

**SUPPORTING MATERIALS FOR THE
VIDEO / DVD SERIES**

CRACKING THE CHALLENGING CLASS

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PART ONE OF THE VIDEO / DVD SERIES :

CRACKING THE CHALLENGING CLASS

Short briefing notes to accompany classroom scenes.

These notes accompany the classroom vignettes where teacher(s) and students interact with challenging classes and challenging students.

The following notes are linked to the vignettes by number (the number appears top left on the screen).

- (1) In this vignette a senior teacher stares in (through the door) at a *very* restless class, with a teacher struggling to gain some sense of focus and order.

This vignette illustrates what *some* senior teachers do in the name of support.

- (2) The second vignette compares a similar ‘episode’ where a senior teacher is wanting to assist a colleague with the same class (in the *immediate* short-term).

What we are seeking to do is contrast how we can (indeed should – on occasions) give immediate short-term support – but with respect to our colleague’s professional (and personal) esteem.

This ‘colleague-safety-valve’ option is just that – it is never an end in itself. We always follow-up with de-briefing (later that day) and ascertain whether this is an occasional, or on-going, concern and then discuss what support-options could best assist our colleague.

There should always be an in-house protocol for this kind of short-term, classroom-entry, colleague support.

- (3) Early intervention is crucial when addressing challenging behaviour of students. Colleague support is an essential factor in any successful intervention and change when addressing challenging classes :-

- moral support (we are all in the same, basic day-to-day boat!); moral support can give assurances, allow us to share our concerns (without

censure or blame) and most of all can initiate the possibility of ‘openness’ to options for supportive intervention (see later).

- Avoid the patronising : “Well I don’t have a problem with that class ...”
- Offer support that is meaningful without denying colleague responsibility – within our professional role (this is explored later in the video when addressing the ‘fresh-start’ approach).

(4) This vignette typifies a restless class as the students begin another ‘classroom-entry’. There is a lot of restlessness, a lot of energy, many students are still in ‘social-time’ mode.

What we have sought to portray here is the importance of a reasonable ‘calm’ entry to the classroom. One should never underestimate the importance of some brief out-of-class ‘settling’ by the teacher.

- The teacher has a brief calming and welcoming chat *before* the students enter the classroom.

(I have seen some groups of students almost push, or ‘harry’, their teacher into the room!)

- From day one it is important to set a standard; to habituate a *reasonable norm* : pleasant, relaxed, purposeful, welcoming and ‘calm’.
- Even our *language* is important here : “Settling down ...”, “Fellas (the vigorous boys) playtime’s over ...” We avoid asking “*Why*” the group is restless, or why they have mobile phones or are chewing gum (etc).

Describe, remind or direct is enough.

- When the group is settled enough (we do not want to keep them outside for more than a minute or so ...) a pleasant “Good morning / afternoon everyone” (or “ ... guys”, or “... folks”, or “... 8D”, or “ ... class”. We all have generic, *group*, expressions for ‘our class’).
- What we are seeking to do on the first few meetings with a new class is develop a **reasonable, orderly, positive entry into the classroom**. This helps in the settling and focus of the class once they are in the classroom.

(5) In this vignette a few boys rush into class with some play-fighting ‘in tow’ – what my colleagues and I call ‘testosteronic bonding’. As with all teacher correction where there is high emotion it is important to :

- communicate calmness and assertion (not incompatible behaviour in teachers);
- direct the immediate audience 'away', or aside;
- check the lad is not hurt;
- give the lads some brief 'time-out' while directing the class back into the classroom to settle ...;
- *when* the class is settled, direct the lads back into the classroom – making sure they do not sit together.

It is pointless asking the two lads “*Why* they are ‘fighting’ “ (they see it *only* as mucking around).

- (6)** In this longer vignette we are seeking to portray a ‘bread-and-butter’ feature of our classroom management :- settling and focusing a class group. This is a crucial feature of our behaviour leadership in the establishment phase of the year. In this longer vignette the issue of how we address student lateness is also included.

In settling a class down our overall ‘calmness’ and confidence is crucial – particularly in the first meetings with the class group. It is not easy to convey this on camera. It is in part our planning (beforehand); *consciously* thinking about our language, *consciously* thinking ahead about how we will address *typical* distractions and disruptions.

Students are natural, ‘astute’, observers of our behaviour as classroom teachers from those first meetings. In those first meetings there are many ‘defining moments’; our first ‘settling’ of the class is one of these ‘moments’.

What we are seeking to convey is:

- a sense of change from ‘social time’ to class learning time;
- a ‘calm’ (not overly confident or ‘cocky’ demeanour);
- we avoid overly kinaesthetic movement while we communicate to the class (i.e. we avoid ‘pacing’, moving in *amongst* the group *while* directing them to settle ...);
- cue the class with brief, directional, language. Scan the class to make eye-contact while cueing for attention’;

- avoid 'asking' students to settle (or 'be quiet') when we mean to direct and remind; it is not a *request*. i.e. we avoid saying, "Would you face the front and listen *please!*" "Can you please be quiet." "Stop talking ...".
"Settling ...", "Facing the front ...", "Listening ...thanks" is enough. 'Thanks' is also more 'expectational' than 'please' when addressing the class group.

Lateness

When addressing lateness it is important to :-

- welcome the student *first*;
- acknowledge (briefly) his lateness;
- we do this while cue-ing the class briefly (" ... excuse me class ..."). This lets the class know we are 'in control' (not of them, but of the flow of events ...);
- it is pointless asking the student 'why' he is late *at this point in the lesson*. The other pointless interrogative is, "Are you late?"
- direct the student to a seat;
- follow-up with the student *later* in the lesson (or after class) re : the reason for his lateness.
- if he argues / refuses a calm, clear, directed choice is enough. We do not need to threaten him ... "If you don't sit where I've told you to sit I'll ...!"
It is enough to give a directed choice such as :- "... the spare seats are over there. It's not an argument Craig (...). If you choose not to join us I'll have to ask you to leave our class and go to ..."

We have sought to *contrast* how teachers address students who are late (I have my convincing role-playing glasses to help me here!)

When a class is 'settled' (it happens!) there are often 'small' distracting / disruptive behaviours in the more challenging classes.

Most of these sorts of behaviours we have portrayed here occur in the establishment phase of one's relationship with a new class. The term used – earlier - was 'defining moments' : in part the students are simply 'getting used' to their new teacher. Some students are also seeking some 'attentional' place in front of their peers. A few are out to challenge even defy. Some have behaviour disorders that

affect their behaviour, some have learning needs that – also – affect their behaviour in front of their peers.

As has been noted several times (in videos one and two) how we address these behaviours with these students in our first meetings *also affects the 60% of students (in most classes) who are ready and willing to co-operate with any confident, respectful, teacher leader.*

We cannot afford to ‘lose’ that natural, ready, support by the way we manage and lead the more attentional and challenging elements in the class group. I have seen moderate, co-operative students ‘side’ with the more catalytic, challenging, students if the teacher is overly confronting, overly vigilant, or non-vigilant and non-assertive (when confident assertion is needed).

Whether we are addressing group restlessness, calling-out, butting-in, students talking while the teacher is talking ... there are core practices and skills that can enable a more positive discipline climate (when needed) so that we can keep the focus of our time with our students on teaching and learning and building a positive working relationship that enhances teaching, learning and respectful peer relationships.

Core practices and skills we have sought to model in these vignettes

The core practices

- Keeping our corrective discipline *least intrusive where possible*;
- *Avoiding unnecessary confrontation* (this includes any sarcasm, ‘cheap shots’ at the students’ expense, publicly embarrassing a student ...);
- Where we need to be more intrusive (as circumstances do demand) we address the student(s) assertively (without hostility or verbal aggression);
- Where possible we use *positive corrective language*;
- After addressing a student’s distracting / disruptive behaviour, we get the focus of the class / individual back to the main business of the learning activities for that class period.
- Keep the focus of the intervention on the primary / main / important or essential issue relating to the student(s) *at that point*. We avoid getting easily drawn into

the students' side-tracking and 'secondary behaviours' (those annoyingly postural non-verbal behaviours).

Eg : the student who calls out repeatedly (with her hand up). The teacher *tactically* ignores most of the calling out. When the student finally puts her hand up (without calling out) there is a big sigh, "... I suppose you're going to notice me now" (just above *sotto voce* (?) – to gain class attention?). It is these sorts of behaviours we can learn to *tactically* ignore.

Core skills

We have sought to illustrate how teachers can use positive verbal and non-verbal behaviour in discipline transactions. These are key aspects of skill within our overall behaviour leadership :-

- ~ *tactical* ignoring;
- ~ *non-verbal cue-ing*;
- ~ *incidental / descriptive* reminders or directions;
- ~ *reminders* and *directions that focus on expected behaviours* [using *targeted behaviour* language *do* rather than *don't*] i.e. : "Paul and Troy, *leave* the curtains (...) facing this way and listening (...) Thanks." Rather than "*Don't* fiddle with those curtains ..."
- ~ *partial agreement / refocusing*;
- ~ *take-up-time*;
- ~ *rule reminders*;
- ~ *directed choices*;
- ~ *deferred consequences*;
- ~ *assertive comments*.

- (7) In this longer vignette the class is *very* restless and we have illustrated how it can help to settle the class by moving around the classroom addressing the 'micro bush fires' *en route* before we 'formally' settle / say good morning to the whole class from the front of the room. This often surprises students who may expect their teacher to

stand at the front of the room and shout them down ... The *settling and focusing* of the class (portrayed in this vignette) is occasioned by speaking to key individuals, groups, while wandering purposefully) around the room. When the teacher senses those more 'catalytic' personalities are more settled he / she will go to the front of the room and *formally* cue the class to "face the front and ..."

Key Scenes

There are key scenes in this vignette where the teacher addresses some typical 'defining moments' :-

- ~ students who have rushed to the back of the room to re-arrange furniture;
- ~ a couple of girls talking to friends (out of the classroom window);
- ~ seat wandering with a few lads (one of who kicked his chair ...).

What I have also sought to portray here – in these key vignettes – are some of the essential practices and skills in classroom management (particularly the language-of-management and discipline).

Eg :- with the three girls moving the furniture we do not ask 'why' (it is irrelevant *at this point* in the lesson). It is enough to *describe* what they have done (this acts as an incidental, but clear, reminder or direction of what they should have done ...).

Much of the students' sulkiness, pouting, low-level insouciance can be *tactically* ignored (at this point). When addressing rudeness a brief, confident, assertive, calm 'I' statement is enough. "I'm not speaking to you in a rude voice ... I don't expect ...". If we start saying, "Who do you think you're speaking to!!", we make it look as if a 14 year old student is some kind of threat to us. It also gives the student far too much peer attentional kudos(!)

If the students refuse to move the furniture back it is enough to give a *directed choice* and leave the responsibility with the student. I.e. : "If you choose not to move the furniture back ... I'll have to follow this up with you at break time ..."

Our aim in all behaviour management is to *enable* the student to own their own behaviour in a way that respects the rights of others (including the teacher!) We also seek to do this in a way that seeks to enable a working relationship with the student. No mean feat!

(8) Shouting a class 'down' or 'up'(?)

This vignette was not easy to simulate – it brings back memories! I look back to times when I have done silly, really unhelpful, things in seeking to lead a class. I am sure this is mostly out of frustration in our first teaching year. Sometimes, though, it is also because of a lack of skills – of *consciously* thinking through what one needs to do in settling a class in a positive, firm, pleasant, confident and *clear* way. These are *skills* we can learn; the ability to confidently settle, lead and teach a group of disparate individuals is not a matter of *mere* personality it is a matter of professional skill. It is *always* worth discussing this with colleagues.

Shouting a class down is (obviously) a self-defeating exercise. It entertains; it even *habituates* the students (they only believe we are 'serious' *when* we are shouting!)

We also communicate too much reciprocal kinaesthetic energy! Pacing up and down, or communicating overly vigorous body language and a loud, carping *tone* of voice has a 'boomerang effect' on the group (this is clearly evident in students with attention deficit disorder spectrum behaviours ...)

(9) Rules and community focus

When framing class (and school) rules, our use of language is important, not merely 'on paper' but in our day-to-day management.

I frequently hear teachers (*some* teachers) say things like, "No calling out in *my* class ...", "Put your hand up in *my* class, "I won't tolerate chewing gum in *my* (or this) class ..." [etc].

I have highlighted the pronouns because I believe we need to be using inclusive language in classroom reminders and corrective language :- ... 'us', 'our', 'we', 'all', 'together', 'everyone ...' – *as a norm*. This is not mere language pedantry. It is *our* class; not *my* class.

When we use a rule-reminder for example (as we often do in the establishment phase of the year) there is an important difference between ... “Michael (...) remember our class rule for asking questions” and “Michael remember my rule for asking questions.”

Of course *tone*, manner and intent are also crucial in all our corrective language. Inclusive language communicated in a (characteristically) petty, brusque, off-hand, mean-spirited manner will mean the student only hears the tone / manner not the intended meaning in the language.

(10) Example of students with *objects d'art* (Walkman, toys, phone ...)

The teacher avoids arguing with our students about what 'other teachers do, do not, allow' – and keeps the focus on the main issue by *partially agreeing*, *refocusing* giving *directed choices* and *take-up-time*. If the student refuses the reasonable teacher reminders, teachers can use *deferred consequences* (in non-serious situations). “If you choose not to put it away I'll have to follow it up with you at break time.” The teacher then walks away (take-up-time) leaving the 'choice' and responsibility with the student.

I have seen teachers argue threaten, demand. “OK! Which teachers let you have the Walkmans in class!?”, “Give it to me now!”. “I don't care if the head-teacher lets you chew gum, you don't chew gum in my class!”

I have seen teachers start considerate, overly generous, but pointless discussions about 'why' we have rules for chewing gum, mobile phones, personal stereos etc.

We do not have to defend the rules; we do need to respectfully focus and refocus (where necessary) to the *student's responsibility* as their behaviour relates to the rules.

It is crucial to stress that these skills are not mere 'technique', they *enable* us to *build and sustain a positive respectful relationship* with appropriate authority (as per our role). These skills enhance our purpose of enabling the student to own their own behaviour and consider others' rights.

Considered discipline language is part of our conscious behaviour management plan. It is too late (in the heat of the moment) to consider what we could, or might, say when there is natural tension created by distracting or disruptive behaviours. We cannot plan for every contingency we can have a *framework for discipline* based in a least-to-most approach that has considered language options.

Deferred consequences

When we use any *deferred* consequences they are expressed as a 'directed choice' (no choices are free – in this sense – they occur within the fair rights / responsibilities rules of the class and school).

With deferred consequences the key is the *certainty* that we will (as teacher) follow-through with what we have said. The *fair* certainty of consequences is *always* more effective than the severity of a consequence.

(11) The two female students in a play-fight that gets out of hand :-

In this vignette we are seeking to model how a teacher :

- calms the class : we calm the class (and the individuals) more effectively by 'calming ourselves' first. Not easy, but effective in the emotional moment. Shouting, threatening, pleading are all (obviously) going to wind the

students up even more and give unnecessary peer audience attention to the students in conflict.

- Focuses quickly, calmly, assertively on the conflict behaviour;
- Does not take sides;
- Uses the time-out option : time-out allows the students in conflict to calm down (away from their peer audience); it allows the teacher and class to calm down too(!) and allows the rest of the students to continue their learning ...

What is crucial to any time-out usage is that there is a *whole-school plan* in what behaviours we use 'time-out' for; what back-up we get if students refuse to leave the class; *where* they go; on what basis they return to class and the *role of the initiating teacher* in any follow-through *beyond* the time-out process.

- follows up later, after class (or at an appointed time) to enable repairing and rebuilding with the student(s).

How we address a crisis, any crisis, is crucial – not just for the students in conflict but also for the audience of peers. There is always the 'audience of peers'. For students in those middle years upwards one's class peers are a significant influence on one's behaviour.

(12) Following up with students after class (one-to-one)

This is discussed at length in the discussion paper *The Establishment Plan : Core practices and skills*, suffice to say here that when we follow-up *after* the incident (when both student(s) and teacher are – hopefully – calmer) we :-

- *Tune-in to how the student is feeling* (in a non-sycophantic or patronising way). This communicates our appropriate concern and our acknowledgment of reality (the student is probably feeling annoyed, anxious or even angry that we have 'kept them back' at playtime or whenever);

- *Focus* (as briefly as possible) *on the behaviour*, issue, task we have directed the student to stay back 'for' (whether after-class chat, detention, task, behaviour interview ...);
- It can sometimes help to illustrate the student's behaviour to them (one-to-one settings). We have sought to model this in this vignette with the two lads. Wherever we use such an approach it is essential to request the student's 'permission' – “ ... do you mind if I show you – now – what I saw you do (or say) in class when you ...?”
Such illustrating of the student's behaviour (as a kind of 'mirroring') is helpful in keeping the behaviour in question, specific, 'concrete', visual ...
- Consider the *ethical probity* of any one-to-one meeting with a student;
- Give the student a *right of reply* (verbal or written);
- Refocus the student to the student behaviour-agreement / or code of conduct where appropriate;
- Refocus the student to 'their future' next – lesson; “Is there anything I can do to help you ...?”
- Always separate amicably (at least on the teacher's part).

It is always important to track student behaviour (over the first few weeks) to see if there is a 'pattern' of distracting or disruptive behaviour; or if there is a behaviour disorder or learning disorder contributing to the student's behaviour. It is always worth tracking a student's behaviour across classes / teachers to see if the behaviour is 'general' (in its distracting / disruptive pattern) or if it is specific to one class or one teacher. This should be a supportive process for student and colleagues alike.

(13) Addressing core routines

This is an example of how a teacher might address whole-class noise level using a simple, novelty, of a class graph to give feedback to the class group about noise *level*.

Like any *core routine* it is crucial we clarify expected, fair, behaviours. When there are 25+ people in a small space (like a classroom) noise level can easily become habituated; students and teacher alike may be unaware of how loud the group noise is. Of course 'noise levels' vary across subjects and that obviously needs to be taken into account. Notwithstanding that variance there is an element of positive training here that balances :

- Explaining why noise level (of *each class*) can affect learning; “We are in a small space folks ...” Voice level (and need for different voice *levels*) changes from playground to classroom *that is reasonable, fair, necessary(!)*
- *Reminding the class* when they are too loud (without too much nagging);
- *Encouraging the whole class* when they have made the effort to consider one another by using their 'inside voices', or 'partner-voices', or 'class voices' ... (more positive terms than working *noise* ...)

My colleagues and I always find it helpful to discuss core routines at a grade-team or faculty-team level prior to our first classes. This enhances reasonable consistency and encourages *relaxed* vigilance. It is always important to explain to a class group *why* we have there routines 'in our class'. Core routines enable the 'smooth running' of a class group of 25 (or more) so we all get a fair go. Although many of these routines seem basic it is still important to clarify them and maintain them.

Some routines are core-relevant to every class group. (These will have been discussed by tutor teachers with their tutor groups.) Some routines will vary across subject or context (as in Physical Education, Food Technology, ICT).

Other crucial routines such as: appropriate movement around the room; how to have a reasonable class discussion; how to get teacher feedback and support and how to finish a lesson positively (and leave the room tidy for the next class) are all modelled and discussed in video 2. (See also the discussion paper: THE ESTABLISHMENT PHASE - Core practices and skills.

See also the closing scene in video 1.

(14) The 'fresh-start' approach

These following vignettes (13) and (14) introduce and seek to illustrate how teachers can work *collegially*, to support, one another with a challenging class group. This process is not easy to initiate and develop on one's own. The support presence of a colleague in the classroom can assist the class teacher's confidence, focus and goodwill.

It is crucial that the role is supportive for the class teacher. It will be counter-productive if the supporting colleague comes in and effectively takes over the class (even with good motives!)

A 'fresh-start' approach involves a supportive 'mentorship' – where the class teacher works with a colleague to re-engage the class to work on their behaviour.

The emphasis is on re-engaging the goodwill of the class by utilising their insights, perceptions and concerns through a classroom meeting approach.

The classroom meeting often gives the 'silent majority' the opportunity and confidence to air concerns and suggestions. It is crucial we take 'their voice' seriously as a common starting point for any 'fresh-start'. The students know more than anyone what their class is really (characteristically) like.

(We have modelled this in scene 15.)

The class teacher and their support colleague plan this class meeting very carefully : telegraphing it ahead of time to the class; 'why we're having this meeting next Thursday ...' Even issues such as what we will say, seating arrangements (etc) will

need to be planned ahead of time. We also need to have basic rules for any classroom meeting particularly the more 'open' classroom meeting. The crucial rule is 'no put-downs', "We're here to talk about our concerns and suggestions for what we need to do to change things here ... We do *not* attack anyone, or put them down; we will disagree yes, but respectfully – with a reason ..."

Sometimes a student will 'have a go' at the class teacher. They will need to be firmly reminded of 'our class meeting rule' at this point. If they continue on in a disrespectful vein they are directed to sit out of the group. If they continue to 'have a go' from the sidelines they will be directed to leave the classroom for time-out (and followed up by both teachers at a later stage).

Both the class teacher and the support colleague conduct the 'formal' or 'open' classroom meeting (who will 'introduce' the meeting and 'open' proceedings; how we will deal with difficult students who want to 'hog the floor'; how we will balance out the contributions from students; how we will close the meeting).

If the class is a very restless and challenging group we find it more helpful to have a more formal class feedback meeting. We have modelled this in vignette (14) where students are given a proforma with the following questions:

OUR CLASS

Please record your answers on a separate sheet of paper. Thanks.

1. What's working well in our class?
What things (activities and the way we run things) work well in our class and why?
2. What's not working well and why?
Anything upsetting you? Why? (If personal, put it in writing.)
3. What are some things we can change? How?

Later we will discuss together and make a plan for action:

- a. Things we can start soon
- b. Things that will take a little longer
- c. How we'll do it

When we introduce *any* form of class meeting in the fresh-start process we emphasise that ...

"... This is your opportunity to raise your concerns with me / us today ... I'm not going to lecture you. You know better than anyone how things have been going in our class these last ... weeks ... We do care about what you think and feel, that's why Mr / Ms _____ and I wanted to have this meeting with you today ..."

The feedback from the students at the classroom meeting forms the basis for a *second meeting*. At this meeting the class teacher (and support colleague) report back the key, common concerns, issues and suggestions. These are utilised at the starting point for re-assessing the class rights, responsibilities and routines ...

“Remember last week ... we had a class meeting where we raised our concerns about how our class has been going ... We too (as your teachers) are part of this class group. As we said we’d be giving you feedback about the issues that were raised. We’ve listed your concerns and suggestions. We saw how many of you are annoyed how some students are making it hard for others to learn here ... ‘too noisy’; ‘calling out’; ‘silly annoying behaviours’; ‘put-downs’, ‘hassling’ ... these were the common things you noted. You also noted what you want to change here. For some of you these things may not seem a big deal – just ‘fooling around’. It’s not. You know we’ll be talking though with some of you one-to-one to work through those behaviours. We’ve already started to do that ... As you look at this list you can also see something else in the responses – you want things to change here. You’ve made lots of suggestions and recommendations and requests. As Mr / Ms _____ and I went through these several key messages kept coming through ...”

Over and over when my colleagues and I have conducted such meetings the overriding themes centre on : *how we can all have a class where we feel safe, respected, and can learn well ...* (without undue distractions and disruptions). The task of the class teacher (with their support colleague) is to work with the class to frame those concerns (indeed – rights) into normative class behaviours.

It can help to frame this as a *class plan* (see discussion notes on *A Fresh Start*). This class plan is often published on a few, positive, posters or even a class booklet (at upper primary level).

(15) Seat change plan within a fresh-start plan

In many challenging classes the seating arrangements are often a contributing factor to noise level, time-off-task, and over-use of social-time (during on-task learning time).

My colleagues and I find it helpful to change the seating plan, both the physical seating plan (layout), and who sits with whom.

This process is best carried out with student involvement and at least some attempt at co-operation.

The class teacher (and support colleague) directs the class to write down the names of two students ‘they know they can sit with, work with, who will not hassle them or make it difficult for them to work ...’ A simple printed proforma is then used to help students reflect on their teacher’s concerns.

Teaching, and utilising, co-operative learning approaches is a laudable aim in a classroom. Some classes need time to come to terms with what this really means. Simply putting students into groups (table groups) and expecting co-operative learning will rarely guarantee that aim.

Simply allowing students to sit where they want, with whom they want, will also not mean they will be more focused and engaged in learning time.

Students need to be able to work with a range of personalities beyond their best mates. There is always time – on occasions – to have a lesson where friendship groupings are the order of the day – providing no student is easily left out of social engagement.

I have seen ludicrous seating arrangements where teachers basically say (day one), “Sit where you want guys ...” and the ‘cools’ sit with the ‘cools’ and the ‘non-cools’ get marginalised or excluded.

The classroom is not merely an extension of the social time children rightfully enjoy in non-classroom time. The classroom is primarily a learning community and seating arrangements can enhance the work for or against the aims we have for positive learning access.

Of course changes can be made to seating arrangements; ‘rotation approaches’, even gender mix (boy-girl paired seating – now that is a novel experience!) – and one that can actually enhance the on-task focus of the male students; alphabetic groupings ...

As with any aspect of classroom management it is always worth checking with colleagues to see how the 'student mix' works in other classes.

(16) Positive lesson closure

As noted earlier (in vignette 13) core routines are essential in the establishment phase with a new class.

In this scene, when the teacher dismisses the class there is the reminder to:-

- Do the next class a favour
- Straighten furniture
- Pick up any residual litter
- Leave row-by-row (avoids that rush at the door)

Ongoing colleague support

It will also help in the maintaining of the hopes and expectations (as expressed in any **fresh start plan**) for the class teacher to have some on-going colleague mentoring. However – any mentoring support offered (and given) needs to be elective. Colleagues have to see a need, a purpose, in such a process for any effectiveness to ensue.

My colleagues and I have found that when such collegial membership is offered / elective/ and on-going there is always change for the better – for the class teacher and the students.

We hope this video series will encourage that kind of colleague support.

In his moving play about personal and social conscience, some lines of J. B. Priestly have ever stayed with me :-

We don't live alone

We are members of one body

We are responsible for one another

An Inspector Calls, 1944