



Australian Government

**Quality Teacher
Programme**



Secondary case twelve

This case is open-ended and is designed to generate rich discussion about leadership issues affecting all head teachers.

Setting the scene

You have a difficult member of staff in your faculty. The teacher is confrontational with students. Many student and parent complaints are generated by this teacher. The teacher demands that you, as the head teacher, solve the problems and does not see that the teacher needs to be part of the solution and actively participate in the resolution of the problems.

Individual reflections

1. What are the key issues?
2. As head teacher, what do you do?

Leadership issues

Educational	pedagogy, programs, assessment, reporting, learning styles, learning environment, learning community
Organisational	timelines, resources, management, systems, accountability
Strategic	planning, vision, values, culture
Personal	social skills, ethics, commitment, personal vision
Interpersonal	relationships, team building, conflict resolution, communication

Focus questions

Educational

1. What do you see as the teacher's role in behaviour management?
2. What do you see as the head teacher's role in behaviour management?
3. What is the school behaviour management and welfare policy?
4. What is the faculty policy?
5. Do you need to consider an improvement program for the teacher?
6. Is this a teacher efficiency question?

Organisational

1. What opportunities are there to allow for quality support and dialogue?
2. Are the procedures for student welfare and discipline referral clearly articulated?
3. Are records of referral to the head teacher comprehensive? Do they indicate patterns of referral?
4. Is there a need to plan professional learning activities on student welfare and management with the faculty? If so, how will this be done?

Strategic

1. What are your strengths or weaknesses in behaviour management? What do you need to address any weaknesses?
2. What are the teacher's strengths or weaknesses in behaviour management?
3. What effect is this situation having on the student learning?
4. What other expertise can you access from the school community?
5. What would you like to see as the end result?

Personal

1. Is it appropriate to seek the students' views about what is happening in the classroom?
2. Do you have an understanding of the teacher's commitment to teaching and vision for student learning?

Interpersonal

1. Can you enlist the support of colleagues that the teacher respects?
2. How can you establish a relationship with the teacher based on mutual trust and respect given the current professional tensions?
3. What strategies do you use to keep the communication between you and the teacher effective and positive?

Considerations

Notes to facilitators: It is the process of analysing the case and the issues that is important in using the cases as a professional development tool. A selection of DET policy documents made available for quick referencing by participants will support informed decision making.

If participants are from the same school, they may identify with key issues in the case and become snared in a discussion of school-specific problems. Sensitive intervention and guidance back to the case may be required.

Using the considerations or sample solutions too early may defeat the purpose and value of head teachers reflecting on the issues and their own practice. It should be remembered that a single issue case is in fact highly complex. If limited time is available, groups could analyse different leadership domains or focus on just a few issues.

Educational

- It is important to empower the teacher to be able to deal with the majority of student management concerns within their own classes.
- It is not desirable to continually 'fight their battles for them'.

Organisational

- Communication and conflict resolution strategies are needed, while at the same time it is important not to make the teacher feel as if YOU are passing the buck.
- Strategies might contain some element of removal of workload to enable the teacher to try some new things.
- You arrange for some relief for one or two classes, or arrange for them to talk to colleagues.

Strategic

- Clear policies must be evident as a basis for the resolution of problems.
- Concern for individual privacy may be an issue.
- You will need a mentor or critical friend. Who will this be?
- What conversations have you had with the principal?
- What will an improvement plan look like, who will be involved, what timelines will be important?

Personal

- How would you develop a plan to solve these issues?
- If a plan needs to be developed, do so in a faculty or team situation to involve all staff and avoid the teacher feeling as if they are being singled out.

Interpersonal

- Make the teacher feel as if this is a partnership between you and that you are there to support them.
- Try to have suggestions and input from colleagues the teacher values, at least initially.

Disclaimer

The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent the views of the Australian Government Department of Education, Science and Training.

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