

Summary

After the 2013 Annual Conference expressed concern about the way PB4L and related initiatives were operating in schools, this paper explains how these behavioural initiatives are being implemented, describes some of the challenges in turning theory into effective practice and recommends PPTA adopt a set of behavioural guidelines to empower branches to have more say about how behaviour management frameworks operate in their schools.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Managing student behaviour is central to the job of being a secondary teacher. It is no mean feat sustaining a learning environment that engages and involves anything up to 30 adolescents on an hourly basis – particularly given that until the age of 16, students do not have a choice about being there. Moreover, society itself is conflicted about what it wants secondary teachers to do. On the one hand, they are expected to act as agents of social control, teaching students to behave according to certain established cultural norms and instilling “discipline” while on the other hand, education is valued as an exercise in challenging established wisdom and encouraging independent thinking. In western countries, including New Zealand, there has been a systematic move away from the former to the latter but not always accompanied by the levels of support teachers require to change the fundamentals of classroom practice.

1.2 Behaviour management and PPTA

It's no surprise that behaviour management has been a regular topic of discussion at PPTA Annual Conference and in other forums. In 1985 after years of intense debate, PPTA Annual Conference signalled that it was embracing a view of education as a transformational experience, not simply a transactional one, and recommended that caning be abolished. This change was cemented in legislation in 1990. The 1985 conference also called for a range of supports that would assist teachers with classroom management in the new environment: smaller classes, more guidance counsellors, a revamped

curriculum that gave students more choice and better home/school relationships.

1.3 Supporting teachers in the classroom

Typically with education reform, the move away from punishment to a more sophisticated model of behaviour management has not been accompanied by the necessary time, staffing and professional development. Teachers have expressed frustration at being expected to deal with an increasing range of complex and sometimes dangerous student behaviours without the system-wide support that is required. In 2008 the Hutt Valley region commissioned the report *The Incidence of Severe Behaviour in Hutt Valley and Wellington Schools*¹. This report focused on the mechanisms for supporting schools which deal with large numbers of students who exhibit disruptive and antisocial behaviour.

The Ministry of Education responded by calling a national behaviour summit, the Taumata Whanonga² at which national and international experts on behaviour provided advice on the nature of the problem and described what a successful response might look like. It was an acknowledgement that there was a real problem in schools that needed addressing and an admission that a coherent national solution was needed. After the summit the ministry, unions and academics continued to work together to develop some agreed solutions to the problem. During this process Positive Behaviour for Learning (PB4L) was proposed as the most evidence-based way to work through problem behaviour.

1. Schagen, Sandie and Hodgen, Edith (2008) *Incidence of Severe Behaviour in Hutt Valley and Wellington Schools*. NZCER.

2. <http://www.minedu.govt.nz/NZEducation/EducationPolicies/SpecialEducation/OurWorkProgramme/PositiveBehaviourForLearning/TaumataWhanonga/Presentations.aspx>

2. Positive Behaviour for Learning – PB4L

2.1 Introduction of PB4L – navigating the rapids of behaviour management

PB4L is a group of programmes which provide a tiered approach to behaviour management, with the focus of the School-Wide (SW) programme on data gathering and evaluation, alongside the establishment and teaching of values. It started in America and spread to a number of countries including Australia, Holland, England and eventually New Zealand. PPTA welcomed the introduction of a supported investment in the programme though there was some concern about its American focus. More critical for PPTA were the issues around schools that did not operate the programme with fidelity. In other words, they used it as a weapon to condemn and isolate teachers rather than as a consultative professional development tool that, properly implemented, would support both teachers and students. In 2010, Annual Conference recommended that schools consult with the PPTA branch about the decision to become part of PB4L and continue to consult with the branch about the operation of the programme. Its implementation was dependent on an 80% buy-in from all staff, which was telegraphed as essential to bring the programme into a school. The steering group helped negotiate time between the original presentation and the vote so that the PPTA branch could also be consulted. It also gave staff sufficient time to consider fully the ramifications of a whole school change initiative.

2.2 Expansion and Review of PB4L

Positive Behaviour for Learning helps parents, whanau, teachers and schools address problem behaviour, improve children and young people's wellbeing and increase educational achievement.³ PB4L consists of

3. About PB4L

ten programmes, some whole school change initiatives, some targeted group programmes and other targeted individual programmes and services. These are listed on the TKI website with the exception of some programmes, such as Check and Connect, which are in pilot phase.

When secondary schools talk about PB4L they often mean School-Wide (SW) which is the whole school values based initiative. There is a [video](#) which gives information about this specific programme. There are currently 515 schools participating, of which 166 are secondary schools (32.2%). As at the time of writing, there are 323 secondary schools (state and integrated), which means 51.4% of secondary schools are implementing School-Wide. No figures are available for composite schools.

2.3 Restorative Practices

Funding has also been provided to encourage schools to explore Restorative Practices, a programme designed to make sure relationships continue to function well in the melting pot that secondary schools can be. It is a relationship-based programme which has found alternative ways to keep students in the classroom and in the school.

Currently 21 trial schools are developing a best practice model for Restorative Practices. The programme involves a whole school approach to behaviour management consisting of three practices: restorative essentials, circles (where students are worked with in groups), and conferencing dealing with more serious disciplinary breaches. The completion of the pilot will lead to a best practice model which is to be made available to 200 schools by 2017. Delays in expansion of the pilot have occurred as a result of issues in designing a model that will both suit the sector and get round the ministry's cap on appointing people which is part of a wider public service personnel freeze. These delays are frustrating as there is a pressing need for this approach to be available to more schools.

PPTA has been fully involved in the development of the resources as well as in designing the delivery model for schools. This initiative must remain sector-led with schools enabled to access ongoing support in the form of training, coaching and advice.

2.4 Youth Mental Health Project

As well as calling for more consistent practice nationally in addressing problem behaviour, the Taumata Whanonga also noted how critically under-resourced schools were in terms of expertise for dealing with teenage mental health issues. The response has been the [Prime Minister's Youth Mental Health Project](#)⁴ which seeks to align health and educational services in order to better support the one in five teenagers who suffer from some form of mental health problem.

3. Shifting sands

3.1 Stand-downs and suspensions

A 2013 Ministry of Education report (based on 2012 data)⁵ indicates that stand-downs and suspensions continue to trend downwards. This suggests that schools are genuinely looking for alternative ways to deal with problem student behaviour.

3.1.1. Reasons for stand-downs

Two thirds of stand-downs are for violence, continual disobedience or verbal assaults on staff (e.g. swearing). The other third includes drug and alcohol use, sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, possession of weapons and other harmful or dangerous behaviours. As stand-downs make up the largest removal from school measure, this tells us a lot about how schools are managing problem behaviour and which students are affected most.

4. <http://www.beehive.govt.nz/feature/prime-minister%E2%80%99s-youth-mental-health-project>

5. Stand-downs, suspensions, exclusions and expulsions from school. Ministry of Education 2013.

3.1.2. Stand-downs and ethnicity

Stand-down figures remain particularly high for Maori. In 2012 there were 16,712 stand-downs of 13,040 students. 69% of these were in secondary schools. The rate for Maori stand-downs is 1.5 times that of Pakeha. Pasifika and Maori had the biggest reductions in stand-downs of all ethnic groups between 2011 and 2012, but there is still a long way to go to achieve 'parity' of stand-downs with Pakeha students.

3.1.3. Stand-downs and socio-economic differences

There is also a class difference in that students from decile 1 and 2 schools are 4.7 times more likely to be stood down than students from decile 9 and 10 schools. Reducing stand-down rates is also critical from an equity point of view. Decile 1 and 2 schools do appear to be doing a better job than higher decile schools at retaining Maori students, but the number of stand-downs remains too high.

The early evaluation indications from PB4L would support this.

3.1.4. Suspensions

The main reason for suspensions in 2012 was continual disobedience, at 24.9%, followed closely by drugs, at 23.7%. Suspensions have decreased 39.7% over the last 13 years so schools appear to be finding other ways to work with students.

3.1.5. Exclusions

The main reason given for exclusion is continual disobedience, at 33.6%; physical assault is second, at 17.4% and drug use is third. The report notes:

- Maori were being expelled at 2.1 times the rate of Pasifika students and 3.7 times that of Pakeha.
- 2.6 times more boys than girls were excluded.

- Students from the lowest quintile schools are 5.1 times more likely to be excluded than students in the highest quintiles.

3.1.6 Use of Section 27

Anecdotally, use of Section 27⁶, which enables principals to exempt a student from attending for up to five days, has become increasingly popular, but as statistics are not gathered on its use it is hard to determine exactly how much it is being used or whether it is being used correctly. This section is designed so that a student can gather the appropriate support for a restorative meeting or other such intervention and enables the school to avoid formally asking the student to stay at home. There is currently some nervousness from the ministry about s27 use, as under this section a student cannot be compelled to stay at home (it is seen as a supportive mechanism). However, the section has at least given schools another tool to use when dealing with particular behaviours. It is crucial, if we are to keep students in school, that schools have tools like s27 that they can use to maintain relationships with students as well as the mana of all involved, while allowing schools to get the necessary support in place so that students can work through the real issues they might have with authority or with substances.

3.2 The changing face of practice

The statistics for stand-downs and suspensions suggest a system in transition, but they currently reflect both old and new practices in schools.

The Health and Wellbeing of New Zealand Secondary School Students in 2012⁷, which is part of the Youth 2000 survey series, suggests that in many schools behaviour and wellbeing is improving. More students

6. <http://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/1989/0080/latest/DLM178252.html>

7. Clark T.C. et al (2013) *Youth '12 Overview: The health and wellbeing of New Zealand secondary school students in 2012*. Auckland, New Zealand: The University of Auckland.

than was the case in 2000 report that their teachers are fair, that they like school, and that they feel the adults at school care about them. This aligns with the growth in importance of relationship-based teaching and with the numbers of students staying on at school until the end of year 13.

3.3 It's not just schools ...

Statistics show that despite deteriorating out-of-school factors schools are managing to reduce suspensions and stand-downs. However, there remain many factors which are often outside of teachers' and students' control and which work against efforts to address poor behaviour. New Zealand ranks poorly in the OECD bullying measures⁸, which led to the creation of the Bullying Prevention Guidelines⁹ this year. This poor ranking for bullying is reflected in the Youth 2012 survey findings. It also highlights other concerning issues which impact on student behaviour, including high numbers of students with significant depressive symptoms, high numbers of parents worrying about having enough money for food and lack of access to a family doctor¹⁰, and the levels of participation in paid part-time employment.

4. The context for teachers

4.1 Teacher Efficacy

Patty Towl (in work commissioned by PPTA in 2007)¹¹ made clear that the biggest issue for teachers dealing with behaviour issues in the classroom was the undermining of teacher efficacy by blame-focused approaches. She also highlighted an unhelpful "deficit model of thinking" operating which implies that any failure of a student to succeed is a result of poor

8. Martin, M., Mullis, I., & Foy, P. (2008). *TIMSS 2007 international science report*. Chestnut Hill, MA: TIMSS & PIRLS International Study Center.

9. *Bullying Prevention and Response: A guide for schools*.

10. This was supported by PPTA's 2013 annual conference paper, *Equipping schools to fight poverty: A community hub approach*.

11. Towl, Patty (2007) *Best Practice Behaviour Management a View from the Literature*.

teaching, and that all barriers to student achievement (including behaviour issues) can be addressed solely by the medium of 'fixing broken teachers'.

The adults who surround students and the consistency of their expectations can make a massive difference to individuals' behaviour. As Dr John Visser points out:

"much challenging behaviour is context related, altering according to time, place and the adults involved. Policies help to reduce different reactions and approaches by different teachers and other staff, thereby helping consistency and fairness. Where such policies are 'owned' and 'lived', safe, well organised schools with staff clearly in control tend to result. Policies must allow staff to listen and talk to pupils and to provide 'emotional first aid'"¹²

The school's behavioural framework and the policies and practices underpinning it will have the biggest impact on teacher efficacy and, if well managed, will allow the teacher to remain clearly in control.

5. PPTA Behaviour Guidelines

The 2013 Annual Conference expressed some concern about the way PB4L and related initiatives were operating in schools, so asked that a taskforce be set up to produce the following:

- a report to Annual Conference 2014, and
- a set of behavioural management guidelines to shape good practice in schools.

5.1 Behaviour Management Taskforce

The Behaviour Management Taskforce considered a range of material covering best practice approaches, including literature reviews. It met face-to-face once and developed guidelines to assist branches

12. Visser, Dr John, Nov 2003, *A Study of Children and Young People who Present Challenging Behaviour*, School of Education, University of Birmingham.

in ensuring that behaviour initiatives operate effectively in their schools.

5.2 Behaviour Guidelines

The guidelines developed by the Taskforce are attached as Appendix A, and Recommendation 2 asks that Annual Conference formally adopt these.

Branches that find that the behaviour management systems operating in their schools are not supporting teachers to be more effective in the classroom need to evaluate their school programme against the best practice approach described in these guidelines and seek a meeting with their employer to discuss how processes can be improved. It is clear that many of the issues around the adoption of any behaviour management programme within secondary schools reflect ineffective change management in schools rather than particular problems with the programmes themselves. PPTA has also developed a number of useful toolkits which should be used in conjunction with these guidelines. In particular, the Change Management toolkit¹³, the PLD toolkit¹⁴ and the School Anti-violence Toolkit¹⁵ can all support branches' work in this area.

5.3 Using the Guidelines

Recommendation 3 encourages regional officers to include training around the Guidelines and the PPTA toolkits for Change Management, PLD and Anti-Violence in their regional training days. National Office staff will help with this as required. Field officers will also be a valuable asset to assist with this process.

Recommendations 4 and 5 encourage branches to display and distribute the Guidelines in their schools, and to use them where there are issues.

13. PPTA Education Change Management Toolkit.

14. PPTA PLD toolkit.

15. School anti-violence toolkit.

The Guidelines will be far more effective if they are supported and encouraged by our regions and branches. They are, in effect, an organising tool that enables staff to prevent poor management practices from taking hold.

6. Conclusion

This paper explains the background to PB4L and other interconnected behavioural initiatives and describes some of the challenges in turning the theory into effective practice. The attached behaviour guidelines give teachers the ability to act together to have an influence on behaviour management in their schools. By working with branch officers and regional networks, PPTA members can make a difference to the way frameworks for behaviour management operate in schools.

7. Recommendations

- ~~1. That the report be received.~~
- ~~2. That PPTA adopt the Behaviour Guidelines.~~
- ~~3. That regions be encouraged to include training around the Behaviour Guidelines and the relevant PPTA toolkits in their branch officer training programmes from 2015.~~
- ~~4. That branch chairs be asked to display and distribute the Behaviour Guidelines in their schools.~~
- ~~5. That branches that have concerns about their school behaviour management system are encouraged and supported to raise the matter with their employers.~~

Appendix: Behaviour Guidelines

May 2014

1. Systems and approaches to behaviour management are effective when:

- A whole school approach is taken. This means teachers are involved in creating the system and key stakeholders are properly consulted in the development.
- Key stakeholders include: PPTA branch, staff-teaching and support, students, whanau, boards, community groups and other agencies.
- In the initial phase of implementation processes are clear and transparent, lines of communication remain open (across all key stakeholders) and PLD is provided which must include mentoring, time and resourcing.
- In the development phase the systems continue to be resourced, are reflexive (monitored through self-review), reflective practices are used, and evidence is gathered and acted upon.
- In the sustainability phase significant changes in key stakeholders are tracked, big changes can occur. School values must be checked. All systems and approaches must be checked to make sure they remain effective. New members of the school community are inducted starting with teachers and working through support staff and other key stakeholders.

2. To support teachers in managing student behaviour they must have:

- An easy to use framework for managing student behaviour developed from a robust, co-constructed behaviour management plan;
- Clear lines of communication to access support (including SENCO, SCT, RTLB, PLD);



- A collaborative working environment where expectations are fair, equitable and negotiated to maintain the mana and dignity of the teacher;
- Supports might include access to mentoring, working with the SCT, senior leaders, HoFs, guidance and deans, whanau, community, agencies, etc;
- The visible support of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) to implement the student management framework;
- Opportunities to know students in context;
- An understanding of the students' world;
- On-going opportunities to build relationships;
- An open and supportive school culture;
- A collaborative and collegial work environment which empowers teachers to implement the behavioural framework.

All of the above should help maintain the mana and dignity of the teacher and teaching.

3. What are the effects of these ways of working?

Teachers

- Positive learning environment for all, mana and dignity flourishes.
- Consistent application of the framework across the school.
- Extra workload of effective implication is accounted for.
- Awareness of behaviours is well developed and well informed.
- Staff awareness of behaviours towards students and each other is high.
- Staff morale and community morale is tracking up.
- Happy, safe working environment.
- Recognition of positive results and opportunities.
- Opportunity to view students differently.
- Give students the chance to change.
- Teaching will be more effective.
- Staff motivation is up and staff wellbeing is consolidate.

Students

- Positive learning environment for all, mana and dignity flourishes.
- Security – students know expectations and outcomes.
- Equity- everyone is treated fairly.
- Motivational- everyone feels part of the collective.
- Modelling- behaviours are modelled by all.
- Recognition- is given to good practice and to teacher and student need.

2014 Annual Conference

Minutes

Minutes of the Annual Conference of the New Zealand Post Primary Teachers' Association (Inc) held at the Brentwood Hotel, Kilbirnie, Wellington, commencing at 9.45 a.m. on Tuesday 30 September 2014, continuing at 9.00 a.m. on Wednesday 1 October and 9.00 a.m. on Thursday 2 October 2014.

Behaviour, Behaviour, Behaviour – It's a Class Act!

1. THAT the report be received.
2. THAT PPTA adopt the Behaviour Guidelines.
3. THAT regions be encouraged to include training around the Behaviour Guidelines and the relevant PPTA toolkits in their branch officer training programmes from 2015.
4. THAT branch chairs be asked to display and distribute the Behaviour Guidelines in their schools.
5. THAT branches that have concerns about their school behaviour management systems, policies and procedures are encouraged and supported to raise the matter with their employers.
6. THAT the PPTA share the Behaviour Guidelines and associated tool kits with the Secondary Principals Association of New Zealand (SPANZ).

Carried