# Chapter 12 Activities

Web activity WA12.1

Considering important features of inclusion in educational institutions

A group of experienced special educational co-ordinators committed to achieving the very best educational provision for young people experiencing special or additional needs, as well as all other students, were asked the question on a university CPD course: ‘What, in your experience, are important features of “inclusion” in schools and colleges?’ (adapted from Wearmouth, 2016, pp. 7–8). They made the following observations about classroom practice. How far do you agree with these points from your own experience?

All children having equal opportunities to participate in all areas of broad balanced curriculum and feel valued, which implies:

* removing barriers to learning so everyone can access curriculum and make progress regardless of any circumstance – health, finance, behaviour etc;
* treating young people differently according to various needs and adopting a holistic approach to support a tailored, individual approach to the curriculum;
* differentiation in classrooms and awareness of how the learning context supports inclusion or excludes some children;
* acceptance of diversity without negative comments or notice, with care taken regarding the language used about others;
* a sense of belonging, taking account of the individual’s feelings;
* all young people know they have a voice;
* young people with needs have access to appropriate provision (internal and external) to meet those needs, irrespective of location;
* deliberate consideration of strategies, procedures, resources and people to make it happen;
* Supporting pupils and staff to create a safe environment for learning for everyone where everybody has a positive attitude towards everyone else and there is mutual respect.

Schools having high expectations, enabling a high level of achievement for all, which implies:

* progress data are taken often and analysed by department/leadership teams and used to inform staff/parents/students and put appropriate, thoughtful interventions in place where progress is not at the level expected of individual pupils;
* progress towards self-directed learning to be functioning members of society.

Web activity WA12.2

Learning from colleagues in a safe environment

How might you self-audit your own classroom organisation and behaviour?

Are you in a position to ask a trusted colleague to observe and audit a lesson for you? It is important to note Elton’s advice that that such classroom observation should not be inspectorial but involve commenting on each other’s teaching. ‘This is probably the most effective method of classroom skills training available’ (Chapter 3, Paragraph 42).

There is a lot of agreement in the literature that lessons that are organised and taught well support good standards of behaviour in classrooms. Have a look at the list below and consider the extent to which you recognise Elton’s list of teacher behaviours as useful in thinking about how to organise lessons that predispose to positive learning and behaviour. How useful would it be to use this list as a template against which your colleague might comment on your classroom behaviour:

Elton (Department of Education and Science, 1989, chapter 3) considers that classroom teachers should:

* know pupils’ names, personalities, interests and who their friends are;
* organise the classroom environment and the lesson to keep pupils engaged and reduce opportunities for disruptive behaviour. [A student of mine once reduced the incidence of disruption in her primary classroom simply through having equipment, including stationery for the pupils, properly organised and available prior to the start of the lessons];
* pay attention to pupil groupings;
* match work to pupils' attainment levels;
* be enthusiastic;
* use humour to create a positive atmosphere in class;
* continually ‘scan’ the behaviour in the classroom;
* be aware of their own behaviour, including stance and tone of voice;
* model the standards of respect that they expect from pupils;
* emphasise praise for good behaviour as well as work;
* make the rules for classroom behaviour explicit from the first time they meet pupils in class, and explain why they are needed;
* be consistently firm but not aggressive or sarcastic, target the right pupil not the whole class, criticise the behaviour and not the person, be sparing but consistent with punishments, reprimand pupils in private not in public, and follow through whenever a consequence has been specified;
* avoiding punishments that humiliate pupils;
* analyse their own performance in classroom management and learn from it.

Web activity WA12.3

Cultural underpinnings of restorative practices

In New Zealand where restorative justice practices are influenced by traditional Maori cultural values and preferred ways of responding to wrongdoing, the emphasis is on the restoration of harmony between the individual, the victim and the collective (tribe or sub-tribe). In order for restoration to take place, all those involved in the offence ‘need to be heard in the process of seeking redress’ (Restorative Practices Development Team, 2003, p. 11).

The process must ensure that all participants are respected and permitted to contribute to the solution. Individuals are trained as mediators to hold the space in which injury can be converted into personal healing and community development.

A restorative conference is a structured meeting between offenders, victims and both parties’ supporters, in which they deal with the consequences of the crime or wrongdoing and decide how best to repair the harm.

In New Zealand, restorative conferences conventionally follow Maori protocols. The Restorative Practices Development Team (2003, p. 20) at the University of Waikato outline the process of a traditional restorative conference as follows:

1. A conference, as appropriate, begins with karakia (prayers) and mihimihi (greetings) that acknowledge the presence and dignity of all in attendance.

2. ‘The problem is the problem, the person is not the problem’ goes on the board or is spoken about.

3. What is hoped to happen in the hui (meeting)? Each person has a chance to speak.

4. What is the problem that has brought those present at the meeting? Each person will tell their own version.

5. What are the effects of that problem on all present at the meeting (and others)?

6. What times, places and relationships are known where the problem is not present?

7. What new description of the people involved becomes clear as those times and places are looked at where the problem is not present?

8. If people/things have suffered harm by the problem, what is it that needs to happen for amends to be made?

9. How do the factors that have been spoken about and recognized in the alternative descriptions help planning to overcome the problem? People will contribute ideas and offer resources that will help to overcome the problem.

10. Does the plan meet the needs of those harmed by the problem?

11. People are granted responsibility to carry forward each part of the plan. Any follow-up is planned.

12. Karakia (prayers) and thanks and hospitality may be offered.