terminology is recent, societies have engaged in practices aimed at resolution of differences between offenders and victims since ancient times (Strang, 2001). Many indigenous cultures have used, and continue to use, conflict mediation strategies that are restorative (Richards, 2006).

Restorative justice was introduced in Australian schools during the early 1990s (Strang, 2001). Since that time, there has been quite significant adoption of it as a whole-school approach to behaviour management. In most cases, schools adopting the restorative justice approach engage staff in professional development to learn its key elements, such as what to ask students when incidents occur and how to conduct conference circles. Support organisations such as the International Institute for Restorative Practices (using their SaferSanerSchools program) are usually involved. However, other schools may have adapted their existing policies and practices to align with restorative justice principles.

The restorative justice approach, when applied to schools, emphasises that students, teachers and others in the community have the right to be treated respectfully and justly. Followers of restorative justice (and of Restorative Practices more broadly) view inappropriate behaviour not as simply a breach of school or class rules but as damage to the relationship between the misbehaving student and peers, teachers and/or others in the school community. This view stems from observed deficiencies in traditional criminal justice and school discipline that punished offenders, but left the victims harmed by their actions and often feeling 'ignored, neglected or even abused' by those punitive and retributive approaches (Zehr, 2002, p. 14).

Traditional school discipline systems generally focus on punishing offending students because their inappropriate behaviour is in breach of rules. There is less of a focus on fixing underlying problems or addressing the needs of victims, which often leaves them dissatisfied with the outcomes.

For example, in the case of a student being given lunchtime detention for bullying, the victim/s are not involved in the disciplinary process, do not get much opportunity to express their grievances, and do not get a chance to resolve their issues directly with the bully and possibly improve relationships. The offender is likely to have little idea of how much her/his actions have affected victims, and may even feel angry at them because he/she is in trouble. This can, and often does, lead to further bullying. As a result, for both offenders and their victims, there is no sense of closure and the underlying problems have not been resolved.

Through the lens of restorative justice, inappropriate behaviour results in harm done by students to themselves and to others, and harm done to others should be repaired through respectful and open mediation. This does not mean that students who misbehave avoid consequences, but rather, in fact, the opposite. Students who engage in inappropriate behaviour (referred to as offenders) must be held accountable for the harm they do to others as a result, and need to put effort into repairing the damage done (Cameron & Thorburne, 1999; Zehr, 2002).

In order for this to happen, offenders need to understand the harm they have done through their inappropriate behaviour. Restorative justice encourages interaction between offenders and those
harm caused by their behaviour (referred to as victims). A key principle underpinning restorative justice is that through engagement with those affected by inappropriate behaviour, the misbehaving student can come to understand how their behaviour affects people and their relationships with those people. Once they have this understanding, offenders are more likely to engage in fixing the problems they caused, and indeed to have a better idea about how they can fix things.

The role of the teacher is to guide students through the process. Rather than impose sanctions or punishments, they help offenders to realise the effects of their actions, assist victims to be open about how they were affected by those actions and guide both parties through ways to resolve the problem so that the needs of all are met. In this way, restorative justice promotes the building of positive relationships, inclusiveness and problem solving. Students are required to think about their actions, take responsibility for them and find ways to repair harm done.

Howard Zehr, the ‘grandfather’ of restorative justice, refers to harm and needs, obligations, and engagement as being the ‘three pillars’ of restorative justice (Zehr, 2002). To understand restorative justice, these three pillars need to be understood. They are explained in the next three sections.

Harms and needs

Through the lens of restorative justice, inappropriate behaviour is viewed as harm done to a relationship. This could be a relationship between two students, or among many students, students and teachers or students and the wider school community. As we have mentioned, people affected by inappropriate behaviour are referred to as victims because they suffer to some degree. In practice, this means that people who are impacted by inappropriate behaviour are asked about their experience, how it made them feel and how they would like things to be made better. In doing this, there is an authentic attempt to address the needs of the victims.

At the same time, the needs of students who have misbehaved are also addressed. Restorative justice asserts that, while inappropriate behaviour can cause harm to others, the perpetrators of the harm have also possibly suffered. This might be through some reaction of the victim’s, the experience of broken friendship or embarrassment. Shame, for offenders, is a common outcome of the restorative justice process. It is a negative emotion, and, depending on the individual, it can lead to negative responses, such as denial and avoidance, lashing-out and self-harm, if it is not dealt with productively (Berk, 2008; Wachtel, 2013). Further, students with backgrounds from some cultures, such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Maori and Pasifika groups, and some Asian societies, might be more susceptible to shame, and to acting out negative responses to it, due to a connection they feel to their peer group or community and a resultant compulsion to ‘save face’ or maintain a certain composure that is expected of them (Berk, 2008; Howard Zehr, 2002). A kind of activity also sensitises students to important values such as forgiveness, tolerance, understanding and compassion, to name a few (Braithwaite, 1999; Varnham, 2008).

Obligations

Harm caused by inappropriate behaviour obliges the offender to repair what has been damaged. The first step in this process is to ensure that offenders understand the problems they cause when they misbehave – at the time of the most recent incident, but also arising out of an established pattern of misbehaviour. Restorative justice (and Restorative Practices more generally) ensures this happens by providing opportunities for offenders to see the consequences of their actions through interaction with victims, explanations from the teacher, or combinations of both.

Once offenders come to a realisation about the problems their behaviour has caused, the second step in the process is to come to an agreement on how to fix those problems. Proponents of restorative justice prefer this over the imposition of a punishment, but acknowledge that sometimes such corrective measures might be necessary (Braithwaite, 2002; Varnham, 2008). Proactive engagement in the process of sorting out how harm can be repaired teaches students accountability and self-responsibility. A key aim of restorative justice in schools is to help students to become more aware of their behaviour and more self-regulated (Morrison, 2002).

Engagement

Restorative justice depends on engagement. Engagement requires an actual dialogue between offenders and victims. In schools, this happens when a facilitator (usually a trained teacher) brings together the offending student/s and the victim/s affected by their inappropriate behaviour for discussion. Victims get the chance to share their feelings and describe in detail how the inappropriate behaviour affected them. Offenders get the opportunity to explain or account for their actions. They share their stories and get to know one another (better), and the situation they are in (better). The teacher facilitates this and follow-on discussions about how best to address the problems (Zehr, 2002).

The ultimate aim of discussion is to come to an agreement on what is to be done to repair the harm done. Discussion generally aims to formulate a plan to address the offending student’s needs (Morrison, 2002). This discussion should generally involve the offender/s, victim/s and facilitator, but it can also include people who care for them and are part of the students’ microsystems. We earlier identified trained teachers as facilitators. However, in some cases, and depending on the situation, peer leaders, student leaders and other staff members (such as administration staff or teacher’s aides) can act as facilitators.

Engagement in discussion can happen in a number of ways, and these attempts at interaction and participation are broadly referred to as Restorative Practices (Zehr, 2002). They range from small-scale mediations to sessions involving many people (Wachtel & McCold, 2004). The following five Restorative Practices are common to restorative justice, but have also been adapted as strategies in schools that do not specifically refer to restorative justice in their behaviour management policies.
Ja'mie, a Year 11 student, has been drawing posters that insult her close friends. The ensuing conflict can take the form of circles, conferences or one-on-one interactions — as exemplified in this chapter’s ‘Starter story: Trouble in paradise’ — and are structured in the same way. The difference is that the facilitator is another student. This may happen ‘naturally’ when a student (perhaps a trained peer leader) sees another student misbehaving and responds in accordance with school policy and procedure regarding minor inappropriate behaviours. Peer mediation is also helpful when the offender has problems relating to adults.

The five Restorative Practices we have discussed in this section have been widely adapted and applied in school contexts (Umbreit & Armour, 2011). What they have in common is a process whereby offenders and victims are able to interact. As a result, victims are more likely to feel satisfied with the outcomes, since they had a chance to be listened to. Commonly experienced consequences of the process for offenders are shame and remorse, which often lead to a commitment to repair harm done and to change their future misbehaviour patterns (Umbreit, 1996; Zehr, 2002).

IN PRACTICE

The peace table

Siobhann and Kate, two teachers in the Northern Territory, use a strategy they call ‘the peace table’ with their transition class. The table is set up away from the main group activity area, covered with an inviting tablecloth and a peace lily. When the table was first introduced in the class, if there were conflicts, one of the teachers would take the children to the table and model the ways to negotiate a solution. After a while, the children elected to go to the table themselves. Sometimes they would say, ‘Miss, we need to work something out. Can we go to the peace table?’ At the end of the negotiation, Kate or Siobhann would check that the solution was an acceptable one.

Peer mediation

Peer mediation can take the form of circles, conferences or one-on-one interactions — as exemplified in this chapter’s ‘Starter story: Trouble in paradise’ — and are structured in the same way. The difference is that the facilitator is another student. This may happen ‘naturally’ when a student (perhaps a trained peer leader) sees another student misbehaving and responds in accordance with school policy and procedure regarding minor inappropriate behaviours. Peer mediation is also helpful when the offender has problems relating to adults.

The five Restorative Practices we have discussed in this section have been widely adapted and applied in school contexts (Umbreit & Armour, 2011). What they have in common is a process whereby offenders and victims are able to interact. As a result, victims are more likely to feel satisfied with the outcomes, since they had a chance to be listened to. Commonly experienced consequences of the process for offenders are shame and remorse, which often lead to a commitment to repair harm done and to change their future misbehaviour patterns (Umbreit, 1996; Zehr, 2002).

Restorative questions

Most Restorative Practices use sets of questions. These questions are used to clarify pertinent issues for offenders, victims, facilitators and other stakeholders, identify reasons behind inappropriate behaviours, identify the impacts of those behaviours on others, and work out how any resulting problems can be resolved. Questions for the offender are meant to put them into a situation where they must reflect on their actions and the consequences. Questions for victims are designed to give...
them the opportunity to express how the offender's inappropriate behaviour impacted on them. Two example sets of restorative questions, drawn from the work of Wachtel (2013) and Zehr (2002), are presented in tables 9.1 and 9.2.

Table 9.1 Restorative questions for offenders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QUESTIONS</th>
<th>PURPOSES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What happened?</td>
<td>• Opportunity for offender to own up to actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Offender must describe their behaviour in some detail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What were you thinking at the time?</td>
<td>• Opportunity for offender to explain issues they think led to their inappropriate behaviour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Offender must reflect on why they did what they did</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What have you thought about since?</td>
<td>• Opportunity for offender to explain their feelings about their actions since they occurred</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Offender must express their view of the inappropriate behaviour after the fact, which might include shame and remorse, among other emotions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who has been affected by what you have done?</td>
<td>• Opportunity for offender to recognise victims</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How?</td>
<td>• Offender must look to their microsystem to identify victim(s) and describe from their own perspective how this student has been hurt or harmed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do you think you need to do to make things right?</td>
<td>• Opportunity for offender to suggest a solution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Offender must offer reparations that will help to heal the broken relationship, including future behaviour</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The research on restorative justice

Most of the research on restorative justice specifically, and on Restorative Practices generally, gives evidence of positive impacts on student behaviour and school climate. In a study of three US schools, Minsky (2003) reported reduced office referrals, detentions, suspensions and teacher reports of disruptive behaviour over a three-year period during which Restorative Practices were in place. In one of those schools, incidents of fighting plummeted by almost half. In another US study, the implementation of Restorative Practices was linked to reductions in conflict among students and to drops in suspension rates (Porter, 2007). In the same study, students reported that they had learned new social skills and were better able to avoid or resolve conflicts with their peers. Similar successes have been reported in the UK (Boulton & Minsky, 2006; McClusky et al., 2009).

Table 9.2 Restorative questions for victims

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QUESTIONS</th>
<th>PURPOSES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What was your reaction to the behaviour?</td>
<td>• Opportunity for victim to describe their initial experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Victim needs to describe their first reactions in some detail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What impact has this had on you (and others)?</td>
<td>• Opportunity for victims to explain hurt felt and harm done, physical or otherwise</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Victim is encouraged to take a wider view of the impacts of the inappropriate behaviour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What has been the hardest thing for you?</td>
<td>• Opportunity for victim to explain the most important impacts on them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Victim is encouraged to be honest and candid about how, and to what extent, they were affected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How did your friends/family react when they heard what happened to you?</td>
<td>• Opportunity for victim to explain how the behaviour impacted on their microsystem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Victim is asked to suggest wider impacts of the offender's behaviour beyond their microsystem, towards the meso- and ecosystems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do you think needs to happen to make things right?</td>
<td>• Opportunity for victims to suggest a fix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Victim is encouraged to express their needs in relation to reparation and to be involved in the resolution of the problem</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Australian studies also give evidence of the positive impacts of restorative justice in schools. In a 1999 Queensland study (Cameron & Thornborne, 1999), the key improvements reported, aside from reduced incidents of inappropriate behaviour, were lower rates of reoffending and higher levels of satisfaction among students and teachers. Teachers also described how they changed their classroom management from punitive, punishment-focused approaches to more restorative ones. A later study of a school in New South Wales reported improved student behaviour overall, but especially among its Indigenous students (Porter, 2005).

Other research suggests that the reach of restorative justice is limited. A study of a challenging student in the UK reported that, despite the implementation of restorative practice across the school and consistent implementation of the key strategies by teachers, and some small changes observed on occasion, the approach had no impact on his behaviour overall (Standing, Fearon & Dee, 2012). Like most approaches, the literature suggests that restorative justice will fail to have an impact on behaviour unless it is implemented as a whole-school approach and is afforded the financial and material resources required to make it work (De Nobile, London & El Baba, 2015; McClusky, et al., 2009; Vamhum, 2008).
Despite the considerable research that has been conducted on restorative justice approaches, more work needs to be done. The International Institute for Restorative Practices has published a significant number of studies (see, for example, Boulton & Minsky, 2006; McCold & Chang, 2008; Minsky, 2003; Porter, 2005; 2007), but this research needs to be balanced by independent research. Additionally, a contemporary review or meta-analysis of research in restorative justice might interfere with the efficacy of restorative justice. More research here would inform practices implemented on a schoolwide basis (McClusky et al., 2009; Morrison, 2002).

Aspects of the bully's chronosystem, such as upbringing, and microsystem, such as social affiliation, relationships. Some students — and indeed some adults — have trouble with this reasoning. As Rigby (2014) asserts in relation to bullying, the bully has to want to have positive relationships with others. The Responsible Thinking Process contends that the teacher appears judgemental or critical, and can lead to increased student resistance, either overt or covert. He posits that the key to handling inappropriate behaviour is to avoid asking 'why' questions, since these more often lead to excuses and subsequent arguments over their legitimacy (Crone & Browne, 2000). The conflict over excuses would then tie up the teacher in secondary behaviours. Excuses often provide students with a chance to avoid taking personal responsibility for their actions. Consider the interaction below:

The interaction between Elizabeth and Mr Jones has moved away from the teacher's goal, which was for Elizabeth to complete her task, and has instead become an argument over who or what is to blame for Elizabeth's lack of progress. Elizabeth does not own her problem, which is resulting in her being off-task. As the situation escalates, Mr Jones will very quickly lose his chance to work with Elizabeth to sort out what is behind her off-task behaviour. The Responsible Thinking Process provides an alternative to this. If Mr Jones had used this process, he would not have become bogged down in an 'excuse spiral', and instead could have helped Elizabeth to gain more control over the circumstances leading to her misbehaviour.

The Responsible Thinking Process contends that the key to helping students to become more responsible and make better decisions about their behaviour is to focus on disobedience and the rights of others. In dealing with inappropriate behaviour, teachers need to get students to focus on what they did, what rules or directions they disobeyed, how they want their class environment to be, and what will happen the next time this misbehaviour occurs (Ford, 1994). If Mr Jones had used the Responsible Thinking Process, the interaction might have gone something like this:

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**THE RESPONSIBLE THINKING PROCESS**

Ed Ford, a former teacher, social worker and counsellor, developed the Responsible Thinking Process in the early 1990s. Ford developed his model of behaviour management after spending a lot of time in schools and their communities, and realising that many of the discipline systems he observed did not seem to be effective. The process he created is grounded in **perceptual control theory**, which contends that behaviour is driven by our perception of the environment and our attempts to control it so that it meets our requirements or expectations (Powers, 2005). A key goal of the process is to help students to develop self-responsibility and respect for others. This approach places the onus on students to make decisions about how they will behave.

Three assumptions about the nature of human relations underpin the Responsible Thinking Process. First, people have the capacity to control their perceptions and are responsible for how they control those perceptions, regardless of who causes them or any environmental disruptions that occur. Second, people cannot control the behaviour of other people, and attempts to do so may result in counter-control or pushback. Finally, students have the right to learn, and teachers have the right to teach, in a safe environment, and no one has the right to disturb the teaching and learning process. A key implication of these assumptions is that students should not violate the rights of their peers, teachers or others (Ford, 1994).

Proponents of the Responsible Thinking Process emphasise the importance of developing self-responsibility in students in order to minimise inappropriate behaviour. Ford argues that lecturing (and particularly reprimanding) students and demanding that they do things a certain way can make
This interaction is very different! While Elizabeth tried to avoid some responsibility, Mr Jones stayed focused on the requirements and the task. It is very likely that if Elizabeth does need help, she will get it, but if there are other issues leading to her off-task behaviour, they can be discussed as well. The teacher is creating an environment where students cannot blame their microsystem for their problems, but instead must control the inputs from that system to find better ways to solve those problems, and in doing so become more self-responsible.

You will notice that Jeff, in this chapter's 'Starter story', and Mr Jones, in the second interaction with Elizabeth, do not reprimand or try to dominate, but instead present as non-judgemental and respectful. Students who misbehave are treated fairly, and there is a focus on social justice, where the rights of all are taken into account and no one needs to feel they have been abused by any process. Mutual respect and responsibility are the key factors that help this to happen.

Having a quiet spot in the classroom (or in the playground) where students can go to calm down and think for a short while is recommended. Sometimes students may not be ready to engage in the questioning discussion. Sometimes a student will not be immediately cooperative when the teacher initiates questioning. Giving students the option to go to that quiet place until they are ready to talk about their behaviour will provide an extra opportunity for the student to work things out (Crone & Browne, 2000).

**Questioning in the Responsible Thinking Process**

The authentic (copyrighted) Responsible Thinking Process utilises a prescriptive questioning process that allows teachers to deal with inappropriate behaviours and to help students think about making better choices (Ford, 1994). This questioning process has, though, been adapted and modified to suit diverse school contexts (Crone & Browne, 2000; Miles, 2003). Below, we have listed the six core questions in such a questioning process. This represents an approximation of the Responsible Thinking Process and various adaptations.

**Question 1: What are you doing?**

Upon noticing inappropriate behaviour, the teacher asks the student/s what they are doing. This question is delivered with a non-judgemental tone and body language. The question requires students to stop and think about their misbehaviour and how it might break rules or violate the rights of others. This encourages the development of self-awareness. If the answer is 'nothing' or if they refuse to respond, the teacher should describe the observed misbehaviour.

**Question 2: What rules or directions have been broken?**

Asking the student to restate a rule or the teacher's instructions may seem unnecessary to the uninitiated, but it helps the student to connect their misbehaviour to expected standards of behaviour. It separates 'the deed from the doer' and enacts objectivity, which reduces the potential for conflict, especially via secondary inappropriate behaviours. This is more respectful and non-confrontational that demanding, 'Do as I say!' An alternative is to ask the student what they should be doing.

**Question 3: What happens when rules or directions are not followed?**

Asking the student this question requires them to focus on established rules and expectations, and to consider the possible consequences of their inappropriate behaviour. If the teacher has established a strong classroom culture, then this is not hard to do. However, if that is not the case, or if the school does not have clear policies, the process can fail. Therefore, it is important for schools to have well implemented policies and for teachers to have clear, logical and reasoned rules, expectations and consequences.

**Question 4: Is this what you want?**

Asking students if they want to experience the consequences, and, more broadly, if that is how they want their classroom experience to be, requires students to seriously consider what kind of classroom environment they desire. It gets students to realise that elements of their microsystem are pushing back on them, and that they perhaps need to change the way they interact with it. The teacher helps the student to realise that they can make choices for good or otherwise, and that they are responsible for how they behave.

**Question 5: What do you want to do now?**

Through this question, the student is guided to think about alternative ways by which they might influence their environment. Sub-questions such as, 'What will you do next time?' or 'The next time someone annoys you, what are your options?' provide a scaffold for students to work out alternative actions, often with teacher guidance.

**Question 6: What will happen next time?**

This question revisits consequences and probable impacts on others' rights arising out of further misbehaviour. Sub-questions like, 'What have you learned about respecting the rights of others?' and 'How can you be more responsible?' can help.

**The Responsible Thinking Classroom**

Of course, not all students are immediately cooperative and responsive to the Responsible Thinking Process questions. When asked 'What are you doing?' some may say 'Nothing,' some may say 'It's not my fault' or 'He was talking first,' and some might defend their actions by explaining what they were trying to do. When students avoid answering a question, the teacher should repeat it. If students still refuse to cooperate, asking them whether they want positive outcomes or not provides them with one more chance to participate in the discussion. If they decide to cooperate, the questioning process can continue to its conclusion. However, if students are recalcitrant, they are directed to go to the **Responsible Thinking Classroom**.

The Responsible Thinking Classroom is a designated place where students are sent (or even go voluntarily) to calm down (if necessary), to reflect on their behaviour and to plan for behaviour change under the guidance of a trained teacher. The Responsible Thinking Classroom is not a place of punishment. It is a place where the student gets an opportunity to plan to make things right again.
IN PRACTICE

A Responsible Thinking Classroom at work

On Tuesday, Linda was referred to the Responsible Thinking Classroom after disturbing two other girls, Katy and Alice, during Mr Kelly's English lesson. Mr Kelly had attempted the key questioning process, but Linda's disruptive behaviour had persisted. She stayed in the Responsible Thinking Classroom for the remainder of the lesson. During that time, she sought assistance with a plan for her behaviour from the Responsible Thinking Classroom teacher, who approved the finished plan and helped her to think through a five-step negotiation.

It is now Wednesday morning, and Linda is meeting with Mr Kelly to discuss her return to class for the next English lesson. This is how the meeting went, step by step:

- **Admit >** Linda owns up to her inappropriate behaviour, describing what it was and when it happened: 'Mr Kelly, I was disturbing Katy and Alice during your English lesson, and I know that it was a breach of the rule "we respect the rights of others".'
- **Acknowledge >** Linda acknowledges the problem caused by her inappropriate behaviour and acknowledges Mr Kelly's feelings, as well as the rights of the affected students: 'I understand that this interrupted your lesson and that Katy and Alice could not get their work done.'
- **Listen >** Linda has a chance to explain what happened from her point of view, while still acknowledging that the behaviour was not appropriate: 'I know it was not good behaviour, but I was just sharing what happened at Alex's birthday party on the weekend. I realise that that was the wrong time to do it.'
- **Explain >** Linda receives the opportunity to hear what happened from Mr Kelly's point of view. Mr Kelly also advises Linda that the other girls might want a resolution, as well: 'I know you are good friends with Katy and Alice, and the birthday must have been exciting, but when I saw you talking to them, I was quite concerned that your work and their work would not get done, and I was disappointed by what you were doing. You might want to talk to them about it later.'
- **Agree >** Linda and Mr Kelly review her plan and agree on it. (Some fine-tuning might be necessary here!): Mr Kelly: So how are you going to handle things next time you are tempted to talk about your social life during work time? Linda: I will leave it till later. There is always recess or lunch. Mr Kelly: That's great to hear. You're welcome back to our English class.

The interaction between Linda and Mr Kelly was positive, focused on the behaviour and not personalities, and clearly demonstrated a tone of respect. Mr Kelly expects Linda to be more responsible in future, because she has expressed this intention in her plan and he felt that she was likely follow through with her plan.

But what if things do not work?

A principle of the Responsible Thinking Process is that students who do not cooperate with both the questioning and Responsible Thinking Classroom processes are unreasonably challenging and threaten the maintenance of PLEs. In such cases, students may be sent home, in which case a follow-on meeting involving the student, their parents and members of school staff will occur (Ford, 1994). Again, this can only happen if the student is willing to be involved.

Negotiation in the Responsible Thinking Process

Once students have written their plan and are ready to negotiate a return to the classroom, a process of reconciliation takes place. The teacher and student talk about the inappropriate behaviour and how to resolve the problems that it caused. The plan constructed in the Responsible Thinking Classroom depends on the context in which the inappropriate behaviour occurred. In secondary schools, it is recommended that students stay in the Responsible Thinking Classroom only for the timetabled period of the lesson that they disrupted (Crone & Browne, 2000).

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The Responsible Thinking Process as an approach

The Responsible Thinking Process is a copyrighted approach to behaviour management. School staff cannot use the process unless qualified professional developers from Responsible Thinking Process Inc. have trained them. Once staff members have been trained and the process has been implemented authentically, the school can seek certification as a Responsible Thinking Process school.

The Responsible Thinking Process is a very structured and comprehensive approach. It has been adopted in many schools in the Australia, the US and elsewhere. The costs of the professional development program and of setting up and running a Responsible Thinking Classroom are, though, prohibitive for many (smaller) schools (Edwards & Watts, 2008; Miles, 2003). Notwithstanding this, some schools have developed and implemented adapted versions of the approach with positive results (Crone & Browne, 2000; Miles, 2003). We recommend, though, that the Responsible Thinking Process be properly and authentically implemented.

Like many approaches to classroom and behaviour management, the Responsible Thinking Process is most effective when implemented on a schoolwide basis (Protheroe, 2005). The Responsible Thinking Process promotes social justice by upholding the rights of all (students who misbehave, students affected by it, teachers and others). It encourages the dignified treatment of students and teachers, and teaches students the skills of self-control over emotions, goals and related actions so that they may become responsible, respectful, tolerant and compassionate individuals.

Research on the Responsible Thinking Process

Most of the research on the effectiveness of the Responsible Thinking Process has been published through the Responsible Thinking Process website. Although not independent research, the studies reported there, which include some Australian research, do provide statistical as well as interview data from periods prior to and after the implementation of the process. The evidence is generally very encouraging. With few exceptions, incidences of inappropriate and challenging behaviour, office referrals, suspensions and expulsions were considerably reduced. The substantial interview data suggests that students develop a positive disposition towards the process, and there are many accounts by students depicting how their behaviour has improved. Teachers are similarly efficacious with support for the process, and their descriptions of rates of inappropriate and challenging behaviour suggest that the process is effective at establishing and maintaining PLEs.

The limited number of studies published beyond the Responsible Thinking Process website tend to support the findings reported above. Crone and Browne (2000) found a pattern of decreased office referrals (overall) and that students and teachers had a positive attitude towards the approach. They reported that one student used aspects of the system — such as going to the Responsible Thinking Classroom — to get out of work, and that some students, while ambivalent about the Responsible Thinking Classroom, acknowledged that it did help them to reconsider their inappropriate behaviour. Some teachers found it hard to let go of their habit of reprimanding and enforcing, but the approach was yielding positive results.

Valencia-Ortega’s (2000) case study of a US school echoed these findings, with some exceptions. She found that the Responsible Thinking Process was positively regarded by students and teachers, and that in many cases classroom instruction time increased, probably due to there being less disruption. However, the recidivism rate for students who had challenging behaviour problems tended to increase over time. Qualitative data suggested that this may be because it takes a longer time for some students, including those involved in bullying, to learn self-control. Although bullying was listed as an issue that earned student referrals to the Responsible Thinking Classroom, no specific data relating to the process’ impact on bullying was reported. It is important to note that the findings of this study were intended to be used by the school to gain official certification from Responsible Thinking Process Inc. A more recent review by De Jong (2009) found that the best behaviour management approaches are those that are positive, democratic and empowering, and he identified the Responsible Thinking Process as an example of good practice in this regard, because of its focus on self-control and responsibility.

While the Responsible Thinking Process looks to be an efficacious way to establish and maintain positive learning environments, more empirical research is warranted. Valencia-Ortega noted in 2000 that the process was still a relatively young approach, and one that needed to be subjected to empirical research. This is still true more than a decade-and-a-half later. We add that such research needs to be conducted independently of any parent organisation.

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VALUES EDUCATION

Values education involves the use of teaching and learning strategies that provide students with opportunities to learn about the values that a society or a community considers important. Values education takes a number of forms, and is also known as civics, ethics, philosophy, moral education and character education.

We contend, though, that there are different ‘types’ of values education. For example, character education examines the lives and actions of important people, while ethics examines actions against moral principles. These activities have been happening in schools for a very long time. However, in Australia, as in other parts of the world, there is increasing attention on teaching values education as a strategy to improve student behaviour.

In 2005, the Australian Department of Education Science and Training published the National Framework for Values Education in Australian Schools (Department of Education, Science and Training, 2005). This framework put forward nine values identified through research to be common across most Australian school communities. The purpose of the Framework was to provide guidance for schools to conduct values education in ways that helped students to develop, among other things, self-responsibility and social justice. Underpinning this was a desire to promote improved relationships and to help schools to better manage anti-social and other inappropriate behaviours. The release of the Framework resulted in many school- and community-based activities aimed at improving student behaviour. (A weblink for the Framework site is provided at the end of this chapter.)

It should be noted that, broadly speaking, values education is not ‘new’. School curricula have long included subjects such as civics and moral education. Many of the suggested activities in the Framework have been in use in schools for just as long.

In the following sections, we explain some of the ways in which values education may be used to promote appropriate behaviour and to develop positive learning environments in schools. Most of these are whole-class or whole-school activities aimed at benefiting all students, and not just those whose behaviours are of concern.

The development of values in Australian school students occurs via one or more of five different mechanisms. A brief explanation of each of these follows.

Inculcation

Inculcation occurs when teachers instil certain values in their students. Some teachers do this intentionally, by making explicit statements about certain values and reinforcing student alignment with these by way of praise or rewards. Other teachers do so by delivering programs of lessons and activities that directly relate to specific values. For example, a teacher concerned that some students are not cooperating in group work might give a lesson on ‘cooperation’, and then guide and encourage the students to apply their new learning to group work.

Inculcation also occurs unintentionally. Students learn values from watching how teachers and other adults treat one another, as well as how they dress, and so on. You must be aware that you are a role model to your students and that you will influence the development of their values. Teachers often indulge in inculcation when establishing classroom culture.

Inquiry learning

Inquiry learning has been used successfully to help students to explore values. Inquiry learning is research- or project-based activity in which students must identify and deal with an issue, such as violence, racism or human rights. Inquiry learning that focuses on values, especially those that are contentious in the student or wider communities, provides students with experience, exposure and the chance to engage in higher-order thinking around the dissonance between espoused values. Racism, for example, might be contended with through assignments that encourage students to learn about other cultures and ways of life.

Student action teams

Student action teams involve a small group of students exploring a school or community issue through research, and then designing and implementing a plan to address it (Australian Youth Research Centre, 2003). For example, a school might be having a problem with littering, and in response a student action team develops a campaign to make the student population more aware of proper ways to deal with their rubbish. This type of values education provides students with an opportunity not only to explore values associated with the focus issues but also to develop responsibility and care for others, and to promote social awareness, leadership, teamwork, cooperation, understanding, fairness and respect.

Student mentoring

Student mentoring involves older students supporting and working with younger peers. These pairings or groupings may form the basis of a schoolwide peer support program through which the younger student can meet with their mentor to discuss problems and get advice. Mentoring can also be more specifically targeted so that younger students will get assistance with identified issues, such as social problems, fighting or self-esteem. Student mentoring promotes the development of responsibility, self-regulation, self-confidence, compassion and tolerance in both younger and older students.

Service learning

Service learning is the experience of doing something to help others in the community. Examples include volunteer work, such as picking up litter in a park, or Meals on Wheels, community action, such as participation in Lions Clubs and Legacy drives; or getting involved in a local issue, such as by writing to local council to express concern about the pollution of creeks. Service learning may focus on helping others in the more immediate school community, such as through involvement in the student representative council. These activities teach responsibility, understanding, tolerance and compassion, and may also raise awareness of social justice issues as students observe less fortunate people or come across examples of people not being treated fairly.

Service learning can have profound impacts on students with challenging behaviour, as the following story of Enrico illustrates.
The research on values education

Since the early 2000s, when professional interest in values education re-emerged, there has been quite a volume of research on the subject. Much of this describes positive outcomes by way of improved student attitudes and behaviour (see, for example, De Noblie & Hogan, 2014; Dovre, 2007; Ere Cavv et al., 2010; Hamston et al., 2010; Rhain, 2011). But much of this research is qualitative and ‘snapshot’ in nature. There are few longitudinal, quantitative studies examining the long-term impacts of values education.

Values education has been engaged frequently to target bullying (Hamston et al., 2010). Some of the studies emerging in the wake of the 2003 National Framework for Values Education in Australian Schools have reported positive results, such as greater student awareness of what to do about bullying and reduced incidences of bullying (Hamston et al., 2010; Hill & Vik, 2007), but a lot more empirical research needs to be done in this field.

OTHER SOCIAL JUSTICE APPROACHES

Other approaches that could be included in the social justice category include the Judicious Discipline and Friendly Schools programs. Both of these encourage capacity-building in self-responsibility, looking after the well-being of others and developing positive relationships. Both promote justice through the interaction of teachers and other adults with students, and through the peaceful resolution of problems.

Judicious Discipline

Judicious Discipline emerged in the late 1980s, and has been growing in popularity, especially in the US, since the early 2000s. Like restorative justice, the Judicious Discipline program has its origins in wider societal institutions. In this case, these included the US Constitution, and the resulting rights and responsibilities of citizens, as well as the US legal system more generally (Gathercoal & Nimmo, 2002). Also like restorative justice, Judicious Discipline repudiates more traditional reward/punishment-driven philosophies of classroom management, and promotes consequences for inappropriate behaviour which aim to repair relationships and ‘make things right again’, in line with the legal idea of restitution (Gathercoal, 2004).

The philosophical ideas that underpin Judicious Discipline are the rights of individuals to enjoy freedom, justice and equality, and the responsibility to ensure that the rights of others are also respected. Adopters of this approach to classroom management understand that students should be given responsibilities if we want them to become responsible people. The core responsibilities promoted by Judicious Discipline become, in essence, school and classroom rules, which include: to act in a safe and healthy way; to treat all property with respect; to respect the rights and needs of others; and to take responsibility for learning (Gathercoal & Nimmo, 2002; Gathercoal, 2004).

Students in schools that implement a program of Judicious Discipline learn self-control through the idea of reasonable time, place and manner, which is a scaffold that helps them to consider the appropriateness of the behaviour before the act, or the reasonableness of their behaviour after the act.

Teachers mentor students through processes of questioning and suggesting, which represents a shift away from an obedience model to a personal responsibility model. Procedural ‘due process’ in discipline matters and democratic practices such as classroom meetings are key strategies (Gathercoal, 2004; McFave Landau & Gathercoal, 2000). Teachers, with the active cooperation of students, create democratic classroom cultures that, as Gathercoal and Nimmo (2002, p. 74) promise, ‘produce students who are responsible for their own actions and who will consciously strive to do good for society’s sake’.

Research on the effectiveness of Judicious Discipline as a classroom management approach is disparate. Some studies suggest positive behavioural and academic outcomes for students, as well as reduced frustration and stress for teachers (Gathercoal, 2004; Ackley & Campbell, 2000). However, findings from other studies have not made a clear enough case for this (Ackley et al., 2003). The approach has not been widely used in Australia, perhaps because of its close associations with US institutions, but we assert that these could be easily adapted to the Australian scene. An exploratory study of an Australian-flavoured version of Judicious Discipline would be worth the time and effort involved, given its similarity to restorative justice and its potentials.

Friendly Schools

Friendly Schools (and its derivatives, such as Friendly Schools Friendly Families) is a program that was developed in Australia to combat bullying. It is a whole-school approach that educates the
community about bullying, encourages peer and adult support systems, and promotes community opposition to bullying. The program views bullying as not being a normal part of growing up, and combats it through a variety of strategies, including assertiveness training and, quite prominently, conflict resolution. It places responsibility to change things not just on bullies but also on bystanders and on the victims, via affirmative actions (Cross & Barnes, 2014; Erceg & Cross, 2004).

The Friendly Schools program works on several levels. At the school level, a team of staff members reviews school practices and identifies areas where action to reduce bullying could be implemented. This often includes leading professional development of other staff members in strategies to be implemented at other levels. At the classroom level, it includes learning activities designed to raise student awareness about all the issues relating to bullying, including what it is, how it happens and what they can do to help their peers. Strategies such as assertiveness training, conflict resolution, providing social support to peers and how to discourage bullies are taught. At the community level, families are involved. Parents and their children may engage in short home-based tasks linked to concepts being taught at the classroom level (Cross et al., 2011).

The program and its derivatives have a strong cognitive behavioural element, through the teaching of strategies that encourage students to be self-managing and in tune with their emotions. But it is the intended outcomes that we believe place this approach in the social justice category. The program is also highly research-driven, emanating from empirical Australian research going back to the late 1990s, and is being improved and re-adapted into other programs through subsequent research. The evidence for its effectiveness at reducing bullying is growing and quite promising as the program continues to evolve and be implemented in schools across Australia (Cross & Barnes, 2014; Cross et al., 2011).

SOCIAL JUSTICE APPROACHES AS PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION

Regardless of which social justice approach is used, a preventative approach in classrooms and schools should prevail. Inappropriate behaviour is not tolerated, but students who misbehave are afforded as much dignity and respect as others. Classroom climates need to evoke respect, fairness and the importance of dialogue in facilitating problem solving. Relationships must be recognised as important, and students must feel supported by their teacher and other students. Classroom cultures need to be clear about teacher expectations of student work and behaviour. Rules and other aspects of classroom culture should be characterised by key terms such as respect, dignity and justice for all. Students should be able to articulate the circumstances under which they misbehave.

There should be posters in classrooms and common spaces reminding students of procedures, such as the five steps of negotiation described by Crone and Browne (2000), or illustrating social-emotional skills aligned to social-emotional learning. One classroom we visited had values-based class rules displayed as illustrated posters reminding students to ‘Treat everyone with respect,’ ‘Act responsibly’ and ‘Be honest to yourself and others.’ If a student started to misbehave, the teacher simply asked the student to point to the sign related to their behaviour.

If possible, schools and classrooms should be organised so that there is a dedicated quiet space where students can go for ‘cool-off/time-out’ or where circle conferences or one-on-one mediation can take place. Lovat (2007) identified links between values education strategies and quality teaching. We would add that any of the approaches described in this chapter would provide opportunities for teaching and that are closely connected to real-world issues, and offer students the opportunity to self-reflect and to communicate ideas. Having students involved in decision making about curriculum, pedagogy and assessment, as well as giving them a reflective voice in response to assessment feedback, would be congruent with the student participation aspect present in all of these approaches.

Many of the processes described in each approach are examples of social justice as intervention. But despite the preventative measures described above, students still engage in inappropriate behaviour. The transition from a preventative to an interventionist focus, though, needs to be formal and recognisable. As part of a restorative justice approach, the teacher may initiate the restorative questioning process or call a circle conference. In a Responsible Thinking Process, school students who are disruptive may be required to participate in a questioning process or to go to the Responsible Thinking Classroom. An interventionist focus is less formally structured in schools taking a values education approach. Teachers might use any of the strategies we described earlier as interventions involving either the whole class or just a small group.

YOU BE THE JUDGE

Teaching in Australian schools is being increasingly informed and driven by ‘evidence-based practice’.

- Is there a strong research-led evidence-base for restorative justice, the Responsible Thinking Process and values education?
- Is there evidence that might convince you that these social justice approaches are worthy of consideration and implementation in various school settings?

You be the judge...

Response hierarchy for social justice

As we have noted in earlier chapters, response hierarchies differ between approaches. By example, the response hierarchy shown in Figure 9.1 below is for Danny, a student who has been annoying others by poking them with his pen. This response hierarchy for Danny is aligned to the restorative justice approach.

For the first warning, the teacher looks at Danny and asserts, ‘First warning, Danny. Please don’t do that again.’ When Danny does it again, the teacher again warns him, and adds that the next step is a time-out. Danny is persistent, and turns his attention to another student. The teacher follows through with the time-out, and Danny stays at the time-out desk for five minutes to think about what he has been doing. Later in the day, he pokes another student, but the teacher has not forgotten the earlier incidents and calls him to a one-on-one conference, based on the restorative questioning process. He will be required to write an apology to all the students he has been annoying.
We also looked at the research evidence in relation to their effectiveness as classroom behaviour management approaches. Two other social justice approaches, Judicious Discipline and Friendly Schools, were also briefly described. We then explored what social justice approaches ‘look and feel like’ generally as prevention and intervention.

Key terms
- Friendly Schools
- Judicious Discipline
- Responsible Thinking Classroom
- Responsible Thinking Process
- restorative justice
- restorative questions
- social justice approaches
- values education

Individual and group activities

Activity 9.1
Review this chapter’s ‘Starter story: Trouble in paradise’. Student-to-student confrontations are (unfortunately) commonplace in school playgrounds, where close supervision by, and support from, teachers is less prominent than in classrooms.
- Discuss some of your experiences in out-of-classroom school settings and how any confrontations were (or were not!) dealt with.
- Jeff’s intervention in this situation was timely and effective. Brainstorm ways in which out-of-classroom conflicts can be avoided and/or resolved more effectively in different school settings.

Activity 9.2
Refer back to the section on restorative justice, and particularly the subsection on engagement.
- What experiences do you have with these five Restorative Practices?
- How could one or more of these practices be implemented in various school settings?

Activity 9.3
In this chapter we referred, from time to time, to aspects of ecological systems theory, particularly the microsystem. The mesosystem and exosystem are mentioned in Table 9.2.
- In the case of violent behaviour or bullying, what elements of the exosystem might be involved in a restorative solution to the problem?

Activity 9.4
In this chapter we referred to various ‘universal values’.
- Discuss and/or debate the relevance and utility of the National Framework for Values Education in Australian Schools document (www.curriculum.edu.au/values/val_national_framework_for_values_education), particularly in light of the cultural and religious diversity in Australian schools.
Activity 9.5
Inculcation is mentioned in this chapter as a values education strategy. However, this strategy has been criticised as 'indoctrination by another name' and for impinging on the rights of young people to be autonomous and to make their own judgements.
- How true is this?
- What should be done to avoid inculcation becoming too 'heavy' an influence on students' values and attitudes, especially towards other people?

Activity 9.6
- In small groups, develop, role-play and demonstrate your understanding of one or more of the five Restorative Practices, the Responsible Thinking Process questions and/or the Responsible Thinking Process negotiation method.

Activity 9.7
Bullying, in different forms, is a major concern in Australian schools (and in society).
- Explore and discuss how the social justice perspective relates to bullying (among school students) and how the use of social justice approaches and strategies in schools might impact on the prevalence and effects of bullying.

Online resources
CENGAGEbrain.com Visit http://login.cengagebrain.com and search for this book to access the study tools that come with your textbook.

Weblinks
International Institute for Restorative Practices (IIRP)
http://www.iirp.edu/

Real Justice: Restorative responses to crime and wrongdoing
http://www.realjustice.org/

Responsible Thinking Process, Inc.
http://www.responsiblethinking.com/

'About national values education' (Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations)

Friendly Schools

References
Don't Just Stand There, Yell Something!...
Learning outcomes

When you have worked through this chapter, you should be able to:

- explain the relationships between positive learning environments, classroom management plans, schoolwide (student welfare and discipline) plans and individual (behaviour improvement) plans
- explain the place of the Lyford model (or an alternative) in scaffolding the development of your first classroom management plan
- develop your evolving professional philosophy statement
- develop your first classroom management plan
- select appropriate classroom management theories, approaches and strategies and embed them in your developing professional philosophy statement and first classroom management plan
- explain and discuss how you would implement and review your first classroom management plan over time
- discuss the summary at the end of this chapter.

Chapter overview

- Starter story: Day one approaches . . .
- Introduction
- The Lyford model
- Classroom management plans (CMPs)
- Developing your first CMP
- Wider issues and your CMP
- Implementing and reviewing your first CMP
- Individual plans
- Advice for the casual or temporary teacher
- Professional reflection
- Summary
- Key terms
- Individual and group activities
- Weblinks
- References
INTRODUCTION

In the short term, this chapter aims to help you to bring together what you are expected to have learned in the previous chapters and to write your first classroom management plan (referred to in this chapter as a CMP). In the longer term, this chapter aims to help you monitor, review, develop and improve your CMPs. These aims are only likely to be achieved if you have actively engaged with this text and the activities throughout all of its chapters (and preferably with the resources on the text's companion website, too). The end-of-chapter 'Professional reflection' exercises are particularly important for developing your CMP.

If you have done all this, you will by now have 'at hand':

- a 'current' professional philosophy statement – noting that this will always be a work in progress! (Chapter 1 and most of the end-of-chapter 'Professional reflection' exercises should have been informative here)
- a preferred model of classroom management to scaffold the development of your first CMP. We introduced you to our Lyford Model in Chapter 1, but, of course, you may have chosen another. Some of these are explained on our companion website (the Lyford model is explained in this chapter)
- a sound understanding of the key preventative elements of a CMP (these have been described and explained in chapters 2 to 5)
- a sound understanding of some of the key theories around, and approaches to, classroom management (these have been described and explained in chapters 6 to 9)

... a sound understanding of a range of intervention practices for developing a CMP (these have been described and summarily explained in chapters 6 to 9)
- a preferred teaching/learning context for your first CMP, whether it is for a primary or secondary school context, or in a full-time/ongoing versus a 'block'/temporary versus a day-by-day/ temporary position context.

To the best of our knowledge, there is no requirement (expressed by school principals or education authorities in Australia or New Zealand) for teachers to have a written CMP. There is, however, a clear expectation that you are able to 'manage' your classroom's and your students, and this is reflected in both countries' teaching standards. Schools and school systems, of course, have to document their student welfare and discipline policies and programs.

We have a growing collection of more than 50 'Stories from the field' written by pre-service, early, mid- and late-career teachers – former students and current colleagues of ours – catalogued on this text's companion website. These are mostly short statements of about 1000 words wherein the authors explain what they believe to be the key elements in establishing a PLE at the beginning of a school year. These reflections outline how these teachers think about classroom management. They also show some of the challenges associated with teaching generally, and with classroom management specifically, and how the authors incorporated theory into practice to meet these challenges. A recurring theme is that the theories and practices advocated in the Lyford model are well supported by most of these authors, regardless of their career stage (Lyons, Arthur-Kelly & Ford, 2015).

Let's now move on to further explain the Lyford model, which we introduced in Chapter 1.

THE LYFORD MODEL

In Chapter 1 we introduced our Lyford model of classroom management, along with statements from our own professional philosophies. This model is a 'transformational' one that can be adapted to changing circumstances, in terms of both evolving theories and evolving classroom practices. In chapters 2 to 5 you were provided with detailed explanations of the model's key preventative practices. These are key elements in most contemporary CMPs, and are essential when you are expected to address curriculum and assessment requirements at the same time as addressing the diverse needs of your students. In chapters 6 to 9 we explained a range of theoretical approaches that you might need or choose to draw upon to intervene in more challenging classroom management scenarios.

If you have worked through this book systematically, you will have been introduced to all the elements needed to create your first CMP. We acknowledge the complexity of this process, so the explanation of the Lyford model shown in Figure 10.1 is presented to accommodate your emerging understanding, and can provide a checklist for you to use in the development of your first CMP.

Built into our Lyford model is the expectation that your ideas and practices will change. It brings 'theory into practice' to empower you to create PLEs where your students experience...
a sense of belonging in a place where they are safe, happy and learning, while at the same time delivering professional achievement and satisfaction for you. If you choose to use our model as a scaffold to inform the development of your own model, you will make many decisions related to each of the parts of the model. These parts are explained in the following overview.

Knowledge and interpretive filters

Knowledge and understanding are the primary inputs into classroom management models. These are 'filtered', in the sense that any new knowledge is interpreted through existing knowledge. The results are therefore individually understood. This is likely to be manifest in the form of pertinent theories, frameworks, models and principles that are drawn from a range of disciplines and are relevant to teaching and learning. These disciplines would likely include human development, psychology, sociology and the latest pedagogical/instructional theorising.

The interpretive filter equates to your 'worldview' and how you use this to engage with, interpret and understand accumulating knowledge and understanding around teaching and learning. Your interpretive filter will be influenced by your conscious and subconscious beliefs, and by your values, attitudes and wider life experiences. As you understand more about teaching and learning specifically, and schooling and education more broadly, your worldview shifts, adapts and develops.

Ecological perspective

As we introduced in Chapter 1, the ecological perspective is the overarching viewpoint that encapsulates all of the parts you integrate within the Lyford model. It draws heavily on the ecological systems theory of Urie Bronfenbrenner (1979). This specifically focuses on accounting for the complexity of interrelationships between schools, individual children, their families, and the local and wider communities.

Sociocultural and psychoeducational perspectives

Sociocultural perspectives provide explanations for the nature of the interactions that each of us have with others. Psychoeducational perspectives provide explanations about individual beliefs, thoughts, feelings, emotions and behaviours. Both perspectives draw on a substantial and interrelated research base. These perspectives act as core elements for this model, and will serve to explain 'why you do what you do' in the classroom.

Your ecological, sociocultural and psychoeducational perspectives are interrelated and overlapping. Your ecological perspective acts as an overarching concept. This is to remind you that when dealing with children, their immediate environments are influenced by broader, more complex environments. Your sociocultural perspective and psychoeducational perspective form the core of your model. In the past, classroom management was often viewed as being primarily
associated with disciplinary actions focused on correcting 'bad' behaviour, with associated rewards and punishments based almost entirely on behaviourist theories. Only more recently have sociocultural perspectives and psychological perspectives become more prominent.

It is our view that an understanding of how these perspectives work together is critical. Your broader ecological perspective embraces both your sociocultural perspective and psychoeducational perspective, and these latter two perspectives need to be kept in balance, hence the adoption of the yin-yang symbol in our model. For those with an interest, these perspectives and associated theories are explained in more depth on this text’s companion website.

Preventative practices and intervention practices

Preventative practices include classroom climate, classroom culture, physical environment, and instructional practice (see chapters 2, 3, 4 and 5, respectively). These are evidence-based practices for creating PLEs and for responding to various challenging student behaviours. Preventative practices are designed to pre-empt challenging behaviours and to create a community of productive learners.

Intervention practices are grouped under behavioural, cognitive behavioural, psychoeducational and social justice approaches (see chapters 6, 7, 8 and 9, respectively). Different interventions from each approach are variously employed for students with chronic challenging behaviours (i.e. those behaviours which persist over an extended time and resist less formal or ad hoc interventions) and/or those with more acute challenging behaviours (i.e. those behaviours which are very severe and often endanger the focus student and/or others).

Cycle of professional reflection and the plan-implement-review (PIR) cycle

In this context, ‘reflection’ refers to how you look back over and reconsider your decisions and actions around classroom management. When you use your cycle of professional reflection, your reviews and reflections lead to informed, substantial changes in your thinking, and subsequently to changes in your practice through the application of new strategies. So reflection goes well beyond just thinking about learning and teaching.

The plan-implement-review (PIR) cycle emphasises that your classroom management practices are an integral part of addressing curriculum requirements, and echo the process of developing curricula, programs and plans. Your cycle of professional reflection and the PIR cycle ‘wrap around’ this model, and provide ongoing inputs into your knowledge and interpretive filters. As your knowledge and understanding increase and your worldview is revised, transformation continues to occur.

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT PLANS (CMPs)

A classroom management plan is, in essence, the teacher’s ‘gameplan’ for how he or she will run the class.

As we described in Chapter 1, a classroom management plan (CMP) is a comprehensive set of goals, procedures and strategies designed to promote appropriate student behaviour and support student learning. It is, in essence, the teacher’s ‘gameplan’ for how they will run the class, which includes how they and their students are expected to behave and what happens if students choose to engage in inappropriate behaviour. Though it might not always be called a ‘classroom management plan’, most teacher programs have this information in some form.

CMPs are ever-developing, dynamic documents that reflect the given group of students and their needs and differences, the school culture and policy, wider system and community values and expectations, and the theoretical standpoint of the teacher. The key elements we would expect to comprise a CMP are outlined in Figure 10.2.

Figure 10.2 The recommended key elements of a CMP

| Professional philosophy of teaching | • Adopted theories  
| Preventative practices                | • Classroom climate  
|                                      | • Classroom culture  
|                                      | • Physical environment  
|                                      | • Instructional practice  
| Intervention practices               | • General strategies  
|                                      | • Levels of response  
|                                      | • Response hierarchies  
|                                      | • Key personnel  
|                                      | • Administration tools  

Clearly, there is a preventative element – when teachers employ strategies that minimise behaviour problems – followed by an intervention element, when teachers must deal with inappropriate behaviour
DEVELOPING YOUR FIRST CMP

When you use the Lyford model (process), the perspectives and theories therein can be used to scaffold your first CMP to reflect your own set of theories, your own principles and your own strategies. If you have ‘done your homework’ as you have read this text, including accessing its online resources, you should by now have drafts of all the main sections of a CMP. In this section, we walk you through the scaffolding process. Be prepared, though, to jot down ideas and build your CMP as you progress.

Your professional philosophy of teaching

In Chapter 1 we encouraged you to draft your professional philosophy statement. In subsequent chapters, however, you have been exposed to theories and practices, and as a result, your knowledge and interpretive filters will have changed. You may now see the world of the classroom differently. That’s okay. In 12 months’ time, aspects of this likely will have changed; but for now, let’s revise and update your statement.

Generally, teaching philosophies start with a statement of the theories and approaches that you have adopted as your own. Common sentence starters include ‘I believe …’ and ‘My understanding of education is influenced by …’ Sometimes teachers place the theorist front and centre, so that the theoretical approach behind a CMP becomes clear right away; for example, ‘John Dewey encouraged democracy in education …’

This is followed by some very general statements about the way you will run your classroom. Usually, there is a connection between the theories and ideas you espouse and the intended practices. Your ability to make these statements of belief stems from your having processed the theories presented in this book, and perhaps others, through your knowledge and interpretive filters.

Remember that your preventative practices and interventions should reflect the theoretical perspectives detailed in your professional philosophy statement. For example, something is ‘wrong’ if your philosophy statement aligns to Glasser’s choice theory, but your interventions are clearly based on ABA. Having said this, it is possible to mix theories. In many cases, they may complement one another. For example, you might indeed use choice theory as the first strategy in your interventions, but then employ a behavioural approach if students do not reasonably respond. In reality, your CMP will likely comprise elements of more than one theoretical approach (and this is inevitable if you have ecological theory as your basis – which we hope you do!) in order to respond to the different demands of different professional contexts.
The Positive Behaviour Leadership (PBL) model

Rogers’ Positive Behaviour Leadership (PBL) model is an excellent example of a pragmatic, practical approach to classroom and schoolwide behaviour management. His PBL model has similarities with choice theory, Assertive Discipline, Teacher Effectiveness Training and other approaches. There is an undercurrent of humanism throughout the model, which is focused on student responsibility and on meeting students’ needs, but tempered by facets of behavioural theory via antecedent control and rewards.

Rogers contends that all disciplinary practices should empower students to be accountable for their own behavioural choices; respect the rights of others to learn; be safe; be respected; and build facilitative positive relationships. Discipline plans should be built on the notions of rights, respect and responsibilities. Teachers should lead and encourage (rather than coerce) students to accept the principle of shared rights and responsibilities. An understanding of, and commitment to, this principle empowers students to meet their (behavioural and social) responsibilities, and for discipline to be managed with dignity (Rogers, 2011).

The five principles of the PBL model are as follows:

• The shared rights and responsibilities of all (students and staff) should be expressed as rules

• Confrontation and potential embarrassment should be actively minimised

• Show confidence in students by offering choices

• Model respectful and dignified behaviour

• Communicate (quality) standards and expectations positively (Edwards & Watts, 2008).

Rogers emphasises the importance of preventative strategies to maximise appropriate and minimise inappropriate behaviours, and to inform students about, and guide them towards, appropriate behaviours. These preventative strategies include (collaboratively) establishing rules within a ‘classroom behaviour agreement’, establishing associated consequences, developing a positive classroom tone and adopting a decisive teaching style. Corrective strategies (for those students who fail to respond to the classroom behaviour agreement) include having a hierarchy of least- to most-intrusive interventions, regular and incidental classroom meetings, conflict resolution procedures, and all strategies occurring within an overarching framework of schoolwide strategies.

Rogers’ PBL model has variously been viewed as ‘atheoretical’ (Edwards & Watts, 2008) and theoretically eclectic (Lyons, Ford & Slee, 2014). Its focus, however, is clearly on teachers providing facilitative leadership to, and behavioural modelling for, their students. Given the diverse assortment of preventative and corrective strategies put forward in Rogers’ work, early career teachers may need to select strategically from those offered to deliver a more manageable set of classroom management strategies.

The Balance Model

Richmond’s (2007) elegantly simple Balance Model draws eclectically on a range of approaches to (or ‘styles’ of) classroom management. Richmond posts behaviour management as intentionally communicating with students to influence them to engage with their learning, and emphasises the critical importance of being organised; being familiar with one’s own behaviour management style; clarifying expectations to students; acknowledging strengths and correcting mistakes; working with challenging students; and being ‘open-minded’ about the nature of, and motivations for, student (mis)behaviours.

The Balance Model is premised on the assertion that behaviour management practices must precipitate a reasonable balance between time spent on management and time spent on academic learning; that is, teaching deteriorates into ‘minding’ when behaviour practices are unable to effect this balance. Richmond contends that no behaviour management approach or style is better than another, but rather that learning deteriorates to minding when any approach and its associated practices are ineffective. The Balance Model advises teachers to strike a facilitative and strategic balance between strategies used, to teach behavioural expectations, to acknowledge appropriate behaviours, and to correct inappropriate behaviours. Success lies in maintaining balance and, when necessary, recognising and correcting imbalances.

Richmond (2007) concludes that good teachers clarify their expectations, give acknowledging feedback, use gradient correction strategies and plan for (any) individual interventions while building positive relationships with all their students. Conversely, good teachers do not take misbehaviour personally, react emotionally, compete with students for power or control, ask students to explain the reasons for their misbehaviours, blame outside factors for the student’s misbehaviours, send difficult students away to others to get ‘fixed’, or rely, simplistically, on commonsense!

Your own theoretical position

So: what theoretical approach will you adopt? Will you be using more than one? If so, how will they complement one another? We suggest starting with one approach, and then seeing if elements from another approach might be useful. Once you have answered these questions for yourself, revise your professional philosophy statement to reflect this.

Your preventative practices

The Lyford model identifies four key areas of preventative practice: classroom climate, classroom culture, physical environment and instructional practice (see Figure 10.1). We explained these in detail in chapters 2 to 5. The ‘Professional reflection’ boxes at the end of each of these chapters required you to think and make decisions about practices that you would likely employ. You should already have a rough plan for prevention; now is the time to refine and extend this for your first CMP.

Classroom climate

How do you envision your ideal classroom climate?

The first consideration is how you envision your relationships with your students, and the nature of the relationships among them. This vision must be aligned to your professional philosophy, since it will give you a goal to direct your energies towards. Two further questions will help you imagine this vision:

• How would you want a colleague or a parent to describe relationships in your class?

• How will you develop relationships between yourself and your students, between students and between yourself and parents?
Pondering these questions will inevitably lead to thoughts on communication, so it is worthwhile revisiting the IOC model of communication, which we outlined in Chapter 2, to inform your decision making about the following aspects of communication:

- The elements of communication that are most important to get right
- The functions of messages that best represent how you want to relate to students
- The features of messages that you would want to promote, and why
- The features of messages that you would want to minimise, and why
- How you will use non-verbal communication to enhance positivity.

You should decide on the nature and timing of the communication strategies you will employ. In Chapter 2 we explained active listening, I-messages, open questioning and other techniques that promote positive climates. There are other techniques that we did not mention that stem from the theoretical perspectives of later chapters, such as ‘repetitive statements’ in Assertive Discipline and PBL (described above). What strategies will you use for certain specific situations, and why?

**Classroom culture**

What are the values, rules and procedures that will define your classroom culture?

Compare the ideas you recorded for your Chapter 3 ‘Professional reflection’ with the contents of Table 3.1 in the same chapter. Have you considered all of the elements? Now use Table 3.1 to add detail to your position on classroom culture. Start with values. These might be implicit in your professional philosophy statement, but now is the time to be explicit, and to add anything you have missed and apply this to classroom culture.

When using Table 3.1, ignore the ‘Level of experience’ column for now. At this moment, you are at what we call the ‘pre-theoretic’ stage, and you are planning what you will use to initiate a process of negotiation with your students in the future, which will flow on through into practice. Focus instead on each of the elements that you can plan for right now, and decide what you want for each of them. Again, this is a ‘visioning’ activity, and your vision will drive the implementation of your CMP as you begin teaching. The following key considerations should guide your thinking:

- The values you will promote and teach (and which might vary depending on your school context)
- Your expectations of yourself as a teacher and of your students as learners
- The rules that you think are important and non-negotiable
- Procedures for movement to and from class, around your classroom, administration, early finishers, and so on
- Routines that help you and your students to organise the day.

Once you have thought through and decided on these important aspects of your classroom culture, you must consider how the rules, procedures and routines will be enforced and what will happen if students do and do not follow them. We identified three perspectives in Chapter 3 that can guide your planning so that you can use the rules and consequences, rights and responsibilities or code of conduct perspectives, or a combination of these.

The final consideration for classroom culture is how you will develop it. We strongly suggest you use the seven-step process we described in Chapter 3. That process will help you and your students to build agreement on the elements of classroom culture, and also help to promote a PLE through a productive classroom climate.

**Physical environment**

How will the physical environment of your classroom contribute to a PLE?

The aspects of the physical environment that you want to focus on in a CMP are generally the ones that you can control. The shape and size of the physical rooms you are assigned to – the amount of storage space, the colour of internal walls – are examples of things you normally cannot control. The following are aspects you should focus on and justify in relation to the physical organisation of your classroom:

- The position and orientation of your work desk/area
- Student seating arrangements and activity areas
- Space for displays of work and stimulus/teaching materials
- Classroom ambience through considerations of temperature, ventilation, lighting, the use of colours and noise control
- Safety considerations, including movement corridors, hazard avoidance and fatigue management.

**Instructional practice**

What instructional practices will you employ?

As the leader of instruction in your classroom, you must state how you will do this leading! There will be certain elements of practice that you will tend to focus on more than others. Again, this will be consistent with your professional philosophy. In time, it will likely also reflect the nature of school community and/or education system in which you work. In this section of your CMP, you need to briefly explain the following:

- How you will bridge the syllabus to the student needs and priorities to create a curriculum that maximises opportunities for students to achieve and maintain their commitment to learning
- The general pedagogical orientation you prefer and the specific pedagogical strategies you will use to promote student motivation, engagement and achievement
- A general statement about assessment, including why you assess and how you will relate the results of your assessments to your students and their parents.

**Your intervention strategies**

Interventions are an essential part of a teacher’s practice, but ideally not needed in daily practice! The cross-section of the Lyford model (Figure 10.1) indicates that less time should be spent on intervention than on prevention. Teachers should nevertheless have the necessary knowledge, understanding and skills to develop, implement and evaluate interventions.

In each of the ‘Professional reflection’ boxes in chapters 6 to 9, you were asked to critically assess the approaches presented and to decide which approach/es would work best for you. Indeed, these deliberations are likely to have led you to the theoretical position you adopted in your professional philosophy statement. Now is the time to review these chapters and confirm your decisions about the approach/es you wish to adopt.

If you have done your ‘homework’, your intervention strategies will directly reflect the theoretical approaches you adopted and signposted in your professional philosophy statement. We recommend
Key personnel
Other staff members will be involved in your CMP, especially if intervention is required. However, these key personnel cannot be identified until you start working in a school. Some general things can be said, though. The school’s learning support or welfare team will no doubt help you with any intervention. In secondary schools, the year coordinator or deputy will be a likely first ‘port of call’ if a student needs to be referred on or is instructed to leave the class. In primary schools, this might be the responsibility of the stage coordinator or assistant principal. Other staff members, such as the school counsellor or community liaison officer, may also be involved.

IN PRACTICE
Graham expands his network of support
On the pupil-free day before his first teaching appointment, Graham spent time with one of the learning support team members to develop an understanding of the various students who were on individual behaviour improvement plans. Graham focused on what each of the students was interested in and enjoyed, and made a point of catching up with the students (who were not necessarily in his class) outside of class to share a positive moment of conversation. He sometimes made a small gift of a magazine or a trinket associated with a student’s favourite sporting team or leisure activity, as a gesture of relationship. When these students are involved in confrontations in the playground, and even in his classroom, Graham has gathered enough ‘relationship capital’ to calm the confrontation and avoid escalation. Graham soon became one of the most liked teachers at his new school, by investing time in building relationships with the ‘problem’ students. He is a clever and thoughtful teacher.

Administration tools
Administration tools include, but are not limited to, procedure prompt cards (such as those used in restorative justice), referral forms, parent interview letters, record-keeping forms, computer systems, and so on. You might also want to mention how you will monitor and evaluate your CMP (more about this later).

WIDER ISSUES AND YOUR CMP
You can draft your first CMP, but you can’t put it into action without exploring and responding to the wider ecological contexts that affect it. In the Lyford model, ecological theory plays a large role, because, in this instance, once your professional philosophy of teaching and model of classroom management are chosen, they must enmesh with various systemic or schoolwide policies and procedures around classroom management. For example, you will need to take account of systemic requirements in order to adjust and align (as much as possible) your CMP so that it will remain...
within their scope. This includes policies that govern response actions beyond the scope of your CMP, including suspension, staged re-entry, exclusion and expulsion.

As we have noted, whole-school behaviour management systems are generally associated with lower instances of behaviour problems. Notwithstanding this, a recent study of Australian schools (De Nobile, London & El Baba, 2015) revealed that one-quarter of participating teachers believed that their school behaviour management policies were inconsistent and/or ineffective and reported higher levels of behaviour problems in their schools. While improvement here is primarily a job for the school leadership, it has obvious implications for your CMP, and we reiterate our suggestion that you employ evidence-based approaches. Many schools respond to systemic behaviour problems by implementing one of the various approaches we have mentioned in chapters 6 to 9 such as PBS, Assertive Discipline, restorative justice or choice theory. If your school has adopted a whole-school approach, there are obvious implications for you, and you might even have to revisit your professional philosophy statement as a result.

Issues like bullying (including cyberbullying) and students with more severe disorders and emotional problems generally require a whole-school approach. You need to examine your school’s policies and procedures before addressing such issues in your CMP. Wider system-based support and professional development around student mental health and well-being, resilience training and social skills training are available; you should familiarise yourself with these as well.

IMPLEMENTING AND REVIEWING YOUR FIRST CMP

Okay: so, notwithstanding the somewhat ‘hypothetical’ context/s you have had to include in your first CMP, you still now do have your first CMP! Your next step is to find a teaching job, investigate the real contexts around your CMP and detail your first CMP so that it can be implemented (and then monitored, adjusted and reviewed). To do so, we suggest a process built on the following three phases.

Phase 1: Detail and implement your first CMP

Clearly, as soon as possible before your first lesson with your students, you should be planning your teaching. This includes the detailing of your first CMP. This is not a task distinct from lesson planning/programming and resource collection. As our Lyford model points out, these are all closely related activities. Much planning can, and should, be carried out before your actual teaching commences, but contextual information will emerge before, during and after your teaching commences.

Once you know of the school, class (and school community) you will be teaching in, you can begin looking at the sociocultural community of the students. We have already mentioned that getting to know your students is the most effective way to tailor your teaching to meet their needs. You might choose particular topics for an integrated unit of work, organise the grouping in the classroom to take account of classroom dynamics, or discuss individual learning plans with support staff, if there are students identified with additional needs. It also helps to incorporate ‘getting to know you’ activities and to explicitly employ strategies to help to create a cohesive, effective learning community.

In this phase, your first CMP is a real ‘work in progress’. In the next phase, more detail can be added as you become more familiar with your teaching context.

Phase 2: Monitor and adjust your first CMP

For successful implementation to be achieved, you need to introduce, establish and consolidate your first CMP. It may take up to a school term to do this fully. This period varies according to the social maturity of your students, their mix of individual needs, the dynamics of the class (e.g. a composite or a part-time group), and your ability to implement your first CMP consistently and systematically. The general intention during the introductory period is to establish a common understanding of the rationale for, and principles of, your CMP. For your students, this particularly refers to their rights and responsibilities, to the class rules or class code, and to basic classroom routines, procedures and standards. The early establishment of positive relationships through effective communication, and the use of quality instruction in an organised classroom are keys to the creation of a PLE.

Once your CMP is introduced for a reasonable period of time, you will need to monitor and, as necessary, adjust it. In this consolidation period, you should seek to develop your students’ understanding of, and familiarity with, the details of your CMP. During this period, some of your students are likely to test out your expectations — that is, to push the boundaries of what is reasonable and positive. This is a natural inclination for some students, and it should be expected, but not encouraged.

Remember: consistency and persistence are key factors in effective classroom management. However, there is a note of caution here — namely, that consistency does not necessarily mean treating all students the same. We do not expect you to teach curriculum content the same way, or at the same level, for all students. Neither should we expect all students to be treated in exactly the same way. Consistency should be regarded in terms of equitable treatment — that is, treatment that meets the needs of individual students and groups of students, as well as the whole class.

Phase 3: Review and develop your first CMP

Eventually, and probably towards the end of the first school term, you will draw on the results of your own insights to summatively review your first CMP. As a result of this review, you may decide to modify or adjust one or more significant aspects (over and above the ‘tweaks’ you have been making during the term). Your review may, for example, indicate a persisting friction between certain groups of class members, so you may need to revisit explicit teaching, focusing on positive classroom relationships. This may require a greater emphasis on the development of more effective communication skills.

This review phase leads back, of course, to the planning phase of the PIR cycle. It is hoped that once you have consolidated your CMP, you will only need to make small adjustments in response to your informed reviews of outcomes.
INDIVIDUAL PLANS

Outside of the ‘whole-class’ focus of a CMP, there is sometimes a need to design and implement an individual plan. We alluded to these in Chapter 6, when we described the FBA process and mentioned behaviour improvement plans (BIPs). BIPs are sometimes necessary regardless of your theoretical approach.

When individual (and sometimes groups of) students fail to reasonably respond to the preventative aspects of your CMP, you will need to ‘raise the bar’ by using individual (or group). BIPs. This also means that the due processes embedded in your CMP will be ‘supercoded’ by due processes embedded in your school’s systems of student welfare and behaviour management. Schoolwide Positive Behaviour Intervention and Support, Response to Intervention, Restorative Practices and Functional Behaviour Assessment (which are variously explained in chapters 6 to 9) are examples of intervention-related due processes embedded at the schoolwide level, but these variously focus on individual students, small groups of students or larger cohorts of students in need.

Individual BIPs are usually collaboratively developed at a school level (involving the school learning support or student welfare team), but are primarily implemented in classrooms by classroom teachers. Clearly, a delicate balance must be struck when these individual BIPs are implemented ‘alongside’ a CMP. So if this situation arises for you, you will need to be very careful in ‘balancing’ your CMP, the individual BIP, and schoolwide (policy and practice) expectations (Conway, 2005).

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YOU BE THE JUDGE

Michele started her teaching career at a ‘tough’ school in a ‘tough’ neighbourhood. This would not have been her first-choice appointment under any circumstances, but a job was a job, and she had bills to pay and a career to progress. Michele investigated her new school and its community, and took considerable time to plan out a first CMP that she judged appropriate to the new position.

Her CMP was singularly authoritative (and behavioural) in approach; rules, and set consequences (punishments) for breaking these, were the centrepiece of her classroom management practices. Michele started day one by explaining her rules and consequences clearly, and began metering out due process and justice from that moment on. There were no positive preventative elements in her CMP, and no recognition, encouragement or rewards for model behaviour; students simply avoided punishment by ‘toeing the line’.

Even though Michele’s approach and practices were hardly consistent with those espoused at the end of the day helps you to develop a nuanced plan that suits your approach to casual teaching, notwithstanding diverse contexts. This, in turn, consolidates your overall classroom plan as you become an experienced casual teacher. Despite the obvious challenges, you should still seek out collaborative input at every opportunity, especially from students and colleagues.

Your choice of interventions, if any, will need to be carefully and strategically thought through. You will not have time to comprehensively assess an individual student’s persistently difficult behaviour, so you should aim to already have your interventions fully integrated into your first CMP. We suggest that you become very familiar with the whole-school discipline (and welfare) policies and procedures. An ability to intervene in ways that are clearly consistent with existing school practices will empower you with both the authority of the school and of the students’ prior knowledge of due process and consequences.

ADVICE FOR THE TEMPORARY OR CASUAL TEACHER

The process of developing your first CMP will involve a multiplicity of decisions, and, in accordance with the ecological, sociocultural and psychoeducational perspectives that underpin our Lyford model, you will need to consider a range of contexts. How you apply your first CMP will vary depending upon the nature of your teaching appointment, the educational setting and overriding policies and guidelines of your educational authority. Nevertheless, (even) as a temporary or casual teacher, your professional philosophy of teaching, theoretical approach to classroom management, preferred model of classroom management and, hence, your first CMP should ‘hold fast’ – at least in the short term.

Your PIR cycle remains pertinent. What will change is the time you have available to allocate to the phases of this cycle. The first phase (plan) should remain essentially the same. Much of your planning can be completed before you commence your temporary teaching. As your work as a temporary teacher proceeds, you will continue to make necessary adjustments. In some ways, your first CMP will be context-independent, but you will learn what types of adjustments are required as you move through a variety of specific contexts (i.e. classes, schools and communities).

As a casual teacher, you will need to be prepared to modify your CMP at short notice – even early on your first day – to suit specific contexts. You will have far less time to negotiate rights, responsibilities, rules and procedures with your students (if you had intended to do so). Rather, try to become familiar with what has been put in place by your colleagues, and take your lead from that; it can be too disruptive for students otherwise. Of course, if you have a temporary contract over several weeks, or even over a school term, then you can make adjustments to suit yourself, keeping in mind that the permanent class teacher will eventually return. Regardless, your most important consideration is the well-being and learning of the students. Having casual staff can be disruptive, challenging and sometimes distressing for students; of course, it can also be refreshing, interesting and fun!

The implementation phase of the PIR cycle may have to be substantially condensed. As a short-term casual teacher, you will have little time to introduce and establish your first CMP, but there will be elements of it that can be consistently applied, in terms of both curriculum content and student behaviour.

The third phase of the PIR cycle – review and consolidation – also remains essential. Reviewing at the end of the day helps you to develop a nuanced plan that suits your approach to casual teaching, notwithstanding diverse contexts. This, in turn, consolidates your overall classroom plan as you become an experienced casual teacher. Despite the obvious challenges, you should still seek out collaborative input at every opportunity, especially from students and colleagues.

Your choice of interventions, if any, will need to be carefully and strategically thought through. You will not have time to comprehensively assess an individual student’s persistently difficult behaviour, so you should aim to already have your interventions fully integrated into your first CMP. We suggest that you become very familiar with the whole-school discipline (and welfare) policies and procedures. An ability to intervene in ways that are clearly consistent with existing school practices will empower you with both the authority of the school and of the students’ prior knowledge of due process and consequences.
Casual experience

Brianne, an early career teacher, prefers day-to-day casual teaching, in order to fit in with her sporadic family-carer commitments. Before Brianne commits to any casual teaching at any school, she spends a certain number of days there as a volunteer. During this time she gets to investigate the schoolwide discipline systems through the eyes of at least one teacher, an executive teacher and a student. Consequently, she is much better prepared than the 'average' casual who turns up 'cold-turkey' to teach for the day. When students realise that Brianne 'knows the rules and consequences', they mostly 'back off and settle into their usual routines.

Remember also that the most frequently reported problem behaviours are talking out of turn and general off-task behaviours leading to the disruption of others. Maintain your positive and preventative approach. Explain any processes of intervention to your new students, while at the same time explaining how you will respond positively to model desired behaviour. Be prepared to respond quickly, calmly, consistently and persistently. Ultimately, the key parts of the Lyford model should still be given due consideration, and you can still aspire to the desired outcomes of a satisfied teacher and students who feel that they belong and are in a safe, supportive environment.

PROFESSIONAL REFLECTION

The process of drafting a first CMP can be daunting! But if you have done what we have asked you to do in this chapter and throughout this book, you will now have at least a draft CMP that is ready for adaptation in the 'real world'. Reflecting on this learning experience, consider the following two questions:

- What did you find to be the most important tools in helping you to design and write your first CMP?
- What areas of knowledge are you still less than confident about, and what sort of professional development will you need to remedy this?

If you have followed all the relevant sections of 'Your philosophy for a positive learning environment', you will have had a draft philosophy of teaching to bring to the development of your CMP, which we hope you have compiled while working on this chapter.

The final section of 'Your philosophy for a positive learning environment' simply asks if you wish to add any further refinements in terms of blending theories, the place of school policy and wider issues such as bullying. Once you have considered these things, you can apply the final touches to your teaching philosophy and your CMP.

**SUMMARY**

Good teaching, for pre-service, early career and experienced teachers, leads to safe, happy, motivated and productive students (and teachers). This can only happen in a positive learning environment (PLE) created and maintained by these teachers. An effective first classroom management plan (CMP) is a critical prerequisite to such a PLE. The design, development, implementation and ongoing evaluation of CMPs is a key responsibility of every teacher. This means 'taking a stand' on your professional philosophy by drawing on key theories and considering the broader contexts affecting the learning environment; 'taking a stand' on your theoretical approach to classroom management by drawing on a facilitative model (such as the Lyford model); considering the broader contexts affecting the learning environment; and developing and applying your first CMP systematically and strategically.

Your first CMP will change in response to the different teaching/learning contexts in which you work, and in response to your ongoing professional reflections. Nevertheless, your professional philosophy, theoretical approach, model and CMP/s must remain aligned and coherent. Remember that you will never stop learning about the processes of teaching and learning. You will be amazed at the diversity of students, classrooms, school and community contexts, and as a result you will continue to update and refine your own theory into practice. Good luck with your endeavours.

**Key terms**

- Balance Model
- classroom management plan (CMP)
- cycle of professional reflection
- interpretive filter
- intervention practices
- Positive Behaviour Leadership (PBL) model
- preventative practices

**Individual and group activities**

**Activity 10.1**

Refer back to this chapter’s 'Starter story: Day one approaches . . .'

Lisa had good intentions to have her first CMP ready for day one at her new school, but perhaps 'left her run too late' to prepare this.

- Discuss and draft an authentic 'action plan' to have your first CMP best prepared for your first day of teaching, including a plan for initial detailing (contextualising), implementation, and monitoring and reviewing this plan.

**Activity 10.2**

One challenge for many teachers is to 'align' their CMP with systemic or schoolwide policies and practices.

- Informally interview one or more teachers from one school setting to investigate and better understand these challenges.
Activity 10.3
Pre-service teachers (including you!) have emerging professional philosophies and different approaches to classroom management; often, these are influenced by their professional experience placements to date.
• Discuss with various pre-service teacher colleagues – preferably those who are at different stages of your pre-service training program – how ‘Prac.’ experiences to date have influenced and changed their philosophical, theoretical and/or practical approaches to classroom management.

Activity 10.4
In the development of your professional philosophy statement and theoretical approach to classroom management, you have been encouraged to take a ‘blended’ approach.
• Prepare for and conduct a class debate around the contention, ‘A “simple” approach to the selection of a theoretical approach to classroom management is too simple.’

Activity 10.5
Writing a first CMP is challenging. Implementing it is even more so!
• In context-specific groups, discuss the various challenges that novice teachers are likely to face in implementing (and detailing, monitoring, adjusting and reviewing) a first CMP.

Online resources
Visit http://login.cengagebrain.com and search for this book to access the study tools that come with your textbook.

Weblinks
The following selection of government websites gives access to key information about Australian and New Zealand legislation, policy and practices related to curriculum, school management, student welfare and discipline.

ACT Government Department of Education and Training

‘Safe and supportive policies’ (ACT Government Department of Education and Training)

Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA)
http://www.acara.edu.au

Australian Government Department of Education and Training

Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership)
http://www.teacherstandardsaitsl.edu.au/

Tasmanian Government Department of Education
http://www.education.tas.gov.au

‘Student behaviour in Tasmanian government schools’ (Tasmanian Government Department of Education)

Learner well-being and behaviour policy (Tasmanian Government Department of Education)

Government of South Australia Department of Education and Child Development

Information about teacher induction

Child and student health and well-being policies

New Zealand Ministry of Education
http://www.minedu.govt.nz/

New South Wales Department of Education
http://www.det.nsw.edu.au/home

Specific student discipline policy and procedures

Northern Territory Government Department of Education and Children’s Services

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