



ATLANTA, GEORGIA

# CRIME AT SCHOOL

Edited by  
Dennie Chaffinger

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ATLANTA, GEORGIA

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CRIME AT SCHOOL

Proceedings of a Seminar  
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Edited by  
Dennis Challinger

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## CRIME AT SCHOOL

### AN OVERVIEW

Dennis Challenger  
Assistant Director  
Information and Training  
Australian Institute of Criminology  
Australian Capital Territory

Schools have long been the sites of behaviour which can be described, literally, as crime. Thefts, assaults, sex offences, vandalism, offensive behaviour and indecent language continue to occur within schools. Teachers and students are both victims and offenders, and various school practices have been developed to maintain order and discipline.

Notwithstanding this, material in the media in recent times has tended to suggest that crime at school has become worse. Recent headlines in Australian newspapers, such as 'Violent Kids Curse of Classroom', 'School Wrecker at Eight', and 'Schoolyard Drug Trafficking on Rise', all promote this view. But is it realistic?

The experience and opinions of the participants at this seminar collectively suggest that that view is not realistic. For sure, there are disciplinary problems within many schools and there are offences committed in and around schools, but they are not necessarily cause for vigorous reaction.

However, they cannot be ignored. They require appropriate responses which have to take into account contemporary standards. Professor Maurice Balson made this point in his address to the seminar by pointing out that society itself had changed over the last decade or so, and an authoritarian approach was no longer appropriate within schools. He indicated that teachers now needed to understand group dynamics, to encourage their students to take part in class decision making, and to see themselves and their classes as one group working towards a common aim.

These views were not immediately embraced by all participants one of whom indicated that while teachers were well aware of features of group behaviour they had been given more and more duties in the last few years which caused them to be stretched to do all of them well. In response, Professor Balson stated that teachers should concentrate on 'teaching well' as their main task. That, he suggested, required teachers to 'open doors' for students to provide a healthy environment that would foster

learning. Teaching well, through guiding and motivating students within a setting of social equality would, he claimed, also lead to better behaviour in class.

According to Professor Balson, that teaching, however, has to occur within a school which has a common philosophy of 'respect, responsiveness, responsibility and resourcefulness'. He said that principals, therefore, had a vital role, and should use their power to influence teachers and build on what those teachers achieve in their classes. Ideally, the school philosophy would be adopted by parents and the encouragement of self-discipline in students would be more likely.

In her presentation to the seminar, Ms Helen Szuty gave good reason to believe many parents were ready to join with teachers in achieving a healthy and happy school environment in which students were able to take greater control over their own lives. Ms Szuty agreed that parents ranged from those who believed schools should be strict to those who thought they should be democratic, but said that discussions which explained school philosophy and got parents actively involved in school affairs were usually successful even though they could take some time.

Commenting on Ms Szuty's paper, one participant remarked that some parents often seemed more concerned about the behaviour of other people's children and were not ready to accept that their own children also had to accept some responsibility for the situation at school. All in all, the notion that parents should be encouraged to work towards common school aims seemed to be accepted by participants.

While such a common approach would undoubtedly assist teachers in their work, they were still probably going to be faced with daily difficulties to resolve. This was particularly true for beginning teachers, that is, those who were just commencing their teaching careers. Dr Alistair Peacock indicated the way in which teacher training in Western Australia had been planned so as to give particular assistance and advice to teachers entering the field for the first time. He indicated that it was particularly necessary for rules regarding discipline to be well defined and well understood by such teachers.

A case study of establishing a new school discipline code was presented to the seminar participants by teacher Ms Kate Sutherland who traced the lengthy consultative processes and discussions (including pupil-free days to ensure teachers fully understood the code and its application) that had occurred in her school. In practice, Ms Sutherland reported there seemed to be a tendency for some teachers to occasionally skip some preliminary steps before invoking penalties but, overall, the code worked well.

The most severe sanction for students in breach of the code was being sent to a time-out room, virtually for a period of introspection, and there were formalised procedures to allow such students to indicate when they were ready to talk over their behaviour with a teacher or counsellor. In response to questions from participants, Ms Sutherland indicated that all teachers had agreed to participate in a roster to staff the time-out room and that a school guidance committee was continuously evaluating the code, its use, and its apparent impact.

In an invited commentary on school discipline in general, Ms Margaret Cowin indicated that a time-out desk within a classroom had been found to be a useful sanction which was less dramatic than a student's complete removal from the class. It also provided an opportunity for students to contemplate the behaviour that had caused them to be so treated and, therefore, could lead to increased self-discipline in the future.

Ms Cowin then produced two documents which indicated the sorts of approaches being taken within some Victorian primary schools to give students both an understanding of their place in the school, and the chance to take an active part in decision making.

The first document, entitled, 'The 3 R's of Citizenship', plainly and concisely sets out the school rules in the context of consideration of students' responsibilities and rights. The full document reads:

## THE 3 R's OF CITIZENSHIP

### RESPONSIBILITIES

The things that People Should do without being told.

1. Have respect for self and others (kindness and respect.)
2. Help make the school a place where everyone can learn.
3. Come to school and stay at school on school days.
4. Be on time for all activities.
5. Finish set school work in class and set at home.
6. Take care of school property.
7. Help make your school a good place to be.

### RIGHTS

A Right is something which belongs to you and cannot be taken away by anyone. Classmates and teachers have rights too.

You have a right to be at school and to be treated fairly by others.

You have a right to be able to work and play without interference from others.

You have a right to be safe at school.

### RULES

A Rule is a direction I must follow for the good of all.

Teasing and fighting is not allowed. Be on time for all classes and assembly.

Attend to lessons and teachers directions without distracting or annoying others.

Leaving school grounds or designated areas without permission is not allowed.

Climbing trees, railings, roofing and hydrants is forbidden.

Never throw sticks, stones, or objects that endanger others.

Take care of things you use at school.

Be obedient to teachers and visitors. Co-operate with others.

Balls only to be kicked on the oval and pines area.

THESE RULES SHOULD BE POSTED FOR REFERENCE



One participant pointed out that the bubble gum procedure was actually an unsatisfactory example of the withdrawal of privileges from all of a group in order to censure a small number in the group who had not co-operated. Ms Cowin agreed with that comment and said that the procedure could certainly be seen as inappropriate in some school settings or for older students. She emphasised that it was important to try and tailor discipline procedures and responses to particular schools, considering all possible ways of dealing with disruptive students.

The introduction of conflict resolution skills in schools was one way of dealing with misbehaviour that received particular attention at the seminar. Ms Helena Cornelius gave a sound overview of the basis of conflict resolution techniques and teacher Ms Susan Plunkett described action research that she had conducted within her small primary school which demonstrated how those students who learnt conflict resolution skills were involved in less aggressive resolution of school disputes.

In response to questions, these two speakers indicated that it was perhaps a bit too early for conflict resolution to be incorporated into teacher training, firstly, because schools were only slowly moving from authoritarian or 'power over' relationships to 'power with' relationships and, secondly, because conflict resolution skill development manuals were only just being prepared. There was, however, no reason why the results achieved with primary students should not be replicated with senior secondary students who would also gain better communication skills as a bonus from a conflict resolution course.

The description of such techniques for dealing with disruptive students indicated how far schools had come since breaches of discipline were dealt with by corporal punishment. In fact, it is only in recent years that some education authorities have formally abolished the use of physical punishment, and that has not always had the agreement of all teachers. A survey of members of the Victorian Affiliated Teachers' Federation had been forwarded for consideration by seminar participants. It showed that, at least in that small organisation, there was considerable support for continued use of corporal punishment despite the Victorian Education Department's abolition of that practice.

Mr Roger Slee indicated to the seminar how one real effect of the abolition of corporal punishment in Victoria had been a considerable increase in the total number of students being suspended from schools, that being the remaining 'ultimate' sanction for teachers. Further, Mr Slee pointed out that compilation of the necessary dossiers for disruptive students was occupying increasing amounts of teachers' time, thus diverting them from more positive activity. Mr Geoff Thorpe, who is to orchestrate the removal of corporal punishment

in South Australian schools, outlined how he hoped to implement that policy change without encountering difficulties of the order described by Mr Slee.

The real cause of the abolition of corporal punishment is that social climate, and in particular the climate within schools, has changed over the last ten years or so. Students no longer accept punishment gracefully and there is a real risk of a student reacting to violence with violence, according to the speakers. Those parents who object to the removal of corporal punishment, appear not to appreciate these changes. Nevertheless, Mr Slee pointed out it is necessary that suspended students understand that their suspension was, in fact, a consequence of their own behaviour in order for that sanction to actually work.

Most disruptive students dealt with in this way do, of course, return to school, and if they have not realised that they need to exercise self-discipline, or if the school is unable or unwilling to give them an environment in which they can negotiate or make their own decisions, there is a good chance that they will again be disruptive and suspended. Such a cycle may well be very difficult to break, although some programs do exist in Australia precisely for highly disruptive students.

One such program was described at the seminar by Ms Chris Woithe, who stated that all the highly disruptive students for whom she had provided assistance over a number of years were all keen not only to learn but keen to get back into a normal school. She agreed with a participant who, after hearing of the program, asked Ms Woithe whether she was not simply teaching survival skills to students, but pointed out to another questioner that she thought very few teachers actually had the natural flair for dealing with these extreme cases. Nevertheless, the skills necessary for dealing with them could be passed on, she said, although experience was necessary to 'fill in the gaps', and one had to stand back and allow the students to start making their own decisions.

The extent to which any students are able to make their own decisions is very much a function of the philosophy of their school. Ms Willemien Duyker, the principal of a Montessori school, shared her experiences with the seminar and demonstrated how her students were able to assist and guide each other, while achieving a high standard of learning and very sound teacher-student relationships.

Ms Duyker indicated that behaviour problems in her school were virtually non-existent. However, this is plainly not the case in most schools and Mr Shane Carroll described his research that established this fact, to the seminar.

Mr Carroll used a self-report approach which required students to anonymously indicate whether (and how often) they engaged in certain behaviour. Overall, Mr Carroll found a high prevalence of in-school offences. In particular, his sample of 906 Victorian secondary students reported they had committed a great many thefts and acts of vandalism. Mr Carroll agreed that many of these incidents were undoubtedly trivial, and agreed that it was not possible to say when a particular delinquent act would be defined as a crime. But in response to further questions from participants, he was able to say that there was a lower incidence of reported acts of vandalism in private schools and that most reported behaviour appeared to be an individual rather than a group activity. One participant raised the issue of how schools should react to incidents of theft and Mr Carroll indicated that it was hard to formulate hard and fast rules although, plainly, there was a difference between the theft of a chocolate bar from an open display in the tuckshop and the theft of a teacher's wallet from the staff room.

This issue received further attention from two other speakers. Mr Gregg Chapman described a pilot program for primary school students who had already established serious patterns of thieving. While the program was primarily an attempt to demonstrate what could be done within the school system, it appeared to have had some impact upon the particular students in the program.

Using outside resources to deal with theft and other misbehaviour within a school raises the prospect of calling police to the school. In an attempt to establish whether there was any consensus amongst school principals with respect to using police to handle events occurring within a school, Mr Dennis Challenger had conducted a small survey of principals. Respondents were given five vignettes of school incidents and asked to indicate under what circumstances they would call police to handle them. Overall, there was good agreement between principals from different types of schools in all parts of Australia.

One particular vignette that raised some discussion was that of an assault by a student upon a teacher. It was suggested by participants that there were growing numbers of teachers contacting their unions for advice on such matters and, in particular, for advice on their legal rights. A teacher's engaging in litigation and suing a student through his or her parents was apparently becoming a more frequent response to such assaults.

One participant indicated that local police were usually ready to indicate the sort of circumstances under which they would be prepared to formally proceed against a student offender but a participant pointed out that there was a difficulty if police were called in as the problem was then not dealt with as a school responsibility. An even easier way of establishing the police

attitude towards in-school offending is to have a school-based police officer on the premises. Principal Mr Roy Harvey described his experience with such a scheme in glowing terms.

Much discussion followed Mr Harvey's presentation, with considerable concern about how the school-based constable might detract from the duties of teachers and counsellors. Mr Harvey indicated that teachers remained the sole arbiters of discipline and counsellors received referrals from the constable. There was a high level of willingness for students to talk to the constable about a range of difficulties and this point was emphasised by participant Mr Lance Goodger, a policeman currently working as a school-based constable. He also indicated that police personnel who worked in that role had to apply to work within a school and were subject to a fairly rigorous selection procedure and interview.

Another police officer, Mr Tony Rand, outlined the close working relationships between the Police Juvenile Aid Bureau and schools in Queensland, and then described the many joint programs that operated in that State. He indicated that police also became actively involved in school affairs following acts of vandalism perpetrated on school buildings.

Such vandalism is, by most accounts, a serious and growing concern, and representatives from two education authorities indicated their responses to attacks on school property. Mr Frank Meaney from New South Wales pointed out that his State lost the equivalent of five fully-equipped primary schools each year as a direct result of vandalism and arson. He asked seminar participants to consider the impact of the loss of their school and their personal papers and work, on teachers and students. He then went on to indicate how his department was encouraging the public to see schools as their property and to enlist their help in protecting them.

The Victorian Ministry of Education had opted for a more consciously security oriented approach to the problem. As outlined by Mr Colin O'Neill, more and more Victorian schools were being protected by silent alarm systems with the Ministry receiving excellent back-up from the Victoria Police. This approach had led to large numbers of trespassers being apprehended on school premises before grave damage has occurred.

It has been found that some young offenders who vandalise schools do so as an expression of aggression against not only their own school but also the whole educational system. Dr Bob Semmens and Dr Simon Petrie both discussed the impact of the school system upon its pupils and, in particular, the extent to which many young offenders in custody relate unsatisfactory schooling experiences. Many of those offenders, moreover, regret not

having achieved anything in the educational sphere. Dr Semmens argued for more sensitive appreciation of students' needs and a move away from the 'control' orientation of the past.

But students are, of course, not the only offenders within the school. Dr Peggy Mares raised for discussion the question of how to handle teachers who have themselves been convicted of criminal offences. The issues of students having to appear as witnesses at an appeal against dismissal; the lack of a code of ethics for teachers; other teachers' responsibility to 'dob in' offending peers; defining 'serious' offences with changing community attitudes; and difficulties for principals in determining when to act on 'rumours'; were all raised. But the questions were altogether too complex for participants to reach any agreement about, given the short time available.

In many ways that last statement is true of the whole seminar. A vast range of issues were introduced and discussed briefly in the formal sessions of the seminar. Many were discussed further, and at length, after hours. Despite that, there was a common theme that appeared to be accepted by the seminar group. That was, that teachers had to move away from the old authoritarian model and include in their teaching role, a conscious effort to encourage students to become self-reliant and mature. The precise ways in which this could be achieved require changes in educational philosophy, training and resources. The adoption of that changed role will, however, undoubtedly have some positive effect upon reducing future crime at school.

## WELCOMING ADDRESS

David Biles  
Acting Director  
Australian Institute of Criminology  
Australian Capital Territory

It is my pleasant duty to welcome you all to this seminar on Crime at School. It is especially pleasing to see representatives here from just about every part of Australia and I would like to give a particularly warm welcome to those who have travelled the greatest distance to get here, those from the Northern Territory and Western Australia. It is also very pleasant for me to see some old friends of mine amongst the audience, especially our first speaker, Maurice Balson, and Bob Semmens.

We had hoped to have the Federal Minister for Education, Senator Susan Ryan, here to open this seminar, but she graciously declined our invitation on the grounds that she would be occupied with parliamentary duties at this time. Perhaps she had advance warning of the national elections, or perhaps she thought that crime at school was not a particularly savoury topic for a Minister to be associated with. At all events, Senator Ryan declined our invitation to open this seminar and you are therefore left with me doing the job.

Crime at school is not a particularly savoury topic. It is not the sort of subject that one discusses in the drawing room of polite society, and I am sure that many people would think that talking about this subject may only make it worse as it will draw attention to a problem which is largely hidden from public view. The Institute certainly does not wish to sensationalise a serious and yet largely unknown problem, but we would hope that by exchanging views and experiences we may be able to make a contribution to reducing crime at school or at least to helping people to respond to it more effectively and more professionally.

The Institute also has another motive for staging this seminar. As criminologists, we have known for many years that the best predictor of adult crime is childhood or adolescent delinquency. We know that it is very often too late to change the attitudes and behaviour of adult offenders, and if crime is to be reduced in this society then the primary focus of attack must be on the early years of development when the first signs of delinquency and socially disruptive behaviour start to appear.

If this seminar can make a contribution to helping teachers reduce crime in schools it may well, in the long term, have also made a contribution to the broader question of reducing crime in society at large. But the main focus of the seminar is obviously going to be on schools, and in particular on school discipline, behaviour management and conflict resolution. The subject is vast and I don't think that three days will be nearly enough for you to explore all of the issues or to resolve all of the problems that will be raised. I nevertheless wish you well in trying to do exactly that.

I know that your organiser and seminar convener, Dennis Challenger, will mention this to you later, but I would like to say just a few words about a new book that recently came to my attention. It is called 'Positive School Discipline: A Practical Guide to Developing Policy' and it is written by Margaret Cowin and a number of other educationists from Victoria. I believe that this book provides just the sort of down-to-earth advice that school principals and teachers need. It is packed full of common sense, practical, step by step guidance and I am sure that it will find a place in many teachers' libraries. I am delighted that Dennis has somehow (it is probably best if I do not know exactly how) made arrangements for participants at this seminar to purchase this book at well below the normal retail price. I am also delighted to note that Margaret Cowin herself, the principal author, is one of the speakers at this seminar.

As a school teacher of many many years ago, one of the class room cowards who took shelter from the real world in other educational institutions, such as prisons and Melbourne University, and more recently in the Australian Institute of Criminology, this seminar is of particular personal interest to me. Being the spouse of a school principal, who also happens to be in the audience, means that I am not allowed to forget that school children not infrequently behave very badly, even criminally, and I am constantly reminded that that behaviour is one of the major causes of stress on teachers and also on those in the front office of our schools.

Crime at school is such an overwhelmingly important subject that I do most earnestly ask you to do your utmost in these three days to come up with useful and practical proposals for doing something constructive about it. Let us together make this seminar more than a talkfest. Let us make this seminar and its published proceedings a positive contribution to the resolution of the real problems of crime in our schools.

UNDERSTANDING AND PREVENTING  
BEHAVIOURAL PROBLEMS IN SCHOOL

Maurice Balson  
Associate Professor  
Faculty of Education  
Monash University  
Victoria

INTRODUCTION

Among the many problems facing teachers, the problem of discipline has assumed major proportions. At State, national and international level there is a widespread public and professional perception that the behaviour of children and young people has emerged as the most serious educational problem. Data from a variety of sources support this view and cast grave doubts on the continued viability of schools to educate children to become effective and responsible individuals.

The problem of discipline has been highlighted by the elimination of corporal punishment in schools. The strong reaction to this move by teachers and teacher organisations reflects their concern that the growing number of defiant, non-co-operative and apathetic students will prove unmanageable without resort to physical punishment. Such is the bankruptcy of interpersonal relationships in many schools. Knowing no approach to motivation other than the threat or use of punishment or reward, many teachers feel that they will be powerless to influence the behaviour of young people without external control.

FROM AN AUTOCRATIC TO A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY

The problem facing teachers is not of their own making but reflects the loss of their authoritarian status which traditionally reaffirmed their right to control the behaviour of students. The problem of discipline is one aspect of a major phenomenon, the transition from an autocratic to a democratic society and the resultant disruption in relationships.

Stimulated by movements such as black power, women's liberation, student power, and by industrial confrontation, society began to change dramatically in the 1960s and 1970s. Each movement reflected the unwillingness of one group to submit to the domination of another. The autocratic system began to collapse and was replaced by another social structure which was more democratic. Whereas authoritarian control accepted and endorsed the values of competition, superior-inferior relationships, sole

responsibility and pressure from above, the newer society rejected these values and substituted the democratic concepts of mutual respect, shared responsibility, self-discipline, social equality and co-operation.

The short-term consequences of these newly acquired values have been devastating as teachers are caught between the two social systems. Being a product of one, they believe they have the right to make children behave in certain ways, that they are personally responsible for the behaviour of students and that competition, rewards and punishment are appropriate forms of motivation or control. Disciplinary problems in our schools are the result of these mistaken beliefs. Alternative approaches to discipline, which are more attuned to our contemporary society, are necessary and inevitable.

#### AN INSTRUCTIONAL REVOLUTION

Not only has there been a social revolution which has affected schooling but there has been an instructional revolution which has enormous implications for schools. At the heart of a disciplinary problem is an educational failure by the school. In spite of the huge investment of resources, human and material, many students experience little success in their schools. Reasons advanced to explain poor student performance include lack of ability, home background, lack of motivation, irrelevant curriculum or lack of time - all factors outside of a teacher's influence.

When students do poorly in school, many of them turn to disturbing behaviour. Because the reasons for student failure are located within the student rather than in the teaching process there is little teachers can do to change this cycle. Recent research has suggested that the individual differences in school learning are man-made and accidental rather than fixed in the individual. Bloom's major conclusion is: 'What any person in the world can learn, almost all persons can learn if provided with appropriate prior and current conditions of learning.' And again, 'Where conditions for learning in the home and in the school approach some ideal, we believe that individual differences in learning should approach a vanishing point' (Bloom, 1976, 16).

The research coming from the mastery learning area calls into question some of the prevailing views of human characteristics and school learning. The research has far-reaching implications for the training of teachers, instructional methods, selection systems, grading procedures, and the organisation of schools. Even more important for the individual are the effects of adequate or inadequate learning on the student's self-esteem, interest in learning, and his use of his learning ability as a means of adapting to change throughout his life. The main import for this paper is that the bulk of

disciplinary problems can be prevented through the application of mastery learning strategies which ensure successful learning for all students.

#### FAULTY APPROACHES TO PROBLEM BEHAVIOUR OF STUDENTS

Almost every school in Australia is concerned with the problem of student behaviour. Attempts to cope with the problem have been generally ineffective as they are based on faulty assumptions about students and learning. Most recommendations for dealing with disruptive students are various forms of 'more of the same' when the 'same' was inadequate and ineffective from the beginning. Mostly, suggestions for dealing with difficult students continue traditional methods which have proven to be futile.

There are four deficiencies in current approaches to behavioural problems in school which will now be considered separately:

1. Students are not consulted in the planning of disciplinary programs.
2. Proposals to re-educate teachers and parents are based upon mistaken views of student behaviour.
3. The view, and subsequent action, that problem students are maladjusted, deviate, abnormal, culturally deprived, pathological or emotionally disabled.
4. Changes in schools such as curricula, assessment, organisation, administration, instruction, technology and the like ignore the most important person - the student.

#### 1. Students are not consulted in the planning of disciplinary programs

The first deficiency suggests that the bulk of behavioural problems, particularly at the secondary school level, have never been recognised for what they really are, namely, a general rebellion of youth. This rebellion is the consequence of the democratic evolution which deprived adults of their power over youth. Neither the present tendency to regain 'control' nor the opposite trend to assume that everything will work out by itself, will solve the problem.

It is not possible to resolve the problem of 'crime in schools' unless students are given an active part both in the planning and execution of disciplinary policies. Most disciplinary or welfare policies in Victoria schools are the product of the teaching staff and completely lack input by students. Until students and parents are regarded by teachers as partners in the educational process, the bankruptcy in our schools will remain.

2. Proposals to re-educate teachers and parents are based upon mistaken views of student behaviour

A neglect of the social significance of our present predicament in regard to problem behaviour in schools is also evident in teacher-training programs. No attention is paid to the fact that teachers have to learn entirely new methods of influencing students. Because traditional methods are based on our autocratic tradition, they are no longer effective. Children can no longer be made to conform or learn. Pressure from without, exemplified by reward or punishment, has greatly lost its effectiveness while new methods designed to stimulate from within, to evoke voluntary co-operation, are not known.

Most school programs fail to consider the socio-political changes responsible for the breakdown in communication between adults and children; until this is done, the problem of school behaviour will remain unresolved and is likely to assume even greater proportions.

Many schools will defend their policies by pointing out that the majority of students do not commit serious violations. That is true but it does not mean that the majority of adolescents are not equally rebellious though not as violently or aggressively so. Many show a type of behaviour in academic progress which does not permit complacency. To make it worse, a large percentage of our juveniles form the reservoir from which delinquency enrolls its recruits in increasing numbers. Today we cannot consider any family or school as safe from seeing its youngsters join the army of open rebellion called 'juvenile delinquents'. It is a large segment of the non-delinquent juvenile to which preventive school programs must be directed.

The need to evaluate contemporary methods in education is apparent if we are not to see more and more children becoming academically deficient and behavioural problems. The majority of teachers do not understand children. Despite their enthusiasm and unrelenting efforts to motivate children, teachers fail because they do not know enough about psychodynamics and group dynamics. Outdated notions in psychology persist in teacher education and teachers are consequently ill-equipped to cope with students who challenge them.

3. The view, and subsequent action, that problem students are maladjusted, deviate, abnormal, culturally deprived, pathological, or emotionally disturbed

There is an obsession in education to label 'difficult' students and, as a result, excuse our inability to deal with them. The use of the terms 'abnormal', 'pathological', 'emotionally disturbed' or 'maladjusted' is characteristic of a society which does not understand children.

All students show a continuum of norm-violating behaviour. On the one hand, there is the child who is slow with his work, clowns around, fights with the others and refuses homework. At the other end of the continuum is the student who drops out of school, underachieves, vandalises, engages in delinquent behaviour and resists authority. The difference between them is only one of quantity rather than quality. All children operate on the same principles but differ only to the extent to which they engage in socially useful behaviour or socially useless behaviour.

The two major sources to which we wrongly attribute the 'abnormal' behaviour of students is to:

(a) Social conditions - underprivilege, deprivation, cultural deficiency, unhealthy neighbourhood conditions, and unemployment.

(b) Home conditions - divorce, neglect, child abuse, lack of love, rejection or sole parent.

References to social or home deficiencies are irrelevant today when casual links to behaviour are discredited. Self-determination, teleology and holism have replaced reductionism and causality in an understanding of behaviour yet the majority of approaches to understanding difficult youngsters ignore these approaches and seek to find the 'causes', what is wrong, and prepare an inventory of deficits. This is a psychology of possession, explaining what a youngster has and hasn't, but does nothing to help with the problem.

Entirely different psychological approaches are necessary which consider how an individual uses his abilities, experiences and situation. People are not passive victims of an environment but create their own environment by how they interpret their experiences. It is essential to recognise that humans are essentially self-determining, purposive and creative in their approaches to making a place for themselves in life. A student's destiny is not a matter of fate but is a matter of choice. We are each responsible for who we are and what we do.

4. Changes in schools such as curricula, assessment, organisation, administration, instruction, technology and the like ignore the most important person - the student

Scarcely a day goes by without another educational reform being announced by the various authorities. In the past decade we have seen a multitude of changes in curricula, school organisation, administration, teaching methods, assessment techniques, school governance, disciplinary strategies, technology, resources and the like.

In terms of individual students and their willingness to cooperate and contribute to the total schooling experience, these massive changes have been singularly ineffective. They fail to tackle the two basic problems which are critical to the theme of this seminar:

1. The inability of teachers to promote maximum learning in all students.
2. The inability of teachers to relate to students in ways which reflect respect, equality and trust and to promote cooperation and self-discipline in their classrooms.

A means of resolving the first problem has been offered by Bloom who has demonstrated that most students become very similar with regard to learning ability, rate of learning, and motivation for further learning when provided with favourable learning conditions. The resultant effect on school discipline would be apparent as it is contended that at the heart of a disciplinary problem is an educational failure by the school. Students who are not able to meet the academic demands made upon them, turn to disruptive behaviour in their attempt to belong.

#### IMPROVING TEACHER/STUDENT RELATIONSHIPS

A means of resolving the second problem has been presented by the framework offered by Individual Psychology, a psychology which is congruent with the values of a social democracy. An understanding of human behaviour is necessary if effective relationships are to be established between teachers and students. Such an understanding is beyond the scope of this paper but some central concepts may be usefully indicated. The work of Alfred Adler, the father of Individual Psychology, is enjoying recognition and unprecedented use at present and reflects a framework which is particularly appropriate today. Sweeney (1975) has outlined a number of these concepts as follows:

1. Human beings are social beings who are essentially self-determining, purposive and creative (idiographic) in their approaches to making a place for themselves in life.
2. They are best understood holistically in their functioning from a phenomenological (subjective) point of view.
3. The lifestyle, the individual's unique set of convictions about himself, life and others, is the map or outline which he uses to guide him in approaching basic life tasks: work, friendship, love, self and spirit. Established by the age of six to eight, it remains basically unexamined and unchanged under normal circumstances.

4. Unsuccessful coping with basic life tasks is a sign of discouragement. It can be overcome early in life relatively easily; however, it can always be overcome if the individual chooses to do so.
5. Social interest is Adler's conceptualisation of a quality in human beings which constitutes their proclivity for being responsible, co-operative, and yet creative members of mankind. Persons high in social interest enjoy and like themselves, others and life. Social interest must be nurtured, however, or the individual's faulty perceptions of himself/herself can result in discouraged, self-defeating behaviours.
6. Adlerians tend to subscribe to a value system based upon social democracy with equality of people at the core. Their approach to helping other people is basically educative and preventive in nature although remedial crisis intervention work is also carried out.

#### HOW TO HELP DIFFICULT STUDENTS

It is apparent that we are bankrupt in our schools and homes. The majority of schools and parents have not the slightest idea of how to cope with difficult children and they vacillate from permissiveness to autocracy. The future of all corrective efforts in homes and schools will not be through counsellors, psychologists or psychiatrists but with parents and teachers who know techniques of group dynamics and who can act as effective democratic teachers whose task it is to integrate families or classes for common purposes.

Individuals are social beings. As social beings the basic motivation is to belong. Students who feel belonging will be willing and able to participate and co-operate with the needs of the situation. Students who do not feel a sense of belonging will try to find a place by whatever means are available. The only difference between students who function well and those who function inadequately is the means by which they try to find their place. Only in those areas where students feel belonging will they co-operate and participate. Teachers who cannot increase feelings of belonging cannot help children. The tragedy of our times is the increasing numbers of children who have to stay in schools, yet the majority do not feel that they belong there. Homes and families face the same problem. We are not dealing with maladjusted children but with parents and teachers whose traditional methods of influencing children have been rendered ineffective by vast social changes.

In order to influence young people whose behaviour gives rise to a seminar of this kind, it is necessary to:

1. Stop fighting without giving in

Neither the exertion of power nor permissiveness will bring any favourable results. Many people in positions of authority believe that there is no possible solution to a conflict other than by fighting or yielding. In a democratic society, no such solution is possible.

Conflicts 'resolved' by subjugation breed new conflicts. The loser will not accept this defeat as permanent and the winner is afraid of losing what he or she gained. Both prepare themselves for the next round. In the process, the victors lose respect for the vanquished and the vanquished lose respect for themselves. Mutual respect, an essential ingredient in solving any conflict, is demonstrated by neither party.

In any conflict situation, it is necessary to pinpoint the issue. The content of a dispute is never the real issue but it constitutes the topic of a dispute. Behind all conflict is the question of 'who wins, who loses?', questions of status, prestige and power. An individual who refuses to fight, respects the view of the other person, and works co-operatively to resolve the conflict, recognises the futility of fighting.

2. Identify the goal of the behaviour

An understanding of the purpose of behaviour is the only possible explanation of why an individual behaves in a particular way. Consider a young person who steals, lies, cheats, bullies others or engages in various forms of violent behaviour. If you feel annoyed by a particular aspect of behaviour, the goal was attention seeking. Power is indicated when you feel that your personal authority is being threatened. A feeling of deep hurt, of outrage, is a sign of the revenge goal while your sense of hopelessness characterises the goal of assumed disability.

An individual who is unaware of a person's goal will always respond inappropriately and act to strengthen the mistaken way of belonging. For example, many young people believe that they belong by being the most powerful. 'Nobody can make me do anything!' They seek, by their disturbing behaviour such as disobedience, stubbornness or violence to engage others in power contests. Regardless of the outcome, they have won whenever they succeed in involving others. After all, it takes two to fight and one cannot be a victor in an empty field.

Similarly, a young person whose goal it is to seek revenge will hit back at society and those members of society who deny him or her a place. These young people, often unemployed or unskilled, feel that they are not wanted. They are a sore trial on their families; they have no place in the economic system; and they're frequently abused by the media as 'dole bludgers'.

Feeling ostracised, disliked, and alienated from society, they strike back and get even with that society which denies them a place. The bulk of violence exhibited in society today has revenge as its goal. When apprehended, these people are told how worthless they are and punished, actions which confirm their already negative self-esteem and invite retaliation.

### 3. Discouragement underlies all misbehaviour

If we recognise juvenile offenders and others who transgress societal values and expectations as discouraged individuals rather than pathological, emotionally or mentally disturbed persons, our approach would be vastly different. There is nothing wrong with their emotions or mentality, but it is their intentions which are faulty. When a youth is already discouraged, as in the case of a juvenile offender, encouragement is particularly important. Unfortunately those who need encouragement the most are unlikely to receive it as their behaviour is far more violent and disruptive than the less discouraged individual.

The essence of encouragement is to increase the youth's confidence in himself and to convey to him that he is as good as he is, that he is accepted as a valued, participating and equal member of society. Behind the crimes of violence and aggression are discouraged individuals who feel that they do not belong through constructive efforts and have turned to power and revenge in their attempt to gain a sense of significance, of importance and worth. As Dinkmeyer and Dreikurs observe (1963, 42): 'It is incontestable that discouragement is a basic factor in all deviations, deficiencies and failures, with the exception of brain damage and mental deficiency. No one fails, with all the consequent suffering and deprivation, unless he has first lost confidence to succeed with socially acceptable means'.

To encourage is to focus on assets and strengths and to minimise mistakes and deficiencies. Courage is by far the most important factor in growth and development as individuals can become skilled or competent only when they believe in their own abilities to do so. Further, to have confidence in others, one must have confidence in oneself. Yet we constantly discourage young people by pointing out their mistakes and deficiencies in a mistaken belief that this will help them to develop. We have no confidence in others to improve by themselves and we do not trust our own ability to encourage them. The ability to encourage is the ability to instil self-confidence; this is by far the most important single quality which must be learned today.

4. Encourage responsibility by allowing individuals to experience the consequence of their own behaviour

Traditional control techniques have employed rewards and punishments to force others into compliance. These techniques showed no respect to the individual as they implied that certain individuals had the right to control the behaviour of others. Today, reward and punishments have lost their effectiveness as pressure from without is a signal for many youngsters to accept the challenge of winning or losing.

In order to forestall any over-permissiveness and to establish limits for the individual, the techniques of behavioural consequences must be mastered. Consequences encourage individuals to develop more acceptable ways of behaving by allowing them to experience the consequences of their own behaviour. The child who refused to get up in the morning experiences the consequences of his or her lateness at school. A lunch left at home stays at home. Library books not returned prevent borrowing for a time. Property damaged by an individual is restored by that individual. Nobody is making anybody do anything. We respect the right of an individual to decide his own behaviour but ensure he experiences the consequences of that behaviour. The realities of the social and natural world are impressed on the individual by the consequences generated by the behaviour rather than by an authoritative and punitive demand. There is no realistic alternative to the teaching of responsibility other than to allow consequences to occur. Unfortunately, most parents, teachers and the like encourage young people to be irresponsible by protecting them from the consequences of their behaviour and by granting individuals the freedom to do as they please. There is no place in society for freedom without order.

THE LAW BREAKING YOUNGSTER

The law-breaking youngster is one who has lost faith in his ability to function usefully. Following a history of discouragement, he now believes that he is worthless and unacceptable to society. In his attempt to gain some semblance of importance or status, his goal becomes one of revenge, to hurt or destroy that society which denies him a place. When a person assumes that nobody likes him, he behaves in such a way that nobody can like him. Such individuals need help to change their view that they cannot be liked. This is what they anticipate and society's response to their revengeful behaviour confirms their expectation. Our present treatment of violent individuals simply strengthens their low evaluation of themselves as 'worthless', and when punished, provides another reason to retaliate, to get even. We must convince such individuals that they belong, are valued, and have a contribution to make in this society. It is then, and only then, that they will cease their violent behaviour.

The problem of the law-breaking student is symptomatic of the larger social problem, the problem of democratic evolution. Those who deal with young people are confronted with a changed social climate in which traditional methods of relating to others have become obsolete. New approaches are generally not well known and many advocate a return to the 'good old days' with its traditional methods of reward and punishment. Until we learn to live with each other as social equals, there is little hope for the resolution of the massive wave of disruption and violence.

One important but neglected area is parent education. An answer to the problem of disruptive behaviour in young people is parent education. The preventive power of parents to reduce the frequency of problem behaviour is enormous but rarely recognised by our schools.

It is impossible to understand any adolescent or adult without information about the first four to six years of life which are formative years. In this period, persons develop concepts about themselves and about life which are maintained throughout life, although the individuals remain completely unaware of the premises they have developed for themselves and upon which they act.

There is little doubt that the true test of the effectiveness of parenting shows itself, not in childhood, but in adolescence. Every difficulty in young people starts in the home. Parents who are either brutal or neglectful or spoiling are equally liable to generate delinquents through their misguided methods of dealing with their children. As the origins of delinquent and other lawless behaviour are almost always in the family, better parenting is the major solution to counteract these behaviours which are the concern of this seminar.

Before we can hope to establish more effective relationships with young people, we will have to resolve the generalised conflict between adults and children and adolescents, a situation recognised by Montessori in her paper, 'Disarmament in Education'. As long as the conflict exists few adults will be able to extricate themselves from the contemporary cultural patterns and to establish relationships based on mutual respect, co-operation, shared responsibility and social equality. That is the challenge facing parents, teachers, youth leaders, employers and social agencies. Their success in acquiring these skills may well determine whether society will survive or collapse. We have the ability to achieve either. There is little question that the hope of preparing the children of tomorrow rests primarily on converting the teachers and parents of today.

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PARENTS' VIEW OF CRIME AT SCHOOL

Helen Szuty  
President  
ACT Council of Parents & Citizens  
Associations Incorporated  
Australian Capital Territory

INTRODUCTION

Parents believe that all children have the right to education within a setting which is free from violence or the threat of violence. Disciplinary methods which incorporate positive encouragement, counselling and the promotion of self-esteem should be encouraged. Parents are aware of discipline problems in schools, of behaviour hurtful and damaging to others or damaging to school property. This paper will therefore concentrate on the possible causes of disorderly behaviour and the ways in which it is dealt with.

BACKGROUND

Disorder in schools is not merely a modern day phenomenon. Newman (1980) points out that violent episodes occurred in schools in England in the late eighteenth century when students rebelled against whipping which was used not only as a punishment but as a basic teaching aid. And in the early nineteenth century in America, growing public concern over juvenile delinquency coincided with large-scale immigration industrialisation and urbanisation, each of which led to the disruption of the previously homogeneous school environment.

Newman (1980) further points out how it was hoped that formal schooling would combat behavioural problems and hence schools were charged with the role of restoring order in society. However, schools merely became the settings for more and more violent and disorderly behaviour. In the early twentieth century, with the expansion of education to include the less competent, the less willing and the less compliant students, instances of rioting by students were recorded.

Whipping and expulsion were the main methods of coping with disorder. Educationalists such as Dewey (1933) claimed that the cause of these disciplinary problems was not only the harsh disciplinary practice but also the reliance of traditional curriculum.

Despite this, schools have continued, until recently, to rely on status differences between teachers and pupils, and on forceful subordination, to maintain law and order. Moves towards expanded secondary curricula have been slow, except in ACT secondary colleges (for Years 11 and 12).

#### THE PRESENT SITUATION

It seems that the amount of school disturbance has simply increased with the requirement for greater numbers of students to attend school and for increasing periods of time. What crimes are we currently dealing with in school? Why do these occur?

From the parents' point of view, all anti-social behaviour which our children may have to deal with at school is a problem. This includes offensive language in the classroom, subtle forms of intimidation (insults and prejudice) in the playground, psychological damage by teachers, and truancy as well as physical violence such as assault, injury, destruction and violence. It is likely that many of these stem from feelings of insecurity and boredom on the parts of students and from inadequate presentation of curriculum as well as from causes outside the school such as unstable home backgrounds, drugs and alcohol.

Children are subject to conflicting messages about the acceptability of violent behaviour because of the double standards in society where some consider violence acceptable on the sports field, on television news and in videos.

The old pattern of hierarchy, conformity and authoritarianism does not help young people to take greater control of their lives. Instead, these negative attitudes are reflected in students by increasing violence and decreasing scholastic achievements. Steinle commented in his review of high schools in the ACT, that:

The use of competition and fear of failure stressed by some teachers adds to the problems of adolescents with a need for achievement. There is little doubt that such competition relative to others among those who cannot hope to do anything but fail, is to invite aggressive behaviour (Steinle, 1983, 5).

It is therefore important to consider the orientation and organisation of schools since current research points to continuing changes in personal relationships, curriculum and classroom discipline. The genuine confusion and uncertainty about how to cope best with social and technological change are inherent in this matter.

### THE PARENT VIEW

In general, the parent view on the treatment of crime at school is a conservative one; when it comes to punishment, of course, parents want protection for their children. A school's reputation is very closely linked with the way in which the public perceives that problems resulting from disorderly behaviour are dealt with, particularly in a high school. According to a 1982 study of parents of sixth graders in the ACT, 'good discipline' is seen by parents as part of the preparation for life and the workforce and includes respecting oneself and the needs and opinions of others. Besides, the maintenance of an orderly environment is necessary if effective learning is to take place.

However, there is some disagreement in the parent community as to how 'good discipline' is achieved. One group of parents considers an authoritarian approach to be repressive and to prevent the building up of responsible attitudes in students. This group wants students to be encouraged to develop self-discipline. This cannot be achieved in a haphazard way but must take place gradually through a well-planned shift from dependence on externally imposed discipline such as detention, loss of privilege or suspension, to freedom to exercise responsible choice within set limits. One method of achieving this is for the school community (parents, teachers and students) to formulate a 'discipline code' and make it binding in terms of a contract on every child.

The Steinle review recognised high schools as one of the most important institutions which assist and support young people in this transition period from childhood to adulthood.

Schools also assist young people to become independent of their parents, to prepare for work and to acquire a set of values, as they seek to satisfy their needs for status and recognition, for independence, for achievement and for a sense of values. These developmental needs can be either assisted or thwarted by schools (Steinle, 1983, 33).

Parents believe that acceptable standards of behaviour need to be clearly laid down and adhered to. There is concern in the community that agreed rules and regulations are not enforced by schools in a consistent manner. Behaviourists have emphasised for many years that it is crucial that authority figures remain consistent in order to allow people to set their personal limits of behaviour.

Another group of parents supports an authoritarian regime feeling that the rigid forms of discipline they experienced themselves at school have done them no harm in the long run. The media and many parents have an unfounded belief that private schools have fewer disciplinary problems, particularly the more serious ones, such as drug abuse and physical harm. This is quite inaccurate. Such problems certainly do occur in private schools but are somewhat easier for the school authorities to control because they can use 'effective' methods not available to government schools. The school may refuse to accept a child based on his or her academic or behaviour record. Expulsion is, of course, a major deterrent and parents are generally supportive of the stricter disciplinary procedures imposed by the private school because they wish to maintain their child's position there.

Most parents then are agreed on the need for a clearly defined code of acceptable behaviour, which, once established, should be observed in all circumstances; and, although most parents recognise that attitudes to discipline begin in the home, they see teachers as playing a vital role in setting a good example and earning the respect of students while the school principal has the ultimate responsibility for ensuring that an orderly learning environment is maintained. Many parents would agree that adequate discipline standards are not always in evidence.

Apart from the minority who see corporal punishment, expulsion or police prosecution as the easy and obvious remedy, most parents view discipline as a shared responsibility, the more serious behaviour situations must involve the parents as well as senior teachers or principal, and focus on counselling rather than punishment in order to discover why the problem exists.

Parents need to be made aware of the consequences if their children infringe the law and need reassurance that there is assistance, especially through counselling. Parents acknowledge that there is no simple solution for dealing with disorder in schools and that it is simplistic to attribute student violence to either stringent or lax disciplinary practices.

#### CURRENT PRACTICES AND SOLUTIONS

Developmental psychologists have found that only a minority of secondary school students reach the higher stages of cognitive development; most have not progressed beyond mere concrete modes. Adolescents who are unprepared, unsuccessful and unmotivated for formal schooling but who are required to remain longer at school than they wish, possibly because they are unable to find a job, need an education which is more relevant to their needs and interests.

Secondary colleges in the ACT have been successful because they provide broad curriculum alternatives relevant to the students'

needs and interests, thus reducing student alienation and, in fact, making colleges pleasant places to be in. Students are less hostile and bitter towards the authority and values of the school and tend not to assert themselves in ways that are detrimental to the function of the school. Since discipline problems arise when students are in a position where they fail day after day, there is a need to find alternative ways in which students can succeed. Schools must therefore re-examine their curriculum and find areas that are more rewarding for low achievers, including the development of interpersonal and social skills.

It does appear that, as corporal punishment has continued to be phased out, improved classroom and student management has needed and is being given greater attention. The benefit of staff development programs which increase such skills for teachers, lies mainly in the more productive and co-operative atmosphere which results. To be able to prevent violent and disorderly behaviour and to recognise its possible cause makes much more sense than reacting with various forms of punishment.

There is obviously a need to determine strategies for dealing with misbehaviour at school for there is no doubt that a considerable amount of offensive behaviour does occur, although the more serious crimes leading to police prosecution do appear to be rare. Many positive and realistic options for coping with students in these situations are currently in use in the ACT. These are generally regarded favourably by parents who would see expulsion and referral to police as only a last resort. These strategies include:

- (i) serious consideration of student-staff relationships with the emphasis on a positive approach;
- (ii) the formulation of a series of steps for dealing with students so that the situation can be improved without resorting to heavy punishments;
- (iii) the 'time-out' process where students who need to be separated from others because of disorderly behaviour, use a 'Time-Out Room' which encourages them to think about ways of sorting out their own problems;
- (iv) an extended 'time-out' process, beyond the school boundaries if necessary - the Dairy Flat program at Fyshwick provides opportunities for alternative activities for students;
- (v) the introduction of the Peer Support Program where more mature students 'adopt' new students to help develop a sense of responsibility, to improve communication skills and to provide a supportive environment.

All of these strategies require school and community co-operation and good counselling services to back them up.

There is no doubt that adolescent students in particular need to experience opportunities for assuming responsibility, decision-making, acquiring respected social skills and receiving appropriate rewards for mature action so that, when freedom is offered, it will be accompanied by sound social control.

### RESPONSIBILITIES

Ultimately, who is responsible for students whose anti-social behaviour causes problems at school? The teachers? The principal? The parents? The students? Society in general?

Are teachers adequately prepared for their roles today? Should they have to deal with students' emotional difficulties, home problems and so on? Should it be the role of counsellors only? Unfortunately, a few parents leave a good deal for the school to sort out, and, because of this, it is time that there was more emphasis on classroom and student management in Teacher Training Programs.

It is important that students understand why rules are set; they are more likely to observe the rules if they have some say in setting them. Furthermore, students must understand that rules are needed, not just for school, but for society in general. If people do not discipline themselves, the law will be involved to do the disciplining. A knowledge of the legal system would seem to be beneficial and, in the light of the recent Schools Commission report, 'In the National Interest', legal studies should be seen as part of the curriculum which develops students' understanding of their rights and responsibilities in the community. If the 'rules' are properly in place in schools and consistently applied, then students should be aware of them and of the consequences of breaking them.

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AWARENESS/ACTION/PREVENTION

THE PRE-SERVICE EDUCATION OF TEACHERS  
RELEVANT TO THE PREVENTION OF CRIME AT SCHOOLS

Alistair Peacock  
Senior Lecturer  
Western Australian College of Advanced Education  
Nedlands  
Western Australia

INTRODUCTION

All teaching/learning situations have the potential for extremes of human emotions and behaviours to occur. These extremes will vary immensely depending upon the mix of the numerous contextual factors which have been identified to exist within those situations. Given the right mix, feelings of success, enjoyment, excitement and pleasure can flow from teacher and learner(s). Given an unfavourable mix of circumstances the teaching/learning situation can give rise to frustration, fear, anger and unacceptable behaviour - on the part of the teacher and/or the learner(s).

A review of the literature related to effective teaching and learning together with my own experiences as teacher, administrator and supervisor of student teachers in pre-service education courses has given me a basis upon which to build my own theories on reasons for the different problems that confront student teachers and beginning teachers in the classroom and the school in general. These problems may begin as simple problems which all teachers face at some time - unfamiliarity with the curriculum, insufficient knowledge of the content, not knowing pupils' names, unaware of the numerous local rules and accepted or unaccepted behaviours that pupils have become accustomed to from other teachers, administrators and significant others.

These simple problems can escalate into discipline problems such as cheating, lying, theft, verbal and physical abuse, vandalism and so on. In most instances experienced teachers can overcome, to some extent at least, the simple problems - in fact most experienced teachers when transferring to a new school have some of these simple problems to contend with. However, in contrast to the student teacher or beginning teacher, they have usually developed skills and techniques for initially surviving and coping and later getting on top of the situation.

Planning, teaching strategies, relationships, communication skills, classroom management, instructional skills and evaluation are skills which teachers have to develop in order to achieve effective learning on the part of their pupils. Within these skills are sub-skills. For example some elementary sub-skills of classroom management include giving directions, keeping pupils on task, communicating expectations, using control techniques and responding to disruptions.

When student teachers go on teaching practice to schools they are faced initially with many problems. What are the names of the pupils? What is accepted behaviour in this classroom and the school in general? What content knowledge do these pupils have and do they like the subject? Do the pupils get on well with the teacher, will I? What is the educational philosophy of the teacher, the school?

Add to these numerous concerns the fact that the student teacher is still trying to become familiar with such teaching sub-skills as planning a lesson, timing a lesson, asking and answering questions clearly and concisely, explaining, establishing positive relationships with pupils and fostering pupils' self-esteem, it is small wonder that the potential for minor discipline problems to occur and, if not dealt with correctly, escalate, is present in greater measure than for the experienced teacher.

However, one consolation for the student teacher is that she or he has the guidance and assistance of the supervising teacher (classroom teacher whose classes the student teaches) and college supervisor (who periodically observes the student teaching and, in consultation with the supervising teacher, provides feedback to assist the student teacher).

The beginning teacher has a slightly different set of problems to confront - she or he is regarded as a fully qualified teacher and, in the hurly burly of the commencement of a new school year is often allocated a teaching timetable and left to establish her or himself in the classroom. That is, for the first time, they can be said to be truly responsible for themselves. But they have their problems, some of which are - what is the educational policy of the school? What are the accepted and unaccepted behaviours of pupils in the school in general? What are the expectations of the principal, senior teachers, parents and pupils?

Hence in both cases of the student teacher and the beginning teacher the potential for discipline problems to occur is likely to be greater than for the experienced teacher - keeping in mind however that other contextual problems such as motivation of the pupils, subject content, and personality of the teacher have a big bearing on the final outcomes of student learning and classroom climate.

Crime at school is not a recent phenomenon. However, the extent of crime, in both scope and frequency, appears to have reached the stage where concern for good order in both schools and the general community has caused more formalised approaches to the prevention of crime and the apprehension of offenders to be given high priority. For example, in Western Australia, many government high schools have adopted a whole school approach to discipline and many neighbourhoods have voluntarily mobilised themselves into Neighbourhood Watch schemes.

Some specific examples of crime at school will give clear indication as to why, how and when teachers can, and should, be educated in the ways and means of preventing forbidden acts by students to occur.

Example One: A group of five students is playing 'throw the coin' in the school yard. The object of the game is to throw your coin as close to the wall as possible - the winner is the person whose coin rests closest to the wall. By itself this can appear a harmless game. Add the elements of 'winner take all' and 'running a book' on the players and you have not only gambling (albeit in an apparent harmless way), but also the potential for the running up of debts, stand-over tactics when payment is not forthcoming, assault and, (in known instances), breaking and entering by the 'defaulter' in order to meet the accumulated gambling debts and stop the acts of violence perpetrated upon him by the 'winner' and quite often, the 'winner's' friends.

Example Two: Students are smoking at school and, through peer pressure and/or lack of a cigarette, a student borrows 'a smoke'. In time a debt is run up and the debtor, with no ready cash to repay the debt, resorts to stealing. At first the stealing may be from home and later, as in known cases, shoplifting from stores.

Example Three: A teacher, having had a late night and not being properly prepared for a lesson, is upset by a students' misbehaviour and, reacts more aggressively or less patiently than he normally would, engaging in heated verbal exchanges with the student. The latter has also had a 'bad' night - in fact he may be having a rather 'bad' year due to domestic problems at home. The resulting exchange of abuse and threats does nothing to resolve the problem and, in fact, could begin to set a classroom climate that is not conducive to either good order or learning.

When considering crime in the context of schooling, it is appropriate to refer to the term 'discipline'. Discipline can be interpreted in many ways - all associated with the notion of order and the following of certain rules. It can be perceived as:

- A form of societal training - a historical approach which sees schooling as a way of internalising the values of the society.
- A means by which teaching can be facilitated through different kinds of control - self-discipline, behaviour modification, classroom management. The type of control employed will depend upon the teacher's concept of education and, more importantly, the classroom management approach assumes man as a potentially autonomous being. This approach is consistent with the next perspective of discipline.
- Educative. Here, control is different to educative order, which is task-oriented, and emphasis is given to the teacher's moral responsibility to assist students evaluate the rules of society and to submit to the rules of a valued activity so that their interest in the activity can be developed and maintained for its own sake.

According to Docking (1980), discipline in the socialisation and control sense has an important place in the school as a social institution; but in so far as the school is also an educational institution, discipline must also be construed in its educative sense (Docking, 1980, 39).

In keeping with the above perspectives of discipline many high schools in Western Australia have developed a 'whole school approach' to discipline. One such school calls its approach 'Managing Student Behaviour' and in a student booklet 'Inside information: Guide to Conduct' includes information on the responsibilities and rights of students as follows:

#### PERSONAL GUIDELINES

The Three R's: RESPECT, RESPONSIBILITY, RIGHTS

RESPECT -

- respect for others and their opinions
- respect for property
- respect for environment
- respect for self

RESPONSIBILITY -

- self discipline
- self organisation
- self motivation, development of our initiative, interests and ambitions
- responsibility towards society, development of a social conscience
- responsibility to our smaller society the school.

- RIGHTS
- right to education
  - right to express opinions respectfully and responsibly
  - right to have a hand in decisions which affect us all.

The Three C's: CO-OPERATION, CONSIDERATION, COURTESY

- CO-OPERATION
- with family
  - with fellow students
  - with adults

CONSIDERATION - towards others

COURTESY - at all times

This handbook reflects the view expressed fifteen years ago by a Government Committee:

Compounded with this age-old problem of adolescence is the prevalent tendency in our society to question the social order and authority. Slogans using such terms as 'freedom', 'right' and 'democracy' have found their way into popular student usage. The effect has been that now, in many classrooms, students are expecting explanations for teacher directions where in the past their counterparts complied unhesitatingly. This erosion of traditional teacher authority means that new thought must be given by educators to defining means of attaining satisfactory teacher/student relationships. The Committee believes that this will be accomplished in large measure by investing students with more responsibility for their behaviour in schools.

Since that report, further relaxation of censorship of all forms of media, the increase in the number of families where both parents are in paid employment, the increase in the divorce rate and the resulting increase in the number of one-parent families and the general relaxing of rules and guidelines for unacceptable behaviour have left many adolescents with more self-determined decision-making than ever their counterparts were required to make. The further complication of a shortage of jobs for school leavers, the fear of nuclear war and the possible resulting devastation of the world has left many of our youth confused, angry and more prone to activities of which society at large disapproves.

### PRE-SERVICE EDUCATION COURSES

The Western Australian College of Advanced Education (WACAE) has pre-service teacher education courses which provide the neophyte teacher with the knowledge, understanding, skill and experience to be an effective practitioner and hence a significant contributor to the prevention of crime at school.

The particular pre-service teacher education course to be considered here is the three year Diploma of Teaching - Secondary. The first two years of the course are each divided into two semesters and in the middle of each semester students undertake a two week teaching practice. This provides a total of eight weeks teaching practice in the first two years.

In the third year, between first and second semester, students have a twelve week teaching practice, referred to as the Assistant Teacher Programme (ATP).

Academic studies include content and curriculum in the student's two chosen teaching subject areas, and the education studies include a range of such areas as: Communication Skills, Teaching Techniques, Social and Emotional Development of Children, Adolescent Development, Sequencing of Lessons, Evaluation, Motivation, Alternative Teaching Strategies, Choosing Media, Conflict Resolution, Alternative Education, Group Facilitation, Social Contracting, Integrated Management, Multicultural Education, Teaching Children with Special Needs, Curriculum Development, Teacher and the Law, and the Professional Development of the Teacher.

Integration of content, curriculum and educational studies in teaching practice blocks is regarded by the college as of fundamental importance in the total pre-service education of a teacher. The specific practical requirements of each practice are based upon the college-based work studied prior to the practice, and each subsequent semester of academic study builds upon the practical experience of the previous teaching practice. The teaching skills which students are expected to practice are arranged in a sequential and developmental pattern. In order that these teaching skills and the content and curriculum areas reflect what is occurring in schools and what should occur in schools (as recommended by research and the requirements of society), special committees comprising teachers, principals, employing authorities, students, college staff and teachers' union representatives operate within the formal network of college administration and organisation policies.

Recent classroom research has provided educators with clear and definite feedback as to how successful teachers plan, organise and manage their classrooms. For instance, 'If applied

systematically, these principles (obtained from classroom research) will enable teachers to establish their classrooms as effective learning environments and to prevent or cope with most conduct problems' (Brophy, 1983, 265).

As it is not sufficient to teach, talk, discuss, role play and complete in-basket activities in isolation from the reality of the classroom, the requirements of each teaching practice block are progressively increased in terms of the number of lessons to be formally taken by the student teacher and the level of teaching skills, professional development, assessment criteria and duties other than teaching. With the culmination of the teaching practice requirements the twelve week Assistant Teacher Programme (ATP) - it is expected that in the last six weeks the student teacher is able to demonstrate the capacity to act as an autonomous teacher in his or her own right. The assessment of this final practice is based on criterion referencing and consensus decision-making by both school and college supervisors as to the final teaching mark. Another component of assessment for the ATP student is the Professional Development Mark. This includes such items as appropriate professional relationship with the students, staff, parents and community, punctuality, commitment to teaching, acceptance and response to advice, initiative, sincerity, effective self-evaluation, and involvement in the corporate life of the school.

It is the college's view that graduate teachers must not only demonstrate knowledge and teaching skills but must also be professional in their personal dealings with students, parents and other staff and to this end must be a model upon which students in their care can look upon as representing those personal characteristics which society values.

During teaching practice, the student teacher is assigned one or two supervising teachers and a college supervisor. Under their supervision the student plans and teaches lessons, is observed teaching and is provided with feedback on the lesson. The student teacher is introduced not only to how to respond effectively to behaviour problems but also how to prevent problems from occurring in the first instance. Brophy (1983) suggests:

...prevention is accomplished primarily by good planning, curriculum policy and instruction that keeps students profitably engaged in appropriate activities...' Because successful classroom managers maximise the time their students spend engaged in academic tasks they also maximise their students' opportunities to learn academic content, and this is exhibited in superior performance on achievement tests (Brophy, 1983, 266).

It would appear to follow then that good classroom management would have a high probability of resulting in effective teaching which is synonymous with effective learning on the part of the student. And with good classroom management, incidences of unlawful student behaviour such as cheating, stealing, assaulting, vandalising and indecent language may be minimised. The opportunity for student teachers to practise the necessary skills with experienced teachers in appropriate classroom situations is of paramount importance.

However, students are not kept within the four walls of a classroom under constant surveillance by a teacher throughout the school day. Recess times, lunch breaks, movement between classrooms, coming to and going home from school and activities such as physical education and sport provide students with numerous opportunities, pranks or harmless fun that may degenerate into more serious offences against the rules of the school and/or society. Student teachers therefore have to know, understand and carry out duties prescribed by school administrators to effectively ensure good order in the school grounds. Not only must this be done, but in the carrying out of their duties teachers must also ensure that they are not negligent - the frequency with which employing authorities are being sued for the alleged negligence of teachers is increasing in Australia. Compounding this is the clear indication that courts of law seek not so much to attribute blame as to seek financial redress for students who may be injured while in the care of teachers.

Student teachers then have to be proficient in both classroom management skills and general in-school order and control techniques in order to ensure acceptable behaviour on the part of students. To ignore, or be unaware of, early signs of certain unacceptable behaviour of students, whether it be in the classroom or the school premises, would be tantamount to inviting more serious offences to occur. Hence carrying out their duties relevant to ensuring good order in the school would go a long way to minimising crime at school. AWARENESS - ACTION - PREVENTION needs to be their motto.

The extent of teachers' perceptions of problems associated with control and discipline in schools can be gauged from a survey in which 42 per cent of teachers expressed a need for an in-service course in approaches to control and discipline. Furthermore, 21 per cent of secondary teachers who had been teaching 3-5 years, and 19 per cent of secondary teachers who had been teaching 11-15 years indicated 'considerable need' for in-servicing in this area (Reynolds and Clark, 1983).

The teacher group probably most at risk in trying to maintain good order with students consists of neophyte teachers. Unlike students and experienced teachers, neophytes have no supervisors or actual teaching experience to support their efforts. The need to provide neophyte teachers in Western Australia with support structures to assist them successfully begin their teaching career has been documented in the form of recommendations by the State School Teachers' Union of Western Australia (Bennett, 1978).

Previous research with beginning teachers from a West Australian Teachers' College made similar recommendations with relation to classroom management and control (Peacock 1976). Specifically the research recommended

a teaching practice of longer duration (say ten weeks) in the student teacher's final year of training. This would enable the student to experience some responsibility for the programming, teaching, evaluating and re-teaching of some units of work. Administrative, disciplinary and curricular difficulties will face the student teacher (in varying degrees) during this time. The solving of these problems (or at least the coming to grips with them) will enable the beginning teacher to commence his career with more confidence (should he decide to commence teaching) and relevant practice experiences (Peacock, 1976, 123).

As a result of this recommendation and in consideration of previous experimentation with different types of teaching practices that research actually led to the Assistant Teacher Programme as previously described.

Feedback from employing authorities, students, teachers, college staff and principals clearly indicates that this substantial teaching experience has ensured that beginning teachers who have had this pre-service experience tend to commence their teaching careers with more confidence, efficiency and fewer classroom and in-school problems.

Because of this extended teaching practice block, and in recognition of the gradual and increasing responsibilities that final year students were required to assume during the ATP, another dimension of course work was required to be studied by these students. This dimension includes the areas of Teacher Negligence and The Teacher and the Law. Integrated with these areas is reference to classroom management and control skills, techniques and experiences which they have learnt and practised previously. Attention is also drawn to ways and means by which teachers can demonstrate that they have taken reasonable care in the carrying out of their duties (Adams, 1984).

## CONCLUSION

Teachers can play a very positive role in the prevention of crime at school. Proper and adequate pre-service education should include courses which provide the graduate teacher with the knowledge, skills and attitudes to ensure effective lesson planning and effective learning on the part of their students. Inherent in achieving effective learning is the assumption that good order and control is maintained in both the classroom and the school in general. In order to achieve these results pre-service education courses include teaching practice experiences which provide opportunity for the practising of teaching skills. Initially these skills are practised under the close supervision of experienced teachers and college lectures. Later, particularly in the last six weeks of the Assistant Teacher Programme, the student teacher is gradually provided the opportunity to be more responsible for his or her classes.

Properly structured practice experiences and appropriate monitoring of the student teacher's progress in carrying out the numerous roles expected of teachers will go a long way to ensuring that discipline problems in schools and the possible escalation to crime in schools, will be minimised.

It should be made clear at this stage that significant others, apart from teachers, have a role to play in minimising, if not eradicating completely, crime at school. There is ample reporting by school authorities to indicate that the parents of students regarded as trouble-makers need to be made more responsible for the actions of their offspring - and this in no way detracts from the offending student's responsibility for his or her own actions. Discipline interpreted as a form of social training, as a means by which teaching can be facilitated and as an educative process is required to be upheld in our schools if crime at school is to be minimised. It is everyone's responsibility to help bring good order to our schools.

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INTRODUCING A SCHOOL DISCIPLINE CODE

Kate Sutherland  
Belconnen High School  
Australian Capital Territory

INTRODUCTION

This paper deals with the development and introduction of a whole school discipline code at Belconnen High School, Hawker, Australian Capital Territory. The code was developed as a response to a desire by the whole school community for written guidelines on student discipline and management to promote positive school 'tone'.

Belconnen High School's discipline and student management procedures prior to 1986 were a loose collection of largely unwritten rules, procedures and sanctions (which included very occasional corporal punishment and other punitive measures) which had evolved over several preceding years. As there was little written, students and teachers relied on longer-serving staff members to clarify expectations for behaviour, procedures and sanctions. This situation encouraged uncertainty and, at times, a chaotic school milieu. Combined with a number of children from families with social problems and the presence of the ubiquitous, adolescent 'bush lawyers', problems were created for teachers and students alike.

Belconnen High School is a junior high school for Years 7 to 10 with a population of 650 students drawn from several surrounding suburbs. It comprises a cross-section of the regional socio-economic spectrum and is primarily English-speaking. There are about 40 students for whom English is a second language and an even larger group whose ethnic origin is not Anglo-Saxon or Celtic.

The school operates under the auspices of the ACT Schools Authority (equivalent to the state departments of education) which has a general policy of devolving to school boards the responsibility of developing their own discipline codes. However, the schools must follow the Authority's specific guidelines on matters such as exclusion, suspension and corporal punishment. For example, the essence of the corporal punishment policy incorporates an expectation that it will eventually be abolished as a form of discipline.

### THE EVOLUTION OF THE BELCONNEN HIGH SCHOOL CODE

A school community conference held in August 1984 recommended that written, uniformly-imposed expectations and sanctions should be presented for use at Belconnen High. According to the BELCON '84 Report, the new discipline code would:

- (a) modify anti-social behaviour, e.g. violence, smoking, drinking, destruction of property, prejudice, abusive language,
- (b) promote the school's image in a positive way, e.g. uniform, behaviour on excursions, school pride,
- (c) aim at developing self-esteem and self-control at the earliest possible age, and
- (d) foster positive relationships between (sic) staff, parents and students.

It further recommended that

the rules of behaviour in the classroom should be codified in writing and communicated to teachers and pupils alike ... the penalties for breaches of these rules should be similarly communicated ... the penalties should, wherever possible, be imposed and imposed uniformly ... the pupils should, wherever possible, participate in the drafting of the rules of behaviour so as to better ensure their general acceptance and maximum compliance.

The report was compiled in the second half of 1984. By March 1985, the Principal, Belconnen High School, together with other executive staff and the School Counsellor, had negotiated with ACT Guidance and Counselling Unit for a Project Team to assist with the review of discipline at the school. The School's Parents' and Citizens' Executive and the School Board has been consulted and were agreeable to this course of action. The Project Team comprised ten senior Guidance and Counselling officers, although not all of these would be involved significantly with Belconnen High School. Two whose early contribution was important were Bettye Pearce and Rosemary Walsh.

The Project Team, in liaison with Belconnen High Executive, School Counsellor and Resource Teacher, prepared and implemented the following program directed at achieving school discipline aims at Belconnen High School.

In July 1985, a pupil-free, in-service day was held and all school teaching and ancillary staff led by the Project Team examined their views on school discipline, personally, within

their classrooms and within the school as a whole. The morning began with a small-group activity where the staff explored their own schooling days and recalled how they had felt when they experienced various forms of discipline. Staff then completed an individual questionnaire, entitled 'Beliefs about Discipline Inventory', which enabled them to assess their teaching style on a continuum of non-interventionist, interactionist and interventionist modes. Consideration was then given to the effect a large institution could have on an individual within it. An exercise followed which involved small-group assessment of the present discipline situation within the school in relation to a set of core aims and values for education. Staff completed the morning by endeavouring to reach consensus on suitable consequences for specific examples of misbehaviour in the school. During the afternoon, the implications of major changes in discipline at the school were canvassed, and the role of a School Guidance Committee was explored.

Subsequently, a School Guidance Committee was elected by the staff. The purpose of this committee was to liaise with the whole school staff and with the Project Team to ensure that the project reflected the needs of Belconnen High School. This committee monitored subsequent sessions and gathered data from all participants to provide material for the school Discipline Code. The Committee also forms an ongoing reference and support group for staff members. It comprises the Principal, the Assistant Principal, Students (Chairperson), the Senior Teacher (Welfare), the School Counsellor and four elected staff representatives.

Students in the school worked with the Project Team and school staff on discipline-related activities for a period of two weeks, concluding with a whole day devoted to activities complementary to those the teaching staff had undertaken. The year 9 students formed into three discipline parties; No Rules Party, Social Agreement Party, and More Rules Party and campaigned amongst the whole student body. These activities stimulated discussion of student opinion on discipline. The Social Agreement party won overwhelming student support in an 'election'.

The views of the parent body were canvassed at an evening meeting, led by the Project Team, with discussion and activities related to discipline.

This information from teachers, students and parents was collected to form a data base on Belconnen High School's views on discipline which was shared with all participants in subsequent meetings.

A study phase of three, one and a half hour, early morning seminars then ensued at fortnightly intervals. Three approaches to school management and discipline were considered by the school

staff and 20 representative parents and students. The approaches were: the Glasser 10-Step Approach, Dreikurs' Approach and Behaviour Modification techniques. Pre-reading learning modules were available to all participants and preparatory discussions on the materials were held with parent and student representatives.

A fourth morning seminar was then held, at which the three approaches were reviewed, along with a possible fourth approach - a 'Belconnen option' (Figure 1). The Belconnen option was comprised of features from the three other approaches, and was preferred overwhelmingly by staff, parents and students.

FIGURE 1

## FEATURES OF THE BELCONNEN OPTION

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<u>Approach</u>	Interventionist/Interactionist - Eclectic.
<u>Orientation</u>	Development of 'success identify' and self responsibility. Development of positive, caring, learning environment for whole school community.
<u>Goal</u>	Development of student independence and responsibility for social norms by adhering to clear and reasonable rules within a positive environment.
<u>Student Motivational Factors</u>	Self-motivation to control behaviour developed through goal-setting, sense of self-worth and appropriate recognition from school.
<u>Consequences</u>	Reasonable consequences of disruptive behaviour are clearly set out and enforced. Consequences of withholding or withdrawing praise and privileges. Rules and Guidelines; Consequences.
<u>Interventions</u>	Encouragement. Classroom Meetings. Time-out strategies. Reward - Merit System. Contacts (Specific Students). Discipline handbook.
<u>Teacher Skills</u>	Communication Skills, e.g. Listening; Negotiation; Feedback. Increase understanding of student motivation. Group Leadership Skills. Contract Skills (Specific Teachers).

<u>Special Requirements</u>	Time-out strategies Reward - Merit System guidelines.
<u>Training Requirements</u>	2 Pupil-free days (or equivalent time). Ongoing support and consultation group.
<u>Parent Participation</u>	Information (handbook) on Belconnen Approach.
<u>Principal's Role</u>	Membership of School Guidance Committee. Support; In-Service; Evaluation.

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The School Guidance Committee then undertook to write a Belconnen High School Discipline Handbook (Student Management Procedures Handbook) and to plan in-service implementation of the Belconnen Option from April 1986. The two in-service days (eventually including a Saturday to avoid too much disruption to teaching) would cover the teacher skills necessary for interventions to occur in order to implement successfully the School Discipline Code. Strategies such as; use of positive reinforcement and a merit system, classroom meetings, time-out strategies, contracts, communication skills and group leadership, would be discussed and practised by staff, under the guidance of the Project Team. The Guidance Committee would facilitate discussion on the implementation of the School Discipline Code and ongoing support and evaluation procedures.

#### BELCONNEN HIGH SCHOOL DISCIPLINE CODE

The code, introduced at the beginning of 1986, contained most of the features established during staff, parent and student workshops. The essence of the code are methods pioneered by Dr William Glasser, the underlying philosophy of which focuses

on the development of mutual respect between students and teachers through the establishment of friendly relationships. He advocates that schools must have clear and reasonable rules and that the consequences of rule breaking must be logically related to the misbehaviour. Students must know the school rules and, within reason, agree with them, as a result of their participation in the process of establishing the rules.

Although the code was designed to check unacceptable behaviour, encouragement of achievement and acceptable behaviour were emphasised also. For example, the 'Rationale' of the code includes the three statements 'the full spectrum of achievement

and excellence in students should be acknowledged in positive ways and vigorous efforts made to provide opportunities for achieving excellence', 'students have basic rights in their schooling including the maximisation of their learning opportunities and a secure, supportive and pleasant environment', and 'students have responsibilities corresponding with these rights.'

The cornerstone of the code is the list of rights and responsibilities from which expectations for behaviour and logical consequences flow (Figure 2). The rights were presented in lieu of 'rules' since they don't have a 'thou shalt and thou shalt not' tone. It was also felt that applying to everyone, rights and responsibilities, would foster better relationships within the school.

FIGURE 2

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES (FOR ISSUE TO STUDENTS)

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Each person has a right to:

1. learn, other students will not deprive the individual of this by their behaviour
2. be happy, to be treated with understanding and kindness
3. be treated with respect and politeness

Each person has a responsibility to:

- \* co-operate with teachers
- \* pay attention in class
- \* keep up to date
- \* allow others to learn
- \* develop skills with the help of teachers
- \* be prepared for lessons; complete homework
- \* come to school and bring an explanatory note if absent
- \* be punctual
- \* be involved in school activities
- \* listen to what you are told.
- \* treat others with understanding - not laugh at others, tease others or hurt their feelings
- \* be thoughtful of others.
- \* use polite language
- \* treat others politely and with respect
- \* respect the authority of teachers
- \* disagree without being disagreeable.

4. be safe
    - \* make the school safe by not threatening, hitting or hurting anyone in any way
    - \* observe safety rules
    - \* wear shoes
    - \* be in bounds
    - \* report attacks on other students.
  
  5. expect their property to be safe
    - \* respect others' property
    - \* not steal, damage or destroy the property of others
    - \* hand in lost property
    - \* report theft.
  
  6. a healthy environment
    - \* discourage others from smoking, taking alcohol and illegal drugs by not taking them yourself.
  
  7. have a pleasant, clean and well maintained school and grounds
    - \* care for the school environment - keep it neat and clean and be prepared to remove litter
    - \* contribute to it being a pleasant place to be.
  
  8. be provided with a school in which they are not in any physical danger. When defects occur they will be repaired
    - \* tell teachers about damage, if noticed
    - \* accept that teachers may more readily see dangers and readily obey their instructions
    - \* pay for damage caused deliberately or by carelessness.
  
  9. expect their school to be well regarded by everyone
    - \* support all school activities and respond appropriately to class rules and wear our uniform with pride
    - \* show respect to visitors.
-

Alongside the rights and responsibilities stood specific expectations for students' behaviour in the classroom (Figure 3), and in and around the school expectations for behaviour in the playground were also devised. They were divided into sections: general, buildings, bike racks, canteen, excursions/sport, gym/hall, library, assemblies, and socials. A map, showing out-of-bounds areas, was also produced to reinforce written expectations.

FIGURE 3

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STAFF EXPECTATIONS OF STUDENT BEHAVIOUR IN THE CLASSROOM

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- ENTRY - On entering a classroom, all students should sit down quietly and take out their books, pens and other materials appropriate for the subject.
- EQUIPMENT - Each student should have the necessary equipment.
- \* textbook, exercise book or folder, writing materials, homework diary, printed handouts on the current topic, and relevant equipment, e.g. calculators.
- FOOD - In general food, drink and chewing gum are not to be consumed in classrooms.
- FURNITURE - All classroom furniture to be treated with care and respect.
- \* No writing on desks or chairs
  - \* Students are to sit properly on chairs
  - \* Furniture is only moved with the consent of the teacher and returned at the end of the lesson (particularly if classrooms are shared).
- LISTENING - Only one person speaks to the class at a time (the same applies in group work).
- Listening carefully includes:
- \* stopping writing/working/talking when asked to do so;
  - \* looking at the teacher (or person chosen by the teacher);
  - \* placing pens, pencils, rulers, tools etc. on your desk;
  - \* concentrating on what is being said;

- \* remaining silent until the speaker has finished;
- \* hands up to ask questions or to attract the teacher's attention.

CO-OPERATION - Where talking is permitted it should be quiet - no shouting or disruptive interaction between groups.

END OF CLASS - Students pack up only when advised by the teacher. Students leave the classroom quietly when told to do so.

Classroom behaviour is expected to reflect school rights and responsibilities and meet expectations of staff. The expectations in Figure 3 have been devised to maximise learning opportunities for all students and minimise classroom discomfort and disruption for students and teachers alike. At the same time, different teaching styles and philosophies are accommodated within these classroom expectations.

Rights, responsibilities and playground expectations having been established, consequences for certain breaches/offences/misdeeds were drawn up. This was a difficult task since covering every likely event is impossible. However, the consequences presented, while not being exhaustive, do present possible contingencies. While some expectations are breached frequently the more severe offences such as victimisation, use of alcohol and drugs, and theft are very infrequent. (At a time when government schools are under close scrutiny it would be unfair of anyone to use aspects of these consequences to draw conclusions about student behaviour in government schools and particularly, Belconnen High School.) Figure 4 presents examples of consequences for consuming alcohol, taking drugs, smoking, playground offences, bullying/victimisation, truancy and some 'extra options'.

FIGURE 4

#### CONSEQUENCES FOR CERTAIN OFFENCES

##### ALCOHOL

- \* If a student is either (a) in possession of, or (b) under the influence of alcohol at school or on any school related activity, then:
  - The alcohol shall be taken from the student.
  - The school will inform parents and call them into school for an interview.

- If student is unwell, he/she will be sent home with parents.
- They shall lose all privileges for a period of 14 school weeks. (The privileges shall include attendance at school socials, Year 10 formal, ski trips, school camps and interschool visits.)

For a second offence:-

- Repeat steps above
- The student is suspended for 5 days or performs 3 days of community service.
- Upon return, the student will be conditionally re-admitted to classes with a written contract signed by all parties, a period check and out-of-bounds check for one (1) month, a further 14 week loss of privileges referred to above, and a promise not to repeat the offence.
- Where the offence occurs at a camp or on an interschool visit, it may affect the acceptability of the student for a similar activity the following year.
- If there is drinking or students are under the influence of alcohol at a social that will jeopardise the next school social. Where Year 10 students are involved, they will be banned from the Formal - any may jeopardise the whole School Formal for all students.

DRUGS

1. Parent interview conducted by the Principal.
2. The police are to be informed by the Principal.
3. A 5 day suspension will follow automatically. (Where a parent requests it the suspension MAY be an in-school suspension at the discretion of the Principal. The time-out room may be used for this.)

Any breach of the terms of this suspension will result in an increase in the period of suspension.

4. At the end of the period of suspension, the Principal will interview the parents and student again. It will be pointed out that re-entry to classes will be conditional ... and that a written contract MUST be signed by the student before he/she returns to class.

The contract will include the following terms:

- (a) an admission that the offence was committed.
- (b) the school's conditions, via
  - (i) satisfactory period check for 1 month
  - (ii) satisfactory 'green' slips for 1 month, and
  - (iii) loss of student privileges including attendance at school socials, Year 10 formal, film nights, ski trips, school camps and interschool visits to Parkes for a period of 14 weeks (1 school term). This last condition does not include school excursions which are an integral part of courses. For such excursions the student will negotiate his/her participation with the teacher concerned.
- (c) a promise NOT to repeat the offence either at school or on the way to/from the school.

#### SMOKING

1. FIRST OFFENCE
  - Contact parents for interview (letter)
  - Until parent comes, student spends recess and lunch in time-out room.
2. SECOND OFFENCE - as for first offence, plus
  - Minimum one week in time-out room.
3. THIRD OFFENCE
  - Parent interviewed
  - Principal suspends for 5 days
  - Principal may recommend exclusion.

#### PLAYGROUND

LITTERING, WATER SPITTING/SPRAYING, OR FOOD THROWING

- clean up the environment/litter duty for at least 20 minutes to be supervised by the teacher on duty.

## CHILDREN FOUND RIDING BIKES OR SKATEBOARDS

- confiscate skateboard and give to AP (Students) for balance of day.

## AGGRESSIVE PHYSICAL INTERACTION/FIGHTING

- 'cooling off' period (may be enforced)
- possible use of time-out room.

## BEING OUT-OF-BOUNDS ... during breaks

- given a slip by Student AP to be completed and signed by teachers on playground duty every 10 minutes.

BULLYING/VICTIMISATION

A flexible response will be made, depending on the seriousness of the incident, using some of the following:

- contact parents
- bring parents for interview
- counselling by school counsellor
- pink room full time
- suspension
- school or community service
- contract
- police
- warn of responsibility regarding protection of others' property by staying away.

TRUANCY

- Two weeks on period check
- Inform parents of
  - (a) truancy
  - (b) period check requirements
  - (c) consequences of non-completion

- If unsatisfactory, check extended 2 weeks
- Time-out room if still unsatisfactory until undertaking to complete period check .

Extra options

- Student asked to make up lost time (negotiation at faculty level)
- Counselling by Year Supervisor/Counsellor
- Notification to Welfare and Schools Authority
- Withhold School Certificate.

---

Management of disruptive behaviour in the classroom was based on Glasser's Ten Step Approach to Discipline including the 'time-out' procedure. (Sometimes this approach is used as part of consequences of unacceptable behaviour outside the classroom.) Belconnen High School modified the ten steps, adding another five. Figure 5 shows the fifteen steps used. Not all fifteen are used for every student entering the 'time-out' system. Glasser envisaged that for the majority of students steps 1-4 would be sufficient to check out behaviour, and Belconnen's steps 1-5 achieve this result in most cases.

FIGURE 5

MANAGEMENT STEPS FOR DISRUPTIVE STUDENTS

(Adapted from Glasser steps page 31)

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This is a set of sequential steps for the management of disruptive students in the classroom.

For the classroom teacher

1. Ask yourself. What am I doing?
2. Is it working?
3. Find ways to give the student positive recognition.
4. Quietly and calmly remind the student of what he/should be doing.
  - Stated when student starts to be disruptive
  - Remind the student of the rule
5. Attempt to solve the problem with the student.
  - This should be done calmly and quietly

- Point out the consequences of further misbehaviour.
- May also be achieved by:
    - (a) moving the student
    - (b) counselling the student at a suitable time
6. Send student to Desk and inform Faculty Head
    - Carried out if student continues to disrupt
    - Calmly and quietly
    - Faculty Head notified via referral slip
    - Letter home
  7. Counselling by Faculty Head with classroom teacher
    - Carried out after Referral
    - Calmly and quietly
  8. Send student to Faculty Head with referral
    - carried out if student disrupts at Desk or cannot work out solution
    - Calmly and quietly
    - If student refuses to go, send for Faculty Head
  9. Counselling by Faculty Head and Teacher. Placement on Faculty Period check
    - Encourage student on Faculty Report progress
    - implement step 10 if progress is unsatisfactory
  10. Faculty Head sends student to time-out room
    - Carried out if student fails to modify behaviour
    - Letter home
  11. Student counselled
    - Counsellled by any one of the following:  
AP Students, Faculty Head, Year Supervisor, Counsellor
  12. Behaviour follow-up
    - a. On first placement in room: student placed on General period check
    - b. On subsequent placement in room:  
Counsellled by any of above  
Placed on behaviour program co-ordinated by school counsellor

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 13. Additional letter to parents - optional | - May be sent by Faculty Head at his/her discretion, if student fails to solve problem after a time   |
| 14. Suspension                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Carried out if student disrupts in the room</li> <li>- letter home</li> <li>- Parent interview</li> <li>- Reference to Schools Office</li> </ul> |
| 15. Exclusion                               | - Reference to the Schools Office from Principal  |

The purpose of the fifteen steps is to provide a predictable, stress-free means of dealing with disruptive students for teachers and a structured system in which students have the 'space' to work out their problem. It encourages students to take responsibility for their own behaviour.

The 'time-out' system does not provide students with unstructured time. There are strict rules to be adhered to at the time-out desk and in the time-out room (Figure 6). Detailed guidelines for staff are given to ensure the successful and efficient operation of the time-out system.

#### FIGURE 6

#### TIME-OUT RULES

#### Rules of the Time-Out Desk (pasted on the desk)

1. I have the responsibility to try to work out my problems.
2. I have the responsibility not to talk to other students.
3. I have the responsibility to ignore all other students.
4. I have the responsibility not to lend or borrow equipment from other students.
5. I have the responsibility to put up my hand to gain the attention of the teacher.
6. I have the responsibility to speak to the teacher only when I am spoken to.

7. I have the responsibility to be polite a all times.
8. I have the responsibility to remain in my seat.
9. I have the responsibility to catch up upon all the work I have missed.

#### Rules of the Time-Out Room

These will be placed in the Rime-Out Room for the student to see and must be observed by all students.

#### YOU MAY

- \* read silently
- \* do puzzles
- \* do schoolwork/catch up on work missed
- \* think about your problem
- \* go to the toilet with permission
- \* sew or knit

#### YOU MAY NOT

- \* talk or communicate with other students
- \* borrow from or lend to other students
- \* leave your seat without permission
- \* leave the room without permission

To request an interview, you may fill out an Interview Request after spending eight satisfactory sessions in the Room.

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The student is not left entirely on their own to work out their problem. There are counselling sessions (by one or more of their class teacher, senior teacher, counsellor, Assistant Principal (Students), or year supervisor) at each step to help students. When the student feels they have sorted out their problem they complete a 'Request for Interview' form to seek an interview with their class teacher. In part, the form reads 'I am now making a serious effort to work out my behaviour problem'.

On return to class they are placed on a period check for a time over which their behaviour is monitored. Further, persistent disruption may lead to time out of school (suspension) and even, at the discretion of the Schools Authority, exclusion.

Back-up to dealing with persistently disruptive students are 'house schools', where students with severe social adjustment problems can be helped on a one-to-one basis. The students return to the normal school environment when they are more likely to be able to cope.

#### CLASSROOM MEETINGS

To explain the code to students, classroom meetings were held. At these meetings, students were encouraged to clarify their understanding of the code, particularly the sections given to them, 'Rights and Responsibilities' and 'Playground Expectations'.

Classroom meetings, if held on a regular basis, provide students with an opportunity to air their grievances and/or appreciation. One of the problems so far has been the irregularity of classroom meetings.

#### MANAGEMENT OF THE CODE

The Belconnen Code is overseen by the School Guidance Committee. As noted earlier, it is a reference group which continues to sort out problems that people encounter, making adjustments to the code where necessary. It will conduct the evaluation of the student management procedures and inservicing of new teachers.

Executive and senior staff members have specific roles in managing and enforcing the code. Roles are clearly set out in the booklet Student Management Procedures, 1987. Further, teaching staff are kept aware of their individual and combined roles. This prescriptive approach is to ensure consistency, efficiency and to minimise students taking advantage of staff uncertainty about what is expected of them.

In fact, the detailed level at which the code is written was necessary to encourage staff confidence and ensure consistency of application through the school. Additional details were added in the 1987 handbook revision at the request of some staff.

## REVIEW

The Belconnen Code was devised to provide students with definite bounds of behaviour within which they should function at school. The code required students to accept responsibility for their behaviour, and it endeavours to encourage self-respect and care for others and the school.

The code has provided a caring, non-punitive school environment in which rewards are received for achievement of all kinds. Students have responded positively to the secure bounds placed on them by the Belconnen High Code.

However, despite the very positive and constructive gains made through the introduction and function of the code, there have been some 'teething' problems. Some problems that need to be resolved include:

- a. Teachers do not always play their professional role in fifteen steps. Rather than going from steps 1 to 15 systematically, some may skip some of steps 1 to 5.
- b. Some teachers initially saw the code as a critical comment on their existing management practices.
- c. Inservicing is required on an ongoing basis to reinforce the philosophy and procedures with some teachers and introduce new teachers to it. Relief teachers also require induction.
- d. Rules at time-out desk and in exclusion room are not always uniformly imposed.
- e. Classroom meetings, necessary to reinforce the code with students and offer them the opportunity to discuss it, are not held on a regular basis. These meetings are supposed also to build communication, problem solving and conflict resolution skills.

Should these early problems remain unresolved student management procedures could break down. Now that the Guidance Committee has completed the major 1987 revision of the Student Management Procedures Handbook, it is expected the group will give their attention during second term and subsequently to staff inservicing.

Overall, the code with its student management procedures has been accepted well by the school community. And, although this paper has not covered all aspects of the code in detail, it remains as a written reference and guide for the continuing improvement of Belconnen High School and other schools in the Australian Capital Territory, a number of which have sought and been given copies of our handbook and advice on implementing discipline codes.

EMPOWERING THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY  
CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND MEDIATION

Helena Cornelius  
Conflict Resolution Network  
New South Wales

WHAT IS CONFLICT RESOLUTION?

Conflict is the stuff of life. In conflict we are as individuals most alive. It comes about from differences in needs, perceptions and motivations. In itself, conflict is not a problem - it is how it is handled that is significant. Quality interaction skills make a major difference to relationships between principals, teachers, staff, students and parents.

To introduce a conflict-resolving culture into a school touches the lives of all members of the school community. A comprehensive program makes profound changes in the levels of student stress, frustration and acting out - both misbehaviour and crime.

WHAT IS CONFLICT RESOLUTION NETWORK?

The Conflict Resolution Network is a Peace Program of the United Nations Association (Australia). It is a national campaign to develop, teach, learn and implement conflict resolution skills for personal and professional effectiveness.

Experience at the Conflict Resolution Network indicates that there is a set of specific, transferable skills in managing and resolving conflict. These skills are able to be taught relatively easily to both adults and children. When understood they feel like common sense, but common sense that people may not automatically be using. Skills learnt in one situation readily transfer across to other areas.

At the Network, we frequently see the tragedy of a negative spiral of interaction, where through lack of skill, patterns of communication rapidly slide from bad to worse. The human distress and impasse that this creates points up very clearly a major education deficit.

One good interaction breeds another and experience at the Network is that a positive spiral of interaction can be created between

individuals and within a group environment such as a school. Before long a conflict resolving culture develops.

The phenomenon of the positive interaction spiral suggests that people learn these skills from each other - they are passed around within the family, and within the school. The rapid development of the positive interaction spiral with only moderate training in techniques is extremely interesting.

#### CHILDREN ARE EMPOWERED WITH CONFLICT RESOLUTION SKILLS

The positive interaction spiral is of great interest in the school system when considering more creative discipline approaches. Certain students are caught in a negative whirlpool of unresolved difficulties which affects their school work. Teachers may recognise there is little they can do while the family structure from which the child comes remains unchanged.

Just as the children have learnt their poor interaction patterns from and as a response to their parents, so parents can learn many of these new skills from their children. Conflict resolution skills in the hands of children gives them some opportunities to be a little more powerful and create positive change in their home environment. Even small successes that the child experiences can reduce significantly the level of pent up feelings that the child may express in negative acting out behaviour.

Students who are handling their teachers and their peers using skills such as rapport building (empathy) and clear statements of needs (assertiveness), build for themselves a friendly school atmosphere.

#### TEACHERS NEED CONFLICT RESOLUTION SKILLS

Many teachers could do with better interaction skills with children. The defensive, autocratic response of many teachers faced with classroom difficulties invokes a very negative atmosphere. As the child grows and wants to assert increasing autonomy, a hard disciplinary line for petty problems creates much resentment.

For the emotionally healthy child this may be no more than rumblings and grumbings. The child from a damaged environment may already be an angry child who is very close to their limits of containing their feelings within socially acceptable limits. It does not take excessively inappropriate behaviour from a teacher to swing the balance so that the child is 'out to get' the teacher and 'out to get' the school.

It is in the negative atmosphere invoked by teachers who are resolving conflicts with an adversarial rather than a

co-operative approach, that gangs of kids bent on destructive behaviour develop most easily.

Teachers with conflict resolution skills up their sleeves feel more powerful, and therefore need to exercise power less. They are more responsive and creative to classroom problems and earn the respect of their class for being 'fair' - a principle terribly important to young people.

Conflict resolution oriented teachers are liked better in their classes and more easily inspire lawfulness. They also like their classes better as they bring out the best in their students. They tend to have higher levels of job satisfaction.

### CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN SCHOOLS

#### The Teachers

Without going into details the twelve conflict resolution skills are described as: win/win, creative response, empathy, appropriate assertiveness, co-operative power, managing emotions, willingness to resolve, mapping the conflict, development of options, negotiation, broadening perspectives and the third party mediator. Within the school these skills can be considered separately for teachers and students. Teacher training has not so far concentrated on Conflict Resolution as a classroom skill. It tends to concentrate on the imparting of information rather than consideration of the environment in which it is imparted. This emphasis is beginning to shift as alternative discipline techniques become more necessary.

Developmental education is just as important for teachers as for students. Students in fact learn most about conflict resolution skills by demonstration. Just as it is now generally understood that student's self esteem is most dependent on the teacher's self esteem, so students' expertise in interaction is most dependent on teachers' expertise in this area.

1. There is a need to introduce these skills as part of teacher training in colleges and universities.
2. It is most important to educate teachers already in the school system.

Restrictions in funding for inservicing challenge the imagination in this area. An initiative of the Canberra Schools Authority may point the way to the achievement of this goal, at relatively low cost.

Two courses in Conflict Resolution for schools were run in June 1987. Their popularity was indicated by the fact that both

courses were over-booked two months before the starting date. Half the schools in the Canberra area were represented.

Most schools were represented by the principal, the school counsellor and one other interested staff member. These three representatives learnt the skills and how to apply and teach them in the classroom. Similar inservice workshops are run in New South Wales. Many graduates are using an inservice manual available through the Network to train the rest of the staff in their schools.

The Canberra Schools Authority has a task force to assist in the setting up of inservice days, and in providing classroom materials to appropriate age groups. The task force also provide support for the schools who decide to introduce the peer mediation program (see below). Similar support is being provided in New South Wales.

#### The Students

In primary school, Conflict Resolution trained teachers are in a special position to teach skills as they arise in the context of the running of the classroom.

Many teachers are also making special teaching times for this material. A number of Australian primary teachers are teaching conflict resolution in a Personal Development 40 minute period once a week.

Some teachers prefer to have morning sessions, say, twice a term when they can invite parents and other family members into the classroom to participate with the children in the material. One extremely innovative program has the parents running the morning, using the teacher and school counsellor as resources for the development of the material.

It would be ideal if involved and interested parents are invited to take part in the pupil free Conflict Resolution Training Day for teachers, so that parents and teachers were in step with each other.

Under a special grant from the International Year of Peace Committee, funds have been made available in the New South Wales Department of Education to write cross-curricula materials in Educating for Peace. These are being written for both primary and secondary schools and will have a strong conflict resolution component. They cover such areas as General Studies, History and English. This means, for example, that in the process of studying certain History topics Conflict Resolution themes will be introduced. Special Personal Development lessons are also

being written under this grant. These and other lesson materials need to be made available to teachers Australia wide.

Many secondary schools have organised one and two day workshops for students in Conflict Resolution with enormous success. Students respond well to the change of pace, and the opportunity to talk in a relaxed atmosphere about the problem areas they are finding in their life - especially relationship difficulties with teachers, parents and peers. They learn to expand their range of options when faced with conflict. So far, these longer workshops have been run by teachers outside the school who specialise in this area.

Some teachers are already experimenting with the cross-curricula approach, and certain conflict resolution skills are frequently taught in Personal Development. More materials for doing this will shortly be issued to New South Wales Schools.

This sort of program has operated for some six years, with considerable success in the United States where gang leaders have been used as mediators. These children are highly influential with their peers. They have high levels of energy which without direction is often negative, but with skills at their fingertips can be directed to the positive by this program.

A mediation program at the 300 student William Cullen Bryant High School in New York has done very well in reducing the rates at which crime, vandalism, violence, truancy and drop-outs occurred within the school. Later this year the Conflict Resolution Network, in association with the New South Wales Department of Education, will run a pilot scheme with four or five schools to see how the American model is best adapted to Australian circumstances.

#### WHAT HAPPENS IN A MEDIATION SESSION?

A suggested format for working with primary school mediators, based on a San Francisco model, may give an idea of how a mediation session actually runs. Before commencing mediation, four basic agreements are made by the children:

1. to solve the problem;
2. not to call each other names;
3. not to interrupt;
4. to tell the truth.

Then the mediator:

1. decides who talks first;

2. asks that person what happened and how they feel;
3. repeats back what was said using active listening;
4. does the same with the other party or parties;
5. identifies and prioritises the issues;
6. asks the first party and then the second party for alternative solutions;
7. works with the students to get an alternative they both think is good;
8. works out the agreement (with older students this may be written);
9. congratulates them both;
10. fills out a mediation report form.

#### The Benefits of a Mediation Program

- (a) Teachers: Less time is spent by teachers in disciplining. When teachers don't have to be seen as 'heavy' so frequently, they are better listened to when appropriate rules need to be laid down. The high visibility of the program encourages the teachers to use conflict resolving techniques.
- (b) Parents: Parents can take an active part in the program with the resulting benefits of a close-knit and caring school community. Parental involvement can free up teachers from mediation program supervision.
- (c) Mediators: Students who are mediators learn to be less biased; they feel they are important; they learn more about other people; it helps them direct their energies in positive ways.
- (d) Participants: Students who have come for mediation are helped by the process with the problem they were facing at that time, without it needing adult intervention; it calms students down, makes them face their own problems and not become troublemakers; they teach what they have learnt to parents, siblings and friends; they are often so convinced about the value of mediation that they want to become mediators themselves.

### Potential Obstacles to be Overcome

1. Finding enough time in the school week for incorporating this project, both for training and actual mediation.
2. Teaching students to be unbiased when they probably know quite well the parties to the dispute.
3. Making sure there is a suitable flow of 'cases' to keep in training all the students who have trained to be mediators.
4. Ensuring the program does not wind down through lack of adult supervision.
5. Making sure an adequate 'report back, support, and refer on' system exists for the mediators.
6. Ensuring all teachers and students, not just the mediators, are receiving basic conflict resolution training. In order for the students to accept rather than rubbish the program a conflict resolving culture must be created in the school. This means that the focus when any difficulties arise is in working it out together using co-operative approaches wherever possible.

### CONCLUSION

Though the establishment of a conflict resolution program in a school requires many hours of dedicated work from all concerned, the benefits in the reduction of stress and tension, misbehaviour and crime make it a thoroughly worthwhile exercise.

The alternative is increasing levels of authoritarian and disciplinarian techniques. Modern trends in education, democratic ideals and basic respect for the child mean we have to find more creative approaches to discipline.

Conflict resolution and its possible offshoot - peer mediation - provides an approach to discipline that preserves the basic integrity of the child, the teacher and the requirements of learning, that school is all about.

## CONFLICT RESOLUTION

### AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH TO SCHOOL DISCIPLINE

Susan Plunkett  
Numulgi School Residence  
New South Wales

In 1986 the author carried out action research designed to test the hypothesis that '...following a six week course on conflict resolution fifth grade children will display a positive improvement in their understandings of personal options available to them in resolving conflicts. The improvement was to be shown in a comparison between a pretest aptitude/attitude survey and an achievement/attitude posttest survey.'

The overall aim of the program was to 'empower' the children with options, skills and strategies that would allow them to resolve problems with increasing autonomy and with developing satisfaction.

#### THE RESEARCH DESIGN

Two fifth grade mixed ability classes formed the control and experimental groups with 25 children being in the former and 24 in the latter. Since students could not be randomly assigned to the two groups the research was quasi experimental in nature. Data from the pretest was gained from 25 control pupils and 24 experimental pupils whilst in the posttest there were 23 and 24 respectively.

The pretest and posttest surveys consisted of an aptitude and an attitude section in that order. The aptitude survey was designed to evaluate the methods by which children managed, or reacted to, conflict situations, whilst the attitude survey was designed to evaluate children's inner management of emotional situations and their belief in their own ability to solve problems effectively. The attitude survey consisted of 24 items whilst the aptitude survey contained the following eight items.\*

1. You have a new boy in your class from Sydney. His name is Robert. Robert is always yelling in class and throwing tantrums. Yesterday he stole your pencils. What do you do about this situation?

---

\* Copies of the complete pretest and posttest surveys are available from the author.

2. A friend of yours has to give a speech at the school social. This person is really worried about the way they look. They say to you 'I don't want to give this speech. I really look awful. I hate the way I look.' What do you say to them?
- 3 Tony walks up to Carol in the playground and calls her a stupid fat pig. What does she do?
4. Two groups of children both want to use the school hall at the same time. One group wants to practise skits whilst the other wants to practise a dance routine. What could the groups do to solve their problem?
5. Your teacher asks you to solve a problem between two groups of children who both want to use an area of the playground at the same time. How would you go about solving this problem?
6. Yesterday, dad and I had a problem. He usually does some book work in his room but yesterday his room was being painted and he couldn't work there. I was watching TV but dad came in and told me that I had to turn the set off so that he could use the TV room for working. I thought that this was unfair. How do you think the problem (could have been) was solved?
7. Your parents are away and a neighbour, Mrs Smith, is looking after you. Mrs Smith has two children close to your age. One day all three of you are out in the backyard playing. Mrs Smith comes outside, says that there is money missing from her purse and accuses you of having taken it. You haven't done this at all. What do you say to her?
8. (Active listening - story read out by teacher with children responding in written form.)

#### THE CONFLICT RESOLUTION COURSE

The course ran over a six week period, and is now described:

Week One: The Win/Win approach, the Creative Response, Empathy and Active Listening. Class structure...whole class/group discussion, paired role play, individual.

Content: When do I like to win? When do I feel I lose? What are the differences between win/win, win/lose, and lose/lose situations? What are the needs and fears (concerns) of children/teachers/parents? What is empathy? What are some commonly used 'empathy blockers'? e.g. name calling, threatening, moralising, criticising? Are 'first impressions' always correct? Role play of first two items on pretest survey. What can we achieve by (a) ignoring problems (b) reacting negatively to problems and (c) treating problems as creative opportunities?

What personal qualities are needed when we are trying to resolve a problem?

Week Two: Review, appropriate assertiveness, co-operative power, managing emotions. Class structure as for week one.

Content: What is the difference between aggression and assertion? What is an 'I' statement? What are the different types of 'I' statement and when should they be used? (Types: Disclosing, Responsive, Preventative and Confrontive) Role play items 2, 3 and 6 from pretest survey. (Note that the actual survey responses completed by the children were not discussed.)

Week Three: Review, Willingness to Resolve, Mapping the Conflict. Whole class discussion, individual work, paired discussion.

Content: What are my needs and how do they affect my behaviour? Can I recognise the needs of the 'other party' even though I may be in conflict with them? Am I always prepared to solve or work on a problem? How can I resolve a conflict when the 'other party' appears to be refusing to do so? How will 'Mapping a conflict' help me to resolve a problem with someone? Practical application of 'mapping' skills.

Week Four: Review, Development of Options, Negotiation skills. Group and paired role plays, whole class discussion.

Content: What kind of options do I have available to me to facilitate Conflict Resolution? Can we add to our list of known options? How can we evaluate the effectiveness of our selected options (or solutions)? Does our option satisfy the needs of both parties? What are the skills necessary in an effective negotiator? Which of these particular skills do I need to work on the most? When would the use of a negotiator be an appropriate option? What 'rules' must apply in a negotiation situation? When should a conflict be referred to another party e.g. the school counsellor?

Week Five: Review, Negotiation skills, Third Party Mediator. Whole class discussion of paired and group role plays.

Content: Role plays devised by children and teacher. Review and practice of skills discussed in week four. How do I achieve neutrality when mediating? How can I prevent a situation where I am being asked to take sides? How can I encourage others to use Conflict Resolution skills? When would a 'time out' period be a practical option? Can I listen effectively and accurately to a problem being discussed? Relaxation techniques.

Week Six: Review and practice of all skills demonstrated in program through role plays (session may be video taped for further discussion purposes).

Administration of posttest achievement/attitudinal survey.

EVALUATION:

Twelve different responses were shown by children in their pretest aptitude surveys. They were:

1. Physical aggression
2. Verbal aggression
3. Command
4. Compromise
5. Negotiation
6. Smoothing
7. Withdrawal
8. Defensiveness
9. Moralising
10. Becoming emotionally upset
11. Appropriate assertiveness
12. 'I don't know'

To gain a more accurate and directed pretest/posttest program comparison, these behaviours were categorised using a modified version of Fisher and Ury's behavioural framework to become:

1. Withdrawal
2. Suppression
3. Compromise
4. Win/lose
5. Win/win
6. Aggression
7. Lose/lose
8. Appropriate assertion
9. 'I don't know'

(Although aggression would obviously be considered a win/lose proposition I wanted to make a clear distinction between the two as the former is a particularly negative form of behaviour and one which, in the school setting, needs to be modified quite rapidly.)

The following table shows the comparison of scores between the experimental and control groups in both pretest and posttest survey:

TABLE 1

## PRE AND POST TEST SCORES FOR CONTROL AND EXPERIMENTAL GROUPS

Behavioural Response to Conflict Control	PRETEST SCORE		POSTTEST SCORE	
	Experimental	Control	Experimental	Control
Withdrawal	15	10	4	14
Suppression	25	21	14	12
Compromise	41	32	38	40
Win/Lose	36	41	23	35
Win/Win	5	7	40	5
Aggression	22	24	2	22
Lose/Lose	5	4	4	7
Approp. Assert	4	0	12	4
I don't know	0	6	0	0

While not statistically significant the change in score within the 'aggression' and 'win/win' behaviours, is an exciting indication of the effect the Conflict Resolution program had had on the experimental group's ability to manage emotions and apply communication skills experienced during discussion and role play.

In the classroom, individuals were becoming proficient in the use of mediation skills and children were beginning to ask for their help in solving conflicts when appropriate.

Initially, the amount of teacher time spent on the program was high, however the children's greater independence and increased social harmony ultimately left the author with increased 'problem free' time that was gratefully used for lesson preparation etc.

It should also be noted that during the program, lengthy periods were spent discussing such issues as whether '...we have a right to make people feel guilty especially when they do it to us'. These 'lessons' were generally unscheduled and arose from student questioning during discussion.

#### RELATED ISSUES

During the program certain issues of an ethical nature requiring further thought and discussion were raised. These can be listed in question form:

1. One 'rule' of our Conflict Resolution program was to maintain confidentiality outside the classroom...so what should I do

when a child comes to me with an intimate family problem that obviously needs immediate attention and referral?

2. How do I cope with parents who seem concerned that family problems will be discussed?
3. How should I act professionally and as a concerned Conflict Resolution facilitator when a child comes to me with a problem about another teacher?
4. How should I react when children ask me questions about more 'delicate' areas such as sexual abuse or incest?
5. How do I ensure that classroom observers, such as parents, maintain confidentiality outside the classroom?

## ADJUSTING TO THE ABOLITION OF CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

### THE SOUTH AUSTRALIAN STUDENT BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT PROJECT

Geoff Thorpe  
Education Department  
South Australia

#### CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

The Labor Party in South Australia has had a long standing interest in the abolition of corporal punishment in the penal, welfare and education systems. Of these three, only the education area remained, any corporal punishment in welfare institutions having been abolished with a new Act in 1972.

Policy Development Paper No 2, 'The School Setting: Management of Student Behaviour in Schools' was circulated by the Education Department to school communities in 1984. Responses were invited and were many and predictable - corporal punishment should remain as an option if school communities so wished. The Minister at the time decided that corporal punishment should be banned from Reception to Year 2; that is, in junior primary years.

At the Labor Party Annual State Conference in June 1986 a motion was passed to abolish corporal punishment within five years. The Minister, who seconded the motion, almost immediately announced the decision as Education Department policy.

The Minister of Education has therefore given clear notice of the abolition of corporal punishment in all schools 'within five years'. School communities have been afforded the opportunity to be pro-active instead of re-active, allowing them to build upon good practice rather than be perceived as having been doing something wrong. The current regulations allow for corporal punishment under strict guidelines. All the evidence shows that the process which a school community goes through in re-examining its policies is as important as the new outcomes. One of the purposes of the project is to encourage and enable school communities to approach the change positively. The Minister has wisely given time for process.

There can be differences between local communities and the international community in how they view practices. The European Court of Human Rights in a recent historic judgement stated that corporal punishment is an offence against the child's dignity. Parents and teachers can see physical chastisement as an expression of having concern in a very serious situation where

change is necessary. One purpose of the project will be to encourage debate in local communities about that difference of view and to encourage those communities to adopt different and more positive ways of dealing with severe difficulties, and thus meet the government expectation which is based upon the wider view.

#### OTHER DISCIPLINE RELATED POLICY

In 1986 the South Australian Education Department provided a resource paper, 'Social Learning', for the policy paper 'Our Schools and their Purposes'. This resource paper is useful in helping school communities to focus on what influences social learning and how the learning circumstances in classrooms may be improved and be more purposeful in developing social skills.

Also in 1986 the government passed an amended Education Act, yet to be proclaimed. Portions of two sections of the Act may be of interest in the present context:

75a (1) The Director-General may, subject to regulations, if satisfied that a child has disabilities or learning difficulties such that it would be in the best interests of the child to do so, direct that the child be enrolled at a special school or some other particular government school nominated in the direction.

75b (1) The Minister may, subject to the regulations, after taking reasonable steps to consult each parent of a child, if satisfied that the behaviour of the child has been such that it would be in the best interests of the child and the maintenance of proper discipline at government schools to do so, direct that the child be not enrolled at any government school.

(2) The Minister shall not give a direction under subsection (1) in respect of a child of compulsory school age unless the child is afforded the right to participate in a program established by the Minister for the education of children outside the ordinary government school system.

104 Any person who behaves in an offensive or insulting manner to a teacher who is acting in the course of his duties as such shall be guilty of an offence and liable to a penalty not exceeding five hundred dollars.

## THE STUDENT BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT PROJECT

In March 1987 the Student Behaviour Management Project was launched to facilitate the implementation of the policy with respect to corporal punishment and to assist develop regulations and guidelines for appropriate sections of the amended Act.

### Project Guidelines

The Project Officer will:

1. research student management strategies through educational literature;
2. investigate and disseminate good student behaviour practices in South Australia;
3. promote the idea of secure learning environments for students in schools;
4. promote sound learning relationships between students and teachers;
5. propose curriculum and teaching methodology modifications which assist good student management;
6. communicate with parents and parent groups concerning parental expectations and participation;
7. evolve management practices which avoid the use of corporal punishment;
8. be available as a resource person to all schools in South Australia;
9. consider any desirable or necessary changes to regulations and administrative guidelines.

### Anticipated Outcomes

1. Schools which currently employ corporal punishment as a management measure will be better equipped to develop policies which exclude its use.
2. All school communities will be caused to re-think their student management policies and practices and either re-affirm their current position or move to a perceived better position.
3. All schools will have a written student management policy which has resulted from the collaborative efforts of teachers, parents and students.

4. Good practice in classrooms and schools around the state will have been shared, assisting the growth of knowledge and providing mutual support.
5. Evidence will reveal that most teachers and most schools are doing a conscientious, effective job in difficult circumstances.
6. Parent fears about the removal of the corporal punishment option will have been allayed by evidence of the effectiveness of other more positive measures.
7. Teacher training institutions will more effectively prepare beginning teachers for their first classroom experiences.
8. The incidence and frequency of disruptive behaviour by students will have been reduced, but not eliminated.
9. Better understanding of the social changes which have promoted different values.
10. Better and more communication between teachers, parents and students about differing beliefs about and attitudes to 'discipline'.
11. All schools, state and non-state, will not employ corporal punishment.

#### Selected Issues

There are change constraints felt by schools, systems and governments:

1. Schools are meeting places of cultures and ages. They have parents of 21 years of age to 70 years, teacher ages from 21 to 65 years and student ages from 6 to 18, with all the difference which that brings. Schools have the socio-economic mix and multi-cultural composition which is Australia.

Schools are constrained by their history, geographical location, buildings, by restricted opportunity for teacher development and by political influence.

Schools constantly deal with the role dilemma of concentrating on the preservation of culture or leading social change. Schools are the crossroads for the values and expectations of political parties, society, employment and parents.

The Student Behaviour Management Project is about change: there will be difficulties.

2. Education systems are slow to change and respond. Some of the factors involved include: their huge size, finance, current staffing commitments and political priorities. In South Australia, and most other states, the huge land area to be covered is a very real constraint.
3. Governments are constrained by finance, the commitments of previous governments, the limited opportunities to appoint appropriate change personnel, the comparatively short time between elections and by party ideology and policies.

All these constraints are relevant to possible outcomes of a Student Behaviour Management Project. The Minister of Education has seen the project as an on-going one over several years. The Western Australian experience bears out the wisdom of such a view.

An emphasis of the project will be on encouraging the formulation of rules and sanctions which are goal-setting for teachers, students and parents rather than punitive in nature. The evidence is clear that punishment unrelated to the behaviour to be changed is usually ineffective. Hence the widespread use of 'appropriate consequences' in effective schools.

One can only lament and be saddened by the poor example which society sets for young people in its dealing with misbehaviour by adults. Rules tend to be complicated and negative, and sanctions are often of limited range, punitive and lacking in 'appropriate consequences'. The temptation for parents and teachers to copy the pattern is always present and strong.

Nevertheless, there are other ways of managing behaviour and there are exciting and immensely satisfying examples in schools where teachers, students and parents have co-operated and worked through beliefs to practices which encourage initiative, self confidence, judgement, tolerance and self-esteem in their learners. Teachers are more positive about their local task and about coming to school, and are less stressed. Parents are involved and supportive. It must be the way to go.

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USING SUSPENSION AS A SANCTION

THE REVISION OF REGULATIONS, IN VICTORIA

Roger Slee  
Lecturer  
Faculty of Education  
Ballarat College of Advanced Education  
Victoria

INTRODUCTION

This discussion of the Victorian Education Department Regulation XVI relating to discipline and suspension of students in Victoria is timely. Firstly because the Victorian Ministry of Education is presently undertaking a re-examination of the disruption in schools issue through the auspices of the Ministerial Reference Group on Integration. And secondly because of concerns at school level about student disruption.

For instance, last month, the Acting Regional Director of Education in Ballarat circulated a memorandum to school principals, teachers and presidents of school councils inviting submissions regarding the Regulation and the procedures for its application. This seems to have been prompted by a series of unresolved problems generated by the suspension of students from Ballarat post-primary schools. Growing conflict between school administrators and Regional Education Ministry personnel over transfer arrangements for suspended students is at the heart of the problem.

The level of intensity of emotion evoked by the issue of classroom disruption and school suspension is all too clearly manifest in the following item which appeared in a school newsletter to parents.

Disruptive Students

It is school policy that an emphasis be placed on discipline. Only through the maintenance of firm discipline can we hope to ensure that each student receives his/her share of teacher time and that the class as a whole progresses with the planned work.

The school is fully aware of the extent to which one or two disruptive students may interfere with the work of teachers and students. I therefore invite parents to contact the school if they feel that certain students are being so disruptive as

to interfere with the education of their own children. Such complaints can be very useful in dealing with the situation and will be handled so that names and addresses are not disclosed.

Certainly classroom disruption is a major impediment to learning and it is imperative that disciplined education become a fundamental objective for education authorities, teachers, parents and students. How this objective is pursued is largely determined by perceptions of discipline as an educational concept. I will argue that disruption in schools must be constructed as a problem of curriculum and organisation if the squalid conflict that arises through the adoption of vigilante style approaches such as above is to be avoided. In short, discipline should be perceived as being distinct from punishment in order to overcome the perennial problems arising from the imposition of punitive sanctions against 'deviant' pupils after the fact.

It may be apposite to place more expansive questions on the agenda. Why do students become disruptive? Why is suspension a more frequent occurrence in some schools than in others? Why is the rate of suspension continuing to increase while enrolments are declining? Why are students more prone to suspension at particular junctures of their school life? Consideration of these types of questions may provide clues for the development of strategies which could be more successful in enhancing discipline than the more dubious control oriented suspension measure. This conceptual distinction between discipline and control has a substantial intellectual tradition that seems to have been overlooked by education policy makers.

#### CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

In 1979, the Year of the Child, the Victorian Minister for Education received representation from the 'five organisations' concerning the abolition of corporal punishment in Victorian Government schools. The Minister sought advice from the Director-General of Education's Policy Committee and after an extremely arduous and protracted review, the committee recommended the formal abolition of corporal punishment.

Rejecting this advice, the Minister published a set of guidelines for the retention of corporal punishment as a 'behaviour control strategy of last resort'. A notable amendment was that parents who wished to, could avail themselves of the opportunity to place their child's name on a school register so that their children would be exempted from corporal punishment. But that amendment was at odds with legal precedent. Originally the legal interpretation when tested through litigation was that teachers had delegated authority from the parent and thus 'in loco parentis' could corporally punish the child. However, in the

1964 case of Ramsay v Larsen the High Court of Australia decided that the basis of the teacher's responsibility was not that of delegation from the parents.

Pupils of the prescribed school age attending public schools have during school hours been compulsorily removed by the authority of the Crown, from the protection of the authority of their parents...the Crown must be regarded as having taken over, in respect of the pupils, those obligations of which the parents have been deprived...a public school teacher in the exercise of his functions as such is exercising an authority delegated to him by the Crown in respect of obligations assumed by the Crown...(Chisholm, 1984, 11).

Given the above ruling with respect to the obligations of Crown employees, the Minister's amendment was obviously vulnerable to legal challenge. Such a challenge did not eventuate given a change in government in Victoria 1982. In June of that year the new Minister announced that corporal punishment would be abolished before the commencement of the 1982 school year.

To that end, the Working Party on the Abolition of Corporal Punishment in July 1982 was established and its report was published in March 1983 (Maddocks, 1983). The Minister accepted the report on 24 May and two days later schools received a communique from the Director-General of Education, formally abolishing corporal punishment in Victorian Government schools and proposing new guidelines and procedures for the suspension of students from school attendance.

#### The Corporal Punishment Debate

The debate surrounding the ethics, efficacy, and the educational merit of corporal punishment is not new. The Children's Petition presented to the British legislators by Richard Chiswell in 1669; Locke's warning that corporal punishment was an 'offensive circumstance' likely to 'infect innocent things, which it is joined with...'; the seventeenth century uprisings in British schools such as Winchester, Rugby and Eton where the army was summoned to quell student disquiet about corporal punishment; and the fact that although the first American State abolition was in New Jersey schools in 1867, the second such abolition didn't occur until Massachusetts prohibited corporal punishment in 1972, reflect the longevity and the intensity of this debate.

A common theme through the debate is that teachers find themselves in the position of defending that which they ordinarily find odious. The introduction of compulsory schooling in Britain was cited by the London School Board in 1871 to

advocate the retention of an undesirable practice. And in 1984 a senior officer in the Victoria Police applied the same logic, arguing that retention of students prompted by increasing youth unemployment meant that Victoria should pursue a re-introduction of corporal punishment.

In a private interview with the Minister of Education in Western Australia in 1985 other factors were used to account for the retention of corporal punishment in that state despite the urging of a number of reports from his Department for its abolition in Western Australia.

I guess there's a difficulty that any school system, or Minister for that matter, faces when dealing with that (the decision to abolish corporal punishment), and that is that although it is an ineffective measure, it is perceived by the public to be a very effective method, and indeed perceived by teachers to be a very effective method. I think that is just not right, but a perception is important and what we are trying to do here is to build up confidence in the new approach like the Whole School Approach...But a lot of people in the Department even are fearful that knowing that corporal punishment is not much good, they are still of the view that you might for example exacerbate a trend of transferring to the non-government sector...Looking at the Beazley Report, where we are taking a very extensive reform of education, one of the important components is public confidence in our new system, and we are not prepared to undermine it by gestures such as abolishing corporal punishment at the present time.

One of those Western Australian reports in proposing the abolition of corporal punishment had concluded that:

Generally speaking the students most frequently caned are less fearful of this form of punishment. While the students frequently caned may have had initially little fear of corporal punishment, a more likely explanation is that frequent exposure to corporal punishment has led to diminution of its effect (Dettman, 1972, 143).

#### Alternatives to Corporal Punishment

It is significant that within the disparate sectors of the Education Ministry during the early eighties a paradox was being hatched. In August 1982 a committee had been formed to review educational services for the disabled. In its report the

Committee posited a conceptual framework within which to pursue the integration of all learners into the life of regular schools. Integration was seen as a twofold process:

- (i) ...increasing the participation of children with impairments and disabilities in the education programs and social life of regular schools...;
- (ii) ...maintaining the participation of all children in the educational programs and social life of regular schools (Collins, 1984).

Students involved in disruptive incidents were to be considered within this context of integration. But concurrently other policy makers were generating two responses to disruption that were segregative rather than integrative. These were firstly, changed to suspension procedures and secondly, the development of off-site facilities to which 'disruptive students' could be referred.

#### Student Suspension Procedures

The 1983 Working Party on the Abolition of Corporal Punishment had recommended (1) means of achieving the abolition of corporal punishment in schools; (2) strategies for the management of student behaviour, including self-discipline; and (3) needed changes to existing suspension and exclusion regulations and procedures (Maddocks, 1983). One of their recommendations was that the Education Act be amended so as to enable changes to common law to prohibit the infliction of corporal punishment. Their report shows an almost exclusive preoccupation with reviewing the regulations and procedures for the suspension and exclusion of students. Only three of the Working Party's thirty-two recommendations to the Minister related to the development of self-discipline or the development of student management strategies.

Whilst there can be little doubt that the Working Party embraced the spirit of devolution in educational administration to encourage 'collaborative decision making processes' and 'participatory conflict resolution', the passage of time exposed gaps between their intentions and the problematical consequences of implementation of their recommendations (Slee, 1984). It was in the domain of student suspension that the problems became most apparent.

The new regulations governing suspension instituted a Departmental Inquiry once a student had been suspended for a cumulative period of ten days or indefinitely for a serious offence. There were two difficulties which emerged with this

suspension inquiry process. Firstly, there were problems which related to procedural shortcomings. Secondly, there were problems related to the recommendations from Inquiry Panels for the resolution of the issues under enquiry.

The Director-General emphasised in subsequent Inquiry Panel guidelines the necessity for a representative and congenial panel in order to facilitate mutually acceptable outcomes (Curry, 1983). To this end, formality was deemed deleterious and duplication of legal procedure of structure was to be avoided. This, however, assumes parity in representation, thus raising the complex and fundamental issue of due process. Certainly the Department ensured that a representative of parent organisations was in attendance to safeguard the interests of the parent and the student. In so doing, it assumed a commonality of interest between this delegate and the interests of the particular parents involved. In addition people advocacy was not established for students whose parents were unable or not inclined to attend such meetings. Galloway (1982) has demonstrated the advantage that school and departmental personnel hold over parents and students on such bodies or tribunals. This advantage is also demonstrated by the fact that before establishing a Panel of Inquiry, the school and associated counsellors or psychologists generate numerous reports of the student's history and of the suspendable incident. These reports are forwarded to the Senior Education Officer who presides over the inquiry. Implicit in this process of documentation is the affirmation of negative perceptions teachers have about the student. Furthermore, because of the high rate of suspensions in some metropolitan areas, students frequently experienced extended periods of absence from school while waiting for an inquiry.

Another major procedural difficulty concerns the discretionary nature of the decision to suspend and the determination of the duration of suspension. Responsibility for both factors rests with the school principal. Predictably, inconsistencies exist between schools in their interpretations of 'serious misconduct', 'disruption', or 'consistent misbehaviour over time'. Some schools suspend students longer for class disruption than for assault. Some suspend students for truancy while others do not. Smoking induces suspension some schools whilst not in others. Disobedience in one school may precipitate suspension, but only a reprimand in another. These inconsistencies require official scrutiny as they too lead to questions of due process. Further, the variables which may influence individual principals in applying suspension are many and various. Amongst them are time of the week, number of discipline problems already dealt with on a particular day, predisposition of the principal, and school policy.

The mandatory requirement for an Inquiry after ten days of cumulative suspensions generated further anxiety. No account is taken of the relative seriousness of incidents or the lapse of time between incidents, and what that might imply. The requirement also means that careful documentation and record building for individuals must occur for suspended students. In the juvenile justice system it has been suggested that such record building can contribute to recidivist behaviour (Schur, 1971).

Inquiry Panels are limited in the range of options available to them. While it is possible to reinstate students in their school within a special or supportive program, panels are frequently made aware of an unwritten agenda which suggests that schools, having explored all other possibilities, see the panel as an (obligatory and cumbersome) preliminary to transferring the student elsewhere. The viable options for the panel apart from the legally murky issue of exclusion, are correspondence school (student remains at home and learning is conducted through posted assignments and lessons), transfer to another school, or placement in an alternative educational setting.

Transfer to another school produces another series of unintended dynamics. Apart from the public stigmatisation of the transferee, a carousel of exchange students - a reciprocal stream of Inquiry flotsam and jetsam - resulted, and the administrative implications of attempting to integrate these students were considerable. Teachers expressed a collective feeling of being put upon for developing welfare structures in their schools. Yet it was schools with an ethos of sympathetic treatment of disruptive students that were often destinations from Inquiry Panels reaching a 'mutually agreeable outcome'. Here then, the respite for a teacher following the departure of a disruptive student could be juxtaposed with the trauma following the announcement of another disruptive student to integrate.

In practice then there were limited prospects for mutually satisfactory outcomes and that, along with the need for exhaustive documentation and additional demands upon the time of personnel, led to the practice of ignoring guidelines or abrogating the legal requirement of reporting student suspensions.

#### Changes to Suspension Guidelines: Responding to Pressure

A response to these problems, a ministerial review of school discipline procedures was established in late 1984. It was to examine the efficacy of the regulations in the production and implementation of positive codes of behaviour and supportive practices within schools and to recommend any necessary changes (Collins, 1985). Subsequently School Discipline Procedures

1985 was distributed to all schools. This document comprised an amended Regulation XVI and a description of procedures for detention, suspension, conferences, and Panel Inquiries, to be applied where 'acceptable standards of behaviour were transgressed'. As the Minister conceded in a letter in the Report of the review, 'a greater degree of responsibility in resolving these issues will be carried by schools and regions' (Collins, 1985).

This shifting of responsibility was highlighted by changes to the mandatory requirements for an Inquiry Panel. Whereas previously a student had to come under official scrutiny after ten days' cumulative suspension whilst at school, this was altered to read: 'When a student's total suspension days in any one school year exceeds ten school days'. Effectively principals could now apply suspension more frequently. And the Department's internal statistics actually reflected a trend to increased use of suspension.

While these statistics cannot be quoted directly the following broad observations are apparent:

- The continuing acceleration in the number of suspensions is accompanied by a decrease in enrolments, which suggests even greater cause for concern.
- Primary School suspensions represent a minor proportion of total suspensions. This may not be surprising but there is a dramatic leap in suspensions from Year 6 to Year 7. This raises questions about the differences between primary and post-primary schools.
- Years 8, 9, and 10 continue to reveal similarly high levels of suspension with a decline through Years 11 and 12. The suggestion that problem students leave school after Year 9 (when they turn 15) is not supported by these data. Junior and middle post-primary schooling must be a focus for policy makers.
- Some Victorian schools are more prone to employ suspension than others. This relates to the discretionary application and a reluctance by the Ministry to monitor and intercede.
- Suspension is undermined as a reformative measure given the rate of multiple suspension of students.

### Suspension: Divergence of Theory and Practice

Clearly the Education Department responded to the pressure from schools and their communities to be able to more easily exclude disruptive students without the previously attendant official incumbrances. However, the Department's endorsement of the suspension measure apparently followed an unpublished review of literature which seems ironical as even a cursory reading in the area is dissuasive of suspension as a deterrent or reformative measure.

The report, Discipline in Secondary Schools in Western Australia puts this succinctly:

If the suspension is being used as a punishment for the purpose of deterring extremely deviant behaviour, then it should be realised that it is relatively ineffective. The students most likely to incur this punishment are the students who dislike it least. For these students, suspension may even, inadvertently, become a reward. Gratification may come from being singled out for the apparently ultimate form of punishment. The students' peer group may elevate him into a hero who easily manages to accommodate the worst that the school can do (Dettman, 1972, 158-9).

And later:

It would appear then that where suspension is used as a punishment it is not fulfilling its carefully expressed function as per the Education Department Regulations nor is it an effective deterrent. The major advantage would seem to be in its effect of isolating the deviant student from the teaching body rather than the student body. Its greatest effect, therefore, is likely to be an increase in teacher rather than student morale (Dettman, 1972, 159).

According to that Report, suspension serves three purposes:

- (i) provides a period for the review of the deviant behaviour, contact parents and effecting contracts to modify future behaviour;
- (ii) provides a means for removal of the disrupting influence;
- (iii) provides a punishment and therefore a deterrent or a retribution for aberrant behaviour.

There is a great deal of overseas research that indicates the inappropriateness of suspension as a sound response to disruptive students. In one study Morrisette and Koshiyama (1976) observed that suspensions had reached mammoth proportions, whilst reports of disruptive behaviour had increased at similarly alarming rates. Deterrence was simply absent. Suspension was most often used for minor offences, and was disproportionately imposed upon black, poor, male, American Indian, Asian, and Spanish American students. Due process was problematic as many districts had written or formal guidelines governing suspension. The researchers concluded that suspension neither results in school improvement, nor services the academic or social interests of the students.

Wu et al (1982) further extend this body of literature by assessing whether suspension is an individual or school phenomenon. Using a range of analytical techniques, they concluded that in addition to their behaviour, students' chances of being suspended increased if:

1. Teachers are seen by students as relatively uninterested in them .
2. Teachers believe that students are incapable of solving problems.
3. Disciplinary matters are handled largely by administrative rules.
4. The school is not able to provide consistent and fair governance.
5. There is a relatively high degree of academic bias among school personnel.
6. There is a relatively high degree of racial bias present at school.

In short Wu et al (1982) found, from their analysis<sup>4</sup> of data from a national survey of schools completed in 1976, that it is more the ways in which different schools operate than the ways in which students in different schools behave, that affects suspension rates.

These are but two of the overseas' studies of suspension. Research into suspension in Australian schools is scarce though Western Australia has generated the most thorough work in this field. The Dettman Report (1972) surveyed schools regarding their rates of suspension and its efficacy. Ryan (1980) reviewed the welfare practices of Western Australian schools.

evaluate the relationship between school processes and disruptive behaviour. Expressing reservations about the frequent use of suspension as a punitive measure or a panacea for disruptive behaviour, Colliver (1983) emphasised concentration upon the range of management strategies and in-school programs. In the following year the research branch of the Education Department of Western Australia released a substantial discussion paper A Study of Student Suspensions. It cursorily reviewed relevant local and international literature, and through the survey and case study methods employed, evaluated suspension as applied in the Western Australian context. It also explored the policy implications for schools and the bureaucracy inherent in addressing the need to improve the quality of life in schools (Hyde and Robson, 1984).

Most recently the publication of Disruptive Behaviour in Schools (Louden, 1985), recommended a Whole School Approach, Regional Support Teams, and Classroom Relationships Project rather than refinements to the processes of suspension and exclusion from school attendance.

#### SECONDARY TEACHING UNITS - A SEGREGATED SOLUTION

The second policy approach embraced by the Victorian Education Ministry to deal with disruptive behaviour was the creation of off-site facilities to which students could be referred. In 1980, under the auspices of the Director of Secondary Education, two Teaching Units were established. These were to:

provide a level of help outside the school situation for children experiencing difficulties at school, especially where it is felt that behavioural problems stem largely from a lack of adequate skills (Jenkin, 1980, 1-2).

After leaving the Teaching Units students were to be reintegrated within their regular school, their self-esteem elevated and acquisition of skills expanded. As suspensions continued to increase, four more Teaching Units were established to service urban schools. These units were described as delivering a service beyond the provision of accommodation for disruptive students. In order to maintain credibility, the Units responded to school demands to withdraw disruptive students from the regular classroom. It is this trend that is contrary to the previously mentioned principle of maintaining the participation of children 'with problems in schooling' in the educational programs and social life of regular schools (Collins, 1984).

The provision of off-site centres for disruptive students is not new. Although there is a paucity of critical literature, the English experience in this area is illuminating. In 1978 Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Schools (HMSI) reported a review of 198

'off-site' units. The report commended the units for their provision of respite for both teachers and students, and for the alternative authority and curriculum structures which enabled students to experience success within this particular milieu. It did however recognise the public labelling inherent in the referral of a student to an 'off-site' unit and it did concede that procedures for returning pupils to schools were often less well developed than those for referral to units (HMIS, 1978).

The substantial body of literature analysing the processes and consequences of labelling or 'secondary socialisation' leads to the conclusion that students publicly assigned to lower 'status flows' find that their potential for success is significantly reduced. It is little surprise then that, of those students who do re-enter the regular school system, many may well continue to be disruptive. A study of such centres in Britain, Daines (1981) found that problem behaviour reappeared in more than 60 per cent of students upon their return to school. Unfortunately literature concerning off-site units in Victoria remains at the descriptive level.

More than this, Galloway (1980) notes that referral of students to such units has had no diminishing effects upon the rates of suspension, exclusion, or corporal punishment in the schools of origin and worse, 'the number of problem children referred to psychologists for special education has increased in direct proportion to the availability of resources' (Galloway 1980, 34). Grunsell (1980) postulates that Teaching Units represent another facet of the trend towards 'specialisms', a trend which reduces 'the range of behaviour which the front-line teacher is expected and feels able to handle'. The increasing reliance upon off-site units is reflected in, for example, English figures which show that between 1960 and 1976 there were 638 per cent more (disproportionately ethnic) maladjusted students in a school population which had increased by no more than 35 per cent (Newell, 1980, 9).

It appears that Western Australian principals call for a review of causes and responses to the perceived problem of student behaviour was prompted by a desire to generate the provision of an off-site solution to disruptive behaviour in schools. Ironically, the report, (Colliver, 1983), rebuked the value of such a strategy. Without qualification, Colliver concludes that such a centre:

is much less likely to change the teacher behaviour and school environment which bring to flower the disruptive potentials of vulnerable students...the existence of a centre would in fact reduce the

likelihood of change in normal school provision, because schools could get rid of their troublesome students (Colliver, 1983, 94).

Those comments exemplify the problem which confronts educators. The credibility of the rhetoric of integration is undermined when students deemed as disruptive continue to be segregated from the regular classroom at an increasing rate.

#### AN EDUCATIONAL RESPONSE TO DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOUR IN SCHOOLS

Responding to the problems of disruptive behaviour and student resistance in ways other than exclusion and segregation is difficult. As it stands the Victorian Ministry of Education has placed responsibility on schools and their communities for creating their own discipline policies, with suspension as an option where school guidelines fall down.

While it is praiseworthy that schools have formulated such policies and addressed the issues of aims and consistency in school discipline, in practical terms the hidden curriculum of discipline is control oriented. The emphasis of the current Education Ministry's current School Discipline Procedures 1985 remains punitive. The problem is implicitly cast in an individual perspective. In this context, comments about the development of remedial education in Victoria made by Lewis (1984) are most apposite:

Failure at school was explained in terms of individual pathology, usually with a biological aetiology...the responsibility for failure is taken from the schools...moving the focus away from the general education process, away from the need to change institutions, away from the need to rectify social conditions affecting the child, and away from the need to appropriate more resources for social use...(Lewis, 1984, 18).

In an exploration of welfare issues attached to transition from primary to secondary schools, Semmens' (1980) description of this individual-organisational dichotomy and consequent implications for action are illuminating:

The person-centred perspective tends to view the individual out of context, and focuses on his/her capacity to adjust to external pressures...this approach tends to lead to a person-blaming or more accurately, victim-blaming explanation of the problem. This means that as more and more individuals with more and more adjustment problems are found, there is a temptation to conclude that because there appears to be a correlation between

individuals and certain problems, then one must cause the other. Therefore, not only does the problem reside within the individual, but the resolution must also be located within the individual (Semmens, 1980, 20).

Coulby and Harper (1985) suggest that the adoption of 'disruptive student' has served to perpetuate this individual perspective.

If we perceive a situation to be disruptive, then this is a temporary state of affairs, and one which involved several participants. If we perceive behaviour to be disruptive, then this is something which can change into other more appropriate behaviours. But if we perceive a pupil to be disruptive, this is somehow something to do with his/her personality or nature. This means that we are more likely to regard it as permanent and difficult to change. We will probably then see any incident in which a 'disruptive pupil' is involved as caused by him/her than as a clash between various participants within a specific context (Coulby and Harper, 1985, 3-4).

Moreover, this perspective on the genesis of disruption as an individual phenomenon, dominates the responses of teachers and administrators.

The existence of the category 'disruptive pupil' both in the provision of a local education authority and in the mental set of educators, may then actually serve to inhibit methods of cutting down disruption in mainstream primary and secondary schools (Coulby and Harper, 1985, 4).

In postulating discipline policies, Victorian schools tend to have adopted behaviourist/management models which rely on control through various strategies. Such strategies clearly describe the phenomenon of disruptive behaviour; forge empathetic bonds with teachers frustrated by disruptive students; and provide systematic steps for the modification of the behaviour of individuals or groups of individuals, for the dissipation of teacher stress. Wilson (1971) observes that this frame of reference manifests a limited understanding of discipline as a philosophical concept. The behaviourist, impelled by the necessity of immediately quantifiable results, substitutes 'control' for discipline in the quest for order.

Subjected to such reductionism, discipline connotes an observation of hierarchical status and order. Pivotal to the behavioural arsenal is the aversion to punishment as a means of countering deviant behaviour. 'Consequences' become the means

for ensuring student adherence to the obligations of their station. Whilst educators can grasp the qualitative difference between 'time out' as a consequence rather than a punishment, this demarcation is too esoteric a distinction for even the most philosophical of disruptive students. Where group dynamics, personal interaction skills, and contingency contracts succumb, separation through 'time-out', suspension from school attendance, and referral to alternative educational settings are enlisted.

Given that the Working Party on the Abolition of Corporal Punishment emphasised a shifting from punitive impositions to 'self discipline which is interwoven with school curriculum' (Maddocks, 1983), adherence to an individual perception of the genesis and amelioration of disruptive behaviour is inappropriate. A broader organisational perspective which also focuses upon changing school practices and policies that contribute in unintended but systematic ways to troublesome behaviour becomes imperative. Apparently largely ignored in Victoria's educational policy-making community are writers who adopt this perspective of student disruption.

Hirschi (1969) posits control characteristics fundamental to social control or conforming behaviour. Attachment to others, personal investment in conventional activity, involvement in socially acceptable activity, and acceptance of the morality of social rules collectively influence the degree of conformity of the individual to normative or conventional behaviour (Hirschi, 1969). And Gagne (1982) stresses the importance of the school as an organisation which can achieve 'student envelopment' in socially acceptable behaviour.

Rutter et al (1979) and Pink (1982) argue that the relationship between disruptive behaviour, student failure, and 'school climate' further implicates the responsibility of the organisation for student behaviour and notes the need to review school ethos as well as organisational practices and processes in affecting change.

The way in which tracks are created which effectively and systematically label children as school failures, or belonging to higher or lower status groups leads to a dichotomy between 'sponsored' and 'marginal' groups within the school with the latter group having no scope for success (Polk, 1984). As Hirschi (1969) and other researchers suggest, recognition and status may be sought in 'deviant' forms, leading to the generation of subcultures where differing normative values, hierarchical patterns, and behavioural expectations enables alternative 'sponsorship'.

The challenge to which educators and education administrations must respond is that of creating bonds in schools which encourage students to participate. Practices which aim for social control

are not integrative. Crisis management or pastoral care programs fail to place the issue of discipline within the curriculum. Moreover, they tend to take students away from their peers for remediation, therapy, or counselling, thereby compounding the labels and marginality of these students. The task of integration is rendered far more problematic if the educator uses separation as his starting point.

In its place Knight (1985) calls for democratic schooling. Believing discipline to be critical to the teaching and learning process, he asserts that students will be integrated as they learn the skills and requirements of participation. Dreikurs and Cassell (1972) point to changes in the expectations of students in terms of their involvement in decision making. Society has become more democratic, they purport, correspondingly students expect that they will be afforded rights of expression and determination similar to the level they experience in the home. Teachers' adherence to their authoritarian legacy creates the dysfunction which ignites 'purposeful' yet disruptive behaviour in the student body.

In their recommendations for resolution, Dreikurs and Cassell (1972) and Balson (1982, 1984) are less forthright and systematic. Priority is given to the creation of empathetic bonds, caring and sympathetic relationships. Mastery by teachers of the processes of group dynamics becomes quintessential. Classroom meetings and negotiations become the key to classroom management. Scrutiny is not extended to organisational processes or practice in the broader school context. Curriculum is absent from their discussions.

In perceiving a complexity in democracy not recognised by these authors, Knight (1985) looks at the requirements of democratic organisation and participation. A comprehensive model for teaching these skills in age appropriate ways is suggested in the 'apprenticeship' scheme. Knight (1985a) argues that as students exercise more responsibility for their behaviour and decision making and take a direct role in creating the ethos and practice of the organisation, they will be increasingly integrated into the life of the school. Programs such as these do have limitations or difficulties. Many of the difficulties centre upon the investment that people have in established values, organisation, and practice. However, the strength of these programs is their philosophical and educational unity with the intentions of the Victorian Ministry of Education. Most apposite is the principle enunciated in Decision Making in Victorian Education that schools should

develop an understanding of their world and of the wider society and an ability to control their own affairs and participate in the management of their society (Fordham, 1983, 5).

Paradoxically, while some sectors of the Ministry are engaged in countering disruptive behaviour as a student owned or individually oriented phenomenon, there is a growing movement, exemplified by Student Working Parties and Student Action Groups, which receives Ministerial patronage to forge bonds based upon participation and positive change. Disappointing is the fact that the connection between this move and the amelioration of student alienation and disruptive behaviour appears not yet to have been recognised throughout the Ministry generally.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

The fundamental challenge for policymakers hinges upon the necessity of securing and maintaining teacher and student confidence in proposed strategies for improvement, whilst effecting a shift in perspective so that 'discipline' becomes an educational rather than an exclusively management issue. Teachers require support and resources if they are to effectively deal with problems within the regular school. Without such support it is ludicrous to expect that they address longer term issues such as the redefinition of classroom disruption as a curriculum issue. It is also imperative that theorists and policy makers are careful that, in narrowing the focus upon school processes as the genesis of disruption, they do not shift the blame to generate a new set of victims; the teachers.

A systematic approach to the issue with clearly defined long term and short term goals based on thorough research is required. The short-term goal should encompass strategies in the classroom and school community to provide immediate support for allaying disruptive behaviour, while supporting schools to identify and generate effective programs for disciplined learning. Long-term strategies should address questions of school climate, curriculum reform and student commitment. While the Education Ministry has worked imaginatively in order to stem the flow of students from schools after the postcompulsory years, this work has not been used to generate a more appropriate education in the preceding years. This seems shortsighted.

The Western Australian Department of Education has pursued policy development with some success. In particular:

- It has a demonstrated commitment to research, with an emphasis upon application. Louden (1985) reached beyond the immediate concerns of punitive reactions to indiscipline, to grasp the issues of school effect with a view to developing strategies to improve teachers' management skills concurrently with the pursuit of developing school climate conducive to student commitment and the improved performance of all students.

- At classroom level there has been trial, evaluation and broader implementation of an Action Research Model of teacher professional development, and peer support. The Effective Classroom Relationships Project represents an attempt for teachers to identify needs, goals and engage in professional development to broaden knowledge and extend skills: management and curriculum development, planning and implementation.
- A major focus of the Loudon Report was the Whole School Approach for school climate improvement which was trialed and evaluated in target schools (after local negotiation) with a view to being extended on the basis of evaluated results.
- At Regional Level a multi-disciplinary team approach to supporting schools and teachers has occurred through the deployment of consultants.
- At State Level the department is consistent in its promotion of such policies and resources within the context of general educational improvement for all students .

This is but one model of reference for policy makers which diminishes the need for focusing upon 'disruptive students'. Victoria is at a point where a rethink is both imminent and invited. The Ministerial Reference Group on Integration is currently reconsidering Regulation XVI in the context of including all students in the educational and social life of the regular school, taking into account the principles of access and success for all students, as outlined in a recent Ministerial paper (Fordham, 1984).

While Regulation XVI does require attention to overcome some of the legal and procedural problems therein, to enhance discipline in schools educational services themselves require greater scrutiny. To this end, a group comprising teachers, teacher educators, academics, Education Ministry personnel, Community Services personnel, an Integration Unit officer, and guidance personnel, have met with a view to collating data which indicates:

1. the extent of disruption in schools; and
2. the extent of segregation of students from regular schools.

The group also intends to identify exemplary school practices which have ameliorated disruption and to devise similar programs and recommendations for resource delivery to support teachers and students in regular schools. One such initiative is the development of a school based special education course conducted by Melbourne College of Advanced Education. Graduate Diploma students from that course will be addressing issues within the school milieu, thereby providing support to teachers.

Despite the inherent complexity of issues with disruptive behaviour in schools, there is room for people to bring optimism to the discussion and planning table. The Victorian Ministry at the moment is considering proposals for School Support Centres as a consultancy service, resource determination and delivery agency for schools. The professional development of Ministry personnel and teachers represents another focus for action within the Education Ministry at present. Clearly it is timely to be addressing such issues in a way that requires policy-makers to move away from the strictures of looking only at sanctions and regulations.

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## 'THE HAVEN' - WHYALLA ALTERNATIVE SECONDARY SCHOOL

Christine Woithe  
Principal  
'The Haven'  
South Australia

INTRODUCTION

During 1985 Whyalla and Port Augusta Secondary School Principals (West of the Range Principals' Association) expressed concern about the havoc caused within their schools by a small group of seriously disruptive students. At their meeting held on 4 July 1985 a consensus was reached that 'there are a small number of students for whom schools do not have the resources to cope'.

The principals also agreed that those students (who often act irrationally, are not able to be reasoned with, and cannot be controlled within the 'normal' school setting by even the most experienced, competent teacher) have a significant deleterious effect on the education and ability to learn of other students, and the tone of the school. In addition, those recalcitrant students take up much time of deputies and other support systems in the school. Invariably attention to those students often means staff are unable to perform all the other activities and duties for which they are responsible.

The Education Department has a responsibility to provide some form of education for these students, as most are under the age of compulsion and other students and their parents are becoming increasingly angry about the situation.

The principals suggested these students be catered for by the provision of an 'off campus', preferably 'live-in' institution with a complete and co-ordinated behaviour modification program in a tightly controlled situation, properly qualified trained personnel (e.g social workers) and adequate family contact (when appropriate).

These concerns and proposals were then presented to the Western Area Deputy Director of Education and Assistant Director of Education (Student Services) who indicated their willingness to pursue the concept of a 'haven'.

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This paper was prepared with the willing assistance of Bruce Menhennett, Teacher, Sandi Schiller, School Assistant, and the students.

## THE HAVEN

The Haven was thus established 'to cater for students who are unable to be controlled by any teacher, regardless of their level of professional development, within the normal school environment; students who act irrationally, cannot be reasoned with, are erratic and who prevent support systems from functioning in their intended role, within secondary schools'.

Following negotiations, the first principal for The Haven was appointed in June 1986. A building was leased in September 1986, two additional staff appointed (1 teacher, 1 school assistant) in September 1986; and the first student intake dates from 1 October 1986.

### The Students

Since then 14 students have been enrolled at The Haven. Their average age at date of enrolment was 14 years 2 months and the average length of their stay at The Haven was 13 weeks. Three have returned to schools, two have been transferred to adolescent psychiatric assessment centres, two left school after turning fifteen, two left school with exemptions (one of whom is unemployed, and one in part-time employment) and five are still attending at The Haven. There were six new enrolments in June 1987, and there are three students on the waiting list.

Students present with most of the following characteristics: a well documented history of chronic, serious disruptiveness within the school system, a recent history of violence within a school, academic underachievement, poor school attendance, repeated law-breaking (theft, breaking and entering, assault, shop-lifting, illegal use of motor vehicle), and involvement with drugs and alcohol.

They tend to come from multi-problem, single parent families, families which 'over use' support systems, or families which resist intervention.

It is hard to generalise the students' personal characteristics, but all have the 'raw' intelligence to enable them to benefit from formal education, have low self-esteem, are astute, manipulative, 'over' active, and impetuous, tend to ridicule and bully others, and have a 'temper problem'. They also externalise blame, have usually 'dictated the terms' - at home, school, in the community, are 'street wise', often sexually very active, and are a curious mixture of being 15 years (chronological age) 50 years (knowledge of the world) 5 years (emotional age) - 15/50/5 syndrome.

### The Environment

The Haven occupies a leased, modern brick church complex, located on a double corner block, in an established part of Whyalla, distant from the students' homes, easily accessible by bike and public transport. The building is light, airy, well ventilated, cool in summer, reasonably easy to heat in winter.

Internally there is a large indoor recreation area, a work room (used also for meals), an office, interview room, withdrawal/work area, kitchen, laundry, 2 toilets and a mezzanine balcony. Each student has a 'private' area, the balcony and main hall feature an assortment of cubby house structures. Overall there is an impression of homeliness, tidiness, reasonable orderliness, and a lack of clutter.

Equipment has been deliberately kept to a minimum, it was bought new and has been carefully maintained by its users. The chief teaching aid is a whiteboard and there is recreational equipment (darts, table tennis table, pool table), a small functional reference library and an adequate supply of general reading material (comics, magazines, newspapers) and quiet indoor games. While there is basic camping equipment there are few 'extras' (no computers).

### Psychological Environment or 'Tone'

Considerable effort has been expended to make life at The Haven under-reactive, mainly peaceful and calm. Staff then need to be firm, predictable, consistent, encouraging, fair, and courteous.

It is essential there are clear expectations and clear rules. There are minimal rules - the main one being no smoking inside the building.

Expectations at The Haven are:

- . regular punctual attendance;
- . negotiated, or honestly explained, absences;
- . The Haven environment to be 'violence, theft, vandalism, drug and alcohol free';
- . all courteous and reasonable requests to be complied with promptly;
- . students, as a group, will attempt to work out solutions to their own problems;
- . parents, friends, foster parents, will be interested in and supportive of The Haven's programs;
- . honesty, courtesy, and openness will prevail.

While predictable consequences follow certain actions, staff are reasonably forgiving within well structured, well defined routines that place emphasis on respect for people and property.

### Curriculum

The Haven is a small secondary school - NOT a 'drop in centre' or a youth club so it has its own separate and documented curriculum. The purpose of that curriculum is to help students learn the skills they need to manage well in 'real life' through activities, programs and experiences. Accordingly, activities are designed to build on and broaden each student's life experience, and to manage and modify student behaviours.

The curriculum is flexible and responsive to changing needs, but centres around developing skills necessary for: literacy and numeracy, domestic management (washing, ironing, mending, sewing, cooking) time, money and stress management. It also includes management of emotions, feelings, sexuality and transitions, problem solving and decision making, learning from experience, and discovering values and beliefs. Use of leisure time, managing with societal rules and laws, discovering and developing genuine interests, and choosing a future way of life are also encompassed in the curriculum.

The daily/weekly timetable is the framework within which the 'curriculum' takes effect. It is followed with reasonable regularity but permits plenty of flexibility to allow for real interests, spontaneity, crises, and the unforeseen.

### Teachers

There are few teachers who choose to work with disruptive students - thus the choice of staff tends to be limited. For those teachers without a natural flair it is often a painful experience (initially). 'Traditional' teacher responses must be unlearned and painfully replaced with new ones; e.g. respect must be earned not demanded, natural over-reactions replaced with deliberate under-reactions.

As it is impossible to hide behind rank or role, teachers must be prepared to show their real selves. They have to adopt a realistic attitude to life and work. The chances are the teacher will work hard for minimal rewards or signs of success. Idealists are quickly disillusioned or burn out.

Total cohesiveness between adult staff is vital to the success of The Haven; students are quick to exploit any division, to play adults off against each other. It is not an overstatement to claim adult lives could depend on their loyalty to each other.

It is best to avoid preconceived ideas as to what makes a 'good' teacher in places such as The Haven. A very inexperienced teacher who learns quickly may well be as 'good' as a more experienced, more resistant teacher with set responses. Teachers have to view their work as a 'skilled' trade rather than a 'life's vocation', the tool of trade is oneself, and a detached overview helps prevent burn out. Teachers have to gain student respect rather than student affections.

There are no right or wrong ways of operating within a setting such as The Haven. Whatever 'works' is best, some methods are simply better than others. 'On the job training' is the best preparation for managing disruptive and disinclined students. Constant exposure to, and training in, a range of skills like group work, family therapy, counselling, behaviour modifications etc is useful. Versatility, broad skill base, a wealth of responses to call upon, a good knowledge of community support services all assist the teacher to manage well.

#### THE IDEOLOGY OF THE HAVEN

In teaching, the staff attempt to:

- . match their teaching style to the student's preferred learning style;
- . provide a quiet working environment;
- . make a genuine provision for individual differences (through differential rates of learning, quality and quantity of output)
- . equip the student for success (provide table cards; break tasks into manageable stages, write clearly on blackboard, etc) and eliminate excuses for not working;
- . emphasise the practical;
- . utilise real life situations and practice;
- . utilise real life situations and practice;
- . maintain high expectations, insist on high quality products;
- . genuinely discover and foster each person's talent;
- . teach for transfer of skills - from The Haven to real life;

- gradually introduce stresses into the teaching/learning situation;
- prepare students for transitions - e.g. return to 'normal' school.

In managing and attempting to modify behaviours, staff try to:

- clearly state rules (minimal), expectations, consequences - provide consistent predictable follow up - showing that we mean what we say;
- expose student to the logical consequences of their actions - no cover ups;
- maintain a specific school 'climate' or tone - non-violent, courteous, respectful, anti-vandalism;
- utilise group and peer pressure;
- use 'creative' responses to provocative situations - use the 'least expected response';
- remain under-reactive, passive and 'monotonous' in escalating situations;
- give a student an honest 'fresh' start once an episode of unacceptable behaviour has been dealt with;
- discover and use individually 'meaningful' positive reinforcers (free time, stamp, choice of movie, etc).

### Beliefs

Some of the beliefs which underlie the functioning of staff at The Haven are:

- Most disruptive teenagers want to experience success at school and be like others - they lack the skills and knowledge to help them do this.
- A young person who 'is out of control' can do very little to break the cycle they find themselves in.
- 'Out of control' disruptive teenagers really seek someone to impose a structure and some control over them (initially).
- Many disruptive students are highly intelligent and often very talented. School achievement is not necessarily indicative of intelligence or potential. It is crucial to recognise and develop each individual's gift and/or talent.

- . Disruptive behaviours are unlikely to be modified simply by tender loving care - kindness tends to be perceived as 'weakness'.
- . Even highly 'emotional' students tend to respond well to the notion of 'fairness'.
- . Most students at The Haven have a good idea of what it is they need to learn to manage better in real life; they like to direct their own learning, to be involved in the educational process.
- . It is important to ensure students are exposed to the logical consequences of their actions.
- . Most students get real satisfaction from 'achievement'. If expectations and standards are high they rise to the occasion.
- . Most parents are concerned about their child, appreciative of genuine help and want to be supportive.
- . A few clear enforceable rules are preferable to many.
- . There are many more effective responses to 'disruptiveness' besides the cane.
- . The removal of artificial or unnecessary structures (e.g. petty rules) gives oppositional youth fewer opportunities to resist - thus co-operation becomes the norm.
- . The more students are involved in the educational process the more likely they are to co-operate.
- . Students must be able to transfer and apply newly learnt skills in real life situations - to cope well within The Haven is not sufficient.
- . Labelling of students by us or other professionals is not helpful, and can provide students with an excuse for poor behaviour - 'short concentration spans' are easily rectified.
- . It is best for disruptive difficult students to be taught by people who wish to do so.

SUMMARY

Staff at The Haven are grateful for and readily acknowledge the:

- generous assistance from, and co-operation of, the Whyalla secondary schools, particularly the tolerant way in which they give our students a 'second chance';
- prompt assistance of Whyalla support agencies (Department for Community Welfare);
- encouragement, support and practical assistance of Whyalla District and Western Area Education Department personnel;
- co-operation of the police;
- many community members who simply visit and provide our students with a 'real' audience;
- help of our neighbour who 'keeps an eye on things'.

I am particularly indebted to my co-workers who help and support me and tolerate my idiosyncrasies and humour my 'creative responses'. Our rewards come from seeing healthy, happy, co-operative teenagers thriving at school. Some days we manage well, others are nerve-wracking disasters - we don't win all the battles, but we often win a war.

A STUDY OF SELF-REPORTED OFFENDING BY VICTORIAN ADOLESCENTS

Shane Carroll  
Lecturer  
School of Business  
Western Institute  
Victoria

DARK FIGURES OF CRIME

It is widely understood that the official statistics represent but the tip of the iceberg of crime, the exact amount of which is largely unknown. One of the techniques which has been used to investigate this 'dark figure' of crime has been the introduction in the later 1950's of self-reported measures of offending. These measures involve asking young people to report their involvement in particular types of behaviour. Indeed, the results of early self-report studies produced a very different picture of adolescent involvement in offending than that obtained from official statistics. Not only was the volume of self-reported offending much greater than that reflected in police and court statistics, but the general distributions of young offending and offenders were also very different.

The self-report method has been used only rarely in Australia and no local self-report study has concentrated on only 'school-based offences'. The current self-report study included a variety of 24 different offences ranging from reasonably minor to moderately serious acts. Of those offences, five related primarily to a school-based situation and are the focus for this paper.

THE SAMPLE

It was originally aimed to create a random sample of Year 9 students from Government and non-Government schools throughout the State of Victoria. Year 9 was chosen as the optimal level for the study because local research indicates that the majority of contacts between members of the Victoria Police and young offenders involve 14 to 16 year olds which approximates the average age of Victorian Year 9 students.

Requests to participate in the research project were forwarded to the principals of 41 schools throughout the State of Victoria in an attempt to obtain an accurate cross-section of adolescents. However, it was disappointing that even the most extensive and vigorous efforts could not secure the participation of all principals contacted, with a final affirmative response from only nine of the original 41 schools contacted.

The most serious obstacle to gaining co-operation in the research project was the apprehension of principals (and sometimes deputy-principals, year level co-ordinators and school councils) to the sensitivity of the questionnaire (13 of the 32 refusing schools). In seven other schools staff were said to be too busy to assist researcher in collection of permission slips. Four schools claimed they had been over-researched within the previous school-year, four could not fit the research in with curriculum and timetable problems, and the final four gave no reason. In a large number of instances, principals seemed embarrassed or almost apologetic, partly for themselves and partly for their school community in declining to co-operate.

#### REPRESENTATIVENESS OF SAMPLE

The final sample comprised 961 student respondents; 50.4 per cent being girls and 49.6 per cent were boys. This figure compared favourably with the 1983 census statistics for school student population which indicated figures of 48.8 per cent for girls and 51.2 per cent for boys.

Table 1 shows how pupils from Government schools comprised 44 per cent of the sample with the remaining 56 per cent of students coming from Private schools.

TABLE 1

#### YEAR 9 ENROLMENTS FOR STATE OF VICTORIA: 1983 COMPARED TO PRESENT SAMPLE

School Type	State Population %	This Sample %
High Schools	45.0	41.0
Technical Schools	26.0	3.0
Catholic Schools	18.0	27.5
Non-Catholic Schools	11.0	28.5
Total	100.0	100.0
Total - Government Schools	71.0	44.0
Total - Non-Government Schools	29.0	56.0

No country schools accepted the invitation to participate in the study which was disappointing. The low response rate from the Technical schools was also unfortunate. Equally, if not of greater concern was the extremely low rate of returned parental permission slips from the one participating Technical school. Only 29 students returned the slips after initial contact with 63 students. Whether this was a result of poor administration within the schools (reminding the students to return the slips) or a reflection of the type of student at this school is not known. Overall, however, it was felt that the sample that remained for analysis was representative of urban Victorian adolescents.

#### THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The anonymous questionnaire used in this research was specifically designed for use with Victorian school students and asked them to co-operate in a study of young people in Victoria by answering questions about 'laws, rules and regulations' with a preamble reading:

Recent studies suggest that everyone breaks some rules and regulations during their lifetime. Some break them regularly, others less often. Some are more serious and others less serious.

This was done in order to assist the less inclined students to answer truthfully and without fear of inhibition. Students were reassured that the questionnaire was not a test, that it had no right or wrong answers, and were asked not to affix their names to the questionnaire, so that anonymity and confidentiality of their answers could be maintained.

The students were asked to indicate how many times 'since last Christmas had they and their friends committed the offences listed'. This represents an easy reference date for the students. The recall period was approximately eight to nine months as the administration of the questionnaires took one month to complete.

Overall, the students surveyed in the schools were particularly enthusiastic about the prospect of completing their questionnaires. The survey appeared to be treated seriously and attentively by the vast majority of the students and this was borne out by their candour in asking questions both before and after the completion of the survey.

Of the 961 completed questionnaires, 54 were deleted for the following reasons: failure on consistency item (33), failure on lie item (13), blatant exaggeration (6), and two blank questionnaires were submitted. These deletions left a final workable sample of 907.

### A WORD OF CAUTION

The usual caveats must be entered about generalising from the current study. One limitation in the design of the present research is that there was no special follow-up for students who were selected from the school roll, and returned the parental permission slips, but who were absent on the day of the survey. While this number was small, not including absentees might have introduced some slight bias.

A final consideration is that the sample attracted only city-based schools and therefore one should be cautious in generalising the survey results to all Victorian School offenders.

### AMOUNT OF CRIME ADMITTED

It was expected a very high proportion of the sample would admit at least one offence, and analysis of the questionnaire responses revealed that all but one of the students admitted offences. Table 2 provides details of the school-based and some community-based offences reported by the 906 offenders.

TABLE 2

PREVALENCE AND INCIDENCE OF SELF-REPORTED OFFENDING  
IN THE STUDENT POPULATION (N = 906)

	Number of Offenders Admitting Offence	Percentage of All Respondents Admitting Offence (Prevalence)	Total Number of Offences Admitted	Average Number of Offences Admitted (Incidence)
<u>School-Based Offences</u>				
Stole from school canteen	106	11.7	693	6.5
Stole from another student	403	44.3	3008	7.4
Stole school property	280	30.9	1574	5.6
Carved up or damaged school property	556	61.4	12562	22.6
Truancy	213	23.5	2221	10.4
<u>Community-Based Offences</u>				
Stole property from relatives	382	41.2	3589	9.3
Stole goods from a shop	310	34.2	2699	8.7
Vandalism	275	30.3	3800	13.8
Travelled on Public Transport without a ticket	414	45.7	5761	13.9
Drank Alcohol	594	55.6	11462	22.7

Overall, the 906 offending students admitted to a total of 30,058 school-based offences. This represents an average of 33.1 offences per offending student. The figures in Table 2 illustrate that the offence of damaging school desks or school property is the single most common and most frequently committed offence by Victorian adolescents.

It is difficult to compare this figure with overseas self-report studies because of different offence definitions and the fact that no self-report questionnaire has concentrated only on offending in schools. Gladstone (1978) asked 584 English schoolboys if they had 'scratched a desk at school' in the previous six months and found that 85 per cent of those boys had done so. That study provides support for the proposition that such trivial acts were so common as to be more or less normal behaviour by the students. And Braithwaite (1979) found that 62 per cent of the 576 male students whom he interviewed had 'carved up or written on a school desk'. The present study asked the students if they had carved up or damaged a school desk or school property and an equally high 61.4 per cent of the students admitted an average 22.6 times.

Theft offences by students were widely reported in this study continuing the results of other self-report studies that theft is a frequent activity. The Tasmanian study by Jackson (1984) highlighted the common occurrence of theft by young people. It found that 99 per cent of a sample of 250 eleven and twelve year old children reported that they had stolen something at some time or another. And Belson's English (1975) study, which involved a much larger sample of 1,425 boys, reported similar results with each boy admitting at least some kind of stealing. In each of the 44 categories of theft Belson inquired about, admissions were made an average, by 42 per cent of the sample, although once again both those studies were not limited to theft in the school setting.

In this sample, 11.7 per cent (106 students) admitted to stealing from the school canteen, an average of 6.5 times, a result lower than Warner's (1982) finding of 16 per cent for 200 Tasmanian High School Students who were asked the number of times in which they had committed that offence in the last three years. It is also clear, and not surprising, that stealing from other students is the most common form of theft and almost a half (44.3 per cent) of all the current respondents admitted to this offence at an average of 7.4 times.

The commonness of such activity is well reflected in the types of items listed by students as being the last item they had stolen. These included pens, money, footballs and basketballs, assignments, cigarettes, marijuana, and bicycles.

A further feature of Table 2 is the substantial number of students who reported stealing school property. Just on one-third (30.9 per cent) of the students admitted to this offence an average of 5.6 occasions.

The listed stolen property included food/confectionery, sports equipment, money, stationery, car badges, teachers' purses and wallets, fire extinguishers, furniture, and toilet paper.

The situation with respect to truancy appears to be not as serious as some other self-report literature suggests, but there are difficulties with the definition of truancy. Even Coventry et al. (1984) in their extensive study with data collected over four years from 2,378 Victorian school students had difficulty arriving at a working definition and at best referred to truancy as 'school non-attendance, without acceptable excuse' (Coventry, 1984, 4). That study suggested that truancy was common for between 40 and 60 per cent of Victorian secondary students.

The present study asked students if they had skipped a whole school day without permission and just under a quarter (23.5 per cent) of the students admitted to this offence an average of 10.4 times. This figure was well below the overseas self-report findings of Casparis and Vaz (1973) which were 40.8 per cent for 489 Swiss boys, 47.0 per cent for Gold's (1970) American sample and 82.2 per cent in West and Farrington's (1977) English sample and 58.8 per cent in Shapland's (1978) British study. However, these authors adopted a less restrictive definition than the current study by referring to truancy as including any absence from school.

Table 2 also provides an overview of the percentage of total offenders who admitted to any of five selected community-based offences. It is apparent that collectively, there were similar number of community-based offenders to that of school-based offenders. This last statistic is, of course, not directly comparable as the offences are quite different and range quite considerably in seriousness.

SCHOOL EXPERIENCE OF SELF-REPORTED OFFENDERS

Table 3 provides an overview of the school type and school-based offences of the 906 admitted offenders.

TABLE 3  
SELF-REPORTED SCHOOL-BASED OFFENDING

School-Based Offences	Percentage of Offences Admitted By Students from				Percentage of <u>all</u> Respondents Admitting Offence (Prevalence)
	High n=369 %	Technical n=29 %	Catholic n=247 %	Other n=262 %	
Stole from school canteen	15.7	75.9	4.9	5.3	11.7
Stole from another student	58.3	79.3	18.2	45.8	44.3
Stole school property	45.8	62.1	17.0	19.5	30.9
Carved up or damaged school property	73.2	82.8	41.7	59.9	61.4
Truancy	20.9	62.1	16.6	13.0	23.5

It needs to be stressed from the outset that the low number of Technical School students prevents a valid comparison of school offending rates. Notwithstanding this, the most notable feature of the data is that Government (High and Technical) Schools provided the major bulk of offenders, with private schools providing a much smaller number of offenders.

These results were not unexpected as previous overseas self-report surveys have revealed large differences between the offending rates of Scandinavian (Christie et al. 1965) and British (West and Farrington, 1977) selective and non-selective schools serving the same or similar neighbourhoods. And locally,

Challinger (1985) found that of all officially recorded offenders in his study, 86 per cent of those students were, or had, attended Government schools.

In the past, Victorian Technical Schools in particular have appeared responsible for a larger number of official police contacts. Challinger (1985) revealed that of youngsters who had come to the official attention of the Victorian Police, Technical School students provided the largest group. And the current figures reveal that Technical School students do admit a lot of offending.

This over-representation of offending Technical School students might be attributable at first glance to the negative impact of Technical school curriculum or administration. However, of particular importance here is the British work of Rutter and Giller (1979) who found interschool offending differences in their study to be the result of selective intake by schools. Their results of research with 12 inner-London secondary schools revealed that whereas some schools admit a high proportion of behaviourally difficult, educationally backward children, other schools have intakes of predominantly well behaved students with above-average scholastic skills. According to these authors the latter group of schools is more likely to have less offending simply because they deal with a more favoured school population.

West and Farrington's (1977) Cambridge Study of 411 boys also shows that differences among offending rates in schools was primarily due to differences among the boys entering them. For those particular boys and schools, behaviour before entering secondary school was more important than the school itself as a determinant of offending. However, it needs to be noted that both studies were not concerned primarily with school-based crime.

The common view expressed in Victoria that less academic or poorly behaved primary school students are sometimes guided or 'streamed' into Technical Schools was endorsed by one Government Technical School principal and various school co-ordinators and teachers from the High, Catholic and Independent schools in private comments to the researcher. Given this situation, the high percentage of offending Technical School students in this study might not be an indication of Technical Schools as educational institutions, but a reflection of the type of student entering those schools.

Examination of the offences committed by the students reveals a pervasive pattern. Overall, theft was a major occupation of the Government School students whereas a smaller segment of Private Catholic and Independent School students admitted stealing. Plainly, the commonness of youngsters committing vandalism

towards school property is well illustrated by the fact that large proportions in all school types admitted in this offence. However, the private schools continued the trend of having the lowest percentage of offenders admitting to truancy.

#### THE NOTION OF COMMITMENT AND SELF-REPORTED OFFENDING

The importance of the school to youthful offending has been the subject of a great deal of criminological debate (Elliott, 1966; Pink, 1984; Polk, 1984). For the purposes of this study it was intended to test the importance of the school and school commitment to the offending sample. A definition of school commitment was adapted from that of Murdoch and Phelps (1972).

A scale was developed that focussed upon 'liking' and 'interest' of school. Three questions were included in the questionnaire from which 'school commitment' was defined.

A student needed to answer firstly that he or she enjoyed school or thought that it was O.K.; secondly, that the things that they were taught at school were interesting or O.K.; and thirdly, that if offered a full-time job 'today' they would not quit school. Any respondent not answering the three questions in that way was defined as being non-committed. Alarmingly, only a little more than a half (57 per cent) of the current students were classified as committed to school.

TABLE 4

#### PREVALENCE OF SELF-REPORTED SCHOOL-BASED OFFENCES BY COMMITMENT OR NON-COMMITMENT TO SCHOOL

School-Based Offences	Percentage of Committed Students Admitting Offence (n=518)	Percentage of Non-Committed Students Admitting Offence (n=387)
Stole from school canteen	4.6	21.2
Stole from another student	32.8	59.7
Stole school property	22.2	42.6
Carved up or damaged school property	52.5	72.6
Truancy	11.8	39.3

It was expected that a clear positive relationship would be found between prevalence of self-reported offending and non-commitment to school. And Table 4 shows that this expectation was fulfilled with all five offences revealing significant differences between non-committed and committed students. These results demonstrate the importance of the school and highlight the need for more positive schooling. Of interest here are some of the comments made by committed and non-committed students in their attitudes to school.

Examples of Committed students' comments are:

- 'It doesn't really worry me. If it gets me a good job then that's that.' (Male aged 15)  
(Male aged 15)
- 'I like my teachers and class but hate exams'.  
(Female aged 15)
- 'I hate it but I don't know what I'd do without it'.  
(Female aged 15)

Non-Committed students said such things as:

- 'Terrible - I hate school - It's become a drag'.  
(Female aged 15)
- 'I'm only here because of my parents'.  
(Male 14)
- 'I suppose school's O.K. It's just that the things we do are so boring'.  
(Male aged 14)

#### SUMMARY

There seems to be little evidence that 'crime in our schools' has increased dramatically in the past decade or so, but there is no readily available self-report data to test such a proposition. Moreover, the evidence in this study is not sufficiently strong to suggest that school-based offences are at the more serious end of the scale. Needless to say, more Australian research utilising the self-report method in our schools is required.

While it should also be recognised that it is beyond the scope of education systems as such to eliminate, or fully compensate for many factors contributing to youthful offending, it is clear from the current data that students with less interest in school are more likely to offend as there was clear support in this study for the proposition that a low commitment to schooling is related to higher levels of offending. In short, there is now an onus upon schools to make their curricula and programs more attractive and relevant to young people.

It is now a matter of time to see if the Commonwealth and State Governments are prepared to promote useful school programs and employment opportunities. Of course, any such innovative programs and others like it require good common sense and insight in order for them to run effectively. In Victoria, we are fortunate to have school teachers and personnel with those characteristics who perceive the importance of dealing appropriately and imaginatively with such a task.

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THE 'ALI BABA' PROGRAM

A JOINT YACS AND NSW DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION INITIATIVE IN INTERVENTION INTO JUVENILE THEFT BEHAVIOUR

Gregg Chapman  
School Counsellor  
Armidale  
New South Wales

This program was designed to assist a small group of identified children who had been engaged in repetitive theft behaviour both in their home, school and/or neighbourhood. The program aimed to teach the children to react, in a socially approved fashion, to temptations to steal. As a secondary aim, because several of the children had stolen to 'buy friends', the program hoped to train the children in self-concept enhancement and peer acceptance strategies. Lastly, because interviews had revealed that the children were poor decision-makers it was decided to include some training in decision-making skills.

EVOLUTION OF PROGRAM

Late in 1986 several parents approached me to see if there was anything that could be done to assist the adjustment of young pupils at primary schools who were involved in regular thefts at home and school and, in some cases, in the neighbourhood. Early in 1987 I assembled a team comprised of a regional psychologist from the NSW Department of Youth and Community Services, an Armidale College of Advanced Education lecturer running a course 'Teaching Children with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Problems, a school counsellor, and a resource teacher to mount the following program. The support of the Regional Director of the Department of Youth and Community Services and the local District Inspector of Schools, was forthcoming and enthusiastic. Approval within the Department of Education was facilitated by the District Guidance Officer and the Regional Guidance Officer. The local Armidale Community Health Centre lent assistance by the provision of a suitable premises to conduct weekly meetings.

THE PILOT PROGRAM

The criteria for selection were that:

- . parents and school were actively concerned, seeking assistance with child management;
- . thefts were serious, regular and a long-standing problem;

- parents must have agreed to participate in family therapy sessions within the program;
- a representative cross-section of Armidale schools was sought.

The program was explained to all Armidale primary schools and nominations invited. The Catholic school system declined participation. Three of the five government schools nominated pupils. Two participants were nominated by the Department of Youth and Community Services. The pilot program actually ran with six pupils who fell into the 8-10 year age group.

The program had three components. The first comprised 16 twice weekly sessions of 30-45 minutes of one-to-one counselling involving the participant and a third year CAE student enrolled in the course 'Teaching Children with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties'. The second component was the anti-theft subprogram of 7 weekly 45 minutes sessions. The material covered in each session of this subprogram were as follows:

Session 1: Introduction, reason for the group, ice-breaker games, relaxation exercises, preview of next six sessions' activities.

Session 2: Reading and discussion of story 'Ali Baba'. Group defined 'stealing' and identified 'temptation to steal' as the point at which behavioural self-control could prevent stealing.

'What is stealing?' - taking something which belongs to someone else and keeping it. The magnitude of theft was discussed and the group decided it makes no difference how big or small or valuable a thing is, it is still stealing. No subtle distinctions were made about the value of objects stolen or the relativity of the wealth of the owner. No distinction was made between individual, corporate or government property. Stealing to win friends was discussed, as most of the children had done this. The conclusion reached was that stealing and giving away what you steal or buying something with money you steal then giving that away is still stealing. The 'Don't Steal!' rule was generated by the group.

Session 3: The children designed 'Don't Steal!' posters to stick up at home in their rooms or on the refrigerator. 'What is temptation?' It was decided it is an attraction, sometimes it can be good, sometimes bad, to something we don't have or don't have enough of and that it happens to everyone. It was emphasised that if the children could recognise temptation they could think: 'Stop!'. Visualisation exercises of a red traffic 'Stop' sign proceeded. Children discussed voluntarily some of their thefts. 'I choose to steal, I don't have to!'

Session 4: 'How would you feel if someone stole from you?' was discussed. Several moral dilemma stories were read and discussed

and reactions to temptation other than theft were generated in the group. 'Who has been tempted and hasn't stolen?' was asked and the children volunteered their experiences. Some of the experiences were selected and role-plays performed.

Session 5: Children were asked to recall and discuss a moral dilemma from session 4 and illustrate it, each child drawing one frame on a communal comic strip. The situation was drawn in two versions - a theft and its consequences and a resistance to temptation implementation of an alternative (in this case doing odd jobs for money) and its consequence.

Session 6: 'Playback Theatre' - children were asked to role-play recent incidents in their lives e.g. birthday parties etc. and video recorded whilst doing so. Once de-sensitised to the video procedure their re-enactment of some of the moral dilemma stories was phased into a re-enactment of their own theft situations. These were then discussed, stopping the video at the temptation choice point and discussing alternative courses of action.

Session 7: 'What if I do steal something?' The idea of restitution was discussed. Review of the sessions indicated the children could recall the messages and events of the program. The final session concluded with a party for the children.

The third component of the program was family therapy originally planned for 6 fortnightly sessions of one hour per family. However, the final version involved three consecutive two hour weekly sessions mounted after component had nearly concluded. It encompassed STEP and PET ideas and materials including active listening, problem solving and developing responsibility in children, as well as conflict resolution. Regrettably the parent training component of the program ran into difficulty. Despite an individual commitment given by each set of parents to attend the sessions, attendance was poor. The families felt to be most demonstrably and dramatically in need of this particular component decided not to attend. That might have been because the parents were demonstrating the responsibility and commitment levels which, as parents, had placed their children in the program in the first place. Alternatively, it may have been that they felt the 'kids have been fixed' now and 'we needn't do anything more'. Perhaps, as the staff suggested in retrospect, they were embarrassed at being asked to attend a group for parents of identified juvenile thieves. It would seem if the 'Ali Baba' program were to be repeated, replicated elsewhere or modified then this component would need reviewing. Alternatives are individual family counselling/therapy, embed the target families into a large parent training program where they can remain anonymous, or drop the component and work only with the children. The second alternative would seem most cost-effective but might not meet the needs of the families with juvenile

theft as a chronic problem. Such families, it has been suggested, may exhibit dysfunctional features needing special attention beyond the normal parenting issues.

#### FUTURE PROSPECTS:

This program, or variants of it, might be mounted in other locations in an effort to assist children experiencing problems with theft. It does indicate how, even in a time of constricting budgets, an innovative program can be mounted if it has some support from authority in state departments. The program team acknowledges the original impetus to have been generated in part by the booklet: 'When a Child Steals: How to prevent it and what to do about it' by Merrill Jackson of the University of Tasmania (1984). A reading of this booklet will enable teachers and others to mount programs similar to the 'Ali Baba' program.

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PRINCIPALS AND POLICE - A PILOT STUDY

Dennis Challinger  
Assistant Director  
Information and Training  
Australian Institute of Criminology  
Australian Capital Territory

School principals have a responsibility for ensuring that their school community is well ordered and that all students are able to get maximum benefit from their time at the school. This means that the school principal is effectively a law-maker, a law-enforcer, an investigator, judge, jury, and imposer of penalty.

Most of the laws involved are, of course, rules relating to student behaviour and are devised to lead to a peaceful and positive school atmosphere. However, some of the rules are precisely those which pertain within the general community, breach of which could lead to the involvement of the formal criminal justice system. In general terms, school principals appear unlikely to resort to that criminal justice machinery, preferring to deal with such breaches internally. But there are incidents that can occur at school for which it would seem most appropriate for school principals to call the police.

The American Safe School Study includes a survey of offending in schools which gives some indication of the likelihood of American school principals using the formal criminal justice system.

Only a small portion of violent offences are reported to the police by the school. One-sixth of the attacks and robberies recorded by principals for the survey were reported even where serious violence is involved, as with attacks requiring medical treatment, only a minority - about one-third - of the offences are reported to police. On the other hand, the majority of certain offences against the school - especially burglaries - are reported to the police. School principals are not unique in the tendency to avoid involving the police. Other studies have shown that people in general are reluctant to call in the police unless an offence is serious (NIE, 1978).

In order to get some idea of the use of police by Australian principals, a questionnaire was distributed with documents publicising the Crime At School seminar.

That questionnaire provided descriptions of three incidents that involved criminal behaviour - theft, assault and vandalism. School principals were asked to indicate what action they would take for each incident and to then indicate how that action might be different if certain other facts were known.

It was disappointing that so few principals completed and returned those questionnaires, at the time of writing, only 30 had been received. Understandably, many principals may not have had time to respond to the questionnaire, even though it was designed to be easy to complete. In fact, one principal wrote:

I am sorry but my time is very limited - I don't have time to fill in such a demanding questionnaire. But went on to add:

Besides, in 13 years of principalship I have not had to deal with anything even remotely like the second and third instances. I have had stealing on rare occasions but have not found the evidence.

The 30 responses that were received do reflect a good variety of Australian schools. They are drawn from all States except one, encompass government, private and church schools, single sex and coeducational schools, metropolitan and country schools, and were completed by both male and female principals.

#### Incident One: Theft

The locker of a student suspected of stealing is opened and found to contain a number of purses belonging to students and two members of staff.

Not surprisingly, there was a pretty standard form of response to this event. Most principals indicated that they would first confront or interview the alleged thief to ascertain the facts, gain an admission or get an explanation for the discovery of stolen goods. Almost all would require parents to attend at the school and many would involve pastoral care staff or counsellors (presumably in the cases where such staff are available).

Further action is dependent upon a variety of considerations. One respondent summarises these most elegantly -

subsequent action would depend on whether the student was responsible for the thefts, for storing the property there, or both, and whether any other students were involved in the theft. It would also depend on whether the student had a history of antisocial activities and what these were, and on the student's home background. Parents would be involved in discussion of the best action to take, which might be no more than restitution of the property, but might go so far as asking the student

to leave the school. This most serious action would be taken only if the student already had a history of antisocial activity which had already involved the school's counselling procedures, and if previous discussions had been held with the parents.

Overall, only five school principals indicated that they would certainly call the police to this particular incident. On the other hand, seven indicated that they would certainly not call the police. Many principals indicated that the decision to call the police would depend upon the insistence of the victims of the theft, the attitude of the student or indeed the co-operation of the parents.

There were some variations in school principals' attitudes with respect to additional information about the incident. The fact that the student was bright and no trouble in class did not change the sort of action that principals would take. One principal commented for this sort of student that he

would honestly find it hard to believe and also hard to push the child to the wall to get his honest view. I would also hope that I was barking up the wrong tree. However, I would continue to the end.

If the contents of the purse totalled less than \$10 no change in action was contemplated. However, if the contents of the purses totalled more than \$300, overall principals were more likely to call the police. As one respondent put it, in that case it would be 'too much for me to decide guilt and punishment.' Another respondent noted that the amount of money

shouldn't make any difference but it almost certainly would. Victims would almost certainly take a stronger view over large sums.

The fact that the local supermarket manager had previously reported that he had caught the student stealing from his store tended to cause more reporting to the police, mainly because that was seen to indicate a persisting bad practice. While deciding not to call the police, one respondent's attitude hardened to the extent of suspending the student and contemplating expulsion when the above fact was known. Another stated somewhat pragmatically that the fact 'would probably harden my heart if the matter had to go further'.

When it was suggested to respondents that the student had previously been counselled for difficulties at home, two additional principals thought police should be called. One thought he would be likely to call police 'to strengthen home authority'; the other thought asking the police to 'caution the offender' would be useful. The remainder of the respondents

did not see this fact as making them likely to change their response to the incident except one who indicated he would place 'additional stress on assistance from "help" agencies'.

#### Incident 2: Assault

A disruptive student is instructed by a teacher to leave the class, the student responds by assaulting the teacher causing a head laceration that needs suturing.

Once again, there were no real surprises in the immediate action that principals would take following this incident. Action was taken in four areas although not all respondents mentioned all of them in their written responses.

First, the student would be quickly removed from the scene, in many cases sent home, either suspended or not, and in some cases sent to an isolation room or some separate place for later interview.

Second, the teacher would receive immediate (medical or other) assistance. One respondent indicated that the teacher-victim would be referred to the relevant Union for legal advice or counselling. Another principal pragmatically indicated that he would then 'arrange for a relief teacher' for the class.

Third, the majority of principals indicated they would try and piece together as best they could just what had happened. Interviewing the student (with a variety of witnesses, including parents and other teachers, present) and the teacher-victim were obvious starting points. One respondent stated that in the event of conflict in the recollections of the two parties to the assault, he would 'question two "reliable" children together to clarify the situation in my own mind'.

Fourth, respondents indicated there were bureaucratic procedures that would need to be followed. The legal branch, district inspector and regional director would all need to be informed according to one principal.

Twelve principals stated quite explicitly that the incident would lead to a student's immediate suspension, but only four would have certainly called the police. Perhaps the incident as presented in the questionnaire was seen as too bald a statement on which to make such a severe judgement - overall, the principals were slightly more likely to call the police than they were for the theft incident.

Nevertheless, the fact remains that the majority of respondents were likely to try and deal with the incident within the school setting in the first instance. For one Queensland respondent,

this included administering 'corporal punishment if this seems to be the most suitable way to emphasise that this way of acting is not acceptable'.

Suggesting in the questionnaire that the student had twice before assaulted teachers did lead to another six respondents then agreeing that they would call the police. Five respondents indicated that a student with such a history would simply not be at their school, four more would expel the student, and a further two would instantly suspend the student (in addition to calling the police).

The scenario that the teacher had a history of taunting and provoking students was seen as being a quite unrealistic suggestion by three non-Government school principals who said such a person would simply not be employed in their school. Another in that group said that he would 'consider getting rid of the teacher; not easy, with the present state of unionism'.

Among Government school principals, three described the specific ways in which they would deal with the teacher. One stated that the teacher 'would be made aware that disciplinary procedures could be commenced if needed, or that compulsory transfer is also available if more appropriate, and that a welfare officer is available at the system level for confidential counselling.'

No respondent suggested that their intended action against the student might somehow be mitigated as a result of possible provocation. (But as many respondents couched their responses in terms of considering all aspects of the incident it could be assumed this fact would have carried some weight.)

If the teacher had been shaken but not badly injured no respondent would change their stated course of action. Those who commented on this proposition made comments such as 'police would be informed regardless of the severity of the attack if the teacher involved wished this'.

The fact that the teacher was female and the student male did not lead to any change in response to the incident. One principal with 30 years experience did admit that 'perhaps it is the chauvinism in me but I would take greater exception to a female teacher being assaulted'.

Another respondent remarked

Personally, I think that women are somewhat more vulnerable physically than men.

The real threat is not necessarily sex-orientated - that may be a first thought, but more often, threats are towards the young, weak, fragile, talentless, frightened or the pretty, ugly or superior - regardless of sex (sic).

If the student had a history of fighting other students three principals indicated that they were much more likely to call the police. One non-Government school principal stated unequivocally that 'the student would not still be a member of the school'.

### Incident 3: Vandalism

On arriving at school on Monday morning, one classroom is found to be severely vandalised. Furniture has been broken, paint sprayed around and all books and papers made useless by a combination of paint and water. Eventually two students in the class admit that they had caused the damage.

Once again, principals had a fairly consistent approach to this sort of incident. The parents of the students would be immediately contacted and in 18 cases the police would also be alerted. In most cases an interview or discussion with the students would take place aimed at verifying the facts of the matter, often leading to preparation of a written statement which would constitute part of an official report of some sort.

In many cases, that interview would encompass discussion of the students' responsibility to make good the damage. One non-Government school principal, who would call the police anyway, stated

... I'd send for parents, insist on costs being met, arrange a punishment involving working on school clean-up and then improvements - if there was parent co-operation would not charge children.

A variation of this approach is provided by the non-Government school principal whose response to being asked whether police would be called was to state

- if parents were in a financial position to pay for damages but refused to do so then charges would be laid

- if it was felt that parents have (sic) been negligent in the care and control of the children then charges would be laid against them

- if it was felt that the parents were sincere in their parental role then charges would be laid against the children.

Another such principal stated quite explicitly that he saw 'police involvement primarily as a shock deterrent' necessary to cause children 'to face a reasonable level of the unpleasant consequences of their actions'.

A further such principal held the belief that consequences had to be faced but he would 'certainly not' call the police (one of only two principals who would not do that). His immediate response to the incident would be to

... inform the students' parents and advise them that the damage would have to be paid for, indicate the cost, and advise them to ensure that the students themselves, rather than the parents, bore the financial burden.

That sort of action is undoubtedly far easier to take in an independent (fee-paying) school but it conveys a general theme that the students should somehow or other be required to make good the damage they had caused. Plainly then, if the two students had offered to pay the costs of repairing the damage principals were likely to be more kindly disposed towards the offenders. One Government school principal put it this way

if restitution was within the students and their parents capacity I would recommend to the police and the Department that, unless the students had previous records, the matter go no further.

The facts that the class teacher described the students as troublesome in class or that one of the students came from a stable supportive home, and the other from a stressful dislocated home, generally made little difference to the ways in which principals would deal with the incident. Comments were made in the second instance about the way in which counselling could be used, but that did not change the principal's overall approach.

That there had been considerable local publicity about vandalism of public property, also made no difference to principals' approaches. One stated that

vandals are rarely caught so this incident could have positive publicity value

but he would have called the police anyway because it was obligatory for him to do so in order to lodge an insurance claim.

#### Principals' Use of the Police

This pilot study involved a small disparate group of Australian school principals which could by no means be seen as representative. Nevertheless, their responses to this questionnaire indicate an attitude to reporting in-school offences to the police that would seem to be fairly straightforward.

They are most likely to call police to an offence of vandalism, a little less likely to respond that way to an assault, and less likely again to report a theft. This accords with the behaviour of the Australian population as indicated by their reactions to offences as provided in the Australian Victim Survey (ABS, 1986).

While not strictly comparable to the school situation, that survey did find that only 30 per cent of personal thefts and 23 per cent of personal assaults were reported to the police. Within households, a burglary was reported to the police in 63 per cent of cases, but a theft from the household was reported in only 34 per cent of cases.

The most common reason given for this under-reporting was that the incident was too trivial or unimportant. This reason was given for 67 per cent of the unreported household thefts, 52 per cent of personal thefts and 43 per cent of personal assaults. Next most common reason was the belief that the police could or would not do anything about the incident (respectively 17, 24 and 10 per cent for the above three offences).

These two reasons are also reflected in a study from the American Association of School Administrators in 1981 (Rubel and Ames, 1986). That study found that district and school administrators (and many teachers) refrained from notifying police of criminal incidents for several reasons:

- . They wish to avoid bad publicity and/or litigation
- . They fear they will be blamed or regarded as ineffective
- . Some offences are considered too minor to report
- . They prefer to rely on their own security and discipline procedures rather than involve law enforcement officials in school-based problems
- . They suspect the police and courts will not co-operate.

Additionally, it suggested that American teachers may have trouble identifying offenders, fear retaliation from the perpetrator or hesitate to notify the police because they do not want to stigmatise youthful offenders.

The reasons for principals' not reporting offences to the police are undoubtedly included in the above. However, the principal has overriding concerns. In particular, the principal has to consider the effect of his or her action on the individual students concerned, as well as the whole school community.

One principal puts it this way:

Within this School we see all experiences as being an opportunity to learn, recognising that all will make mistakes in some area at some time. If learning from mistakes is to occur there needs to be support and counselling, both from the School and the home. If over a reasonable period of time it is obvious that learning is not taking place then external, professional assistance is needed, e.g. police, psychologist, etc. Our experience has been that such a course is highly successful, obviously with some occasional lack of response.

And that neatly puts into perspective the difficulty of calling police to crimes at school. The impact of such action upon any student offender must be assessed from the student's and the school's perspective, rather than as a common criminal event.

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## THE SCHOOL BASED COMMUNITY POLICE OFFICER

Roy Harvey  
Principal  
Sadadeen Secondary College  
Alice Springs  
Northern Territory

BACKGROUND

The idea of having a police officer in a school grew out of an 'ad hoc' situation that started in Darwin. Casuarina High School was having an expensive gymnasium built, and that was to be used in the evenings by outside bodies. A police officer was chosen to run the youth club liaising with the school. Gradually he became known to the students who turned to him for advice. From this came the suggestion that a police officer could have a part to play in an educational establishment.

RATIONALE

For a scheme like this to work, everyone represented must gain something. It might therefore be appropriate to see the advantages for each party.

The Police

Since the Police Force provide and pay for the manpower, there must be real benefits for them. These seem to encompass two main areas. First, the police do have an image problem. Probably this is true of all discipline forces and some suggest it is caused by ignorance of the public. After all, it is very hard to be objective when the usual first contacts with the police for the average citizen are usually traumatic. Police officers have the unenviable task of breaking the news of death or serious injury, for instance from a road accident. When you add the fact that speeding offences and drink driving checks catch a fair proportion of the populace, it is not surprising that people tend to view the police as the enemy. Add to this the stories of corruption, and the small group who hit the headlines, and the popular film and television cop who is usually a moron, or a sadist or both, you can readily accept that there is an image problem. It is usually hard for people to get to know policemen off duty as they tend to socialise among themselves. However, a sympathetic policeman in a school can become known as a person. He can then be seen as human and this can be transmogrified to other members of the force. Second, crime prevention is important. If the youth of today can be helped through the

traumas of adolescence when so many transgress, it is possible that they can be guided to the more socially acceptable patterns of behaviour. They might then be able to avoid crime, or to turn to the police for assistance if they do transgress, rather than turn belligerent when they are 'sprung'.

### The School

Is there any school which is not prepared to have an extra member of staff above entitlement? The police officer attached to the school is a member of the force, but works under the direction of the Principal. (Only one of the thirteen school based constables is female so the male pronoun will be used in this paper.) To all intents and purposes he is a member of staff who can be called upon to assist in areas where he has expertise. Thus he can assist in those lessons where legal matters are raised. He can also run those investigations of child abuse and welfare problems that can take an inordinate amount of time.

### The Community

Members of the community can see the advantage of having a police officer who can deal with all those problems of safety at school crossings which have been a serious hazard for young children on busy roads. They can also see the appearance of Blue Light Discos, and the Safety House Scheme.

To some extent these activities overcome a possible community view of the school based police officer as a disciplinarian. The American model jumps to mind with the police being used as guards to keep order in the corridors. This is an image that I was very concerned about - that my school was so dangerous that I had to have a cop to keep order. We have not yet come to this, and I have been at pains to prevent this from being seen to be the case.

### INTRODUCTION OF THE SCHEME

The first step is to make sure that a school wants a policeman. It is not a scheme that can be forced upon any institution, and it should not be hurried, because all sections of the community have to be positive in their approach. If the Police are in favour they will fund it. The staff and students have to know what it is all about, and the staff in particular have to be sure that a police officer is needed. Then the Governing Council as representatives of the community have to request the officer. Thus they have to be fully briefed and have any doubts put to rest. None of these steps can be forced, and if there is any strong opposition the scheme cannot go ahead.

If the school actively requests an officer, the next step is for the police to identify an appropriate person. It is crucial that

the right type of person is recruited, and that he is sympathetic to the young and the school he is to be placed into. Again, if the right type of person is not available, the job has to wait until a suitable applicant can be recruited.

It is also wise to introduce the scheme on a trial basis. Thus the lessons learned can be taken into account as the scheme develops. This also fits into financial constraints as the police budget expands to take in this new area.

In the Northern Territory, the timing was as follows:

1984 : 1 officer in Casuarina High School, Darwin  
 1985 : 3 officers - 2 in Darwin, 1 in Alice Springs  
 1987 : 9 officers - 1 in Alice Springs, 1 in Tennant Creek  
           7 in Darwin.

There are therefore now 13 Community Police Officers covering 14 schools. It is planned to eventually have 16 for 18 high schools.

#### THE SCHOOL CONSTABLE'S DUTIES

I think the key idea is to use the constable where he naturally has a role which is comfortable for him and the school. However, there is of course a formal duty statement for a school based constable as follows:

##### Scope of Duties

The duties of each school based constable are to provide a visible presence in a particular High School, its feeder primary schools and the shopping centres in the particular area. Each officer is required to:-

- . pass on information to other instrumentalities or elements of the Police Force to reduce risk to students from crime, traffic, etc, as necessary;
- . liaise with representatives of Government Departments regarding welfare of students, eg Health, Community Development, etc;
- . attend School Council meetings;
- . assist in organising approved after-school activities;
- . perform normal police duties as required;
- . be seen as a member of the school community;
- . liaise with school staff, parents and shop keepers;

- . take any complaints or particulars of offences;
- . lecture within the schools on selected topics if requested;
- . advise on security;
- . supervise monitors at school crossings;
- . advise on parking restrictions in the vicinity of schools;
- . monitor the activities of any undesirables in the area;
- . liaise with Truancy Officers and Home Liaison Officers;
- . counsel students as required.

Most high schools in the Northern Territory have some four to six 'feeder' or neighbouring primary schools. It is intended that the constable based at the secondary school regularly attends at the primary schools and occasionally at the local pre-schools also. This is basically to provide these students at an early age with an accurate understanding of the police function.

The constable is also available for consultation by the primary school councils but due to time constraints, does not regularly attend their meetings. However, the member is the police representative on the Safety House Committee which enables him to oversight the scheme in his area and provides further contact with his local community.

The constable is available to assist with after school activity on a limited basis. This is intended to encourage the school, parents, and other groups to provide such activities with the constable supplying a regular presence immediately after school. This also has the potential to increase the usage of the Police and Citizens Youth Clubs.

The 'normal police duties' is intended to convey the understanding that the member is first and foremost a member of the Police Force with all the normal powers and functions. Although his time must normally be fully dedicated to his school role, extraordinary occasions may occur where he will perform non-school duties. However, this does not imply that he is to be used to bolster the normal function of another police section.

Through liaison with shopkeepers and other local people, the Constable is able to develop some local interest in the children particularly the wayward ones. In this manner and in conjunction with the Truancy Officers and Home Liaison Officers, better control of offending children can be achieved.

Although it is not possible to consistently provide a police member to each school crossing, with the frequent presence of the school constable the regular offenders are usually deterred and the problem reduced.

In order that the constable can provide maximum time at the school a number of facilities have been provided. He is equipped with a micro-type vehicle and a portable radio. This vehicle displays the Community Policing theme and is home garaged to facilitate direct attendance to school. An automatic telephone answering device and transcription service is also provided to enable the constable to supply his reports by telephone.

The constable is directly supervised by the General Duties Inspector in charge of the sector which includes his school. In this way, all the sector police are able to directly relate to the constable with good potential for constructive interaction with the students as well.

It has to be stressed that the constable is a police officer, he is always in uniform and he is a member of my staff. He does not take charge of investigations of theft, damage, drugs, etc, which could lead to prosecution. This would take him away from his school. He can do the preliminary work, but then he calls in the regular officers to pursue formal enquiries. The community policeman has to stay in the school and be identified with it.

#### THE SCHOOL CONSTABLE'S VIEWS

The way in which the Sadadeen College constable sees his job is described in the following statement written by him for this seminar:

My first expectations upon joining the School Based Scheme, some 17 months ago, were ones of going into a 'great unknown' with a majority of population, students, who were known to have as much trepidation in having to face a police officer, as the police officer felt in having to face them. Added to this was the fact that the minority population, teachers, were a previously little studied species, who were considered generally to hold anti establishment view points. My new 'patch' was an area traditionally well steered clear of, and only ventured into under extreme emergency. It was a pleasant surprise to find that the vast majority of staff welcomed my presence, with no apparent feelings being obvious that their professional integrity was being 'slighted' by my introduction to their work place and environment.

Complete freedom to move and operate, as considered necessary, was granted to me, politeness and friendship were also afforded to me, but yet a feeling of working in an alien environment and being totally on ones own still persisted, and to a degree still does.

Different levels of education become obvious, and with that a difference in personal view points were also obvious.

Being a police officer in a school can be compared to being in a state of limbo. One is not a teacher, in the traditional sense, nor is one a police officer, again in the traditional sense. As a police officer 'on the street' one has to be friendly to all, but be a friend to none, impartiality being paramount. In the school one has to work hard to be a friend, some one who is available to discuss the most intimate personal aspects of life with, to be 'mate' enough to be able to tell an individual that they are out of line, and not have the individual resent hearing it. An interest and awareness has to be developed in a community, in order that that community might develop in its self and its expectations, but at the same time one is always aware that it is an artificial community. When the school bell sounds at 3 that community ceases to exist until 8.30 the following day. It is not known to a school based police officer if the lessons of life learned in a school community are considered when the individual student lives in his or her other community, that being home and social environs. It is not known if the scheme is a success in its long term objectives. Short term success would indicate that this is to be, but only time will tell.

Although a job profile was written an individual discretion has to be developed to serve where the greatest needs are, and in that vein it has become blatantly obvious the greatest need of the students is to find some one they can talk to. The almost total lack of communication between child and parent today is staggering. To find a child in trouble, unsure, or with a problem and in 98 per cent of these cases you find little or no communication and a feeling of no one cares.

Show some care, re-open the communication lines, albeit with me first and then with the parent and

then for the parent to show some obvious care and watch a person perfectly happy to take an active role in life.

That care and communication must be developed at the earliest age possible and maintained throughout life. Personal counselling would account for the lion's share of time spent within the school.

My role, as I see it, apart from duties outlined within the stated job profile, is one where if a particular need or requirement arises, is to attempt to fill or satisfy the particular need or requirement.

In a lot of instances, a human 'sounding board' for ideas, thoughts and actions, has been required, and I am used for that purpose.

I also attempt to be used as a bridge for the students that allows them to pass with as much safety as possible from academic childhood into work environment adulthood, a reference point they are able to identify with during that transitional stage.

Staff also use the scheme, apart from academic purposes, in as much as they have their own personal Police Station.

Overall I see my role as that of a 'gofer'. If an occurrence arises within the school community, be it personal, social, curiosity or one of limited or no knowledge, then I simply go for it.

### EVALUATION

A real evaluation should perhaps wait for some years as students grow into adulthood. However, it is possible to look at how the scheme is developing now.

#### Acceptance by the students

I had anticipated that it might have taken at least a term for the constable to be accepted. However, in less than a week he was part of the staff. In a survey within the school the vast majority of students placed him in the first three members of staff in order of importance. In one school year he had individual interviews with 35 per cent of the pupils, not including repeats and casual meetings.

The cases which he has dealt with show that the students have approached him on a wide spectrum of questions. They can be categorised as:

Welfare - incest, child abuse, rape, attempted suicide, malnutrition, neglect;

Criminal - drugs, car theft, shoplifting, parties, drinking fights;

General - broken hearts, loneliness, parents.

The fact that students take these matters to him, many of which are of a very delicate and sensitive nature, must underline the degree of acceptance and confidence they have in him.

#### Staff

The constable is a member of staff and takes part in all associated activities. He was universally nominated to be permanent chairman of staff meetings and is a full member of the Welfare Faculty. Teachers refer cases to him directly and have expressed in the strongest terms the valuable contribution he makes to the smooth running of the college. He himself has also noted that he has become their own personal Police Station for a whole list of queries.

#### Administration

I have a truly professional relationship with my constable. On many occasions I have wondered how on earth I managed without him. The problems of vandalism have almost disappeared. Trespassers are removed with no hassles. Lunatics are dealt with by him instead of me. Because of his close rapport with the students I am kept more fully informed than has ever been possible before. The amount of time saved because he handles the initial investigations into drugs, theft, welfare has given my assistants more time to get to know the students and to do their other work. When he first arrived we felt that there would be long periods of slack time - the reverse has been true.

#### Parents

Despite the best efforts of the Department, some parents had not fully understood why the constable was in the school. There were a number of questions raised but they were always able to be answered.

I have been amazed at the way that parents now view him. They make appointments to come and see him to ask for advice about kids leaving home, their children taking no notice of them, slipping out of bedroom windows at night, drinking and even assaulting them. When the college has a parent evening the

constable always attends and parents actively seek him out to discuss problems. I have heard children telling their parents to go and see him. And they do. They feel easier about visiting a cop at school than going to the station and setting up an interview.

### Community

The feeder schools like to call on my constable to give talks on safety, cycling, etc. He monitors the crossings, and with some of the drivers about, this has been invaluable. He has a large role to play in the Safety House Scheme and the Blue Light Discos.

The other factor that goes with the presence of a constable is what I call the scarecrow effect. His mere presence has the effect of getting students to watch their step when it comes to the anti-social behaviour like vandalism and graffiti. There has been a noticeable decline in such activities which the students attribute to his presence. I have also heard the students say they feel safer. It seems a reasonable conclusion to make.

### Police

It is clear that the Police feel that the scheme is a success since the number involved in schools has increased at a time of economic difficulty. Had it not been proving its worth I am sure that the money could not have been found.

I have attended two full conferences involving all schools, their police, and the senior officer of the Police Department. All are convinced that the scheme is proving its worth. This is not to say that there have not been sceptics in the force, but they are in the minority, and as successes occur should disappear. In Alice Springs I know that the police already feel that there are runs on the board. There have been some successes with, for instance, my constable working with the drug squad. There has also been a marked diminution of 'nuisance' calls to the station, and the police have been able to get information about Blue Light, Safety House, child molestation, etc, to the student much more easily by using my constable. I believe that police have found it difficult to approach schools in the past because they felt that they were an alien environment not normally within their experience.

### Conclusion

I am convinced that the scheme is a success. It has not yet had any noticeable effect on the crime rate but this is one of the long term results that could be looked at. But in the short term the benefits are clear and there is considerable evidence to show that the Northern Territory Police have developed something of positive worth. I can recommend it to you all.

PREVENTATIVE POLICING IN QUEENSLAND SCHOOLS

David Jefferies, Tony Rand  
Juvenile Aid Bureau  
Queensland Police  
Sally Leivesley  
Research Consultant  
Queensland Police

Juvenile crime in Queensland schools is an area of major concern for the police and the education system. In 1985 over 1300 juvenile offenders were dealt with by the Queensland Police Juvenile Aid Bureau. These offenders ranged from children who were shop stealing after school to the very destructive and disturbing offences by school arsonists which cost the community millions of dollars.

The Queensland Police Department through the Juvenile Aid Bureau has adopted a policy of juvenile diversion by the use of a cautioning system. It has emphasised the police role in preventative work and the success of this approach has been demonstrated by a recidivism rate of 7.6 per cent for young offenders when records were searched over a ten year period. Low re-offending by juveniles was attributed to the cautioning system and the approach by trained Juvenile Aid Bureau (JAB) officers who established a direct relationship with the young offenders and their families in order to prevent re-offending.

An analysis of ten years of data on juvenile offending in Brisbane has shown that peak ages for offending are between the ages of 12 - 15. After these ages there is a marked decline in offending as the maturing child appears to be less motivated to engage in antisocial behaviour.

The data also showed that truancy by young offenders who came to the notice of the JAB bore a strong relationship with their later offending and conversely, 40 per cent of recidivists had first come to notice of the JAB as truants. Two other related problems which bore a strong relationship with re-offending were assault and behaviour problems. This shows the very strong interpersonal needs of school age children which the JAB considers are best met through a co-ordinated approach by police, educators and others.

Emotional problems leading to serious crimes, such as arson in the school, assault and long term re-offending require a close relationship to be established with the child and his family. This provides an opportunity for those working with the child to have a collaborative approach to the assessment and intervention in the family situation. It is considered that the earlier the

indications of high risk behaviour are identified the more likely it will be that preventative action will succeed.

A significant number of juveniles who come to notice for re-offending are initially involved in break and enter offences. Shop stealing, which is the most common offence for juveniles, is not a significant indicator of later offences.

This indicates how statistical data can be used to identify those offenders who are at greater risk of recidivism and provides a rationale for the useful deployment of scarce police resources into close work with juveniles who show these characteristics of high risk.

#### A COMMUNITY RELATIONS APPROACH

Since 1970 the Juvenile Aid Bureau has followed a policy of close community relations and the adoption of preventative programs involving police officers. One of the first examples was the close involvement with school principals and guidance officers.

The Juvenile Aid Bureau has the capacity to visit the child's home in order to assess the home environment, parental interest and the child's behaviour. This assessment would allow other professionals and the police to work closely together in assisting the individual children and their families. The focus of JAB work was on the child's needs rather than enforcement, and where necessary there was long term follow-up of children.

This early community relations approach by the JAB has led to more than twenty years of liaison with professionals and close co-operation with members of the public, including parents who want advice and assistance to protect their children from being involved in antisocial behaviour.

#### POLICE-SCHOOL LIAISON

##### School Liaison Unit

In 1985 a Police-School Liaison Unit was formed as part of the JAB, thus formalising the relationship which had existed with schools for a number of years. The Unit had the role of providing lecturers to schools and other educational institutions to discuss such topics as the consequences of crime, explaining the law, child abuse and its prevention and role of teachers in reporting suspected child abuse offences.

As part of the service a special booklet A Guide to Professional Workers was written in collaboration with the Department of Children's Services and distributed to teachers and professionals.

Unit staff have contributed a segment to the Protective Behaviours Courses which are offered to primary and secondary schools. This involvement had led to close co-operation between teachers and police in each school with a team work approach for the prevention of offences through education of the children.

#### Adopt a Cop

This program is based on schools requesting a policeman to be 'adopted' and become known by the children as their local school police officer. The program gives school children many opportunities to get to know and relate to a police officer. It is formalised by the presentation of a certificate 'legalising' the adoption at a ceremony which introduces the police officer to the school community.

Thereafter the police officer in his own time visits the school and any functions. He or she is available to teachers for advice and discussion on local issues and parents can also talk with them. The police officer has the advantage of becoming known in the local community and being given a lot of informal information by children and others to use in preventative work.

Adopt a Cop programs have been so successful that 167 Queensland schools have become involved. In terms of prevention, an example of the effectiveness of the program has been in the field of alcohol and drug abuse where the presence of a police officer in schools has reduced the motivation of children to engage in these activities.

#### Protective Behaviours Program

Since 1985 the Queensland Police Department and the schools have also been promoting the Protective Behaviours Program. This is 'anti victim' or self protective strategies based on two themes:

Everyone has the right to feel safe; and  
Nothing is so bad that it cannot be talked about.

Teachers, police and volunteers have been trained and accredited by a committee and the work focuses on educating children on how to protect themselves from becoming victims.

As a result of the program many child abuse victims have become known and protection and assistance has been given through the schools, police and welfare services to both child and family.

One of the strategies in self protection for the child is the development of their protective network of persons to whom they can turn for assistance. The program stresses the necessity to keep reviewing this network and the importance of talking to those in this network until the child feels safe.

This type of education helps to protect children through their becoming assertive and reduces the risk of them becoming victims of crimes such as sexual abuse, molestation and exploitation. It also increases the child's capacity to help themselves in any emergency by identifying protective behaviours in emergencies such as fire or accidents.

#### Safety House Program

The Safety House Program is well known throughout Australia. The Queensland Police commenced it in 1985 and community co-operation has enabled houses around 365 schools in Queensland to be included in the program. This program has had the effect of not only giving children additional security but linking the public, the police and the schools into a very strong network to reduce offences against young children.

The work in setting up programs for each school area has also reinforced for the public and the school their valuable role in policing their local community.

#### Training of Police and Educators

Police education for work in schools is undertaken through the JAB training course which involves three week residential training program at the Queensland Police Academy. Police learn the skills required to communicate with children and to liaise with teachers, guidance officers and other professionals. They also learn about child development and antisocial behaviour and its origins.

Teachers and guidance officers act as instructors for these segments and this allows a close co-operative relationship to develop between police who are entering the field and the professionals. It also provides for an understanding of the role and interdependence of each profession working in the schools.

One of the training methods includes the use of a panel comprising a teacher, a juvenile offender, and a parent of an offender discussing their expectations and experiences with the JAB.

Teachers are trained in their college curriculum on the role of police and police diversion programs. Trainee teachers are made aware of their important role in preventing juvenile offending and child abuse and the strategies to be adopted in schools.

#### PREVENTATIVE POLICING IN THE FUTURE

The experience of policing in schools in Queensland has shown that close police-school liaison has the capacity to reduce the

motivation for young people to adopt antisocial behaviour. It has also assisted the police in entering into a more holistic approach to the prevention of offending and helping young people.

### Proactive Policing

Within the next decade policing in schools may be ready to adopt a far more proactive and community centred approach moving further away from the enforcement model of policing. This requires a more flexible approach by police and broader education in the humanities. It should, in turn, lead to less use of the courts and the acceptance by the community and its schools of more responsibility for the welfare of young people.

Further to this theme, there are many organisations and groups outspoken in their advice to juveniles of their 'rights', after they have committed offences. These groups are noticeably silent in advising juveniles of the responsibilities that go with these rights. The task of teaching our school children these responsibilities must be tackled in the not too distant future.

An example of such an approach is an American program called - 'The Consequences of Crime'. It is aimed at school students before they offend and endeavours to instil in them the responsibilities they have in the maintenance of law in society.

### Suggested Committees for Children at Risk in Schools (CARS)

The use of the multidisciplinary approach in child abuse has in recent years proved the efficacy of police liaison with other professionals. Existing Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect Teams (SCAN) may also prove to be models for a school based multidisciplinary team which focuses attention on high risk children in the school and marshals and co-ordinates the resources they need.

Such a program could be titled Children at Risk in School (CARS). It would be a community program based in the school, run by police and educators, to protect young people from high risk activities.

The cost effectiveness and co-ordination of activities through school based community organisations is evident by preventing the duplication of many agencies who deal with young school age offenders who have no existing mechanism for co-ordination of information and feedback of the outcome of their dealings with the child.

### Health, Education and Welfare Committees

Another future development may be the recognition of a police role to actively participate in Health, Education and Welfare

Committees which are established in each education region in Queensland for the purpose of co-ordinating services for children in schools. This would give a greater sharing of information on high risk children and ensure close co-operation between the professional groups.

#### Incident Analysis through Computer Mapping

In terms of technical police work further developments are also inevitable. One such change may be the use of computer mapping of incidents to allow police and schools to trace the pattern of juvenile related crimes in their areas. The subsequent use of police prevention programs in these schools would then be most effectively directed at local patterns of offending. A system of computer mapping which shows a constantly updated geographical pattern of offences would be of low cost but most effective in terms of manpower deployment and the targetting of specific prevention efforts. It would also allow strategic planning for future policing and effective deployment of resources, utilisation of prevention programmes and training.

## ARSON, VANDALISM, AND SCHOOLS

Frank Meaney  
Community Relations Unit  
Education Department  
New South Wales

School buildings have always reflected the ideals communities have had about their operation. It was not uncommon in the late nineteenth century for schools to resemble churches in appearance and, in New South Wales in particular, Scottish churches. The early school administrators in New South Wales not only brought the ideas, practices and aims of Scottish education with them but in some cases the plans of schools. So, for example, North Newtown school in Sydney bore a very close resemblance to the school in Montrose, Scotland for a very good reason - they were built from the same plan.

School systems under pressure to provide accommodation are often reduced to replication. So in the early education handbooks not only were rules, regulations and curriculum requirements included but so were school plans. A school was a school - awe-inspiring temples of knowledge.

The thrust of the last twenty years in school design and construction has seen immense changes. Sites have now a pre-determined size which often effectively ensures that other buildings do not encroach too readily upon schools.

New building materials have enabled schools to have a variety of shapes, designer features and open, airy spaces. Increasing design knowledge has seen better utilisation of space and more orderly traffic flow.

The complex and flexible nature of curriculum offerings has led to a massive investment in specialist provision and equipment for schools so that the once humble classroom is now a very expensive item indeed.

But the most significant change has been the development of schools as child-based facilities. Growing out of newer theories and insights relating to the ways in which children learn, design has moved schools towards a much freer, more open mode in which the needs of children are paramount.

Valuable units such as libraries and laboratories have been designed for maximum use and access by children and the community dividends yielded with respect to learning have been very great

indeed. Modern schools are open, welcoming and hospitable places erected on the premise that such an environment would assist the development in children of desirable character traits and attitudes.

Costs of providing such buildings have grown greatly too. The cost of a modern secondary school, fully equipped has risen to \$8 million whilst a modern primary school will cost between \$2.5 and \$2.8 million dollars.

The finance for these buildings comes from the pockets of taxpayers Australia wide and it would be reasonable to suppose that taxpayers would be only too ready to protect their investment. Schools should be relatively immune to attack.

However, over the past ten years or so it has become apparent that public property in the shape of train carriages and schools are under a type of guerilla attack. Operating over a wide area with obviously little respect for the quality of the property small, deadly groups have waged war against schools. They have, by virtue of forced entry, been able to plunder and destroy teachers' property and disrupt student learning programs by ensuring that valuable equipment is disabled or stolen and sold.

Often this valuable material is not stolen by children at all but by professional burglars who are well aware of the valuable property that is located in schools. As education has become more complex and demanding, equipment to match these needs has become more expensive and thus more marketable. Once the theft is completed, fire is sometimes used to camouflage the original crime.

Whatever the motivation, whatever the act, the results are always the same - anger, frustration, falling morale among teachers and disillusionment among students. For the taxpayer another blow at the sensitive hip-pocket.

Over the past few years this guerilla warfare has cost the taxpayer a staggering \$16 million per year. The Treasury in New South Wales has had to meet this bill and therefore the citizens of the State have been deprived of the benefits this money could bring to areas of need such as roads, hospitals and transport.

Protecting property, in the first instance, is a relatively simple matter. Doors with locks, windows with catches and gates that can be shut are the simplest means whereby one person's property is marked off from another. Provided that there is a prevailing ethic in the community which respects other's identified property all should be well. Whether that happy stage ever existed or not is beside the point - it doesn't exist now. Such elementary measures as mentioned above have long been added to. Strong rooms have been built in some schools, bars have been

added to doors and windows, security lighting has been installed, back-to-base alarm systems are operative, mobile security patrols are operational, some schools have live-in caretakers and lately, following the successful Victorian experience, electronic surveillance is being installed in schools at a significant cost.

Still the war goes on. Attacks on schools continue so that the fifty schools which are at the moment attached to the new electronic surveillance system have had at least 77 persons attack them. These are the persons who are caught - there may be others who have escaped detection. The cost of attaching schools to such sophisticated systems as electronic surveillance is high. The cost of apprehending trespassers is high. The cost of police action is high. Can the community continue to afford these costs? Is there any alternative?

Some places - in other countries - have tackled the problem head on. Acting on the principle that as each problem presented itself a solution must be found, some schools turned themselves into fortresses. In Chicago, for example, one school erected a high wire fence (to keep students in, trespassers out) employed armed guards to patrol corridors and the toilet block became a scene of naked pedestals as dividing walls were removed. Some problems were solved, but at what cost! There is evidence to suggest that the approach embodied here is a self-defeating spiral. The more sophisticated the means of protection, the more sophisticated become the means of evading the protective devices.

Why do some schools escape altogether? The thesis advanced here is that schools, like other public properties, escape attack when the community attitude is such as to render such attack as unacceptable. When a community cares enough about its buildings, rather than, say, regarding them as the Government's buildings, the buildings rarely suffer damage.

The key to safer schools, I believe, rests in the development of such an attitude in the community as will not countenance any interference with valuable community property. On the way to this ideal development there are no doubt a number of stages through which a community passes.

An early stage is one in which the community, through the action of the principal and the parent group, decides to protect the school by the simple expedient of rostering parent members of the organisation to patrol the school property when the school is not being used. Although very demanding in time it is a very effective method by which trespassers are discouraged and potential malefactors frightened away. Several schools have found this approach to be effective but not much imagination is required to know that it cannot be regarded as the norm.

The next stage involves a variety of Neighbourhood Watch in which the community as a whole is encouraged to be vigilant and aware for signs of potential malefactors. Quite obviously police co-operation is essential and one of the most pleasing aspects so far is the willingness of police to assist. It is of no value if community members draw attention to the presence on school property of trespassers who seem to be loitering with intent if police do not respond. The degree of effectiveness of such an approach is directly related to the confidence police will have in the reliability of the information relayed to them by the community.

Because of a great deal of work which has been put into 'Neighbourhood Watch' programs, information received has become much more reliable and the effectiveness of the approach has improved greatly. It will take time to develop that approach but it is by far the most promising.

The role of the central organisation in an Education Department in encouraging the development of such an approach is important. Liaison with police and official parent organisations is crucial. But the effective work that the centre can do is related principally to the development of public awareness. Using the mass media to develop this awareness is one role. When comment is sought about the problem of security, difficulties caused by arson and dislocation caused by vandalism, it is essential that a clear, coherent and consistent message be conveyed. The message that is being conveyed by the New South Wales Department of Education is that whilst every effort will be made within available resources to install security devices, such will be of little effect unless the community members begin to take care of their own buildings. It is pointed out that schools are special places and whilst, theoretically, they could be protected against all forms of attack the notion of 'fortress' schools is quite unacceptable. Members of the community are encouraged to report suspicious movements of persons in and around school property to police authorities.

Such messages, consistently conveyed, arise from a determination to retain, especially in the eyes of the public, the image of a school as a warm, welcoming place. There is also the hidden agenda item of progress towards self-discipline as being part of the process of child growth and development in which schools play such an important part. Let us suppose that schools were turned into impregnable fortresses then there would be little incentive for students to be brought face-to-face with responsibility for their own property. As a result students would reasonably carry with them into adult life expectations that there is little for individuals to do with respect to caring for community property because it has all been done for them.

Parents' and Citizens' meetings usually follow a common format. Committees are formed because of pressing needs as seen by the organisation - fete committees, school maintenance committees, etc. If security is to be in the forefront of member's minds then it should feature in the agenda of the meeting. For in this way attention is drawn to the issue - once attention is drawn to the issue it tends to assume importance in everybody's mind.

But there is more to do. Active programs of community-type advertising programs are important too. The New South Wales Department intends to use radio extensively to convey to target audiences a message that community care of community buildings is essential. Target groups are decided upon very simply. Most damage occurs where most children are. So radio stations which serve those areas are chosen with an overlay of stations whose audiences comprise community 'grey power'. Not only is it necessary to alert the taxpayers to the assault being made daily on their pockets but it has to be realised that older people are more likely to spot and report suspicious, lurking persons who will cause the damage.

If these forces can be harnessed then the amount of time and money devoted to protective, security devices can be contained. Positive community attitudes and actions will prove more durable and effective in the long term.

## SECURITY AGAINST PROPERTY CRIME AT SCHOOL

### THE VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSE TO SCHOOL CRIME

Colin O'Neill  
Manager, Security Services Group  
Ministry of Education  
Victoria

Following a spate of major fires in Victorian schools in the early 1970s, the Ministry of Education established a Security Services Group in September 1974 with the appointment of two officers.

The broad charter of the Group was to be responsible for the overall prevention and detection of crime against school buildings and property. Arson was by far the most disheartening and destructive offence with school fires exceeding three to four million dollars in damage each year. At that stage, it was difficult to determine the extent of the burglary problem in Victorian schools. However, every burglary was viewed as a potential arson threat.

During one spate of fires a well known arsonist was responsible for destroying fourteen public buildings, including eleven Victorian schools, during his reign of terror in 1972 and 1973. His degree of pyromania was such that, during one attempt, he fell off a high security fence and broke his leg. He then completed the arson and subsequently drove himself to hospital for treatment. That particular fire caused \$500,000 worth of damage. Upon his release from hospital he continued to commit arson until he was arrested and convicted.

Another school arsonist set fire to one Victorian country school on three separate occasions. This person became particularly agitated during inclement weather and would ride his bicycle to the school in his pyjamas during a storm and light the fire. One offence was committed whilst he was on Christmas leave from a Youth Training Centre. The local police, on learning of the fire at the school, went straight to his house and found him in bed dressed in wet pyjamas. He was convicted and returned to the Youth Training Centre. Upon his release four years later, he set fire to a local suburban primary school in which fifteen classrooms were destroyed with damage estimated at one million dollars. He is still in one of Victoria's prisons.

The trend in criminal offences, particularly arson, raised grave fears that the future would bring both a higher incidence and a more violent nature of school crime.

The Security Services Group in 1975 initiated a program involving patrols and surveillance of school property, provision of security rooms and of engraving school equipment. Still the fires continued. The situation deteriorated to the extent that five major school fires occurred in as many days. 'Weg', a now retired cartoonist for the Melbourne 'Herald', featured a satirical drawing on the front page of the evening newspaper, which showed a schoolboy in a fireman's uniform armed with a fire extinguisher. The caption read, 'I'm off to school now Mum'.

It appeared that the Ministry of Education's fears were justified and the Security Services Group initiated electronic surveillance in an attempt to reduce the incidence of arson.

Field operations and experimentation with numerous types of alarms became every day (and night) occurrences for members of the Security Services Group. However, another problem had arisen. The installation of local audible alarms in Victorian schools had created a noise pollution problem and led to many complaints to the Environment Protection Authority from annoyed residents living in close proximity to schools equipped with those alarms. The installation of local alarms in Victorian schools was suspended in late 1976 and did not resume until some eighteen months later. In the interim period, an exhaustive study was carried out by Ministry of Education and Public Works Department officers into the feasibility of electronic surveillance in Victorian schools.

On 13 August 1978, the first apprehension following detection by a silent intruder detection system installed in a school, was achieved. The Security Services Group had converted all existing alarms to silent models, and commissioned three private security contractors to monitor approximately 150 systems. It was anticipated that there would be a dramatic decline in criminal offences against Victorian schools.

In 1979 a total of 226 offenders were detained following detection by silent school alarms. The total loss to the Ministry of Education in burglary, wilful damage and arson was estimated at \$1.6 million.

An extensive study tour of school security operations in New York and Los Angeles was undertaken in 1980. As a result of this tour, the Ministry of Education commissioned its own Control Room and all school alarms were directed to the Security Services Group headquarters. The Group apprehended 360 offenders in 1980 and 497 in 1981.

Combination multibreak type alarms had now been introduced which could pinpoint the location of an offender or a fire. This system was unique and was positively acknowledged by the Departments of Education in New South Wales, South Australia and Western Australia. The integrity of the system was further proven by the excellent support given by the Victoria Police, in particular operational units such as the Air Wing and The Dog Squad. The Ministry of Education Control Room has direct radio access to the Police Helicopter and Police Dog Squad units. It is now quite common to see at least six Dog Squad units, Security Services Group patrol cars and the Police Helicopter, operating on any given night, in the fight against school crime.

School burglaries and arson reached a peak in 1982 with 2,626 reports of burglary and 138 reports of arson. In 1986 the number of burglaries committed in Victorian schools has been reduced to 1,553 incidents and reported arsons reduced to 72. Total estimated loss is now in the order of \$2 million.

Since the inception of silent intruder detection systems in Victorian schools, a total of almost 5,000 offenders have been apprehended on school property. During 1986, 898 offenders were detained, 68 per cent of them being juveniles. Many were repeat offenders and were well known to police. We can reasonably assume that the majority of offenders are attending schools in either the public or private education systems as two-thirds of offenders apprehended are under 17 years of age. This raises many questions as to the behaviour of students during school hours and as to what motivates them to commit crimes against schools. Many offenders caught were also responsible for other crimes in the community. In some cases, offenders were sentenced to long terms of imprisonment.

Whilst these figures could be described as acceptable, further 'State of the Art' preventative electronic measures will be introduced in Victorian schools during 1987. In addition the existing security staff of 17 officers will be increased to a total complement of 25. We expect this year to apprehend in excess of 1,000 offenders who will be caught in the act of committing burglaries and other related offences.

The message to all would-be school offenders is simple but direct - 'stay away from Victorian schools or you will get caught'.

SCHOOL EXPERIENCE OF YOUNG OFFENDERS

Bob Semmens  
Head of Special Education Department  
Melbourne College of  
Advanced Education  
Victoria

INTRODUCTION

A major issue for this conference on Crime at School is discipline. Participants will be faced with the choice of opting for a school system which gives priority to control, or one which emphasises curriculum development.

The experience of the young offenders discussed in this paper suggests they have experienced various control strategies during their schooling. Experts have been called in, therapies applied and sanctions imposed. Ultimately, the youths have declared teachers are bossy and lessons boring and have either left school or been expelled. The youths generally still want education because the more education they can get the greater their hope for employment. All they want is teachers who can teach and care about them. Exclusion processes, which are the ultimate control weapon, do not convey a sense of concern and the lesson learnt from the experience differs from any concept of good teaching.

On the other hand, schools may choose to emphasise curriculum development, the distinguishing feature of the teaching profession. When curriculum development is central, then schools have a set of education aims, teachers are seen as encouraging, lessons are exciting, students have a sense of belonging and competence, and school connects with the world outside.

The curriculum development emphasis is proposed here in the light of data on some aspects of the school experience of 88 youths admitted to the Malmsbury Youth Training centre between April 1983 and April 1984. The Malmsbury Youth Training Centre is located 100 kilometres north-west of Melbourne in an area which is mainly a small farming community. The Youth Training Centre provides minimum security school and work training programs for 17 to 21 year old male offenders who are detained for 4 to 14 months.

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I argue in this paper that the lack of connection between school and work for many of these youths has contributed to their law breaking behaviour. For other youths, the length of their institutional history appears to interfere with their connection to either school or work. After addressing the similarities and differences between these groups of youths, I propose a model for strengthening the connections not only between school and work but also between schooling and society generally.

## DATA ANALYSIS

### Pre-Program Data Analysis

Historical data was analysed in terms of institution history, level of schooling attained, and employment record over the six months prior to admission to Malmsbury.

In relation to institution history, three groups of youths emerged. Firstly, those whose initial entry to an institution was before their fifteenth birthday, i.e. as Wards of State. Secondly, those whose initial entry to an institution was after their fifteenth birthday, via the Children's Court, i.e. as sentenced Young Offenders. Thirdly, those whose initial entry to an institution was after their seventeenth birthday via adult courts, i.e. as sentenced Adult Offenders.

The three groups remained significantly different from each other with regard to level of previous schooling. Twenty-five out of 31 State Wards had not gone past Year 9 at school; none of the 29 Young Offenders had gone past Year 9 at school; and all of the 28 Adult Offenders had gone past Year 9 at school.

The three groupings also differed significantly on several variables concerned with previous schooling as shown in Table 1. That table ranks the three groupings according to mean score, so that the figure 1 on previous schooling indicates that Adult Offenders had significantly more schooling than State Wards (2) and Young Offenders (3).

On schooling expectations, State Wards expect and aspire to more schooling than Young Offenders and Adult Offenders. Achievement of their aspirations would bring them up to about the same level as Adult Offenders, i.e. Year 10 or 11. Adult Offenders on the whole do not expect or aspire to further education but five of their number do aspire to at least three years of tertiary education and this makes them significantly different from Young Offenders, only one of whom aspires to schooling beyond Year 11, i.e. to Year 12. The main differences between State Wards and Young Offenders are that six State Wards reached Year 10 or 11 and a further six aspire to Year 12.

The State Wards' aspirations are interesting in that their ratings of previous schooling experience, in terms of involvement in activities, school as a place to be, and school as preparation for life, are significantly worse than Young Offenders and Adult Offenders. Despite this apparent lack of engagement with schooling, State Wards tend to want more formal schooling.

The difference between the groupings on 'social awareness' interview scores is partly explained by level of previous schooling. Adult Offenders gained their additional 'social awareness' in Year 10 and above, while Young Offenders tended to support this finding by often responding to questions with statements like: 'I never got that far at school', or, 'They learnt about those things further up the school'.

State Wards tended to explain that they were taught what little 'social awareness' they have by individual teachers in institutions who took a personal interest in teaching them what they called 'survival skills' particularly in relation to the world of work. This may explain the significant difference between State Wards and Young Offenders in 'social awareness' but both groups score significantly less than Adult Offenders.

While there are significant differences between the groupings on variables related to previous schooling, there are no significant differences between alienation scores or employment records at the pre-program stage.

However, there is a significant difference between Adult Offenders and the other two groupings on the 'trouble index', which is a combination of number of offences, with seriousness of offence and length of sentence for those offences leading to detention at Malmsbury. The 'trouble index' shows that Adult Offenders are the most serious offenders although they are relative newcomers to detention. They also appear to be more conforming whilst in detention in that of the original study population of 165, only 4 Adult Offenders escaped or were transferred to another institution, compared to 27 State Wards and 12 Young Offenders in these categories.

#### Post-Program Data Analysis

There are no significant differences in the ratings of training program participation by the three groupings. No group is significantly more involved in training programs, sees its training venue as a better place to be relative to the perceptions of the other groups, nor does any group see Malmsbury training as preparation for life outside.

TABLE 1  
 RELATIVE RANKINGS OF STATE WARDS, YOUNG OFFENDERS,  
 AND ADULT OFFENDERS AT THREE DATA COLLECTION STAGES  
 FOR SIGNIFICANT FACTORS ONLY

	Variable	State Ward	Young Offenders	Adult Offenders
Pre-Program Stage	Previous schooling	2	3	1
	Expected schooling	1	2	3
	Aspired schooling	1	3	2
	School involvement (self)	3	2	1
	School involvement (peers)	-	-	1
	School as place to be	3	2	1
	School as preparation for life	3	2	1
	Social awareness	2	3	1
	Trouble index	-	-	1
Post-Program stage	No significant difference between groupings on training program variables, social awareness, or alienation.			
Six-month follow-up stage	Employment - increase in weeks worked	3	2	1
	Re-offending	-	-	(3)

### Follow-up - Employment

There is no significant difference between the two types of program participants (school or work) in terms of the number of weeks worked in the first six months after release. The status of jobs gained remains at the same low level as jobs obtained prior to detention, that is around 48 (labourer, process worker) out of 54 on the Daniel (1983) scale. Thus, the youths are no worse off for having participated in school or work programs at Malmsbury. When the data are analysed according to offender groupings, there is no significant change in the status of jobs obtained, but there is a significant difference between the groupings in the number of weeks worked in the post-release period. Such a difference was not present in the pre-program stage. The mean number of weeks worked out of 26 in the post-release period indicates the size of the difference between the groups - State Wards = 10.37 weeks; Young Offenders = 14.93; and Adult Offenders = 18.22.

The Malmsbury pre-release 'work-out' program may help to bring about the observed slight increase in the overall number of weeks worked but this observation does not explain the significant difference between the three groupings of youths in the number of weeks worked post-release. A possible explanation is that the combination of previous schooling level and length of institution history influences employment performance post-release.

### Follow-up - Re-offending

The rate of return to detention is 20.5 per cent in the six months post-release, but the overall re-offending rate is 38.5 per cent in the six months post-release. The Adult Offenders have the lowest re-offending rate in the six months post-release (29.6 per cent), as compared to State Wards (40.6 per cent) and Young Offenders (44.8 per cent). A two-tailed t-test shows this outcome tends toward significance ( $t$ -probability = 0.063). However, even a re-offending rate of 29.6 per cent does not compare favourably with other recidivism data (Griswold, 1978). The data on re-offending rates suggest that an increase in the schooling level of State Wards and Young Offenders to the same level as Adult Offenders, is unlikely to be accompanied by comparatively favourable reduction in recidivism rates. New training strategies may be required. Careful evaluation of school policies and practices is also implied.

Reformulation of school curriculum content is a possible consequence of such an evaluation, and I want to outline a model for carrying out this task. I will begin with appropriate theoretical basis and move to the implications for schooling in community and correctional settings.

### PROPOSED THEORETICAL MODEL

Social bonding theory is based on the premise that the stronger the social ties, the greater the commitment to the social order. The agents of social order are family, peers, school, work and community organisations.

Those youths who have strong ties to all of these social agencies are less likely to break the law than are youths for whom social ties have either not developed or have been attenuated through failure experiences in one or more social agencies.

Social ties can be strengthened through attachment to law abiding people and the development of belief in the moral validity of social rules. Elliott et al (1979) refer to these processes as 'commitment'. Both 'attachment' and 'belief' are responses by individuals to their social situation. Therefore, the question for educationalists is what needs to be done to the social situation of the school in order to facilitate these 'commitment' responses?

Elliott et al (1979) postulate another concept to answer this question. Their 'integration' concept refers to involvement in conventional activities which are perceived to have personal value in the future as well as in the present. The individual therefore has interests which misconduct would jeopardise.

The implications of Elliott et al's (1979) social bond theory for schooling are that curriculum content needs to be clearly tied to the present and future world for students, and that this curriculum needs to be presented in a school context conducive to 'commitment'. Teacher attitudes and school organisation are critical contextual factors for student commitment, and this is supported by the work of Polk (1969), Pink (1982) and other researchers of 'school climate'.

Another implication for schooling is that the peer group is an important source of teaching and learning. The peer group is also an agent of social bonding. Consequently school curriculum and process that involves peer participation can strengthen social bonding through school and peers. The school can strengthen social bonding processes further through interaction with families and with community organisations and activities.

The network of social interactions is completed by connecting curriculum with the world of work in the present as well as in the expected future. This makes an on-going link between schooling and life career.

It has been shown that teaching, which combines cognitive and affective components within a context of social interaction, maximises students' innate motivation for competence. Thus,

students who are active in their own learning and have a sense of belonging to their school, will be motivated to demonstrate their competence.

In summary, implementation of social bond theory within the social institution of schooling, increases the connection of youth to conventional society and thereby decreases youth alienation.

#### Implications of the Proposed Model for Correctional Settings

The implications of social bond theory for educational practice can be illustrated by the work of Grant and Grant (1975) who report on a small project which paroled 18 felony offenders from a California State prison to work in training and job development programs for the poor. The project became known as the New Careers Project. After three years one participant was back in prison, four had returned to the kind of semi-skilled jobs they held before incarceration, one had entered tertiary education and the remaining 12 had continued in training, job and program development work, reaching positions of middle management responsibility. This project was undertaken as a demonstration of the potential within the offender population for contributing to the solution of crime and delinquency problems.

One difference between the Grants' project and other correctional education programs appears to be that the Grants developed their project from learning principles which were then used to address the practical problems of custodial life and post-release living conditions. Grant (1982) summarises these learning principles in the following way:

1. Knowledge is acquired through using knowledge;  
and,
2. learning is facilitated by maximising learners' participation in developing their own learning programs and in providing knowledge to themselves and others.

Grant (1982) argues that learning through social interaction is most effective when applied to institutional management as well as to the development of career paths for inmates. He describes how at the Berkshire House of Corrections a governance board was established with elected representatives of each group concerned. The board proceeded by establishing educational and management aims, devising means and developing strategies for overcoming obstacles to achievement of aims. This co-operative approach to learning also involved local community, education and welfare agencies, some of which became sources of post-release employment. He summarises the overall effect of this program on the climate of the institution in the following way:

The officers found more dignity and responsibility in their roles, the inmates took control of their lives and the jail took on a new image in the community (Grant, 1982, 16).

In short, the Grants demonstrate that social ties are strengthened through purposeful social interaction. It is in this type of context that learning involves solving real problems. This is pertinent to the Malmsbury youths who protested that their schooling rarely addressed real problems.

### Implications for Schooling Generally

Pearl (1978) makes the same point in his book entitled The Value of Youth. He argues that schooling needs to address the critical problems facing youth today - unemployment, poverty, war, racism, and democratic process. Pearl proposes involvement of youth in action research on these issues and cites evidence that all students are motivated to learn, but that somehow schooling turns off some students.

The Victorian Minister for Education made some steps towards redressing the alienation of some youth in Ministerial Paper Six (1984) in which he stated that 'the central purpose of schooling is to enable all students to enter fully into society'. He proposed three key areas for development of student competence - the multicultural society, the world of work, and democratic decision-making.

While the precise detail of curriculum cannot be prescribed, some aims for education (in a correctional setting) could be:

#### Area One - Cultural Competence

1. To create a climate in which diverse groups can interact without infringing the rights of others, and to seek non-violent resolutions to antagonisms and conflicts.
2. To eliminate gender, race, class and ethnic bias from lessons and texts.
3. To make it possible for all students to gain experience in history, language, lifestyles, arts and values of the different nationalities represented at the institution and in the wider community.
4. To encourage co-operative rather than competitive relationships in academic studies, recreation, and personal problem solving.

5. To provide a sense of connection between present, past and future in society so that school subjects can be understood in context.

#### Area Two - Worthwhile Work

1. To provide literacy and numeracy programs where necessary, and relate these to economic life of the community.
2. To provide daily opportunities for all students to learn through doing with others, e.g. cross-age tutoring and peer counselling at the institution and elsewhere in the outside community.
3. To connect school programs to valid credentials and the world of work, e.g. negotiate for credits with secondary and tertiary institutions, and arrange work experience within and outside the institution preferably on apprenticeship basis, to recreation officers, teachers, social workers, correctional program workers, tourist facilities.
4. To have high expectations and actively discourage notions of personal failure.
5. To encourage students and staff to take part in actions to change the youth unemployment situation.

#### Area Three - Decision-Making

1. To design a classroom structure that facilitates democratic processes.
2. To negotiate education programs with students, individually and in groups.
3. To design activities which facilitate decision-making about personal and social issues e.g. competence in a wide range of daily situations; confidence to formulate, substantiate and alter if necessary, personal opinions on contemporary social issues such as poverty, conservation, and world peace.
4. To introduce democratic decision-making to the governance of the institution as a whole, e.g. section meetings, and total institution meetings.
5. To establish a community advisory committee consisting of students and local educators and employers.

In each of these curriculum areas I have attempted to address the interaction between issues of the real world and issues of the correctional environment. There is also an emphasis on interaction between people especially through negotiation of curriculum and institutional management. This emphasis would be further strengthened through regular participant evaluation of the means, resources and obstacles to achievement of educational aims.

The Minister's Paper also provides strong encouragement for learning through social interaction. This position is supported by the critical need to do something about the role of schooling in the attenuation of social ties of Malmsbury youths (particularly the State Ward group). Further support for a learning through social interaction approach comes from the work of Grant and Grant (1975) and from Petrie's (1984) work on school organisation.

#### CONCLUSION

The Malmsbury study has illustrated the extent to which some youth are alienated from schooling and society. As the school is a key social institution it has a central role in integrating all youth into society. I have proposed a model which shows how schools might address this responsibility. Additionally, a comprehensive job creation program would strengthen social ties for all youth.

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## SCHOOLING AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF DELINQUENCY

## ASPECTS OF THE 'HIDDEN CURRICULUM'

Simon Petrie  
Lecturer in Education  
Brisbane College of Advanced Education  
(Kelvin Grove Campus)  
Queensland

The complexities of the school-delinquency relationship continue to command the attention of researchers and policy-makers alike as official rates of juvenile crime, in general, and attacks against school property, in particular, apparently continue to increase. Attacks against school property, such as arson and vandalism, represent only a small part of the school-delinquency relationship (Petrie, 1984) but rate high levels of media attention. More important, reports of attacks against property paid for by the public purse, at times of budgetary constraint, have altered subtly the direction of the debate. School arson and vandalism have been elevated to the level of 'community concern'; the surrounding discussion has moved increasingly to focus upon cost; remedies are perceived in terms of inter-departmental committees, 'gee-whiz' technology, security surveillance, dog patrols and chain-link fences; and the role of the school has been relegated to maintaining order and ensuring that students conform to appropriate standards of discipline. What is becoming lost in this scenario is an understanding of the importance of the role of the school in the development of delinquent behaviour, whether that role be contributory or causal. Moreover, the school-delinquency/school-crime relationship in toto must become a 'community concern', for it is only as the school is perceived more and more to be an integral part of the community in which it is located that any resolution to problems and difficulties will be found.

The purpose of this paper is to examine aspects of the hidden curriculum of schooling to indicate the complexity of the school-delinquency/school-crime relationship. The two aspects of the hidden curriculum that have been chosen - school discipline and ecological aspects of time and space - are interwoven, indicating the importance of an holistic approach to any understanding of school interaction.

SCHOOL DISCIPLINE STRUCTURES

In a recent examination of alienation in school, Tripp (1986) contrasted the school experiences of some students with their experiences gained out-of-school, for example, during work-

experience programs. Generally, the comments from the students indicated that they felt 'put down' by school rules and by the attitudes (of school authority figures) at school. Tripp (1986) states:

... they saw school discipline as imposed unfairly and unnecessarily, whereas at work the job that they had to do imposed its own discipline; and they were personally responsible for getting it done (Tripp, 1986, 141).

Students appeared to approve of the way that they were treated as 'adult' individuals at work, in contrast to being treated like 'children' at school, with the development of feelings of resentment towards school, not least because of the perceived lack of responsibility. Superficially, this would appear to fly in the face of accepted notions of alienation and the world of work, but perhaps it reflects more accurately the feelings of powerlessness, helplessness and frustration experienced by many high school students. In times of increasing change, school students remain as segregated and isolated from the real world as ever (Pearl, 1971) with as little influence on the events and situations that surround them. School students remain marginalised in a society that increasingly exhorts them to become competent, adult members of that society. One result of this situation is that students develop sets of expectations that view school as quite separate from the outside, real world, with critical implications for schools and schooling. For example, in terms of the relevance of school curricula, Tripp (1986) states:

Thus, the relevance of school subjects is an important and problematic issue, because pupils apparently reject what is taught in the school curriculum because it is a school curriculum, regardless of what it contains (Tripp, 1986, 137).

To many students school is school is school. Schooling is a predetermined, inescapable, unavoidable process to be endured as painlessly as possible; to be negotiated with as little aggravation as possible. For some, acquiescence and passivity are the keys to survival. For others however, active open resistance becomes the choice of strategy. Regardless, school authority figures hold the monopoly in determining what is valuable, appropriate or feasible - and at the central core of this monopoly is the school discipline policy.

It would not be unfair to suggest that the issue of 'discipline' in schools and classrooms has assumed major proportions in the eyes of professional educators and the general public, alike. Indeed, it has become almost an obsession amongst pre-service students, being viewed not least as the single most important

step towards 'good' teaching. It is important to analyse the notion of 'discipline' in schools and classrooms and look beyond the implications of the present levels of obsession.

Tripp further indicates that in terms of philosophies of teaching, few teachers based a personal philosophy of teaching on rationale or theory. Most teaching philosophies, when analysed, were akin to 'coping strategies'.

Teachers found what worked best for them in the classroom and the efficacy of their practices led them to rationalise and articulate a philosophy based upon their practices (Tripp, 1986, 129).

At the common-sense level this should be of no great surprise to professional educators, but what becomes important are the implications of this approach. Teacher discipline in classroom situations all too often becomes a spontaneous reaction to perceived problems in that place at that time. The over-riding, overacting concern of the individual teacher to implement and maintain 'strong' classroom discipline and thus, be viewed as an 'effective' teacher, has blurred the important distinction between discipline and control; has heightened the inconsistencies evident in the variety of approaches utilised by different teachers; has reinforced the (false) notion that 'strong discipline' is equated with 'effective learning'; and has effectively undermined attempts by school authorities to introduce 'blanket' codes of conduct or sets of disciplinary procedures. The classroom teacher, under enormous pressure from all sides, resorts to clutching at straws, in the effort to seek immediate solutions to wider problems. Moreover, it would appear that the teacher is in a 'no-win' situation, for not only do few students equate 'strong discipline' with 'good teaching', it is evident that indiscipline in one setting with one teacher may be the result of over-reaction to strong discipline in another setting with another teacher. The problems confronted by less authoritarian teachers may have little or nothing to do with their particular styles of teaching. Even more disconcerting, different students from the same classes are alienated by different teaching styles.

Polk and Schafer (1972) point out the proclivity on the part of classroom teachers to 'shunt' problems out of the classroom at the earliest possible moment. Reynolds (1976) indicates the futility of pursuing policies which intensify efforts to ensure compliance to rules. One set of strategies to obviate these situations has resulted in the psychologising of classroom management techniques (e.g. techniques based upon the work of Glasser and Hunter, Dreikurs, and others). But essential components have been overlooked. Few teachers willingly 'shunt' problems; few teachers actively seek confrontation in the classroom. Teachers are every bit as much victims of school structures and educational systems as are their students.

In order to more fully understand the relationship between schools, schooling and the development of delinquent behaviour, it is necessary to consider wider aspects of the schooling process.

#### ECOLOGICAL FACTORS

The school as an institution has an individual history of establishment and development, any part of which may be important to an understanding of the existing tone or climate within the school. Similarly, the size of the school, the physical design of the buildings, the spatial allocation of the buildings, the materials used in the construction of buildings, furniture and fittings and the organisation of time within the school may contribute or combine in various ways to influence the overall climate within the school, for both staff and students. The development of a low institutional pride syndrome (Petrie, 1984) - the collective manifestation of high levels of disenchantment, dissatisfaction and disaffection on the part of both staff and students - is often the result of an accumulation of niggling or petty problems associated with any or all of the structural features outlined above.

This can best be illustrated by reference to examples which link school discipline codes with ecological factors.

The physical design of school buildings and the spatial allocation of the buildings on the school campus may create numerous situational contexts and opportunities for deviant behaviour amongst students, which in turn promote the development of authoritarianism amongst staff charged with the responsibility of 'policing' school buildings. New buildings immediately result in new sets of rules to cover every conceivable contingency associated with the new building, but more important, governing the behaviour of students in and around that building.

From the point of view of the students, the numerous petty restrictions not only serve to restrict whatever freedom they may have felt that they possessed but also increase their sense of powerlessness because they are not consulted in the rule-making process. Gould (1974) indicates that students lack personal space in schools. Evans (1974) indicates that territorial definitions within schools may be indicative of assumptions concerning relationships. More pointedly, Mackie (1982) suggests that the physical structure of the school and of classrooms reflect the power structure between teachers and students.

From the point of view of the staff, new (additional) buildings mean extra rules mean extra duties to implement school procedures to ensure that students comply with rules - a task viewed as onerous at best and positively irksome at worst, with the added danger that personal classroom strategies (philosophies) may have to be shelved to fulfil the dictates of wider school policies.

In some schools, the rules and subsequent disciplinary procedures that evolve from the architectural design or construction of the school may serve to exacerbate existing difficulties. Thus, rules excluding students from playing in attractive/desirable areas, reducing student control over their own property (e.g. no bags allowed in classrooms - bags must be left on unprotected, unguarded racks outside classrooms) and impinging upon student freedom of choice or access (e.g. restricted time access to facilities such as libraries, swimming pools, etc.) do little to enhance positive feelings amongst students towards their school. When considered in conjunction with aspects of time and movement, the spatial allocation of buildings may serve to increase opportunities for in-school or out-of-school truancy.

### CONCLUSION

The current set of social expectations that view success in schooling as a prerequisite to success in life - with success measured in terms of assessment results - creates enormous pressures for school personnel, for students and for families. Restricted numbers of tertiary education places combined with stringent assessment procedures automatically result in large numbers of school 'failures'. High levels of youth unemployment serve to exacerbate the already difficult situation in which far too many students are classified as 'losers' before they begin their adult lives.

Politically, education systems in general, and aspects of schooling specifically have been utilised as the scapegoats for wider social problems, usually with some degree of 'blame' also attached to 'families'. Socio-pathological accounts of deviant behaviour have two major direct implications for schooling. First, the tendency for schools to turn inwards - to examine school curricula, school discipline and so on - rather than outwards - towards closer links with immediate communities. Second, attempts to turn outwards (e.g. the Inala Cluster of Schools) highlight the degree to which schools are removed from the realities of social existence with their immediate communities and reinforce the futility of 'school-based' attempts to solve wider social problems. In both situations, the potential is present for the development of high levels of alienation amongst teaching personnel - to the detriment of students.

Three major points become immediately apparent. First, that there exists an urgent and pressing need for a radical reappraisal of the role of schooling in contemporary Australian society. Initiatives by the Hawke Government, such as the Participation and Equity Program, are to be commended. But to be successful, such programs must be accompanied by job-creation schemes. More important, short-term initiatives 'bank-rolled' by government funding must not be mistaken for meaningful action.

All too frequently, innovative schemes are initiated by schools as the result of funding becoming available, only for the schemes to collapse as the funding runs out or interest and enthusiasm wane. Schools possess enormous amounts of untapped potential and expertise or have access to unrealised sources of potential and expertise. Similarly, it is within the scope of schools to alter traditional structures, such as time or the use of space to help to create an environment based upon mutual trust, respect and understanding rather than upon failure, degradation and humiliation. Fundamental to this is the need for a reappraisal of school discipline structures and the student-teacher relationship.

Second, it is important to promote higher levels of appreciation of the complexities of the school-delinquency/school-crime relationship. For part of the value of appreciating the complexities of the relationship lies in increasing levels of understanding of the relationship between schools and the communities in which they are located. Certainly, school buildings are vulnerable to attack, but not necessarily by students of that school. Certainly, there would appear to be a valid case for protection of property. However, the root causes of attacks against school property may lie within the school itself (high levels of dissociation, disaffection and rebellion among students; high levels of alienation among staff) or may be the result of social forces totally beyond the reach of the school (indiscriminate, anti-social behaviour on the part of outsiders). The difficulty of the moment lies in the determination of solutions. Electronic surveillance fences and security patrols may be effective in deterring outsiders but do little to enhance the 'educational' environment for students and staff. School crime and school-age crime are separate, discrete phenomena. The role of the school in the development of these phenomena may be contributory and/or causal. Regardless, it is only through closer liaison between all parties - school staff, school students, parents, other professionals and agencies working within communities - that any solution to delinquency can be approached. Schools must look, therefore, for more meaningful students and parent participation in decision-making and determination of school policies.

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## CRIMINAL TEACHERS?

Peggy Mares  
Assistant Director of Education  
Education Department  
South Australia

The question 'what shall we do with the criminal teacher?' does not imply that there are a lot of such teachers or that it is time to start some sort of witch-hunt. And it does not refer to allegations that teachers by and large are professionally incompetent or negligent in the discharge of their duties. Whether or not you believe there are such teachers in significant numbers in our schools may depend upon anecdotal evidence or media reports, since definitions of competence and negligence differ, and facts about such things are hard to come by. How best to deal with such allegations and restore public confidence in the profession is an important question that could usefully be explored at another gathering of this kind.

My focus here is the small number of teachers who are charged, and possibly later convicted, of criminal offence in or out of school. Such offences include assault, larceny, forgery, breaking and entering, growing or smoking dope. The nature of these offences, the many different places in which they may occur and the consequent range of ways in which they may be dealt with by the law and the employers, makes the collection of statistics, or even a rough estimate of the probably number of cases, difficult. The number is less important today than the principles that are involved.

I come to this question wearing three hats, or perhaps two hats, one being the kind that has to be worn at different angles. First, as a member of the Teachers' Registration Board of South Australia for the past twelve months, I have been present at meetings, and at some formal hearings, where the registration - and therefore the employment - of teachers with criminal convictions is at stake. Second, having a brief in Departmental Personnel, it is one of my responsibilities to manage the recruitment of new teachers and therefore to assess the suitability for employment of applicants who admit to having a conviction. Third, another of my responsibilities is to recommend to the Director-General whether or not action should be taken to dismiss teachers employed in the schools in my region, if they are convicted of an offence. One important issue of course, is the nature of the offence. In some cases, the nature of the employment also makes a difference.

Let me give three examples, mentioning them only briefly at this point because they will be taken up again later. They are composite pictures put together from recent cases. I have labelled them the embezzler, the seducer and the addict.

The embezzler was a teacher in a position of responsibility who managed, over a number of years, to convert several thousand dollars of school funds to his own use. When the law caught up with him he served his gaol sentence and then applied again for renewal of registration and employment. The seducer was an applicant for a position as a primary teacher who admitted on his application form that ten years before he had been convicted on three counts of carnal knowledge. The addict was charged, while employed as a teacher, with several counts of breaking and entering chemists shops and stealing drugs.

In discussing these cases, as in dealing with them, it helps to remember they occur in a particular social and legal environment. In South Australia, the Education Act contains a number of clauses that bear on teachers' moral standing. For example, under Section 26, the Director General can recommend to the Minister, the dismissal of a teacher on the grounds of 'disgraceful or improper conduct', and under Section 61 of the same Act, the Teachers' Registration Board is charged with responsibility for determining whether or not someone is a 'fit and proper person' to be registered as a teacher. The Registration Board, under Section 65 of the Act, may cancel the registration of a teacher if, after an enquiry, the Board is satisfied that he or she is guilty of 'gross incompetence or of disgraceful and improper conduct'. The Board has been advised that if a teacher who has been refused registration or dismissed from the teaching service were to appeal, the court would take into consideration the evidence of reputable members of the teaching profession to define what constitutes 'gross incompetence'. However, the court makes the final decision on this, as it does on what constitutes 'disgraceful or improper conduct' for a teacher in this day and age.

Presumably there are similar phrases in the Education Acts of other states and presumably they are equally open to varying definition. Certainly the Registration Boards of other professions, for example, Nursing, carry similar responsibilities and face similar difficulties of interpretation and of action.

As well as the Education Act there are other Acts and Regulations that shape the employment practices of a State Department of Education (and, to some extent, all other employers). Equal Opportunities Acts, for example. Perhaps more significantly, employers or Boards considering depriving a professional of their means of earning a living, must proceed within the parameters of natural justice. This includes recognising that the teacher who has served a prison sentence for a crime has already, in the eyes

of the law, paid his or her debt to society for the offence in question, and in general should not be punished again by exclusion from the profession.

In this respect the issues I am raising here are similar to issues that face people working in personnel in any organisation. That is, how to balance the needs of the system with the rights of the employees. For employers in Education, as in other human services, the phrase 'the needs of the system' must encompass the rights of the clients, in our case, the rights of children to a suitable education in a safe environment. Teachers are expected to stand 'in loco parentis' and employers must exercise, and must be seen to exercise appropriately, the duty of care in relation to students in schools.

In the remainder of this paper I want to raise three main questions about these responsibilities. Briefly, they are:

- . with which offences should we, as employers and perhaps as parents, concern ourselves?
- . at what stage, and for how long should these offences be the subject of our concern; and
- . what action should be taken so that the duty of care can be exercised?

As a novice member of the Teachers' Registration Board, I believed that there were some simple answers to the first questions. I believed that ipso facto people found guilty of certain crimes, for example crimes of violence, should not be employed in schools. Not so. In the eyes of the law every case must be considered individually and even the teacher convicted of rape must be given the opportunity to demonstrate that there were mitigating circumstances, or that he is a reformed character who will not offend again. Although the Teachers' Registration Board is chaired by a lawyer, and has access to advice from Crown Law, some members of the Board, myself among them, have found difficulty in accepting this point. For some of us, the potential risk to children, and indeed, to other teachers, is of greater and longer term significance than the harm that may be done by excluding an individual teacher from the profession for the term of his natural life.

On the other hand I found that the law takes seriously crimes which reveal dishonesty, particularly where there is record of previous convictions. From these the law may deduce that the teacher has a persistent tendency or behavioural characteristics that renders him or her not 'fit and proper'.

The embezzler was a case in point. His crimes had been committed over a number of years and in more than one school, and further

investigation revealed he had three prior convictions and an earlier suspended sentence for offences of dishonesty. By all account he was an excellent classroom teacher who succumbed to temptation when he was promoted to a position in which he had charge of the funds. The issue here was not simply would he put his hand in the till again, given the opportunity, but also whether the fact that he had done it, or something like it, several times before, indicated that he was not a fit and proper person to be passing on his skills to the next generation.

The case of the embezzler raised for me a further question. He had been admitted to a pre-service teacher education course after his first conviction and, indeed, while he was still on parole. Should he have been? Is it the business of the accrediting institutions, on which the professions rely, to check the moral standing of those they admit to courses of professional training (at public expense, one could add), or is their responsibility properly limited to assessing and later attesting to, formal professional and academic qualifications?

Similar questions arise in the case of the seducer. He admitted both on his application for registration and when he first applied for a teaching position, that as a youth he had been convicted on several counts of carnal knowledge. (He added that it was always the same girl.) He too held his conviction before he enrolled in a course of teacher education. Should it have prevented him from training as a teacher? Should it preclude him from being employed? In discussing this case, the Teachers' Registration Board considered three routine questions:

- . How recent was the offence?
- . Had the teacher any other criminal record? and
- . What evidence was there that in all other respects he was a 'fit and proper person'?

The Board came to the decision that this applicant should be granted registration, and it was then up to the employers to decide whether or not he should be offered a job.

Clearly opinions on this case differed, just as opinions differ on whether a registered teacher with a recent or long-ago conviction for shoplifting or for smoking dope should be given a job. The critical questions for an Education Department then becomes, who should decide? Whose standards should prevail in a society with shifting values? And how can the matter be dealt with in a way that will protect the interests of all parties and at the same time preserve confidentiality? As I have already said, I don't have answers to these questions.

Because it is about sexuality, the case of the seducer raises other difficult questions to which there can be no easy answers. Students, or their parents on their behalf, not infrequently claim sexual harassment by teachers and in investigating such cases employers often find that while the complainants want the behaviour to stop, they are reluctant to involve the police or to allow the student to be questioned in court. One consequence of this is that it becomes virtually impossible to sustain a charge of misconduct against the teacher. Even if the employer's internal investigations lead to the conclusion that there are grounds for disciplinary action, because, at least in South Australia, the teacher has the right of appeal, legal advice has usually been not to proceed since the student would almost certainly be required to appear and to stand up to cross questioning when the case eventually came before the court. While I accept the necessity to protect teachers against false accusations, I believe this is one of those situations I mentioned earlier, where the rights of the employee to natural justice appear to override the obligation of the employer to provide an education in a safe environment.

It is also the case that the evidence of reputable members of the profession, which can be called on where a teacher is charged with incompetence, is not sufficient to substantiate a charge of improper conduct. Even if they are prepared to attest to a series of incidents which have been reported to them, legally this constitutes hearsay and the evidence of the students themselves who allegedly experienced the harassment is always considered essential to a successful case. The inevitable delays in investigating such a case and the difficulty of maintaining confidentiality for the accuser as well as for the accused, means that few cases involving harassment proceed.

An episode of 'Rumpole of the Bailey', recently replayed by the ABC, concerned such a case. The fourteen year old school girl revealed under Rumpole's cross-questioning that she had set out to 'catch' the handsome young English teacher in order to make her boyfriend jealous. The teacher was nevertheless found guilty and sent to gaol, on the grounds that he had taken advantage of the position of trust he was in vis a vis the student.

In real life in Australia, I suggest such a situation is more likely to be handled without recourse to the law, by counselling both parties and possibly moving the teacher to another school. According to the grapevine, there are some teachers who have made several changes of school under such circumstances. In one recent case, there was a considerable discussion about how much information should be passed on with the teacher to his new school. The decision was that as nothing had been proved, natural justice to the teacher required that nothing be revealed.

My final example is the teacher I have called the addict. At the time he was charged with breaking and entering a chemist's shop and stealing drugs, he was employed to teach physical education in a country school. Police enquiries revealed that an earlier charge of forging and uttering prescriptions had been dropped at the request of the local doctor. The second charge came to light in an interesting way: the local policeman mentioned it to someone on the school council during a round of golf. What should a school do with such information passed on in such a way? Should there be some obligation for the police to give formal notification to the employer? Should the conditions of employment put the onus on the employee to report a criminal charge? If so, what sanctions should apply if the teacher does not tell?

Any teacher on a charge, of course, must be presumed innocent until proven guilty. As it is likely several months will pass before the matter can be brought to court, the immediate issue for the employer is what to do with the teacher in the meantime. Should he or she be left in charge of students, particularly of students actively engaged in sport and other potentially dangerous physical activities? Could he or she be required to undertake a medical examination, and if found to be not physically fit, would there be grounds for terminating employment?

This case illustrates the random way in which an employer may come to learn that a charge has been laid against a teacher. It also raises the whole question of teacher health (mental and physical), a question that is not strictly relevant to this discussion but one that is of growing significance to employers because of the increasing cost of workers' compensation claims. More immediately, the case of the addict returns us to the question with which I began this paper:

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Once the case has been heard and a teacher is found guilty, the employing authority can pursue its own internal procedures for determining whether or not there are grounds for dismissal. If the teacher is dismissed, should the employer then advise the Teachers' Registration Board so that it will take the next step of determining whether or not the teacher should be deregistered? And, as registration is a State matter, should there be some interstate network providing information on deregistered teachers?

As I said earlier, it is not my intention to start a witch-hunt, or to suggest that there are large numbers of teachers facing criminal charges or holding criminal convictions in Australian schools. Over the past two years I have, however, become convinced that the fact that such cases occur at all should alert

us to the need as a society to establish some benchmarks and to sort out our procedures. As employers, we are responsible for the safety of the children in our schools: as teachers we share responsibility with all other teachers for the good standing of the profession.

SEMINAR: CRIME AT SCHOOL

List of Participants

Mr Geoff Allen	Senior Officer Victorian Secondary Teachers' Association 35 Elizabeth Street NORTH RICHMOND VIC 3121
Mr Roger Amey	Theodore Street Behaviour Unit CURTIN ACT 2605
Mrs Mary Armstrong	Principal The Forest High School Frenchs Forest Road FRENCHS FOREST NSW 2086
Dr Maurice Balson	Associate Professor Faculty of Education Monash University CLAYTON VIC 3168
Mr Frank Barr	NSW High School Principals' Association Young High School Campbell Street YOUNG NSW 2594
Dr Ray Barratt	Principal Rosedale State High School Priestdale Road ROCHEDALE QLD 4123
Mr Bruce Bensley	High School Principal (retired) C/- The Forest High School FRENCHS FOREST NSW 2086
Mr David Biles	Acting Director Australian Institute of Criminology PO Box 28 WODEN ACT 2606
Ms Julie Biles	Principal Richardson Primary School Clift Crescent RICHARDSON ACT 2905
Mr Keith Bradshaw	Lecturer in Educational Studies Bendigo College of Advanced Educations Edward Road BENDIGO VIC 3550

Mrs Lorraine Braithwaite	Senior Education Officer Schools Directorate Department of Education PO Box A605 SOUTH SYDNEY NSW 2000
Miss Mary Brownlee	Lecturer SA College of Advanced Education City Site, 46-68 Kintore Avenue ADELAIDE SA 5000
Ms Helen Carey	Senior Lecturer in Education SA Collge of Advanced Education Holbrooks Road UNDERDALE SA 5032
Mr Shane Carroll	Lecturer Western Institute PO Box 315 ST ALBANS VIC 3021
Mr Dennis Challinger	Assistant Director (Information and Training) Australian Institute of Criminology PO Box 28 WODEN ACT 2606
Mr Gregg Chapman	School Counsellor Duval High School PO Box 751 ARMIDALE NSW 2350
Sister Loreto Conroy	President Catholic Primary Principals' Association PO Box 347 WATERLOO NSW 2017
Dr William Conway	Principal Education Officer ACT Schools Authority PO Box 20 CIVIC SQUARE ACT 2608
Ms Helena Cornelius	Conflict Resolution Network PO Box 1016 CHATSWOOD NSW 2067
Ms M Cowin	A/Senior Education Officer Ministry of Education 431 Nepean Highway FRANKSTON VIC 3199
Mrs Helen Cunningham	Senior Teacher St Anthony's Parish School Wentworth Street Wentworth NSW 2800

Mrs Jennifer Damiani Vice President  
Federation of Parents and Friends Association  
of SA Catholic Schools  
19 Market Street  
ADELAIDE SA 5000

Mr Robert Davis Senior Master  
Canberra Grammar Junior School  
Monaro Crescent  
RED HILL ACT 2603

Mr George De Wolfe Assistant Principal  
Padua Catholic High School  
Mackinnon Street  
WANNIASSA ACT 2903

Mr Phil De Young Senior College Coordinator  
Wesley College  
577 St Kilda Road  
PRAHRAN VIC 3181

Mr John Dunkley Weston Creek High School  
Badimar Street  
WARMANGA ACT 2611

Mrs Willemien Duyker Principal  
The Montessori School  
18 Montessori Place  
KINGSLEY WA 6026

Mr Michael Dwyer Assistant Principal  
Fraser Primary School  
Tilyard Drive  
FRASER ACT 2615

Mrs Elaine Ennett Youth Worker  
Castlereagh House  
PO Box 627  
MACQUARIE ACT 2617

Mr Laurie Etherton Principal  
Altona North Technical School  
272 Millers Road  
ALTONA NORTH VIC 3025

Mr Lindsay Francis Senior Lecturer  
SA College of Advanced Education  
Holbrooks Road  
UNDERDALE SA 5032

Mr John Gardner Consultant to VATIS  
108 Trafalgar Street  
ANNANDALE NSW 2038

Mr Peter Garlick	Field Officer Association of Teachers in Independent Schools 234 Magill Road BEULAH PARK SA 5067
Mrs Eileen Garmonsway	LASA Youth Centre 35 Damala Street WARAMANGA ACT 2611
Mr Brian Geary	Controller School Experience Bendigo College of Advanced Education PO Box 199 BENDIGO VIC 3550
Mr John Gelling	Principal Holder High School Mulley Street HOLDER ACT 2611
Constable Lance Goodger	School-based Police Officer Light Cliff High School Light Cliff Road DARWIN NT 5790
Mr Roy Harvey	Principal Sadadeen Secondary College PO Box 1219 ALICE SPRINGS NT 5750
Mr Owen Hasler	NSW Teachers' Federation Gunnedah High School Marquis Street GUNNEDAH NSW 2380
Ms Diane Hatfield	Daramalan College Cowper Street DICKSON ACT 2602
Mr David Inskeep	Youth Worker Castlereagh House PO Box 627 MACQUARIE ACT 2617
Ms Linda Jepson	Melrose High School Marr Street PEARCE ACT 2607
Mr Fred Jones	Principal Erindale College McBryde Crescent WANNIASSA ACT 2903

Mr Gordon King	Lecturer in Education Northern Rivers CAE LISMORE NSW 2480
Ms Shelley Lavender	Assistant Secretary Victorian Secondary Teachers' Association 35 Elizabeth Street NORTH RICHMOND VIC 3121
Dr Don Levis	Director (South) Education Department of Tasmania 181 Elizabeth Street HOBART TAS 7000
Mrs Jean Loke	Assistant Principal Driver High School Tilston Avenue PALMERSTON NT 5787
Mr Bill Lucas	Head of School Studies in Education SA College of Advanced Education Holbrooks Road UNDERDALE SA 5032
Mr Lawrence Maher	Principal Sturt Public School White Avenue KOORINGAL NSW 2650
Mr Patrick Mansbridge	Rosny College Bastick Street ROSNY PARK TAS 7018
Dr Peggy Mares	Assistant Director of Education (Personnel) Eastern Area Education Office Mobilong House MURRAY BRIDGE SA 5253
Mr Gerry Marriott	Principal Greenwood High School Coolibah Drive GREENWOOD WA 6024
Mr Rob McConchie	Principal Kambah High School O'Halloran Circuit KAMBAH ACT 2902

Mr John McDonald	Youth Liaison Coordinator NSW Police Headquarters 14-24 College Street SYDNEY NSW 2000
Ms Judy McKee	Belconnen High School Murrnaji Street HAWKER ACT 2602
Ms Helga McPhie	Acting Assistant Principal (Students) Hawker College Murrnaji Street HAWKER ACT 2614
Mr Frank Meaney	Leader, Community Relations Unit Department of Education GPO Box 33 SYDNEY NSW 2001
Mrs Julie Millerick	Anzac Hill High School ALICE SPRINGS NT 5750
Mr Bruce Moon	Lecturer College of Advanced Education ARMIDALE NSW 2350
Mr David Moore	Principal St Paul's High School PO Box 194 BOOLAROO NSW 2284
Ms Jane Mugford	Principal Programs Officer Australian Institute of Criminology PO Box 28 WODEN ACT 2606
Brother Laurie Needham	Deputy Provincial Christian Brothers 179 Albert Road STRATHFIELD NSW 2135
Ms Barbara Nichols	Head of Junior School Abbotsleigh Junior School 22 Woonona Avenue WAHROONGA NSW 2076
Mr Robert Nield	Canberra High School Bindubi Street MACQUARIE ACT 2614

Mr Peter Nolan	Deputy Headmaster St Edmund's College Canberra Avenue GRIFFITH ACT 2603
Mr Rodney O'Rourke	Principal Ravenswood High School PO Box 340 LAUNCESTON TAS 7250
Mrs Bernice O'Sullivan	Assistant Principal (Student Welfare) Merici College PO Box 154 BRADDON ACT 2601
Mr Colin O'Neill	Manager Security Services Group Ministry of Education Private Bag 33 MT WAVERLEY VIC 3149
Mr Neil Pattinson	Year Supervisor Belconnen High School Murrarji Street HAWKER ACT 2614
Dr Alistair Peacock	Senior Lecturer Professional Practice Coordinator WA College of Advanced Education Stirling Highway NEDLANDS WA 6009
Ms Bettye Pearce	Assistant Principal (Students) Weston Creek High School Badimara Street WARAMANGA ACT 2611
Dr Simon Petrie	Lecturer in Education Dept of Education Studies Brisbane CAE (Kelvin Grove Campus) Victoria Park Road KELVIN GROVE QLD 4059
Ms Susan Plunkett	Numulgi Public School MODANVILLE via LISMORE NSW 2480
Mrs Elizabeth Pryzibilla	Secretary Federation of Parents and Friends Assoc of SA Catholic Schools 19 Market Street ADELAIDE SA 5000

Mrs Narelle Radford	School Counsellor Belconnen High School Muranji Street HAWKER ACT 2602
Dr William Ramsay	Senior Lecturer in Education Centre for Education University of Tasmania GPO Box 252C HOBART TAS 7001
Detective Sgt Tony Rand	Queensland Police Department GPO Box 1440 BRISBANE QLD 4001
Mr Cliff Ree	Regional Special Education and Guidance Officer PMB 2 IPSWICH QLD 4305
Ms Sandra Renew	Theodore Street Behaviour Unit CURTIN ACT 2605
Ms Diana Roe	School Counsellor Richardson Primary School RICHARDSON ACT 2904
Mr Maurice Rousell	Marist College Marr Street PEARCE ACT 2607
Mr Michael Ryan	Principal Lecturer - Education Catholic College of Education PO Box 201 CASTLE HILL NSW 2154
Ms Elizabeth Savage	Counsellor Telopea Park School New South Wales Crescent BARTON ACT 2600
Mr Peter Schiller	Carey Baptist Grammar School 349 Barkers Road KEW VIC 3101
Dr Robert Semmens	Head of Department Special Education 757 Swanston Street CARLTON VIC 3053

Ms Brenda Seymour  
Research Officer  
NSW Teachers' Federation  
300 Sussex Street  
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dr Ann Shorten  
Lecturer in Education  
Faculty of Education  
Monash University  
Wellington Road  
CLAYTON VIC 3168

Ms Halia Silins  
Senior Lecturer  
SA College of Advanced Education  
Sturt Road  
BEDFORD PARK SA 5042

Mrs Rosemary Sinclair  
Official Spokesperson  
'It's OK to Say No' Series  
46 Norman Street  
DEAKIN ACT 2600

Mr Roger Slee  
Lecturer  
Education Faculty  
Ballarat College of Advanced Education  
MT HELEN VIC 3350

Mr Dennis Sleigh  
Principal  
St John the Apostle Primary School  
Pawsey Circuit  
FLOREY ACT 2615

Ms Carmen Smith  
Queensland Teachers' Union  
PO Box 310  
SPRING HILL QLD 4000

Mr Kenneth Smith  
Lecturer in Psychology  
ICE Mercy Campus  
251 Mt Alexander Road  
ASCOT VALE VIC 3233

Mr Michael Smith  
Assistant Headmaster (Student Welfare)  
Daramalan College  
PO Box 84  
DICKSON ACT 2602

Mr Andrew Sturman  
Senior Research Officer  
Australian Council for Educational Research  
PO Box 210  
HAWTHORN VIC 3122

Ms Kate Sutherland  
1 Lambert Street  
LYNEHAM ACT 2602

Mrs Helen Szuty  
President  
ACT Council of Parents & Citizens  
Associations Inc.  
c/- Downer Primary School  
Bradfield Street  
DOWNER ACT 2602

Mr Geoff Thorpe  
Studies Directorate  
Education Department  
31 Flinder Street  
ADELAIDE SA 5000

Mr Len Tuohy  
ACT Schools Authority  
PO Box 20  
CANBERRA ACT 2608

Ms Rosemary Walsh  
Executive Officer - Operations  
Policy and Advice Unit  
ACT Schools Authority  
PO Box 20  
CIVIC SQUARE ACT 2608

Ms Mary Weddell  
Assistant Principal  
The Woden School  
DEAKIN ACT 2600

Mr Michael Wills  
Assistant Director (Security Services)  
Department of Education  
130 George Street  
PARRAMATTA NSW 2150

Ms Christine Woithe  
Principal  
The Haven  
140-146 Elliott Street  
WHYALLA SA 5600