



Australian Government

**Quality Teacher
Programme**



Secondary case thirteen

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

Setting the scene

You are the head teacher of a faculty with an eclectic array of people, personalities, experience and skills. Recently, you have become aware that a number of teachers are tolerating insolent and disruptive behaviour from some students in class and the principal has informed you that there have been several parent complaints about the situation.

You decide to hold a faculty professional learning meeting on student welfare and behaviour. You particularly want all faculty members to share their views on this topic. During this discussion you are aiming to clarify individual teacher beliefs and values regarding student welfare needs and classroom climate and their impact on student learning.

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. How do you ensure that the skills of all teachers in student management are strengthened?
2. Are all teachers familiar with DET student welfare policy and supporting documents and materials?
3. Who is available to support student welfare concerns in the school?
4. What key learnings do you want to focus on at this meeting?
5. How do you measure the effect of this situation upon student learning outcomes?

Organisational

1. How will you conduct this meeting? Does it need an agenda?
2. How will you direct discussion if some staff members attempt to divert the attention of others with negative and misguided statements?
3. What professional learning opportunities can be planned for the teachers?

Strategic

1. What do you identify as the immediate problem? How do you deal with it?
2. How do you achieve the long term goal of inclusive student engagement in learning?
3. How do you establish a shared vision of a positive classroom climate?

Personal

1. What leadership skills do you need to draw upon?
2. Have all teachers been given the opportunity to share their personal vision of student welfare and learning?
3. Does your faculty share a clear vision of student learning expectations?
4. Is this vision aligned with the school vision? Is this a problem?

Interpersonal

1. What opening and closing statements will be required at the meeting?
2. How do you deal with conflict at the meeting if it occurs?
3. How will you promote positive, collegial relationships between members of your faculty?

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

- Discussions could be held on the impact of classroom climate and learning. Research is available on this topic.
- The principles behind differentiated learning may need revisiting with the faculty.
- Have students needing learning support been identified?
- Do teachers have a shared understanding of the meaning of quality teaching?

Organisational

- Consider the procedures for student referral. Are these adequate?
- The faculty records and communication systems may need reviewing.
- The importance of rewarding positive behaviour and recognising individual student achievement needs to be reviewed.

Strategic

- There may be impact of welfare and student management issues upon student learning. How do you assess this?
- The perception of the professional image of the faculty by the senior executive and other members of the school may have changed. Whose problem is this? What can you do?
- What steps do you take to solve the problem in the short term and the long term?

Personal

- Allowing each member of staff time to reflect on their individual approach to student welfare and classroom management is important.
- Consider strategies to align individual and faculty values regarding student welfare and acceptable standards of behaviour.

Interpersonal

- Have you identified the strengths and areas for improvement of individual members of staff in relation to student welfare matters?
- It may be necessary to assess the impact of student behaviour on the morale of the faculty. How do you do this?
- Is there a culture of professional support between members of the faculty?

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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