



Developing your personal philosophy of classroom management

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This resource consists of a series of linked activities chapter-by-chapter to the De Nobile et al 2017 course text *Positive learning environments: Creating and maintaining productive classrooms*. These activities enable you to progressively work on and develop your own philosophy, plan and style of classroom management.

A classroom philosophy, simply put, is a statement of what you believe about how to best manage a class and how you will go about achieving that vision. This resource will help you build it bit by bit. Complete the activities linked to each chapter of the text and by the end of chapter 10 you should be able to bring your work together to form your classroom philosophy.

FINAL PERSONAL PHILOSOPHY FOR ASSESSMENT 2

When I began my journey as a teacher in 1994, I had no idea of what a teacher was, except in having a basic understanding of what it was being a student in a classroom with a number of teachers at TAFE as I was in my third diploma course and I was enjoying all the successes education was bringing me through my employment and my work situation.

I owe this wonderful journey to media giant Peter Musgrove who introduced me to the world of teaching during the Campaign Planning module of my Advanced Advertising course at Sydney Institute of Technology. Mr. Musgrove asked me in class if I was interested in teaching Art Direction subject as they didn't have a teacher for their upcoming season and they were going to advertise the position. I asked myself: how was I going to educate students in the art of art direction if my views were tainted and were biased? How was I going to assess students and provide them a mark based on my personal opinions of advertising and marketing?

As I have taken on this challenge twenty years since I gained my degree in Vocational Education I have come to realize the fundamental change has been technology and how students use that technology that allows them to develop and learn at a lot faster rate than when I was at university, TAFE, or even at school in the 1980s.

My KLA is in graphic design and multi-media as I have been working in this field for twenty-five years at top level in the industry. I now want to make a difference by working with children at school helping them learn what it takes to get a job – bringing vocational aspirations to young adults before they become infantilized by parents and school in their adolescent years.

Since 2016 I have been working at PriceWaterhouse Coppers and have had access to unlimited resources and equipment where nothing is out-of-reach and everything is accessible if needed to complete a job – the possibilities are truly endless at corporate level. However, what money cannot buy is youth and the imagination of young people and the dreams of children. In my experience, at corporate level, the decision makers are old and out-of-touch with the visions of young people and youth of today. During this course, I have been exposed to great thinkers like Robert Epstein whose believes that in ‘western society’ we infantilize children as they are capable of taking more responsibility than we give them credit for and that parents ‘baby’ children far too long beyond their appropriate age. Epstein is a strong believer that high schools are a cause of the problem and that the system somehow tries to continue the infantilization by placing rules and restrictions the children are bound to rebel against. In an interview for Scientific American Mind, Phi Delta Kappan in 2007 with Leon Botstein, Botstein argued that “we hold teens to impossible standards” because we actually don’t behave as we want them to behave

I have been influenced by Ken Robinson and his book “Creative Schools” where he states that “there are opportunities for students to pursue their individual interests and strengths” when we personalize education to suit the needs of the students.

What I have learnt in this course is that I need to read the rubric more carefully and not try to be clever by ignoring it.

(Week 1) PPLE: A problem-based approach

Reflection of the week’s Lecture, tutorials and readings.

The following activities are designed to get you thinking about your own model of teaching and classroom management.

1.1 What is a ‘good teacher’? Think about the teachers from your days in primary and secondary schooling. What qualities did they have that made them ‘good’? Make a list in the box below.

From my experience, a good teacher is one that inspired and motivated me with praise and recognition that I was not a bad boy. I still remember his name – Mr Crowhurst from science in year 7 as he inspired me to become the student of the year in 1980. At the general assembly, in front of the whole school, my name was called out and I had to walk to the stage to receive my award and a science book with my name in it, and his recognition that I had succeeded. It was to change my life forever, giving me the impetus to keep on wanting to learn at school. Mr. Crowhurst’s qualities were being able to give praise and being positive with students.

1.2 Using the what you have learnt about ill structured vs structured problems in relation to classroom behavior, what do you think are the key considerations when a teacher is planning their strategy for classroom management? list them below.

I have looked and looked on in week one we looked at ill-defined and defined problems, so I am guessing this is the same. What I learnt is that as teachers, we should NOT use the same solution with every problem encountered. We were asked whether we should make assumptions or not and what it was established was that as teachers, we need to “take ownership” of the situation when it comes to classroom behaviour. What was discussed “challenging behaviours” by Gerber & Solari (2009) – these were as follows:

Well-defined = problems that have solutions – we’re going to be asked to act quickly. This means that we should set goals with expected solutions and be prepared.
 Ill-defined = problems typically encountered each and every day as emergent dilemmas where we as teachers need to handle the challenge and NOT DEFLECT the situation when we are faced with different situations.

1.3 With your responses to the last two activities as a source of ideas, complete the sentence in the box below.

In relation to our classroom activities, I believe a positive learning environment is about the willingness to contribute to a group learning situation as well as openness to new ideas and the appreciation of different ideas others may bring along for discussion. Roberto Parada quoted in class: “Children are unfinished works of art. Teachers get children as unfinished works and we are there to help them become the artful masterpieces that they are”. What he was referring to, was the importance to developing a positive learning environment so that we can continue happily with the masterpieces.

(Week 2) Review of classroom management theories

This week you have been introduced to some theories of behaviour/classroom management. Your readings (Ch 8 & 9 of the text and De Jong in tutorials) introduced you to different views on why young people misbehave and particularly what to do about it. Some of these might have caused you to react in some way, either negatively or positively. Of the ones you developed a positive feeling about, was there a particular theory that stood out? Was there a theory or approach that you felt might fit your view of how children should be treated and how teaching happens? Think about this before responding to the activities.

2.1 In the box below, list the theories that you think are ‘not for you’ under the heading ‘Not me’, and the theories that you think are more favourable under the heading ‘More like me’.

Not me	More like me
Choice Theory – Glasser but I am questioning this and may switch things... I am not a behaviourist	I am more a constructivist, but I am keen to look at psychoeducational theory when I have my class or group of students. Assertive Discipline from text book p164 Rational emotive behaviour therapy and the active-directive form of therapy.

Chapter 8 - Goal theory is inviting.

2.2 Now take a closer look at the theories you placed in the ‘More like me’ column. Read the suggested readings provided in this chapter and the online companion. Get to know the theories more intimately. Use this new knowledge, specifically the key philosophies behind the theories (or theory), to develop your own statement of belief about the sort of places

classrooms should be. Complete the following sentence and perhaps add another to accompany it.

I believe classrooms should be places where students are encouraged to get involved in learning new things and expanding their knowledge base through interactions between teacher and the rest of the class – with a goal in mind to achieve an education. Maybe I am more into “goal theory” than I care to imagine.

(Week 3) Relationships, communication & professional reflexivity

Effective communication is a key component of effective classroom management, and quality teaching depends on it. The lecture, tutorial readings as well as Ch 2 & 3 of the textbook describe some very useful skills for dealing with inappropriate student behaviour in a non-confrontational and positive way. Being aware of non-verbal cues will lead a teacher to be more sensitive to how their messages are being received as well as how to send messages and provide feedback more effectively. Active listening allows teachers and students to interact with minimal interference from underlying emotional factors. I-messages provide the teacher with a tool to convey to students how their behaviour is affecting the class in a non-submissive, informative and positive manner. Teaching philosophies often describe the way a teacher will interact with their students and this, in turn, provides a window into the classroom climate that a teacher is trying to establish. The following activities should help you to identify your preferred way of communicating with the class generally as well as in dealing with inappropriate behaviour. After completing them you should have a better idea of how your classroom philosophy will describe your communication style in the classroom.

3.1 Using your readings of the chapters, in particular the Relationships and communication, Interference, Communication process and Non-verbal communication sections, complete the sentence in the box below. You might need to add a second or even a third sentence.

I believe that good communication between teacher and student is vital to a positive classroom climate because it fosters equity and allows for reflexivity in teaching. It's all about feeling | doing | acting and becoming aware of yourself. It's not the rules that actually create positive behaviour but how they are maintained. It's not about why children misbehave but why are they not doing naughty things. What is important here is the consistency of the relationship as this gives meaning to acknowledgement and respect for both teacher and student. The essence of being a teacher is to be able to teach student strategies to learn by showing them how to get organized through metacognitive methods aimed at encoding information in ways that make it easier to recall and use information at a later stage. In other words – teach them mnemonics. Give them feedback so that they learn to learn in small chunks. It's best to trickle the information in so that they have enough time to absorb the lesson.

This week you also looked at how personal beliefs can help or hinder in your relationships and communication with students.

3.2 Briefly outline your understanding of how beliefs can help or hinder your ability to create positive learning environments:

Teacher personal beliefs affect the way we create Positive Learning Environments by influencing the dynamics felt in a classroom through culture and climate set. What's important to illustrate here is that Elli's ABC model is not only a fundamental to students but also to teachers. REBT is a behaviour model that beliefs that applies to everyone, including the teacher, and other teachers in the staffroom as well.

Your teaching philosophy should describe how and for what purpose you might engage in a cycle of professional reflexivity, be it through critical analysis using various perspectives or an action research model, or both.

3.3 Why should teachers engage in professional reflexivity? Once you have given this some thought and done some further reading, complete the following sentence.

I believe professional reflexivity is important to my teaching because it will allow me to check on myself and learn from my mistakes. If I can document my "progress" then I can reflect back on what worked and what didn't – critical analysis as described above. As we develop as teachers, we create "vignettes" for us to learn from and for others to try to understand.
Maybe we should be asked to create a daily blog or maybe a YouTube channel.

3.4 Having thought up a justification for it, how will you go about engaging in reflection about your practice in your teaching career? Once you have thought this out, think of some practical and achievable ways you can engage in professional reflexivity and complete the next sentence.

As a consequence of this belief, I will share my experiences with others so that we can discuss life at school and extrapolate knowledge acquired. This in turn may help to build my individual capabilities as a teacher. What is the point of creating a journal if I am not able to share it with others? It's not as if I am on a deserted island with only Wilson to talk to? The more I can share my experiences, the more I can learn to be a teacher.

(Week 4) Classroom organisation and curriculum, assessment and pedagogy

Classroom management is not just about managing behaviour. At the heart of teaching and learning are the curriculum taught, the pedagogy used and the assessment designed to measure how well that curriculum was taught and how well the pedagogy worked. This chapter takes you through these three areas one at a time.

The next part of your teaching philosophy will be about how you will deliver curriculum and assess student achievement/growth. After reading this chapter, please reflect on the following:

- What will you take into consideration when planning your teaching program?
- How will you know what to teach and where to start?

- What are the many ways in which your students could demonstrate achievement other than tests and quizzes?
- What teaching approaches will you use and what philosophical views will your pedagogies reflect?

4.1 Using the PIR Cycle (see Ch 5 p118) as a stimulus, explain how you will go about planning your teaching program in the box below.

The PIR chart has been drawn in so many ways and as shown in the book, it's circular in appearance. But for me, it's more of a triangular shape, spinning in a spiral and it does not necessarily begin with Planning at the top. Sometimes one needs to review things before they begin the planning phase. Sometimes a teacher is needed to Implement things without following the plan as sometimes one plans and plans and plans but is unable to put things into place and implementation comes off from sheer experience and knowing what to do in a classroom.

For me, I would like to ask students the question of what they think and why they are at school and get to know the students before I am able to begin planning anything.

This is called delivery – as we facilitate the delivery of the curriculum to students by getting to know them first.

Yes, we can follow the process as on page 119 of the book where they discuss “curriculum for PLEs” is critical as teachers need to know how to deliver the curriculum to his or her students all dependant on the relevance of the program.

So, before planning, before implementing anything or even before having an opportunity to review things, getting to know the students in your classroom comes first.

4.2 Pedagogy refers to **how you will teach the curriculum**. Usually, the type of pedagogy you implement is influenced by a basic belief about how students best learn. After considering your pedagogical approach and strategies, complete the sentences below.

I believe that students best learn through ... hmmm students not learn through but learn by working together in a collaborative manner in a classroom all working towards the same goal. This from my experience, happens when a lesson begins at the opposite end of the schedule and a timetable is worked out to establish what is needed to gain the marks and the qualifications by working backwards and not forward. It's being able to establish the destination and then working towards getting there via an itinerary for the journey.

Therefore, I will use pedagogy that has significance to the end goal by teaching the students life-skills such as time management, communication skills so that they are empowered to achieve good results and teach them acceptance and tolerance so that working in teams and in groups becomes the social interaction they crave. By doing this, students can gain the skills of cooperation and collaboration which is needed in everyday life living. This is all too theoretical, as Dr Parada said – we can have all these preconceptions of teaching but until you are in the frontline – one really does not know.

As explained in Chs 3 & 4, there are several dimensions to classroom organisation. Each of these put together become the manifestation of your classroom culture. Your classroom culture is, simply put, the way your class operates and incorporates:

- rules and procedures
- organisation of the physical space.

It is now time to think about how your teaching philosophy will describe these two aspects and explain them in terms of an overarching set of beliefs or approaches. After reading these chapters, complete the next two activities.

4.3 What values do you hold as important to establishing an orderly, productive and positive classroom? Answer this question below, then list the key rules/expectations you think flow naturally from those values and which you want to stress in your class. Complete the section by explaining how rules and consequences will be established in your classroom.

(Week 5) Principles of behaviour modification

This week we looked at fundamental aspects of behaviourism and learning (see Ch 6 & 7 of your text) But also Ziporli from your references in the Learning Guide and Killu your tutorial reading which provide examples of the application of such theory and research to classroom management and behaviour change. Important concepts such as reinforcement, functional purpose of behaviour and behaviour shaping are discussed

5.1 After reading Ziporli and Killu and reflecting on the lecture content what would you add about aspects of your classroom management that have not been mentioned so far in your philosophy? Add these in the box below in rough draft form. You can refine them later.

(Week 6) Applying behaviour modification in schools PBIS

Positive Behaviour Intervention and Support also known as Positive Behaviour Support (see Text Ch 6 p168) has become an accepted and often implemented part of schooling in NSW. A key aspect of PBIS is to teach students behavioural expectations.

6.1 Previously (see week 4) you reflected on what your classroom could be like. In the section below pick 1 expectation (e.g., respect self and others) and list how you will teach what this expectation looks like, is exemplified by and demonstrated in your classroom. Give as many examples as you can.

(Week 7) Social Emotional Learning in Schools SEL

Readings: Cohen, J. (2006) & Zins, et al (2007).

Social and Emotional Learning brings your attention to focus efforts on promoting students' social and emotional competencies. Many leaders in the field underscore the importance of skills-based teaching and learning to properly address this important facet of teaching the whole child.

7.1 After reading Cohen and Zin and reflecting on the lecture content what would you add about aspects of your classroom management that have not been mentioned so far in your philosophy? Add these in the box below in rough draft form. You can refine them later.

(Week 8-9) Online Week. Mental Health & Schools

Work published online – certificate gained through: www.beyou.edu.au

(Weeks 8 & 9) Drafting your personal reflection/philosophy

Ready to roll ...

Now, read it to yourself, and start editing to a maximum of 1000 words, it's time to prepare your final submission. Look at the Unit Learning Guide rubric and instructions and now write your own personal reflection and philosophy You have to reflect on what you have learnt and what you are still to learn. This reflection is an opportunity to provide your own behaviour management philosophy/model.

Your personal model can be based on your personal experience and any of the theories and research explored in PPLE or other Units which form part of your course. You need to appropriately identify and credit these theories which influenced your thinking in relation to the development of your personal approach within your text. You must provide at the end (not counted to word limit) an 'acknowledgement' section where you may list the theories/policies/ people that may have influence your model to date.

Into the future!

However, please be aware that your philosophy may well change as you gain experience in teaching and are exposed to other ideas from your ongoing professional development, your interactions with peers and other sources of inspiration. It will be an interesting task for you to go back to this philosophy you have just completed in 10 years' time and compare it to the one you have then. Will it have changed much? How have your approaches evolved? What kind of teacher have you become?