

A Framework of Principles and Best Practice for Managing Student Behaviour in the Australian Education Context

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ABSTRACT Public opinion over the past 30 years consistently rates lack of discipline in public schools in the USA to be the biggest problem communities have to contend with (Charles, 1999). Similar concerns are apparent in Australia. The issue of student behaviour was raised at the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) in 2002. The Council recognized that behavioural problems were both ongoing and growing and were of major concern nationally. Consequently, the Student Behaviour Management Project was established. This article briefly describes the aim, research process and outcome of this project. It reports on the core principles and key characteristics of best practice that were identified and the predominant models and approaches of student behaviour management that appear to inform best practice across Australia. Of what relevance is this project to school psychology? The effective management of student behaviour is arguably the business of school psychology practice in many countries around the world. This article is intended to contribute to international perspectives and debate on contemporary theories, principles and best practice associated with the effective management of student behaviour.

KEY WORDS: Australian education context; best practice; student behaviour management; student discipline

Introduction

As documented in Phi Delta Kappa, public opinion over the past 30 years consistently rates lack of discipline in public schools in the USA to be the biggest problem communities have to contend with (Charles, 1999). Similar concerns are apparent in Australia. The issue of student

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behaviour was raised at the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) in 2002. MCEETYA constitutes the Ministers for Education from all the States and Territories in Australia, and the Minister for Education in New Zealand. The Council recognized that behavioural problems were both ongoing and growing and were of major concern nationally and requested that the Student Learning and Support Services Taskforce provide Ministers with advice on programs that exhibit best practice in addressing student behaviour issues. Consequently, the Student Behaviour Management Project was established under the auspices of the Taskforce. In March 2003 I undertook the role of principal researcher for this national project. This article briefly describes the aim, research process and outcome of the project. It reports on the core principles and key characteristics of best practice that were identified and the predominant models and approaches of student behaviour management that appear to inform best practice across Australia.

Of what relevance is this project to school psychology? Although there is some variance in terms of how school psychology services are conceptualized and delivered across the different States and Territories in Australia, it is apparent that it is commonly considered to be an important component of support in the development and maintenance of safe and healthy school environments. The National Safe Schools Framework (MCEETYA, 2003) was recently developed by a range of Australian educators, school administrators and teachers, student services personnel and school psychologists. The Framework 'incorporates existing good practice and provides an agreed national approach to help schools and their communities address issues of bullying, harassment, violence, and child abuse and neglect' (p.3). The effective management of student behaviour is arguably the business of school psychology practice in many countries around the world. Twenty-one articles associated with the topic of student behaviour, most notably in the area of bullying, have been published in *School Psychology International* since February 2000. They reflect student behaviour issues, practices and research relevant to countries such as Canada, the USA, Australia, the UK, Israel, Italy, Greece and Portugal. This article is intended to contribute to international perspectives and debate on contemporary theories, principles and best practice associated with the effective management of student behaviour. How do the principles and best practices associated with student behaviour management in the Australian context compare with those in other educational settings? How does school psychology in different countries contribute to the development of effective student behaviour management? These questions are posed to generate further dialogue and debate about this important topic which is clearly of international interest.

Aim of the project

The overall aim of the MCEETYA behaviour management project was the development of a framework of guiding principles and practices that can be used to support the development of successful student behaviour management programs on a systemic, district, school, classroom and individual level in Australian education environments.

In relation to the aim of the project, two questions were posed: (1) with reference to the Australian education context, what characterizes best practice in addressing student behaviour issues and (2) what are the key principles that underpin best practice in addressing student behaviour issues?

Research process of the project

The project commenced in March 2003 and was concluded in July 2004. It consisted of two phases, namely the *Literature Review* (phase one) and *Survey* (phase two). The Literature Review was completed in May 2003. It aimed to: (1) scan the literature on programs in the Australian education context that exhibit best practice in addressing student behaviour issues and (2) identify the key best practice characteristics common to these programs.

The Survey, which was completed in April 2004, was based on the key best practice characteristics identified in the literature. The survey questionnaire aimed to: (1) ascertain the nature, principles, aims, strategies/practices and successes of the nominated 'student behaviour management' programs that were deemed by the respective education jurisdictions to exhibit best practice in addressing student behaviour issues; (2) determine which were the key strategies/practices associated with the successes of the program; (3) evaluate the best practice characteristics associated with addressing student behaviour issues as identified by the literature review and (4) maximize the range of key best practice characteristics so that the development of a framework to support the enhancement of successful student behaviour management programs was comprehensively informed.

Based upon a set of guidelines, State, Catholic and Independent Schools jurisdictions across Australia were requested to survey between six and ten programs that exhibit best practice in addressing student behaviour issues. In total, 52 survey questionnaires were submitted. They were representative of all education jurisdictions across Australia.

The design of the project was located broadly within the qualitative research paradigm. Miles and Huberman's (1994) processes of data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing provided the qualitative data analysis base for the project. The *unit of analysis*, namely the

characteristics of and principles associated with best practice in addressing student behaviour issues in the Australian education context was basically the same for the two data bases (i.e. the literature review and survey). This allowed for the comparative analysis and synthesis of best practice characteristics and the identification of principles underpinning these characteristics. The assumption was made that where the literature made repeated reference to certain behaviour management strategies associated with successful outcomes, and the survey concurred consistently with this, these strategies could be considered to be good practice.

This project had three challenges of 'definition' to address. Firstly, there was the question of what constitutes a 'program'? This project adopted the broadest possible definition of 'programs'. This included policy frameworks, and the full spectrum of levels of intervention. The analysis process was guided by conceptualizing programs according to different levels of intervention (system, district/community, school, classroom, individual).

Secondly, there was the challenge of ascertaining what comprises 'student behaviour issues'. For the purpose of this project, Charles' (1999; pp. 2–3) broad definition of misbehaviour was used, namely 'behaviour that is considered inappropriate for the setting or situation in which it occurs'.

Thirdly, there was the challenge of defining 'best practice'. This concept was derived from the business sector and is now widely used in education (DETYA, 2001b). It is not an unproblematic notion, particularly as it could imply a sense of absolute assurance to the exclusion of contextual variables such as culture and values. 'Good practice' might be a better term to use. Although it does not necessarily capture the relativity of the context in which it is used, it has a less conclusive 'feel' about it than 'best' (de Jong, 2003). For the purposes of this project, best practice was interpreted as *strategies* associated with philosophy, policy, organizational structure and culture, procedure, development and action that are likely to result in successfully addressing student behaviour issues.

Outcome of the project: a framework of guiding principles and best practice

The framework presented below is a synthesis of the literature review and survey on best practice in addressing student behaviour issues in the Australian education context. It is not intended to be exhaustive, nor in any way prescriptive. Behaviour management programs that exhibit successful outcomes will not necessarily incorporate *all* the key characteristics contained in the framework. Depending on the context

and particular aims/intended outcomes of the program, certain characteristics may be considered to be more relevant and important than others. Further, it is important to be reminded that best practice was interpreted as strategies likely to result in successfully addressing student behaviour issues. An assumption was made that where the literature made repeated reference to certain behaviour management strategies associated with successful outcomes, and the survey concurred consistently with this, these strategies could be considered to be good practice. There is an element of tentativeness allied to the identification of best practice characteristics as reflected in the claim that best practice associated with addressing student behaviour issues is *likely* to feature certain characteristics. This tentativeness is considered appropriate in view of the fact that only 20 percent of the programs surveyed indicated that they had been formally evaluated. Some pointed out that they were in the process of being evaluated or planning their evaluation. On the whole though, there was a lack of 'hard' evidence to substantiate claims of successful outcomes and how they were linked to behaviour management practices. Many programs presented anecdotal evidence. Despite this limitation, early indications are that this framework is currently being used by some education districts, school administrators and student support services as an appraisal 'checklist' for reflection purposes, with a view to modifying and improving practice related to the management of student behaviour.

Principles

Seven core principles were identified as being the basis upon which best practice associated with addressing student behaviour issues should be guided:

(1) *Student behaviour needs to be understood from an eco-systemic perspective.* This principle emphasizes the complex interconnected, interdependent and recursive nature of relationships between a range of environmental, interpersonal and intra-personal factors that influence the daily lives of schools as organizations, teachers and students. It assumes that behavioural change in social systems does not occur in the linear fashion characteristic of the positivistic tradition. Rather, the complexity of circular causality needs to be understood in the management of student behaviour, where behaviour is viewed as cycles of interaction. In other words, the behaviour of a student is understood to affect, and be affected by, the context and behaviour of others. Central to this principle is the focus on modifying a problem environment, rather than simply problem behaviour. Minimizing challenging behaviour requires systems change and a range of appropriate interventions. No one intervention will necessarily facilitate meaningful

behavioural change. A *comprehensive approach* to behaviour issues rather than a piecemeal, category-specific method (e.g. focusing only on substance abuse) will maximise the potential for successful outcomes.

(2) *Student behaviour management programs and practices must embrace a health-promoting approach to creating a safe, supportive, and caring environment.* This principle advocates that the promotion of both health and learning is a core business of schools. Health is defined broadly in terms of physical, cognitive, social, emotional and spiritual dimensions. They are interconnected, influencing and being influenced by the environment. Health and learning and behaviour are intricately allied. A healthy learning environment will enhance appropriate student behaviour.

(3) *Student behaviour management programs and practices must embrace inclusiveness, which caters for the different potentials, needs and resources of all students.* This principle explicitly recognizes and celebrates diversity, acknowledging students as individuals rather than as a homogenous group. This includes creating a socio-cultural and linguistic climate in the school which embraces a broad understanding of language variation, dialect development, cross-cultural communication and the historical development of Aboriginal English. This principle constructs student behaviour issues as part of student diversity and not fundamentally a 'deficit' concept which requires 'fixing'. 'At risk' behaviour is seen to be part of a continuum of life-factors, with young people's level of vulnerability being variable over time as they move in and out of 'risk'.

(4) *Student behaviour management programs and practices should incorporate a student-centred philosophy that places the student at the centre of the education process and focuses on the whole student (personal, social and academic).* This principle considers the needs and interests of the students as being paramount. It advocates flexibility and is thus responsive to student needs. Key to this principle is the assertion that enhancing self-esteem through placing the student at the centre of the learning process will minimize behaviour issues.

(5) *Student behaviour is inextricably linked to the quality of the learning experience.* Teachers make a difference. Effective pedagogy is critical to student engagement. Teacher practice is a central behaviour management and change 'tool'. This principle asserts that quality curriculum and teaching will maximize student engagement and minimize behaviour issues and alienation.

(6) *Positive relationships, particularly between student and teacher, are critical for maximizing appropriate behaviour and achieving learning outcomes.* This principle advocates that teachers should make it their priority to develop positive relationships with their students. This would include taking a personal interest in the lives of each student,

embracing the idea of 'I earn respect' rather than 'I deserve respect', and applying effective communication skills.

(7) *Effective student behaviour change and management is enhanced through internally based school support structures, and externally based family, education department, community and interagency partnerships.* Community as a whole can better support students than a school in isolation. This principle takes cognisance of understanding student behaviour in context, and encouraging multi-component interventions to facilitate behavioural change.

Characteristics of best practice

Seven themes of key best practice characteristics associated with addressing student behaviour issues were identified by the project. It is beyond the scope of this article to describe these themes in detail. In summary, they were:

(1) *A clearly articulated and comprehensive behaviour management policy.* Best practice related to addressing student behaviour issues is, in the first instance, likely to be based on a clearly articulated and comprehensive behaviour management policy at a system, district/community, school and classroom level. This was evident from the survey and literature review (Australian Education Authorities, 2002; Burgess, 1996; De Jong, 2003; DETYA, 2001a; 2001b; EDWA, 1998a; 1998b; 1998c; 1998d; Elliot and Downey, 1999; Jacobson et al., 1999; NSW Department of Education and Training, 1995; Rogers, 1995; The State of Queensland Department of Education, 1998).

Such policy states clearly the education philosophy, values and principles upon which it is based and makes explicit its assumptions and beliefs about the management of student behaviour. It embraces a student-centred philosophy, and inclusiveness which demonstrates understanding and catering for the different potentials, needs and resources of *all* students. This includes recognizing student diversity by acknowledging students as individuals rather than as a homogenous group, and constructing behaviour management issues as part of student diversity and not fundamentally a 'deficit' concept that requires 'fixing'. The importance of prevention and early intervention is stressed and the whole school community, including interagency collaboration, is encouraged to be involved in its programs and practices.

A comprehensive behaviour management policy focuses explicitly on providing a school environment which is safe, supportive and caring and is concerned with fostering the well-being of all its school community. It incorporates principles and practices of equity and social justice to ensure that the educational outcomes for all students are maximized (i.e. the fostering of non-violent, non-coercive, non-discriminatory behaviour).

Behaviour management policy views behaviour management fundamentally as an educative process – essentially a means to an end (in supporting the student to behave appropriately) and not simply an end in itself (punishment). It embraces the notion of rights and responsibilities that every member of the school community is accountable for adhering to and encourages students to take ownership of their behaviour, including interventions aimed at modifying and improving their behaviour. The school, staff and parents are encouraged to take ownership of supporting their students/children in their endeavours to modify and improve their behaviour.

The policy provides the school community with clear and consistent expectations regarding appropriate conduct and behaviour. It includes ongoing professional development for staff in best practice associated with the effective management of students and incorporates a comprehensive monitoring program that records and tracks student incidents and provides the school with a history of each student 'at risk'.

(2) *A health-promotive culture.* It was evident from the survey and literature review that translating behaviour management policy into successful practice requires the development of a health-promotive culture at all levels of the education system (Australian Health Promoting Schools Association, 2003; DETYA, 2001b; De Jong, 2003; MCEETYA, 2003; MindMatters, 2003). In essence, such a culture embraces a health-promoting approach to creating a safe, supportive and caring environment that reflects a healthy psycho-social culture through the facilitation of positive peer relations and development of social skills. This culture reflects student 'connectedness' as being central to the mission and daily life of the organization. It has an established and active pastoral care system and incorporates a proactive, rather than reactive, approach to potential student behaviour issues and challenges.

(3) *A relevant, engaging and stimulating curriculum.* The survey and literature (Association of Independent Schools of WA, 2002; Browne et al., 2001; Catholic Education Office, 2001; De Jong, 2003; DETYA, 2001a; DEST, 2002; Henderson, 2002; 2003; Hunsader, 2002; Jaffe, 1999; King and Browne, 2001; Love and Townsend, 2002; O'Brien et al., 2001; *Stay Just a Little Bit Longer...*, 2001) indicated unequivocally that best practice associated with addressing student behaviour issues will feature a relevant, engaging and stimulating curriculum. Underpinning this theme is the assertion that behaviour is inextricably linked to learning. By implication, quality curriculum and teaching will maximize student engagement and minimize behaviour issues and alienation. Such a curriculum embraces and makes explicit values associated with social justice, social capital (inclusiveness), enterprise and citizenship. It is demonstrably connected with the wider

community and global context. A quality curriculum is responsive to the needs of the students, is flexible in its delivery and is inclusive, catering for all students. This might include the development of planned future pathways, which offer students choice and increased access to education, training and employment. It includes work experience opportunities for those students who are particularly alienated from school.

Poor literacy and numeracy skills are a significant factor in student alienation and associated behavioural problems. A quality curriculum features the development of these skills. In addition, it includes challenging activities that build leadership skills, success and confidence, and incorporates resiliency building experiences and life-skills, particularly those that help students manage conflict appropriately. Such a curriculum endeavours to develop critical thinking skills, focusing especially on decision-making, appraising conflict situations and restorative justice.

(4) *Effective pedagogy.* There were numerous references in the literature to the relationship between positive student behaviour and engaging pedagogy (De Jong, 2003; DETYA, 2001b; DEWA, 2002b; NSW Department of Education and Training, 2002; Rogers, 1999). Effective pedagogy is essential for student engagement. There is an integral link between the nature of the learning environment, student behaviour and achieving learning outcomes. A non-stimulating learning environment has been identified as one of the distinct elements of an alienating school culture that is considered to be the single most critical factor influencing early school leaving (DETYA, 2001a). Education Queensland's Productive Pedagogies (Henderson, 2002; The State of Queensland Department of Education, 2002) presents a comprehensive framework that can be considered to represent key best practice pedagogical characteristics associated with addressing student behaviour issues. In summary, the survey and literature review indicated that effective pedagogy reflects high degrees of intellectual qualities (e.g. higher-order thinking, knowledge as problematic), high degrees of connectedness (i.e. knowledge integration, connectedness to the world), and highly supportive classroom environments where diversity is clearly recognized. Effective pedagogy takes particular cognisance of different learning styles and issues of gender preference. Activity-based methods of learning, including cooperative learning practices, are incorporated.

(5) *A democratic, empowering and positive classroom management approach.* The survey and literature (Crone, 2000; De Jong, 2003; DEWA, 2002b; Elliott and Downey, 1999; Northern Territory Department of Education, 2002; O'Dea, 1997; Poh, 2002; Rogers, 1999, 2000b) revealed that best practice associated with addressing student

behaviour issues features a democratic, empowering and positive classroom management approach. Characteristic of this approach are teachers who make it their priority to develop positive relationships with their students. This includes taking a personal interest in the lives of each student. The teacher constructs his/her own approach to behaviour management that is coherent with the school policy, and negotiates with the students a classroom management plan. The teacher endeavours to understand the function (goals) of behaviour. Best practice suggests that this is the basis upon which effective management and change strategies should be applied.

A democratic, empowering and positive classroom management approach reflects a range of management strategies that maximize on-task behaviour, such as proximity, setting clear expectations, with-it-ness, and planning student transitions. It features teachers who model appropriate behaviour and attitudes. There is an emphasis on positive reinforcement of appropriate behaviour and behaviour management strategies which aim to develop responsibility (students take ownership for their behaviour), self-discipline and self-regulation in the student. There is a focus on responsible thinking processes (encouraging students to do the thinking in managing their own behaviour) and restorative justice (emphasis on the impact of inappropriate behaviour on people and not only consequences of breaking of school rules).

Behaviour management is flexible, offering students appropriate choice and taking into account the individual needs of the students. A mutual problem-solving approach is applied in conflict management and conflict resolution.

Ownership for the management and resolution of student behaviour issues remains with the teacher for as long as is possible. Student behaviour issues are dealt with as promptly as possible. The teacher recognizes when it is appropriate to call upon the system for help.

(6) *Well established internal and external support structures and partnerships.* Many student behaviour management programs that were surveyed exhibited strong internal and external support structures and partnerships. It was apparent from the literature that best practice allied to addressing student behaviour issues includes this theme too (De Jong, 2003; DETYA, 2001b; DEWA, 2002a; EDWA, 1998a, 1998b, 1998c; Henderson, 2003; Kelly, 2003; Morey and Bruce, 1997; Northern Territory Department of Education, 2002; NSW Department of Education and Training, 1995; O'Brien et al, 2001; Quarumby, 2001; *Stay Just a Little Bit Longer...*, 2001; The State of Queensland Department of Education, 1998). In summary, support structures and partnerships are based on a shared vision with associated actions and demonstrated commitment to sharing knowledge and resources via agreed processes and infrastructure. They involve

community agencies in supporting the school's behaviour management policy and practice and incorporate frequent parent and community communication and participation that address behaviour issues collaboratively and celebrate student success.

Such structures and partnerships provide students with community focussed activities to facilitate their social skills development and sense of community responsibility, and ultimately to build their self-esteem. In the case of vocational training and enterprise based programs, they focus on developing work experience and employment opportunities for students.

Best practice associated with this theme indicates that student needs are coordinated and monitored through a school-based case management strategy which operates as a well-organized sub-program in the school. This strategy ensures that students and parents experiencing behaviour issues have easy access to efficient and effective mental health services (psychologists, counsellors, social workers, etc.). Where possible, these resources offer on-site consultancy services to the school and individual teachers which focus on holistic approaches to behaviour management (e.g. whole class management).

(7) *An alternative flexible learning environment.* Despite inclusive schooling and the provision for diversity, mainstream education is not necessarily successful for all students. Students who are, for a range of reasons, alienated from the regular classroom and, notwithstanding numerous school-based interventions, continue to present with challenging behaviour, will need an alternative flexible learning environment. Withdrawal of a student from the regular classroom is usually considered to be a last resort, and is based upon the conviction that not all successful educational/learning experiences occur in the classroom – there is a need to think more broadly about education and not exclusively 'schools'. The emphasis in non-traditional settings is primarily on re-igniting the students' desire to learn and creating opportunities for planned future pathways which can range from re-integration into the regular classroom, to accessing the education system in general or finding employment. Successful transition into these pathways is the overall intended outcome for students engaged in alternative learning programs.

The survey and literature indicated that best practice associated particularly with addressing challenging student behaviour is likely to involve a flexible, individualized education program (IEP) informed by diagnostic assessment (DETYA, 2001a; DEWA, 2002b; Netolicky, 1998; Rogers, 2000a). Some of the literature highlights the principle of inclusiveness as being fundamental to IEP's (ACT, 2002; Australian Health Promoting Schools Association, 2003). The literature makes considerable reference to IEPs being located in an alternative or

complementary learning environment, such as school-based partial withdrawal, community-based partial withdrawal, community school, outreach services, integrated whole school and event-based interventions (Kelly, 2003; O'Brien et al, 2001; Rodney and Lake, 2002; Semmens et al., 1999; *Stay Just a Little Bit Longer...*, 2001). It is important to note, however, that the survey revealed that a number of successful alternative flexible programs were integral to the schools' curriculum and organizational structure. These programs were delivered by the school, in the school, and in some cases celebrated as being a privileged option to students. They were clearly responsive to student needs and constructed as 'part of', rather than 'in parallel to' or 'outside of' the schools' curriculum. Although 'alternative', these programs appeared to de-emphasize the notion of 'withdrawal'. They emphasized inclusion and were particularly cognisant of the potential risk of increasing feelings of alienation through perceptions and experiences of isolation.

Inclusive and alternative models of IEPs share similar best practice characteristics (ARTD Management and Research Consultants, 1999; Association of Independent Schools of Victoria, 2001; Association of Independent Schools of WA, 2002; Browne, 1999; DEST, 2002; DETYA, 2001a, 2001b; Jones, 1999; Keddle, 2002; Kelly, 2003; King and Browne, 2001; Love and Townsend, 2002; McGrath, 2000; Northern Territory Department of Education, 2002; Poh, 2002; Quarmbay, 2001; School Volunteer Program, 2001, 2002; Snedden and Browne, 2001). In summary, they include a comprehensive approach to behaviour issues rather than a piecemeal, category-specific method. This requires a 'Holistic/Systems/Wrap Around' delivery framework. There is an emphasis on early intervention and high levels of interagency collaboration. Best practice includes a focus on developing a sense of purpose and vision in life for the disconnected student (hope for a positive future), being responsive to students' needs and maximum flexibility of the curriculum and its delivery. Student ownership is key to success. Learning programs are negotiable.

Best practice features the development of literacy and numeracy skills and resiliency by teaching students coping skills such as optimistic thinking and humour, rational interpretation of events, normalizing and seeking help and self-disclosure. The focus on resiliency is often associated with mentoring, learning to understand self better and the development of life-skills, responsible thinking skills and pro-social behaviour. There is a major focus on improving self-understanding and life-skills in the areas of rational thinking (e.g. the Responsible Thinking Classroom, De Bono's Thinking Skills, Cognitive Behaviour Therapy), self-regulation and control (e.g. anger management), problem-solving, conflict resolution, peer mediation, communication

skills, pro-social behaviour and team-building. Best practice associated with an alternative flexible learning environment includes vocational training and enterprise in trade areas, technology skills, entrepreneurial skills and hospitality services. This incorporates accreditation for these skills and industrially recognized workplace competencies.

A supportive, non-threatening learning environment is key to student engagement and the development of a sense of belonging. Relationship-building is fundamental to improving behaviour and learning outcomes for students with challenging behaviours. This incorporates an under emphasis on power; modelling of trust; an emphasis on the positives, even under adversity and de-escalation of conflict through humour. Mentoring is considered good practice, where significant others (adults and peers) support students in changing their negative behaviour through the development of reflective thinking, life-skills, encouraging pro-social behaviours and generally fostering a sense of direction and purpose.

Predominant models of student behaviour management

The literature review and survey revealed five predominant models of student behaviour management allied to good practice in Australia. They were:

(1) William Glasser's *Choice Theory* which is based on the belief that the only behaviour a person has control over is their own; the purpose of our behaviour is 'to attempt to satisfy the basic biological and psychological needs of survival, love and belonging, power, freedom and fun' and 'all behaviour is our best attempt at the moment to control ourselves (so that we can control the world around us) as we continually try to satisfy one or more of these basic needs' (Edwards and Watts, 2004; p. 135).

(2) Edward Carr et al's *Positive Behaviour Support* (PBS) which 'is an applied science that uses educational methods to expand an individual's behavior repertoire and systems change methods to redesign an individual's living environment to first enhance the individual's quality of life and, second, to minimize his or her problem behavior' (2002; p. 4). The philosophy of PBS embraces applied behaviour analysis, the normalization/inclusion movement and person-centred values. This approach de-emphasizes pathology and stresses personal competence and environmental integrity.

(3) Ed Ford's *Responsible Thinking Process* (RTP) which is based on Powers' Perceptual Control Theory and aims 'to teach students, whose behaviour is disturbing others within the school environment, how to think of ways to reach their goals without violating the rights of others' (Edwards and Watts, 2004; p. 194).

(4) *Restorative Justice*, which is defined as 'a participatory and

democratic justice that focuses on the incident and not solely on the offender's behaviour. It is an approach to harmful behaviour and community conflict that sees wrongdoing as essentially a violation of people and/or property' (Thorsborne and Vinegrad, 2004; p. 6). Restorative Justice aims to encourage a paradigm shift in philosophy and practice of BM – from a punitive approach which focuses predominantly on the individual, to understanding the complexity of the context within in which the behaviour occurs and focusing on the impact of the behaviour on relationships and what is needed to restore these relationships.

(5) Rudolf Dreikurs's *Democratic Discipline Model* which asserts that all behaviour is goal-oriented, and all misbehaviour is as a result of students' faulty beliefs and reasoning (In order to belong, I must 'attract attention', 'exercise power', 'exact revenge' or 'display inadequacy'). This model aims to: (i) understand why a student behaves in a particular way so that the teacher can be appropriately responsive to the student's behaviour; (ii) give students some choice in how to manage their behaviour and (iii) model for the students the kind of appropriate behaviour that is expected of them (Edwards and Watts, 2004).

(6) Lee and Marlene Canter's *Assertive Discipline Model* was cited as being the approach used in a few programs, but did not present as a dominant exemplar underpinning student behaviour programs exhibiting good practice. Many programs indicated that they were eclectic in their approach to managing student behaviour, drawing aspects of practice from the range of models listed above.

Concluding comments

When considering the relevance of this student behaviour management project to the practice of school psychology it is useful to contemplate how this framework of guiding principles and best practice reflects child development theories. To what extent are the framework and its assumptions about human development, how children learn, school discipline and management of student behaviour compatible with contemporary practice in school psychology? This is obviously the subject of further enquiry. However, a brief preliminary response to this question seems an appropriate way to conclude this article and generate further thought and debate. One way of doing this is to examine the framework in terms of educational philosophies, and which child development theories these philosophies reflect. Associated with this is the relative power of teachers and students in relation to the teaching and learning processes, and how different models of behaviour management and discipline interface with these processes. Porter

(2000), and Edwards and Watts (2004) propose structures which illustrate the relationship between models of student behaviour management, child development theories and the balance of power between teacher control and student autonomy. Edwards and Watts refer to three categories of child development and discipline, namely: *management theories* which ‘assume that children’s growth and development are consequences of external conditions over which they have little control’; *non-directive intervention theories* which ‘are based on the assumption that children develop from an inner unfolding’ and *leadership theories* ‘which are based on the assumption that children develop from an interaction of both inner and outer influences’ (ibid, pp. 21–22). Teachers command most control in the management category, while students have most autonomy in the non-directive intervention category. Control and autonomy is more evenly balanced between the teacher and student in the leadership category. Porter presents a similar continuum with autocratic theories of student behaviour management at the one end, followed by authoritarian, authoritative/democratic, liberal and laissez faire at the other end.

Where does the framework of principles and best practice associated with student behaviour management in the Australian educational context ‘fit’ on the continuum described above? If we use the five predominant models of student behaviour management that underpin this framework as a source for making this judgement, it is likely that the framework locates most comfortably in the leadership category with some overlap into the non-directive intervention category. These models commonly focus on democratic values and practice, student choice, person-centredness, self-control, personal responsibility, relationships, social justice and contextual factors. They broadly suggest that child development is based on the interaction of both inner and outer influences, where behaviour needs to be understood in terms of the complex interplay between child and environment, where power is judiciously shared between teacher and student, with teacher as mediator of the learning process and mentor of relationships, assisting children to assume greater control and responsibility over their behaviour.

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