22ND EDITION

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*“You could stop 95% of students who drop out of class, from ever doing so after you read this book. Growing their mind really is that simple”.*

*\*LESS BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT*

*\*LESS TEACHER STRESS*

*\*HAPPIER STUDENTS & TEACHERS*

*\*EXPERIENCE, FEEL, LEARN, LIFE LONG SUCCESS*

***THE SIMPILEST AND MOST LIFE CHANGING CLASSROOM TOOL YOU WILL EVER USE***

“Not all students minds develop and mature at the same rate or time.

yet an educational system tell’s them where they believe they should be and puts a label on them.

this leaves them believing they are either smart, average or dumb because they can, or cannot yet do something their mind may not yet be ready for”

when you read this book, think about what physical actions your student can control, where they can experience success.

if they experience success with you in one area, they will believe they can experience success with you in anything

(These students will never drop out of your class or quit school)

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**BOOK 1 – BUILDING POSITIVE SUCCESSFUL STUDENTS FOR LIFE USING SCHOOL LIFE SUCCESS**

SCHOOL LIFE SUCCESS

(*Following the Sport Life, Camp Life and School Life Success Protocols)*

**CHAPTER 1 – ‘SCHOOL LIFE SUCCESS’ TEACHING PROTOCOL**

(PLEASE SEE APPENDIX 2 FOR SLS PROTOCOL)

The “School Life Success’ (SLS) Teaching Protocol can empowers teachers’ teachers to connect with all students in their classroom like never before. Users can expect to bring their students to new levels of success and holistic wellbeing in many different forms from academic, social wellbeing, through to behaviour – all while increasing their satisfaction, resilience and confidence within themselves, both in and out of school. Also, you can expect to have better triangular relationships between students, teachers and families.

The School Life Success Teaching Protocol see’s the teacher identify the positive physical and behavioural actions that their students are performing which they believe will give the student or class the best opportunity at Academic or whatever other skills they are trying to teach them success. By celebrating the success of skills and efforts the students can physically control or apply themselves to do it is going to give the student a higher level of engagement and resilience to push through what may be challenging activities or requirements etc.

The SLS Teaching Protocol was originally created as a multi-pronged strategy to help disengaged youth from different backgrounds, to positively engage in school, to reduce aggressive incidents between themselves and to grow their self- confidence and resilience in the classroom. Operating under some of the most arduous and challenging circumstances, the SLS Protocol was extremely successful in assisting the students to improve their schooling and personal outcomes. It was also massively successful on the sporting field where sport was identified as a vehicle for brining the classroom and social success to its first ever cohort of students.

The first group of children to use the SLS Protocol were girls aged from 12 to 14 years. They were from a range of tribal groups and many had ongoing behavioural issues and a reluctance to engage in education. Nearly all of the students spoke English as either a second, third, fourth or even fifth language. They also lacked the social skills at the time to work other children from different backgrounds.

The sport they chose to play was a contact sport for which there was no regular female competition, so consequently they had to compete in the boy’s league. After starting with 22 girls and losing their first six games by over 100 points, the girls defied everyone’s expectations, including their own, to gradually improve their physical performances using the SLS Protocol to the point where they beat four of those same six teams by the end of the season. They also grew their player base from 22 to 35+ players despite losing on the scoreboard in the majority of their games.

Just as impressive was the significant improvement in their attendance, engagement, behaviour and self-confidence within the school environment. This was a direct result of the scaffolding that the SLS Protocol provided between the club football and the school they attended.

**Recognizing All Students Actions and Keeping Them Involved At All Times**

The SLS Protocol requires the teacher to break down the day, lesson or activity and develop a list of positive actions and choices that they want each student to be doing at every moment of that time. Once the teacher has developed a that list for the students, they can then record and acknowledge each students actions or performance. The teacher may elect to focus on certain areas of a student performance plan for recording purposes, but importantly every student is now constantly involved in their own performance and has something positive they can achieve towards at all times.

Currently and what has been since the introduction of formal schooling, schools and the academic society have defined the success of school as high grades which measure children’s content of knowledge across a range of subjects and in some instances level of skill across different areas.

These grades which are awarded and presented on a piece of paper however are purely a measure of those content knowledge areas. They do not at all measure or teach the skills that a child will need to thrive in life. They do not measure a child’s resilience, a child’s self-confidence, a child’s ability to grow and overcome adversity, a child’s communication skills and connectedness in life. Those grades do not acknowledge or celebrate the positive actions that that child does for themselves or others. These life skills, learning skills, communication skills and learning to succeed and overcome skills are the keys to actually succeeding in whatever field a child wants to as an adult and also having the opportunity to grow and achieve in whatever field they wish.

So now while teachers are still teaching the curriculum classroom content that is required, they are now focussing on the students themselves and teaching, celebrating the personals skills that they are growing in. A student who is made to feel like they are succeeding, enjoys the feeling of succeeding and improving and will value your direction and knowledge in succeeding across multiple fields and ways now.

SLS was designed for the time poor, human resource poor teacher. It was specifically designed by a teacher who had no time left in his day for anything else. When using SLS as a whole of classroom approach the teacher does not break down the positive actions or involvements each child does into a range of categories, rather everything positive that they do falls under one total level of output. There isn’t enough time to execute a break down of every detail for every child all day every day in this way. Even seeing every action that a child is doing positively across a classroom is impossible, however you can make a mark more easily and quickly against a students’ name when you see them doing something positive that you have asked as you scan the room, or reflect back to how the last 5 minutes has been while presenting information to the students. SLS is flexible, malleable and a powerful tool for you to use to the extend and way which best suits your teaching practise and help your students.

Using SLS you are now acknowledging all student’s success and validating their efforts, you are beginning to teach them to succeed.

**Tiered Recognition and Public Acknowledgement of the Positive Actions Your Students are Executing**

The key to creating a stronger student both in the classroom academically or behaviourally and in life, is for the teacher to now define success as improvements in the student’s positive actions/involvement totals. These are the actions that a student can control and hence improve on. To do this, the teacher will decide before the lesson/day begins how many positive involvements or actions a student will need to do to receive either a bronze, silver, gold or platinum award. Students become ‘Game Involved’, ‘Game Focused’ and ‘Game Aware’ throughout the entire lesson and the resulting increase in positive involvements and actions benefits both the individual’s results and the whole vibe and flow of the classroom as the class is now collectively more engaged and on track. The flow on effect of this is often a better result both academically but also in regards to social happiness than otherwise what would have been achieved.

By recording, acknowledging and celebrating the student’s positive efforts, the teacher is now building a culture of success and giving the students the fuel for them to push further. Every teacher or coach knows that a student or athlete can at times put in a huge amount of effort but not necessarily see an instant improvement in their performance. For students whom are still developing their minds and learning to become resilient this is a critical time where they can switch their minds off and categorize themselves in a manner which very negatively affects their own mindset of themselves and limits the opportunities they are willing to engage with in the future do to their perceived lack of self-worth for themselves. This is a very big fatal flaw with how many schools and classroom currently find themselves unintentionally in.

**The SLS Protocol focuses on, records and publicly acknowledges the** **positive involvements of all students across the duration of the day, activity or lesson as a person in relation to life, instead of an academic score which in real terms plays a minute part of where a person can head in life.**

*Appendix 1* will include a series of just of the possible positive actions/effort’s teachers may use in the classroom, but the beauty of SLS is that each teacher can make up and define what is important and needed for their activity. The football coach is likely to have some different involvements in comparison the classroom teacher or the school musical director.

Some quick classroom examples of positive involvements in a classroom could be, head down writing, each minute of focussed work not talking to peers, each minute without an undesired behaviour, each time a desired behaviour occurs Eg. hand up, or question asked or answers given.

**CHAPTER 2 – IMPROVING IN THE CLASSROOM**

When you use the SLS Protocol you can expect the individual student to be more aware of their own actions and engaged in the class activity. At the same time, they will have an increased sense of confidence in and knowledge of, what their role is and how they are contributing toward their goal or that of the classes. The student will feel more acknowledged and more excited to attend each session, day or activity. Coincidentally they will also have a better awareness of each of their fellow students impact and work in the lesson. This knowledge promotes greater understanding and respect among class mates, whilst also fostering the improvement in both the individual students’ performances and the classes ability to achieve goals collectively.

**STEP 1 – Keeping your students busy and lesson aware all the time**

As a teacher or even a parent visiting a classroom some of the things you quickly can’t help but notice and remember are who the most diligent students are and unfortunately which students are wanting extra attention and disrupting the class to achieve the desired attention or tangible thing that they want.

The SLS Protocol requires you as the teacher to begin by breaking down exactly what you want each student to be doing 100% of the time during each lesson, day or activity. In essence, each student should be performing some type of action which is in some way helping themselves and or the rest of their classmates move forward in a positive direction.

This could vary across physical actions during the class through to verbal input and showing mental focus and engagement at all times. When a student is doing all of the small things right, they are working harder, not taking short cuts and increasing their chances and focus in a manner which will best prepare them for success that they can perform through any aspect of life.

The first thing is to make a list of what you want to see each of your students doing actively at all times. These things must be physical actions that your student can control and do themselves. There is no focus on your students’ actions in comparison to another students whose actions they cannot control.

**STEP 2 – Building The Class Environment That Makes Students Feel Good And**

**Teaches Them Resilience**

If there is nothing physical that you can think of that your student needs to be doing at certain moments during an activity or lesson, then how can they be supporting their peers you may well ask.

NBA championship player, Patty Mills, kept his position on the San Antonio Spurs team during his early years in the league, more because of his team first attitude, his ability to support his team from off the court and the vibe he brought to the team despite personally only playing small amounts of game time. For Mills though, becoming the ultimate team player paid dividends when NBA and Olympic championship winning coach, Gregg Popovich, declared that while ever he was the coach of The Spurs, Mills would always have a position on the team if he wanted.

Popovich values players who can not only contribute physically on the court, but who can also make team mates feel better and more confident. As they celebrate one another’s successes, they are working towards team goals and where team encouragement is taught, recognized and valued just as physical skills are, you create a positive, safe environment. A place where students or players feel good and confident in when they play or learn.

Students are more likely to want to learn and work hard in such an environment where they feel supported and encouraged by their teacher and peers. A positive environment helps students to become more resilient as they learn how to face challenges themselves and with their peers. By recognizing and recording Hi 5’s and positive encouragement statements, you are creating that positive, safe environment which brings out the best in all students regardless of what technical grade they may have earned today, but are confident to try and improve on tomorrow.

**STEP 3 – Creating The Steps To A Winning Standard**

Now that you have defined exactly the actions you want to see from your students all the time, combined with the way each student can be communicating with and supporting each other, you will have created the most positive and forward focussed class room environment possible.

The next step requires you, as the teacher, to set up a tiered level of work rate to measure and recognize the positive involvements and actions that your students will complete at different levels of performance. The SLS recommends using a 4 Level System.

\*For example, Bronze 10 – 20 involvements; Silver 21 – 30 involvements;

Gold 31 – 40 involvements; Platinum 41+ involvements.

This system would be effective for many activities, but teachers can change or modify it to best suit their circumstances.

The SLS System measures work rate and the effort of your students. When deciding on how many involvements are required for a student to move between levels, it is a good idea to look at age and the level of the activity being engaged in. You should also look at how long your term or project might be for and how much improvement in effort and work rate you are looking for from your students to improve their academic and life learning skills. If you have any or many students achieving the highest level/s possible in the very activity or week, you may be lessening their focus on chasing a higher score and therefore their desire to achieve a better work rate later. This could become a limiting factor in their future growth.

As a teacher it is important that you recognize all the efforts that your students are putting in so that they experience that strong and positive feeling that people get when they succeed or accomplish something. For them to continue to improve though, you also need to ensure you have the scope to be able to encourage them to push further and extend their own performances and efforts.

**STEP 4 – The Winning Teacher Speech**

Now that you have created the standards and criteria that allow your students to achieve by the actions that they can control, it is up to you as the teacher to help reframe and retrain your students thinking processes. For SLS to be at its most effective and beneficial to the students in their in-classroom performances, the teacher must now channel their focus and energy towards defining success through a measurement of the four-tiered SLS Coaching Protocol.

You as the teacher have created this tiered system and this system is aimed and defined by you as a measure of your players’ success and excellence. So when talking about the goals of the day and as to whether the student or class is succeeding or not, it is important that the teacher focuses on and celebrates what their students can control, which is of course recorded in the actions counted in the tiered system.

By focusing on the tiered system that measures what the students have done each time or during each activity rather than only, you have a better idea of how your class and student is actually performing and you are really acknowledging how good their performance is. You are also allowing the students to feel proud of the work and efforts they have completed, rather than constantly directing them to compare their feelings of self-worth and image of success against others.

The key to true happiness, freedom and self-confidence is the ability of a person to be happy with themselves. When you are constantly comparing yourself to others so as to determine your level of self-worth and therefore happiness, you are basing your happiness on other people’s thoughts, ideas and actions, all of which you cannot control. If the person you see in the mirror is not you, it will be impossible to ever reach true peace and happiness.

**Example: SLS Teachers Challenging Lesson Time Speech**

“Okay guys, come sit in our semi-circle please so I can talk to you all. I saw that we were doing lots of good (…insert skills…) out there and that is really good to see because that is giving you plenty of positive involvement points for your awards. If we keep this up, we are going to earn a good level of certificates today. I am really proud of the way we were working together when we were doing ………………. and being really positive and working hard in the game out there. Remember you can earn points by doing (…insert focus skill you want them to try and focus on more…). You can earn a lot more points if you do that. Congratulations to ………… and ………… and …………. who gave (whatever skill) a go. Okay guys, everyone stand up and I want you to go Hi5/Shake Hands with 5 class mates. \*Pause while they do this\* Okay everyone hands in, and on my count 1,2,3 (…insert team name…)

**Example: SLS Teachers Half-Time Speech – Class Is Already Performing Well**

“Okay guys, come sit in our semi-circle please so I can talk to you all. I saw that we were doing lots of good (…insert skills…) out there and that is really good to see because that is giving you plenty of positive involvement points for your awards. If we keep this up, we are going to earn a lot of gold/platinum certificates today. I am really proud of the way we are working together and being really positive and working hard in the game out there. Remember you can earn points by doing (…insert focus skill you want them to work on…). You can earn a lot more points if you do that. Congratulations to ……….. and ………..

and …………. who gave (…whatever skill…) a go. Okay guys, everyone stand up and I want you to go HI5/Shake Hands with 5 class mates. \*Pause while they do this\* Okay everyone hands in, on my count 1,2,3, (…insert team name…)

As you can see in the School Life Teacher’s example speeches above, the content and framework of the two are nearly identical. This is because in both scenarios the teacher is trying to achieve the same outcomes. Those outcomes are for the students to feel positive about themselves, work positively to improve one particular area of their lesson and have fun with their peers. No matter how their peers are going is or what their current academic grades say, we want our students to be improving, having fun and getting recognition for their own performances.

**Step 5 – Gamifying The Classroom**

Now that you have a good grasp of the SLS Teaching Protocol and how to keep everyone active and focused during the lesson or activity, you are now in a position to consider if you would like to gamify the lesson and increase the student’s levels of motivation, engagement and ability to learn to experience success.

Video games, in most cases, work through different levels and players receive rewards, acknowledgements and success in a tiered fashion. This happens within the context of arriving or reaching an ultimate goal point or objective. Teachers can consider using the SLS Teaching Protocol or the SLS Coaching Protocol to further assist gamifying lessons or activities for their students.

**Example 1 – Breaking The Lesson Or Activity Into Segments Or Periods Of Time.**

Breaking a lesson, day or activity down into halves or quarters and setting new goals or target scores in each period can bring further focus and impetus to each of those smaller lesson segments. For students to work effectively, each of those segments requires some type of positive reward or acknowledgement that can be valued by the students.

This is can be easily done in the classroom whereby the teacher can gamify the day by using different periods for the focus of, for example, managing the behaviour of a student to succeed with emotional self-control. For a student for whom maintaining self-control for a whole lesson is not feasible, then wiping the scoreboard or the previous negative behaviour clean by having new periods of time allows the student the best opportunity to reset their mind and refocus so they can move forward from a neutral or fresh position. It’s hard to get on the front foot when you are handicapped by old baggage.

You cannot control the past and neither can the student so teaching student to look forward in time, to see what they can control rather than to remain thinking about the negative incident that occurred in the past, helps them to rebuild and strengthen their mind. So, every time the mistake or negative outcome occurs, the teacher can restart the timer and the student tries to go longer before the negative outcome reoccurs. Doing it this way always gives the teacher something positive to talk about as in nearly all cases the student was doing something positive in the period immediately before the negative outcome or behaviour occurred. This allows you to use self-modelling for positive success for the student.

This system also works for having students complete a quantity of activities in the classroom in specific times also. Again it is often good to use small time periods to achieve a level of points for the students before stopping and refreshing their minds and refocussing.

**Example 2 – Create Your Own Scoring System**

For teachers who want to emphasize different parts of the lesson for their students to achieve and improve in, they can then create their own point scoring system and objectives. This will still require the students to be acknowledged and celebrated.

An example of using this scoring system in the classroom could look like a “happy classroom” scoring system where the teacher rewards points for manners, positive actions and words, work completed etc.

Gamifying the lesson creates structures and levels which can improve both individual class members but also the whole close overall and create a much calmer and more conducive to learning environment.

By gamifying the lesson, the teacher has their class working and focusing on standards that the students can control and thus pushing themselves to achieve personal related individual and class goals, rather than purely just judging themselves on their current academic knowledge or grade at that time. This will allow them to continue to remain engaged in the educational environment and while that is happening the chance for education and growth exists, where those opportunities do not exist for students who disengage from the classroom.

**Using Sport Life Success As A Classroom Confidence and Self-Esteem Builder** SLS is constantly focussing on and recognizing the good things that students do and the effort that they are making. Increasing student self-esteem is paramount to building their resilience and ability to progress forward in any focus area.

**BEHAVIOUR EXAMPLE**

An example of using SLS in regards to working with student behaviour may look something like this:

The teacher could allocate points for every positive interaction that a student engages in or for tasks that they are carrying out. Points could also be allocated for every minute they are on task or demonstrating the appropriate behaviour.

The teacher would already have the SLS tiered reward recognition system in place, so that the student was then acknowledged and/or rewarded with whichever specified level of award certificate they had earnt. This would be dependent on the number of points earnt that day or even that lesson.

As a teacher, I have used the SLS system for individual students across stand-alone lessons and single day or whole week time periods. It depends on what I am trying to achieve with the student, how old they are and what their current behaviour is like.

For a younger student who is regularly off task, using the SLS Protocol with a one lesson focus is likely to be much more effective than trying to use it across a whole day initially. As teachers or coaches, the important thing we need to accomplish first, is for the student to quickly succeed after applying some effort towards their cause or goal – to experience and celebrate a success quickly. This will allow them to feel that positive recognition and attention that gives rise to joyful celebration.

If you, as the teacher or coach, can instigate that feeling of achievement or positive success for your student, then their belief in your knowledge and intentions will be significantly increased in no matter what area of sport, classroom or life you are trying to assist that student grow in.

**ACADEMIC EXAMPLES**

The SLS Protocol can work dynamically in many different ways to drive academic improvement of the students in the classroom.

1. Students are acknowledged by their teachers using the tiered certificate reward system of bronze, silver, gold and platinum for formative pop quiz style assessments in any area from sight words to number facts, to historical names, places and dates or different geographical facts. As always, the emphasis is on the student being acknowledged for their efforts and striving to improve their own personal best scores.
2. Recognition of the quantity of work and effort put in by a student when mastering a new skill or broadening their background in a subject area is important. By using the SLS tiered certificate reward system, teachers or coaches can reward students by acknowledging the amount of time devoted to undertaking a particular task or practising a skill, the number of books read, words written or any other particular tasks undertaken.

**CHAPTER 3 – USING SPORT LIFE SUCCESS (SCHOOL LIFE SUCCESS FOR SPORTS) IN SCHOOL OR CLUB SPORTS TO GROW THE CHILD IN THE CLASSROOM**

**BUILDING BRIDGES - Using Sport Life Success in School Sports Or Extra Curricular Programs - To Bring Positive Changes in Classrooms**

By working with school or club sporting teams

SLS is an exceptional tool that can be used for school sports teams by their coaches or sports teachers. Not only will you be able to grow and improve your players’ confidence, resilience and skill level in those sports but you can transition that attitude and confidence straight into the classroom and other extra-curricular activities.

An ideal way of building on the success and growth of positive mindset and attitude the student is experiencing as a result of the recognition SLS builds on the sports field, is to acknowledge that success publicly at school. Highly effective ways of doing this include acknowledging the children with certificates with their award levels at a full school assembly, year group assembly or in class meetings. The positive effective this has on the child is multi-layered. It allows them to feel valued by having their efforts acknowledged verbally in front of their peers and secondly it becomes a confidence builder by affording them practice at standing in front of an audience to receive positive recognition for their own actions, behaviours and efforts.

It is important that the presentation is conducted in front of an audience as this increases the social value the student feels. In reality, it can be very challenging for some students to allow themselves to be put in such a position, as they are often surrounded by a negative peer group where positive success in life often leads to jealousy. Standing out for being positive is unfamiliar territory and therefore scary for many.

The more times a student can stand up, accept and learn to enjoy, being recognized for something positive, the easier it is for them to set themselves apart from a peer group that may encourage them to make poor personal choices later on because of peer pressure.

This is the yellow brick road that you want children to follow and the SLS Protocol is a proven way to ensure children embark on that journey. A child learns to feel good receiving positive recognition for positive behaviour, effort or work they have done. They also gain confidence in accepting positive praise for those actions when they are publicly acknowledged and ultimately feel that being successful is good – that they are personally good and worthy people.

This affords the teachers of that student a seg-way into a positive conversation which allows them to then relate that success to the subject they are teaching and at the same time to build a positive rapport with the child as well.

At this point the teacher can start drawing on the similarities and skills that the child demonstrated successfully on the field to provide a crossover path for those same actions to become apart of other aspects of the child’s personal and educational life. An example of such a possible scenario may go something like this: -

“ I see how you are making some really good positive choices for yourself.

Playing sports like basketball are really good for your body and your mind.

That’s really good to see and I see you have been working really hard in

your games and getting an award.

Now that I know, that you know how to work hard and have a really

positive mindset, then I know you can make positive choices for yourself

and do well in Maths as well. You obviously are really smart being able to

play that well at basketball, so I know we can transfer your winning ways

on the court to your maths work. Just like at basketball, if you need to

work on one of your skills or need some help from your coach to

understand the play, then that’s what we are going to do here too. It

won’t be long before you are starring here at Maths like you do at

basketball. You’ll be “killing it” at life – doing well at sport and school,

getting set up to go to college or get that good job and make good money.

You will be able to make your family proud, get a good car and go on

those fun vacations.”

The SLS program seamlessly fits into the daily school program and presents the opportunity to change the relationship between student and teacher and also the student and the school. The new thinking and the positive relationships and conversations that are now occurring can have a massive effect on students who have had behavioural or self-confidence challenges. For those students who may have been finding acceptance and value from dangerous parts of society such as gangs or criminal enterprises, they will now find that positive recognition elsewhere. SLS allows each teacher the opportunity to have better relationships with their students and to build their students’ resilience and confidence in themselves across their subject, just as has happened to them on the sports field.

Whether you use the SLS method or find some other way, the key to building a person’s transferable confidence and self-esteem is to find at least one positive thing that they can feel proud of and be recognized, celebrated or acknowledged for.

(More information on the Sports Life Success Coaching Protocol which shares the same structures as the School Life Success Teaching Protocol is available at [www.sportlifesuccess.com](http://www.sportlifesuccess.com))

**CHAPTER 4 – Creating the Lifelong Positive Relationship Between Student and Teacher, Teacher and Family, Student and Family**

The School Life Success Teaching Protocol is able to significantly enhance the positive communication that flows between teacher and student, the student and their family members and the teacher or school and the student’s family.

School Life Success enhances and directs positive communication between all these parties and paves the way for longer lasting positive relationships for all concerned. In any aspect of life, both working or personal, communication really is the key to unlocking the potential success in any type of relationship.

**The Student and Teacher Relationship**

The SLS Protocol can ensure a foundational positive relationship week in, week out between every student and teacher. By following the protocol, teachers look to break down all aspects of the lesson or activity for their pl students and identify what they want them to be doing at all times. This will best help them achieve their classroom and personal goals.

Using SLS’s tiered reward certificate system to then acknowledge and celebrate their students’ efforts, the teacher has now made a positive emotional connection with them. The student feels good, accomplished, acknowledged and respected by the fact that someone in a position of power, respect and authority has been watching them and seen the effort that they have put in.

That feeling of being looked out for and supported is a very strong positive emotion. It far outweighs the very strong negative emotion that comes with that feeling of invisibility and worthlessness many have when their efforts or abilities are overlooked and not acknowledged or celebrated by their teachers or families.

Through the SLS Protocol approach, teachers put themselves in a position to be able to buy-in with a student when it comes to talking to them about most topics in life. This is because they have gained the trust, confidence and respect of their student by acknowledging and rewarding positive things about them. Unfortunately, for many younger people, they may honestly have not experienced being told positive things about themselves previously.

Having experienced success with you in one area as a coach or teacher, the student will have more confidence and willingness to work and listen to you in regards to other aspects of their lives which fall outside of the classroom. To achieve a positive outcome, respect must be a two-way street. The School Life Success Protocol definitely brings that to fruition.

**KEY POINTS**

1. Help them improve at something or find something they are good at and show it is important to you with your words and actions.
2. Acknowledge what they have done.
3. Celebrate what they have done.
4. Use that positive feeling of success that they have felt with you, to help them in other areas of their life’s journey.

**The Student and Family Relationship**

The School Life Success Protocol is set up to enhance and grow positive communication between a student and their family, teachers or any other support network of people. By using the tiered bronze, silver, gold and platinum system of recognition for each student’s positive involvements and actions, you as the teacher are pointing out and celebrating that achievement of positive actions that your student has done.

This type of positive recognition, acknowledgement and celebration has often not occurred in this manner across society in general. In the main, society recognizes, acknowledges and celebrates the most eye-catching individuals and their actions. For too many, all of the positive acknowledgement about effort and small things only occurs at someone’s funeral.

**Think about the following common scenario:**

Peter gets home from school today after his maths test quiz and finds his father arriving home from work at the same time. The first and often most common question that parents or other well-meaning people ask is,

“So did you top the class today in the quiz?”

Peter replies, “No, I was probably somewhere in the middle.”

The reply from Peter’s dad, “In the middle again? Weren’t you there last week too? You must not be working hard enough OR maybe you just aren’t smart at Maths”, is the type of negative response that often follows.

Sometimes the well-meaning, but equally as disappointing response of, “Never mind, there’s always next week”, or “Winning isn’t everything”, conjures up the feeling for Peter that he either didn’t try hard enough, or that you can only celebrate or feel good when you win and winning means being in front of other people.

Every week, in every class, schools are designed to rank, number and label their students into categories that they deem as important and assign them value on how the rest of society should judge them. This results in identifying and labelling more “losers” then winners and students walk away often feeling that a grade on a piece of paper is an indication of themselves as a person, their ability and their own self-worth. This feeling of not being good enough, being a loser and feeling defeated is unfortunately regularly reinforced by conversations with parents, teacher and peers where further negative conversations occur. Whilst you may feel this is unintentional because such conversations are just considered normal everyday chatter, the fact remains that the students self-worth is lowered, because a system labelled them.

*Now look at the same example scenario with a club or team that uses the School Life Success Protocol*.

Peter gets home from school after completing his maths quiz and finds his father arriving home at the same time. Peter’s dad sees his son holding his certificate that he got from school this week. The first and most common question that Peter’s father now asks is,

“So, tell me, what level certificate did you earn this week?”

Peter replies, “I got a silver one this week.”

Peter’s father then says, “Wow son, that’s really good. Didn’t you get a bronze one last week?”

“Yeah, this week I did extra practise in class and my teacher saw me focussing on my work and not getting distracted, like I got some answers right on my quiz to, my teacher said if I keep working the same way in class soon I’ll get all the questions right”, replied Peter.

“You must be really be working hard out there, I’m proud of you. Keep this up and it won’t be long before you earn that platinum certificate”, said Peter’s father.

Now you can see the natural change in the flow and style of the conversation. The conversation is now positive. The natural focus of the conversation is now on what the student has earned and received. The acknowledgement is now naturally more likely to be a positive one. It also identifies exactly what the student did do and the acknowledgement and recognition is based solely on their performance and actions. Their self-worth and reward of recognition is not judged anymore based on the actions of their peers, which they cannot control. It is not even judged solely on the amount of questions they answered correctly. They are judged on the efforts they have put in to improve. If students consistently are acknowledged for the efforts they are making and they feel good about continuing to work hard and be engaged, then they are positioning themselves to also achieve and understand more academically and will stay engaged. They will also learn to control their own actions, efforts and involvements and should be judged positively on that.

Think about it. If you had to compete against Albert Einstein in a maths quiz every day, you would most likely never win. It does not mean though that you are not getting better at maths or not actually performing well or deserving of that positive praise and acknowledgement. On the contrary you might actually be learning to perform to more of your ability than even your peer is. You can build this confidence and work ethic into other parts of your life and achieve more closely to your potential there as well.

So, by using the SLS Protocol, teachers are able to actually set the scene and position the conversation between parent and child to start off in a positive fashion rather than letting one element of the child’s day dominate and guide the conversation in an often-negative way.

The Sport and School Life Success App can be a very useful tool to enhance and strengthen your ability as a coach or teacher to create more positive conversations between a player/student and their support network.

The SLS App sees the player’s certificate and award level emailed out to parents and other supporters of the player straight after the game or lesson. Then when the student speaks or sees them next, the conversation is already set to talk positively about the actions they performed to be able to earn that award level.

This is much more constructive and beneficial for the child, than to focus on how they measured up against their peer. In fact, to do that would not be a recognition of them or their performance at all.

**Key Points**

1. School Life Success allows you as the teacher or school to reframe the conversation and help educate others to recognize the positive work your students are doing.
2. The continual reinforcement and recognition by yourself and others, of the positive work done by a student further reinforces any messages or learning that you want to get across to help that student. All of these positive feelings of success and validation by others are coming from learning in your classroom.
3. Educate the parents and supporters so that they understand about the teaching protocol and positive mindset you are helping the student with.
4. Using the Sport/School Life Success App will greatly enhance your ability to spread the positive conversations and build your players’ self-esteem and respect for themselves, their team and their club.

**The Teacher/School and Family Relationship**

The School Life Success Teaching Protocol does more than strengthen a students’ relationship with their teacher and their family. It creates the perfect environment to strengthen and solidify the ties between the teacher or school and the child’s family.

A school that is using the SLS Teaching Protocol will have students who feel happier, more self-confident, focussed and resilient than those who are not developing within that system.

This is because the focus, recognition and acknowledgement of the game is based on what the individual student is doing and how they are contributing toward their long-term development rather than solely what a particular academic score is at that moment, which does not at all demonstrate effort nor ability to achieve future success outside of that content knowledge area.

In essence, no matter what particular grade a student may get, those using School Life Success are able to measure themselves on their own abilities and family and teachers get a true knowledge of actual effort applied.

SLS provides a platform from which success is possible with effort and practice. Where students ALL get positive, individual attention from the teacher after each day/lesson/activity and no one accidentally misses out. Students are going to be consistently happier and more eager to come and school each day.

Families who see their children happy, improving and wanting to come to school each day are going to be happier to take them and support both you and them as their teacher. They are also far more likely to be supportive of a school that is now valuing their family member for the person they are and not just what an academic grade tells them. They will be much happier and have a good attitude towards the school as they can see that the teacher and the school is helping teach their child many skills that will help them push further in life. With the scene set for the positive conversations between the family members and students each week, this will also provide an equally enjoyable experience for all members of the family.

For those who decide to use the Sport/School Life Success App, you will also have the significant advantage of creating stronger, more longer lasting positive memories which will spark meaningful conversations and feelings in the years to come.

Teachers who use the SLS App are able to produce certificates which include a class or individual photo taken on the day so that every student and parent has a memory of that day’s success to go alongside the recognition of their personal performance. They can then proudly display that certificate on their wall at home or give it to another person who is important to them to do likewise, or post it to their personal profile on any given social media outlet.

The SLS App also allows the school to help promote those positive conversations, by sharing the success of their students with their family members, immediately after the lesson or activity has finished. Family members who may not live in the same house or even same city can now also celebrate their child’s success immediately after a day, lesson or activity. This further reinforces the positive self-esteem that a student feels from the recognition already.

**BOOK 2 – THE TEACHERS TOOL BELT**

**CHAPTER 1 - 7 STEPS TO CREATING POSITIVE AND EFFECTIVE CLASSROOM RULES AND CONTINUING POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS**

[](http://classroomclipart.com/clipart-view/Clipart/School/student_at_principals_office_jpg.htm) **No**[](http://classroomclipart.com/clipart-view/Clipart/School/student_raising_hand_jpg.htm)**Yes**

A key step to creating a safe, positive and dynamic learning environment is to effectively implement a positive set of classroom rules into your classroom. A well-constructed set of positive classroom rules will help frame the students learning potential and also thought processes both in and outside of the classroom setting.

7 STEPS TO BUILDING AND IMPLEMENTING POSITIVE CLASSROOM RULES

1. Decide what you want and need to achieve through the implementation of the classroom rules.
2. Identify and assess the work environment that these rules will mostly be used in.
3. Examine and assess the group of students whom these rules will guide. Be sure to include in your examination the students age, gender, race, religion and relevant socio-economic status/family and cultural backgrounding.
4. Begin to draft your set of rules and or consequences (remember positive language ☺)
5. Bring your class together to work as a team to formulate their classroom rules/consequences with you guiding your students to come up with a very close if not exactly same set of rules that you have drafted.
6. Publish, promote and communicate your classroom rules around both the learning environment and also to the student’s families.
7. Consistently follow and administer the classroom rules and consequences.

HOW TO USE THE 7 STEPS FOR YOUR CLASS

1. **Firstly decide what you want and need to achieve through the implementation of the classroom rules.**

In most instances classroom teachers will have a goal for their rules which will be for their students to be able to learn in a safe and happy environment.

1. **Identify and assess the work environment that these rules will mostly be used in.**

It is important to take your time to assess the work environment that your students will be working in. This can be markedly different for each teacher with there being obvious major differences between a general academic classroom and science lab, sporting complex or engineering classroom. Consider the rules which will be best used within these facilities to keep your students safe, responsive and on task. The higher risk the classroom environment the more likely there will need be to have more and very specific rules.

1. **Examine and assess the group of students whom these rules will guide. Be sure to include in your examination the students age, gender, race, religion and relevant socio-economic status/family and cultural backgrounding.**

Your classroom rules need to be relevant and communicated very effectively for them to be successfully implemented with your students. The age and maturity level of the students should be a major consideration when developing your rules. Younger students will generally require more rules or what some people consider more examples of how the classroom rules apply to them as they have not yet developed the mental reasoning skills and experience of older students at their age. Gender, race, religion, family status and cultural backgrounding also need to be given strong consideration when developing your classroom rules. Private schools of religious orientation and parents of those students are likely to require some differing values and expectations implemented and taught through your lesson. Be careful not to make rules students may not be capable of keeping. For example a rule requiring all students to email their homework in may be very applicable for students from schools with students of high socio-economic backgrounds, while students from lower socio-economic backgrounds would not physically be able to carry out that requirement. All of the factors listed should also be considered when working out the wording and structure of how you’re communicating the rules to the students and also any corrective consequences that you will need to CORRECT rather than punish a student’s behaviour. \*Having rules and consequences which you have designed knowing that they will be broadly supported by the general community, school and student’s families also will give you a head start in the classroom.

\*NOTE*: A teacher without a good supportive general community support base, school, or student’s family support can still be very effective with their students and their rules in the classroom. This in general may require more patience at the beginning for the students to completely buy into the classroom environment and obtain the positive results that they are capable of.*

1. **Begin to draft your set of rules and corrective consequences (remember positive language ☺)**

Now that you know what the goal of the rules in your classroom is setting out to achieve and you have taken into consideration the work environment, age, gender, cultural background, race, religion, family background and socio-economic status you’re ready to begin drafting your set of positive classroom rules with positive corrective consequences.

***What is the positive language for rules and consequences?***

*Positive language for rules and consequences generally means to set a positive tone. Positive language will be telling the students what they need TO DO, rather than what not to do. Positive disciplinary consequences are focussed on what the student will now do to make the situation better or prevent it from happening again rather than a punishment which does not move to repair or fix and move forward what the student has negatively done.*

**Draft Rules**

When beginning to draft my classroom rules I try to keep the number of rules in my classroom for the students to remember to a bare minimum (but my class does go through a broad range of examples of how and why the rules apply and how they work. Apart from making the rules easy to remember the students do not seem to feel overburdened in these instances. See below an example of how I keep my classroom rules to a minimum.

**(Positive Rules)**

1. When the teacher is talking everyone is listening
2. Act safely towards yourself and everyone else in the class.
3. Allow yourself and your classmates the best opportunity to learn.

**(\*Negative Rules)**

1. No when is to talk while the teacher is talking.
2. No one does anything that is dangerous and that could hurt themselves, anyone else or anything else in the classroom.
3. Don’t stop someone else from getting an education.

\* *In some select circumstances I have used negative style rules rather than positive ones effectively in my classroom. In these instances the students in those particular classes have spoken a form of pigeon English as a second, third or fourth language. These classes were also filled with much older disengaged students whom were actively trying to prevent other students from learning. The negative language in these classes unfortunately was the form of language that the students best understood, respected and followed based on their earlier upbringing.*

When keeping your number of rules small and broad as I have done in the example it is important to consider how many and what sort of examples you will need to discuss and provide for the students in your class. A senior student is very likely to understand that rocking on your chair is dangerous because you could fall and break your neck and that if they are rocking on their chair they are breaking rule. A much younger student may not be aware of this and this is why it is critical for those teachers to regularly run through examples around the classroom of how the classroom rules apply.

**Draft Consequences**

When beginning to draft your consequences it is important to develop them as a means to correct a behaviour or action rather than with the idea to be to punish the student. Punishment often lends itself to resentment, bitterness and fear among other negative mindsets. A corrective exercise or consequence moves the situation forward to either make things better or prevent them from occurring again. Consequences where possible should be directly related to and explained in terms of what the student did wrong. For example a teacher who makes a student pick up litter when they fail to hand in their homework is punishing the student. A teacher in the same circumstance who makes the student stay in during lunch to finish the homework is instead providing a more corrective consequence. One set of consequences has left the student up to date and prepared to move successfully on while the other has left the student further behind in their class work then before and potentially much more likely to not succeed in that class.

1. **Bring your class together to work as a team to formulate their classroom rules/consequences with you guiding your students to come up with a very close if not exactly same set of rules that you have drafted.**

Now you have a set of draft rules and consequences it is time to introduce them to your students. There are two different ways I would recommend doing this.

1. If you have a high turnover of students, short time frames and one off style classes I would recommend quickly running through the draft rules and consequences you have for the group with any examples you think are needed for that group of students so that you can move on with your lesson.

2. If you are teaching a class repeatedly and for a longer duration I would use the very first class to engage the students in building a classroom set of rules and depending on age consequences also. Students in general are very good at pointing at things that are bad and not correct so there will be little problem in them participating successfully at this initial activity. What you as a teacher then do is to steer and guide the students using leading questions and giving them your draft examples and wording that will in the end give you your set of class rules which you had already decided upon. Now though the students feel a sense of ownership because they have made them. An example of doing this would be to brainstorm a lot of the student’s quite specific rule suggestions on the board. For example, “don’t hit people, don’t throw pens, don’t swing on your chair”. Then to say to the students “So if we wanted to just make a few rules so it was easy to remember do you think we could?” I would then provide the following rule for them to agree on ‘Everyone has to be safe towards themselves and everyone else in the classroom’. The teacher can then show how all of the brainstorm rules fit under that example etc.

1. **Publish, promote and communicate your classroom rules around both the learning environment and also to the student’s families.**

A good set of classroom rules which is not published and communicated is as good as having no classroom rules at all. It is very important that you continually publish, promote and communicate the classroom rules to the students. After developing or going through the classroom rules and examples with the students for the first time, it is essential that you quickly have posters or other visual-aides soon placed up in visible positions around the classroom. The classroom rules should be run through verbally each day for younger students, while for older students this would be done as the teacher thought necessary based on how the students in their class were behaving. Finally the teacher should also promptly communicate the classroom rules to students parents so that they are also aware and understand the expectations for their child’s behaviour in the classroom. Communicating early with parents is much more likely to lead to a positive and enhancing partnership for the teacher, parent and child.

1. **Consistently follow and administer the classroom rules and consequences.**

Once you have your classroom rules in place it is now up to you as the teacher to carry them out and follow them through. This will allow your students to grow and be moulded into the type of students that do well in class and also the type of students that you would like to teach. As a teacher you need to be seen by both the student you are correcting and by the students in the class as following through on the classroom rules by implementing the correction/consequences. As a teacher you do not want to inflame or embarrass the student at fault in front of their peers but you also need for their peers to know that you will be following through on what has happened and they know that something will occur. For example a student who has said something insensitive to another student you may talk to about their behaviour by themselves and not in front of the class but then have that student apologize to the victim. Then you may talk to the class as a whole about why it is wrong to say some things to others and how it can be hurtful. By doing this the victim knows that they are being looked after and can move forward, the student at fault has had counselling which isn’t threatening or embarrassing in front of others so that they can move forward and the whole class also gains more counselling in how to be a better classmate.

**CHAPTER 2 - Developing the Relationship ‘The Key Too Building A Students Confidence’**



**KNOW THE RELATIONSHIP WHICH IS GOING TO BE MOST EFFECTIVE FOR YOU AND YOUR STUDENTS**

Developing the relationship and rapport between yourself and your students and is an essential ingredient in being able to help take control and give support to your student so that they can achieve their ultimate goals which are a pathway to opportunity, health and success in their lives.

While there are many ways and forms of relationships which can provide positive outcomes or lead to defined desired goals, there are some more effective varieties which work more broadly than others. Military leaders for example can obtain precision and complete effectiveness by demanding and obtaining complete compliance from the soldiers that they command. The dominance that the commander exerts could easily be seen as derived through a combination of respect, fear and authority. In the army there are solid physical goals which are required to be achieved. This is far different from the classroom where student’s minds are developing and the physical goal is given away to a need for development of mental goals and thinking strategies.

**THE TEACHER/STUDENT RELATIONSHIP AND WHAT YOU ARE UP AGAINST**

As you are preparing to go in to teach your students at the start of the year it is important to decide what sort of relationship and effect you want to have on your students? Each individual school and class is likely to be made up of students from families with different expectations and thought processes. At one school where the surrounding area has a low unemployment and crime rate it is likely that a teacher will be able to come to work with a reasonable expectation that students will be reasonably compliant in class and work within the expectations that they will follow the teachers’ directions in the classroom. This is at least at the bare minimum because that is what is expected and the social norm; even if they don’t have a deeper thought process as to why they are actually doing it. In a school however where this is not the case, it is much more necessary to evaluate where the student’s mindset is at.

If students do not value schooling or have had that example set for them by their family and the surrounding community, the teacher and the school will need to do more to go about changing this mindset. This will require a change by the teacher and school in how they go about their business because up until this point the education system will have been likely failing the students as their expectations and those of the teachers are not aligned.

To change this, we need to change the relationship so the way the student views the teacher is different to their stereotypical and current understanding. This begins with finding what the student or the student cohort as a whole value. The teacher or the school then needs engage through that value to begin to engage their students. Students which are likely to have been less successful here see teachers as people who don’t care about them and are only there because they have to be and just to get paid. The likely result here is that the school as a whole has a low expectation and there will be a feeling that the place is “crap” and is undervalued by the students, the staff and the community. The change in thought process here needs to come and be triggered through a change in stimulation.

**BUILDING THE POSITIVE RELATIONSHIP**

At the College I worked out we began this process through integrating afternoon, evening and weekend sport into the school program with the activities run by school academic staff. This eventually resulted in the students beginning to not define between the regular school day and the rest of their lives. All of the activities which were run by the same people blended into a life approach rather than students treating the school aspect as separate to the rest of their lives. Our approach which was used mainly through sports saw the students begin to value teachers as people that wanted them to succeed and belief in their teachers advice would grow as they began to experience success outside of school. Once someone had begun to succeed in something a level of trust began to build and their eyes and ears became open as they began to see that success in their extra-curricular activity translated into that that they could also succeed in the classroom and then have the opportunity to do something successful in life. This again led a step forwards towards the success of the student’s ultimate goals of success, happiness’ and health.

Again key to developing the relationship is ensuring that your students experience success sooner rather than later. It is here where you as the teacher need to really take charge and guide the students experience and expectations. This is a make or break time for you with a tough group of students, so you need to make sure that you are controlling the goal and expectation. This can be a relatively hard thing to do within a competitive environment where there variables which are out of your control and your students. For example you cannot control how well the opposition plays or what an umpire may rule. You can however teach your students to take control of their actions. In understanding this you make the object of success and the activity about what they can control.

**AN EXAMPLE OF SUCCESS WITH AT RISK YOUTH**

An example of how I did this at my school was through the sport of AFL (Australian Football). AFL has many parts to its game and is very highly interactive for those who play it which was great at allowing my students to have fun and success while achieving in game goals that they could achieve and improve on rather than be measured by a total on the scoreboard. If you only focus on one element of the game and use that as the measure of success you are limiting the amount of positive thinking and success that the individuals in your team can achieve and are denying them those many benefits. In AFL we would count up marks (catches), kicks, tackles, passes, shepherding involvements, blocks and also points scored and contests forced. This would place value on all the things that the player on the team did which contributed to a better team performance. This also related well to life for the students because to be successful in anything that they do there are lots of little things that need to be done. It is not just turning up and doing your job which will get you through life, it’s making sure you go to bed early enough so you don’t sleep in, that you have your clothes ironed before you go to work to make the best impression etc.

A great example of how effective this program was in changing the relationship, building trust and changing the students’ mindset was during the following example with our AFL program. One of our junior AFL sides which was a mixed gender team would get beaten, week in and week out by single sex male teams but each week would see the students leave the field smiling, happy and confident with themselves and all counting down the days until their next game. Regularly our students would walk the field feeling happier and smiling more than the opposition whom had just beaten them. This was because the students had learned to not focus on the scoreboard but rather on what their own stats was, what they had achieved and the level of award they were going to receive on the next college assembly (of which I used three; Gold, Silver and Bronze). In this manner the students were getting better each week as they were learning the game and becoming more involved and striving to get better. They developed pride and found success within themselves when they played a better game by being more involved and achieving these awards. This was fostered by our teaching/coaching staff who talked about the students improving and how well they were playing and what award they had reached already at each break during the game and what they had to do to get to the next level when they went back out. All the language you use when doing this is positive language. We would give the students one thing at a time to try and work on which they could then do and then succeed at during that next period.

Now that you have succeeded in opening up the relationship with the student and you have begun to change the mindset out of school with your students, you need to continue with that change in school. To do this you can now use your new relationship that you have formed with your students. They know now that you value them and that you have helped them become successful in something that they value. Just because the students have now opened up to you it becomes just as important that you still keep yourself in the position of adviser and supervisor. It is good if your students come to you with problems or concerns that they confide in you or seek your guidance but you need to be particularly sure not to slip into a level of where the students see themselves completely equal with yourself or see you as another student. Once that starts to occur you lose the opportunity to guide the student and the ability to re-set the students thought process

**TIP -**To help maintain the relationship you have with the student you need to make sure you stay in control of yourself. Don’t use sarcasm to make a fool of someone even if you’re only joking. There is also no need to raise your voice to intimidate or say something to embarrass a student in front of their peers. Remember if a student ever tries to embarrass or argue with you, that they are only kids and that you have a degree and a job and they don’t have anything at all. You have to remember that you’re the adult of the situation.

Developing the most effective relationship with your students is a balancing act but one you can get right sooner rather than later and will continually improve as you become more practised with your teaching.

**CHAPTER 3 – DESCALATING YOUR STUDENTS -KEEPING CALM CLASSROOMS AND MINIMIZING HIGH TENSION AND PHYSICALL AGRRESIVE SITUATIONS**

BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT: Preventative and De-escalation Techniques for Both Teacher and Student

[](http://classroomclipart.com/clipart-view/Clipart/School/student_at_principals_office_jpg.htm)

(Without resorting to this!)

In this new age of society and schools for a teacher to be successful across all school environments they need to be a master of de-escalation. This training manual will focus on Preventative and De-escalation techniques for both the Teacher and Student in a normal classroom environment. (De-escalation techniques for more volatile situations will be discussed in a further manual ‘De-escalation Techniques for Students in Volatile Situations’

**De-escalation between Teacher and Student**

*Why is it important?*

It is important for the teacher to not allow themselves to be escalated by a student. When either a teacher or student becomes escalated their thinking process is not as clear and as logical as it would generally be expected to be. This can then often lead to further escalation where smaller problems lead to bigger issues and more problems for both parties. Both the teacher and student are then using significant time and emotional energy in a non-productive endeavour.

How to de-escalate as a teacher

1. **Take the emotion out of the situation** – As a teacher you need to take your emotions out of these situations and clearly identify what the problem is and what negative effect it is having on a given situation. You need to not allow yourself to get into a mindset of “this student should do this because I said so” and then take it as a personal insult or attack on yourself that the student does not carry this out. Do not make a confrontation about your feelings. 99% of the time a student is not initially interested in a confrontation with you as they are doing something else which they value very highly at that moment in time.
2. **Decide what is most important at this time to achieve** – A student who is off task and talking to their friends and drawing pictures is obviously not helping himself with his studies, but as a teacher my initial concern would be for the distraction they are causing to their classmates. In this instance your focus initially at least should be on ensuring that all of the other students are able to focus on their studies.
3. **Correction or control over the behaviour** – You now need to look at how you can either help correct or control the student’s behaviour. The student that you have may be sitting with friends and constantly trying to talk and garner their attention and entertain them with his drawing. There are a number of ways here that you could try to correct or control his behaviour in a manner that allows all students including the one off task to remain de-escalated and refocus on their set tasks.
4. Firstly remind the entire class of what you require them to do and any further rules/expectations you have. (These rules etc. should be a part of your classroom rules)
5. Secondly remind the students of the task that they should be working on without making a direct reference to the student off task and what they had been doing incorrectly. At this point though you may even ask the student off task to briefly re-explain what you have just said to the class dependent on whether you saw that they were actively paying attention to you. If it did not look like the student was actively listening do not call upon them in front of the class as you are trying to de-escalate rather than escalate the student. (This also gives the student a chance to self-regulate without feeling an escalation in either anger of fear)
6. Thirdly explain in a friendly and even manner to the student why doing this particular work task benefits them and how what they are doing will help them. (The focus the student feels is again on helping them do something which is good for them and not what they might be doing wrong so there is no escalation)
7. If the behaviour continues ask the student why they are not doing what was asked and if they are not forthcoming offer some suggestions as to why they might not be so focussed yet. Your suggestions again should not be placing blame on the student rather they should be empathetic, for example asking them if they are tired, worried or angry about something in or outside of the classroom. (Here you are looking at what the aggravation might be for the student to be not performing to their potential. You are also allowing the student to knowingly deflect some of their blame away from themselves which many students at this time will take advantage of this opportunity to avoid further conflict while saving face. This can allow you to help them solve their problem and help them move on through it without any escalation. )
8. Deal with the behaviour or the issue – You may find out that the student finds that they get distracted around the particular students they are sitting with so you might be able to move your student to another spot in the classroom which will correct everyone’s issues. If you cannot solve the issue you may be able to take steps to treat the behaviour. This could include not demanding the student do their work at that time if they are over tired or worried about something else, but rather have them sit quietly so they don’t affect others, or you send them for a bathroom break to clear their head or to a counsellor if available or really needed. I have even had very volatile students lay down and sleep during the class so that they don’t affect others, but they also do not get into conflict with me and do something which will result in consequences which are much worse for that student and out of my control and theirs.
9. Isolate/remove the behaviour/problem – You can isolate or remove the problem in a number of different ways. You can ask for the student to move to a new position in the room if they are generally a compliant and obedient student. You can ask for different people around that individual to instead move if you believe they will do so unquestioningly (this can be a negative though if the student moving feels that they are being punished because of the other student so it is important that you give that student a positive reason for them to move eg because they are really good at their multiplication tables so they can help another student etc.) If you feel that you cannot take any of these actions without causing a major escalation and the student has now continued to repeat their inappropriate behaviour.

**CHAPTER 4 - How To Deal With Student Fights And Prevent Further Incidents Occurring**

[](http://pixabay.com/en/martial-arts-muay-thai-thai-boxing-150008/)

*Case example of De-escalation of a highly emotional student in a volatile physical situation (Eg Student involved in a fight)*

**PLEASE NOTE: The below techniques and procedure are one’s that I personally have found to best work and I am comfortable performing in volatile situations. I regularly have to deal with these incidents on a weekly basis within a secondary school setting. EACH INDIVIDUAL TEACHER MUST DECIDE WHAT THEY ARE MOST COMFORTABLE WITH WHEN DEALING WITH THESE SITUATIONS. WHEN ENGAGING IN A PHYSICAL VOLATILE SITUATION THERE WILL ALWAYS BE A RISK OF TO YOUR OWN PHYSICAL SAFETY.**

SITUATION: Mr B is on playground duty at lunch time when he notices lots of students all running to a different part of the school. He follows the student’s to see 2 year 9 boys shaping up to have a fight with a big crowd beginning to form to watch.

DE-ESCALATION PROCEDURE

1. Assess the situation quickly looking for obvious immediate dangers including the people engaged in the physical violence, current/potential victims, weapons or other people likely to become more involved.
2. **If not comfortable entering the situation then DON’T, stop immediately and** send for further assistance which you believe to be appropriate. This may consist of getting further staff to help control the situation or for example in an extremely volatile situation where the student has an imminently dangerous weapon such as gun/knife etc. call the authorities straight away.
3. Preferably before or while entering the situation make a phone call for further assistance to your administration or have a student run the message for you.
4. Position yourself between the students fighting while loudly but calmly (CONCENTRATE ON NOT YELLING OR SHOWING ANY OF YOUR OWN ANGER OR AGRRESSION) announcing that everything is finished and any spectators etc. have classes and/or other important commitments that they need to take care of. Encourage students whom are friends with one party to take that person for a walk while you have the other student with you. Let the whole crowd know that you are dealing with the situation now, “Come on guys it’s my job to deal with whatever is wrong here now so thank you for your assistance and maturity in heading back to class now/helping keep people calm etc.” Generally speaking even if students don’t always follow teachers’ instructions all the time, there is that innate desire to do what they are told in these situations as they are used to following a teacher’s direction. This allows them to start handing over control of the situation mentally to you rather than them feeling as much of a need to become more deeply involved in some type of capacity. In particular this helps to neutralize fringe dwellers to the fight but not necessarily yet those who have been more deeply impacted by the argument because of either a relative or friend being involved or they themselves threatened in some way.
5. As soon as you have a degree of control/attention of the one student position them in a manner so they are facing away from the other student and begin moving them in an opposite type direction.
6. You will probably need to physically take hold of the student and guide them to where you are going. This will often be required for a number of reasons. Firstly, this allows the student to save face from not fighting because the decision has been taken out of their hands by you the teacher. On many occasions I have had to physically control a student as I have taken them to the admin building with the student only shaking and yelling enough to look like they don’t want to be taken but not doing so or trying enough to really break free. This allows them to save face and not appear like they were scared. You also need to be aware that by not having the student restrained and moving along with you that they are potentially more likely to run off if they are still very distressed. They can also be seen by other students still as a threat of running off and as such they may feel like you are not in control of the situation.
7. When removing the student from the situation all the way through to when you sit them down at where ever you have deemed to be a safe place, it is vital that you **do not attempt** to castigate them for what they might have done. This will only further inflame the situation. Instead while removing them from the situation focus on remaining calm, talk about another subject entirely if you can, be empathetic to what they are saying, tell them that you are there to help them so that they don’t get into trouble and or make things worse, tell them that they are doing the right thing by coming with you, tell them that they are being smart and their family etc would be proud that they are being smart.
8. When you arrive at your choice of place where you are going to further talk and debrief the student, you again need to focus on just initially recording what they have to say. Again this is not the time to chastise anyone. Once you get down what they are saying you may wish to ask further questions for clarification as to what happened? Why the student did what they did? What were they thinking? What did they think the other student did what they did? Explain to the student that you are just trying to understand what happened and why it might have happened. This will allow you to better understand the student’s reality and their thought process. **(IMPORTANT –If the student has suffered any visible injury, indicates they have an injury or you become aware that they have had physical contact with their head as soon as realistically possible arrange for them to be examined by a school nurse/health professional)**
9. Do not let the student leave yours or another supervising adult care until you believe it is safe to do so. If the issue has not been resolved face to face by the students then the issue still likely exists in their mind, especially if angry. A student who may say that the issue is over can at times be lying and may wish to continue any fight that they were previously involved in. While the student is upset they cannot make a rational decision and are much more likely to make one with poor consequences. To help ensure that the students are likely to make a rational decision you can tell them that they will be able to leave once their heart-rate drops to the appropriate resting heart rate. By doing this you are giving the students something else to concentrate on and at the same time they know that they have control over this as it is their body. Once their heart rate drops to this level rational decisions without emotion can be made. Another technique that can assist in calming a student down is to make them drink a large cup of water. When a person drinks they are raising their head skywards and making their throat vulnerable. When this occurs, it sends a signal to the rest of the person’s body that they are in a safe place. This again begins to calm them. Also, by having something in the student’s stomach it slows them down as it is not natural for the body to be taking on new liquid or solids when it is in a state of arousal.
10. In the case of a violent incident or what looks like it could become a violent incident I will not allow the students the opportunity to be in the same area at any stage until the issue is resolved at least to the extent where both parties are comfortable that they are not under immediate threat. In this instance one or both students may need to be either kept at home or internally suspended in the office. Both students can go back into the mainstream school community once you are satisfied that neither of the student’s is going to start something back up.

**CHAPTER 5 - A Compassionate Mindset Change For The Class Or The Entire School**

**AIM**: To reset students thinking processes to provide the teacher or administrator with a window to implement a classroom or entire school culture change.

BACKGROUND: While the Head of a very culturally diverse Secondary College was absent for an extended period of time behavioural issues flared and conflict was breaking out on a daily basis along cultural lines. Attitude, behaviour and academic results of students all went into decline. Conflicts between different groups of students began to become systemic and a part of daily life.

**Activity**

The Secondary College used two integrated activities to create the window for culture change and provide the mind reset for students. Either activity can be used as a standalone activity, however in the instance of this school cohort it was evident that there needed to be a substantial and quick culture shift that was student supported.

Activity 1 – Engaging The Student Cohort And Bringing Them Back Together

1. You need to break the routine and get all of your students together whether it being your class or the whole school. In this instance it was the senior and middle school of approximately 220 students. Call a whole school meeting at a different time then when you would normally hold a parade or assembly.
2. Ensure that all of your students and staff come to the meeting – (In this school students would often refuse to attend classes and meetings and hide around the school). To promote attendance the College staff put up posters informing students that anyone attending the school meeting would be getting free cash and a positive activity for their lives. (The lure of free cash and curiosity resulted in 100 percent of students turning up to the school meeting)
3. With all the students seated on the floor for the meeting the coordinating staff member announces that everyone in the room is going to get some free cash today just as promised and that all they need to do for their free cash is engage in a quick positive team building activity. While making these announcements it is important to continually use positive language and for impact walk around with enough one dollar bills (US currency was used within the Australian School for this activity) in your hand so everyone can see that you have a good amount – enough for one for each student.
4. In this instance we broke the students up into boys and girls and had them form a circle each. It was explained to students that in order to receive their free cash that they had to stand and lock arms with the student on either side. Staff would go around and see if they could break into the circle. Each student who was linked with the student beside them which meant the staff member could not get through was handed one dollar. Students who did not link could not get paid and would earn nothing.
5. All students quickly got the idea and linked arms so that they all received their dollar. While doing this talk to the students about the fact that individually they are all strong people. But if they work together with others they are all stronger again and much more successful as they were seeing in real time at that moment.
6. With all the students sitting in their circles a teacher and pre-arranged student got up in front of the group and then worked together to work together to complete an exchange of knowledge. In this instance the teacher demonstrated to the student how to make a paper crane. The student in turn then made a paper crane. Another teacher then came over and gave the student $5 for the paper crane. The process was commentated on aloud to the students while the action was taking place. “At our College we are stronger when we work together, student and student like before. Now teacher and student here. The teacher passes the student knowledge of how to do something. The student then uses that knowledge to help them earn an income to support themselves and their family in this instance by selling the crane. The staff member who purchases the crane then gives it to their wife to make them happy. When working together everyone is stronger and wins.

Activity 2 – Creating A Long Lasting Emotional Connection And New Way of Thinking

(Due to the deep-seated nature of the cultural violence we believed more was needed to establish a meaningful connection and change of mindset in the students)

1. With the students all still sitting in their circles they faced our big screen computer projector. On the screen we placed up a number of short YouTube clips with some extremely confronting stories and vision of children and their stories from extremely impoverished nations.
2. Speak to the students about what they have and how the problems that they may have been having and fighting about were quite probably insignificant compared to the battles that these children faced.
3. Tell the students that if they like they can donate their money back and pay for one of the children from a very poor place to have food, education and some healthcare. But tell the students that it is completely up to themselves whether they wish to donate the money or not because the College had promised them free cash and it was theirs to do whatever they liked with it.
4. Have a staff member go around each circle and ask each student if they would like to donate back their money. Do this individually to each student in the circle so that all the other students can see that student’s response. In nearly all cases the students’ willingness to either help another young person and/or the pressure of everyone watching what they were going to do saw the students donate all of the cash that was handed out back. In some instances, even more money came back then had been handed out as some students donated their own cash as well.
5. Thank the students for their positive thinking and mindset and compassion in their hearts. Then offer the students the opportunity to change a young person/s lives. In this instance our College offered to sponsor four children with one each to be decided upon by the senior boys, junior boys, senior girls and junior girls. This little adopted brother or sister was to become the responsibility of that student group. The catch being that the College would pay for the student’s food and education on a daily basis for everyday that there was not a fight or act of violence by that group of students. If there was for example an act of violence that day then the students involved would have to write to their sponsor child and explain why their fight was more important than them eating that day. (Please note that while this was said to the students the facts were that the school paid for the child’s sponsorship every month regardless. For the outcomes of a mind reset and reduction in violence though we needed to tweak our narrative and sales pitch to the students)
6. Have the students break up into the groups that you have chosen and allow them to work together to decide which child to sponsor. Go through a number of children from multiple countries, ages and backgrounds. Most students will show some angst in trying to pick one child out of many deserving ones, but this is part of the connection you want the students to have and the ownership and responsibility of the exercise.

Follow up for activities

1. Place up calendar posters of the sponsor children in each classroom and have the students/teacher mark off each day as to whether the group was successful in working together to ensure that their child got fed that day. It is essential that this happens each day to maintain the connection and build the relationship and responsibility in the student’s minds.
2. Have the students write letters to their child and share letters that come back from the child (please note that in some classes it is a good idea if the teacher writes some pretend letters also to the class or students so that the cohort feels again a very regular connection and sense of positive reinforcement that they are making a difference.)

**RESULTS**

In the five weeks since implementation there have been zero fights based around cultural backgrounds. Zero fights involving senior students. 1 fight involving two 12-year-old boys over a minor reactive issue. Both boys were very disappointed that they had let their little brother down and did extra duties together to make up for their mistake so their child could eat that day. Both boys continued to be friends after that fight and have had no other incidents.

The activities with the correct follow up and support by staff ensuring students connection with their foster child showed immediate and lasting culture change and success.

**CHAPTER 6 – PREVENTING TEACHER STRESS AND BURNOUT**

I have learnt that one of the hardest things for me and many other teachers to do is to look after themselves. I have seen and been one of many a teacher who have beaten up on themselves or felt guilty when their class or student has not succeeded, lost sleep over why they didn’t and feel that they had failed and let people down.

This isn’t a good mindset to fall into and can be the undoing of many passionate caring teachers and mentors. Falling into this mindset will hurt you and things can quickly snowball, from your mental health to your physical health and then financial health. This then can grow to put pressure on your family and your friends. If left untreated for too long it could be even possible to alienate yourself from your support base and destroy your resilience.

So how do we make ourselves stronger and keep this from happening? (For one thing if you are already a good and passionate teacher you are already a strong person and you don’t need to work harder, rather just smarter)

**IN THE CLASSROOM**

1. **Build a structure and routine of what you would like**. The best way of doing this for even the most head strong of disengaged students is to let them build the structure and rules and expectations with you guiding them to get there. You will generally find that even the students who would break the classroom rules most regularly when asked to create rules that are going to make the classroom a safe and good place to help them become successful and achieve their goals will nearly always come up with the rules that you would have tried to force on them anyway. Often the student can even make harder rules and higher expectations on themselves than you would have yourself. This way they have ownership of their environment and it becomes more about their own self-discipline and their decisions than you forcing them into something and challenging them.
2. **Never engage in an argument with a student**. Let them say their piece if need be and wait for them to calm down and then just explain what you need them to do again, why it’s important for them to do it (and it’s not a case here of its important for you to do this maths or you will get detention) and then remind them that it will be over in a moment and they can move onto something else or go somewhere else etc. Get them thinking forwards again and show them that their pain or inconvenience is only temporary and that they can get through it. If you engage in an argument with the student you are taking on their pain and adding to it. This isn’t a healthy thing to be regularly doing to yourself.
3. **Remember that you’re an adult and the student is a child.** The student’s brains are not yet developed fully and they don’t always yet have the ability to make completely rational decisions that an adult would. This is again why it’s not worth getting involved in an ongoing argument with your students. When your student is being angry or arguing back with you it often does not start as something to do with you. You are probably standing there thinking that this child is “acting stupidly, selfishly, unjustly etc. etc.” and the facts are that they probably are. As I said, these students are not yet rational thinkers and there is no point arguing with a mad man for want of a better term.
4. **Don’t take student behaviour personally**. As we established above students’ brains are not yet fully developed and it can be hard for them to rationalize, feel empathy and see the world from someone else’s view. You will be much happier and in control if you can detach yourself and your feelings from the student’s behaviour. If a student is angry at me or something else and isn’t able to act in a rational manner and ends up abusing me I detach myself from the emotion by imagining the student having kicked their toe and now yelling and cursing in pain wile jumping around the place. When a student may be doing the wrong thing or lashing out at you this is all in practicality that they are really doing. They are in pain about something and this is their reaction to pain. Thinking this way stops me from taking it personally and reminds me that this is a natural reaction to pain. As with someone who has kicked their toe it also helps me with the next step of how to treat it. If one of your students kicked their toes you would start to calm them down and begin any first aid required. It is the same if the student is yelling or lashing out at you or something/someone else here in the classroom. You need to be thinking of first aid and try and calm the patient down to begin to treat what is hurting or causing their pain. A disciplinary action at this time will only cause more pain and increase the outburst and anxiety with little effect on calming. If you have successfully began to treat the student’s outburst as you would someone who had just kicked their toe, I know you won’t be feeling upset or angry and are likely not to be very highly stressed over the whole situation. It also means that you were in control of the situation.
5. **Don’t make it a “me” Vs them situation”** – If you begin to think in the terms of me vs a particular student and “I’m out to get them” or settle a score you are hurting yourself. If you were having some medical problems would you go to the hospital and talk to a patient about your problem or the doctor? I hope you’re picking the doctor here. If you go into a class and have a running battle with a student because of how they are treating you and you are taking it on a personal level, you are the same as the doctor who goes to the hospital and gets treated by a patient and not another doctor. You are giving the student power and following their directions. You are becoming a patient rather than staying the doctor. You know you are still the teacher, so there is no real rational thinking that should allow an inconvenient student make you angry or hurt you at all. If you are still angry and thinking about that student 10 minutes after your class has finished, you are becoming more the patient then the doctor.
6. **Don’t punish yourself** – If you are trying to provide a deterrent and consequence to your students all the time, make sure that you aren’t punishing yourself in the process. If you are going to have a make-up work time or detention of some sort, don’t do it every day. Have it once or twice a week. A detention of your students is also a detention of yourself. Teachers have ever increasing time demands placed on them and I find it’s often better for a teacher to give themselves their lunch break to mentally freshen up, recoup, reflect and revise strategy for their next lesson. As a more experienced teacher now I will rarely use a detention except in the cases of needing assessment in immediately for my own deadlines or if there is a danger of something blowing up like a fight in the playground between students which needs help being resolved and mediated by adults because students are too emotional to do it the best way possible at this stage. At times I will also ask a student to stay back to counsel them about a behaviour or concern I have and how it is either impacting them or may be hurting someone else. In these instances, though it is important to make very clear to the student that this is in no way a detention or some other form of punishment, more just a chat in an adult to young adult sense. This often leaves the student feeling more mature and better about themselves because of the way I have spoken and the individual attention they have been given.
7. **Be as organized and prepared as you can be**. Particularly in your first couple of years of teaching or when teaching a new subject or grade for the first time. It will be during this time that you are likely to feel at your most vulnerable in front of your class as you are in a new and different situation. For your class to run smoothly and for you to be confident in what you are doing and teaching you will need to be well prepared and have a plan/recipe in place that you can follow and fall back upon if something in the class goes wrong or off track. If you are unorganized and or ill prepared the class will not flow as well as it should and the students will become restless all of which will begin to snowball into more stress for yourself. This is why it is important to also reflect and make either written or mental notes after your lessons, particularly over the first couple of years so that you can improve on your next lesson and be less stressed.
8. **Everyone can have a bad lesson sometimes**. This is just a fact of teaching. As a teacher you have one of the most important and difficult jobs in the world. You are trying to get 20-30 people who cannot rationally think yet to all follow your instructions like robots with very limited forms of instantaneous discipline. This is much harder than an employer and their workforce where if an employee does not do as they are told the employer can dismiss them. Also a teacher doesn’t have the advantage that in most cases an employee will have the ability to think rationally and can also understand the rationale of needing to work to earn money to maintain their lifestyle and what they like doing. If you have a bad lesson where the students become silly, belligerent and get a bit out of control it can be very hard and at times nearly impossible to get all the students straight back onto that particular task they were doing in that lesson. Just remember that the lesson will be over in an hour or half an hour, it does not have to be or should be an ongoing thing. It also does not define you as a bad teacher. Every teacher has faced this at one stage or another, with some more regularly than others depending on the students in their class, what they are teaching and how they teach. A bad lesson is not the end of the world so don’t beat yourself up over it. It’s like passing wind. Everyone does it, nobody really likes to own up to it, and it can be quite embarrassing when other people know about it. But at the end of the day it happens to everyone.
9. **How to stop repeat bad lessons and the stress they bring**. When you have had a poor lesson, which has caused you a great deal of stress because of behaviour management issues you need to make a note of what happened that you didn’t like and why you believe it happened. When you identify these things, you can then begin to problem solve them to bring a different strategy next time. The worst thing you can do is go in to your next class with these students and just expect them to be acting better and listen to you more because that’s what they are supposed to do. If you do the same things again guess what???? You will get the same results! If you are having trouble with thinking of strategies early on to deal with a problem the quickest solution is to remove/isolate the problem and this will quickly help identify if this is the real problem or not. In regards to this being a student you could send them to do some jobs for you, to another classroom temporarily, move them to a different position in the room, give them a different task that they will engage with so that they are engaged in something. All of these methods are a quick way to isolate a student if you believe it is their behaviour which is igniting a whole lot of poor class behaviour. Remember when using this isolation technique not to do it in an aggressive or confrontational manner, particularly if you are trying it part way through a lesson which has become a bit uncontrollable as this may further escalate the student and their behaviour along with the other students around them. You need to be able to “sell” what you want the student to do in a way that they are happy to do it. If you have already had an argument with the student this lesson this is even harder to do, which is again why it is important not to lower yourself down and engage in an argument with the student. If you are trying to regain control of your lesson part way through of it (which can be very hard to do in particular for an inexperience teacher or one with a limited rapport with the students) You will need to be flexible with your plan and re-set your classes mindset. This can be done by breaking from routine. Doing something unexpected. When you do either of these things you gain your classes attention again which is what you lost before. The easiest ways of doing this can be to take your whole class out for a drink or a quick jog across the oval and then bring them back in to work on a new topic or task. This is one method of “starting again” and bringing the students back down. By doing these things it will again lower your stress levels because the students will be behaving better but more importantly give you the self-confidence that you can remain in control of the situation despite the bumpy ride. In this instance I personally picture this as a man riding horse and in control of the situation when the class is working well, of the same man falling off the horse when you’ve had a bad lesson but then him getting back on the horse more prepared which is when you get the students back again in the next lesson. Finally, once you become a more experienced teacher and you can really teach, I picture the horse trying to buck and throw the man off but he hangs on and brings the horse back under control. This is you when you can bring the students back under control when the students have begun to become out of control and got them back on task without losing the whole lesson.
10. **Listen to, have a whinge and talk strategy with the other staff around you (don’t take it all home)**. It is human nature to be able to talk and it is important to get issues and concerns off your chest. The people in your staff room are probably some of the best people to do this with. They most likely have been through what you are going through now previously. They know the people you are talking about. They can empathize with what you are going through and also provide advice and strategies on what might have worked for them. Often your fellow staff members are more likely to be able to understand what you are going through more so than even your own family members at home whom while they might be concerned for you don’t have the same knowledge of the situation that your peers will. An old saying that sums this up is “A problem shared is a problem halved” and in these instances it is often very true.
11. **Take a minute out or even 30 seconds** – I have hit the wall and given my all before. Worked myself to a state of feeling ill every day and struggling to get out of bed except for the reason of obligation of having to do the job because I would feel like everything would fall down without me. I have been like an addict with my job which cost me greatly in terms of relationships, my mental health and physical health. When having some time away to rejuvenate myself and gain some perspective I was put onto…..http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F6eFFCi12v8 this particular site shows you some quick mental techniques which will quickly allow your mind to relax and refocus

**CHAPTER 7** **Student Engagement Equalizer Activity**

**Title**: “School’s name” Olympics

**Aim**: To provide a school wide or year level cohort mind reset engagement activity which would refocus students’ mindsets, allow them to achieve a positive success, promote team work and reduce behavioural incidents.

**Background**: The following activity was used as a full secondary school activity including both male and female students aged 12-18 years of age. When this activity took place approximately 25% of the higher achieving student cohort were absent on another school-based excursion. At this time the College day was quite disrupted with lots of staff away and also students struggling to deal with absence of routine. Student disengagement and conflict amongst the student body and also conflict with staff was increasing in level of severity and frequency. Students undertaking this activity had not met the standards required by the College to attend another more enjoyable educational camp out of town.

**Method**

1. To bring a change in behaviour and a mind reset we required a change in pattern and routine (with a well-planned structure and message behind it however). This occurred by scheduling an unannounced full school assembly on a non-regular assembly day.
2. Students were divided into groups at the assembly that they would not necessarily always generally work with but that we hoped to promote team building and resilience with. In our case study example we divided the groups into junior boys, senior boys and mixed level girl groups.
3. Students were communicated to that the day was going to be a fun day with lots of different activities, competition with points and prizes and bragging rights for the leading cohorts in the school.
4. The activities ranged from sporting, academic and problem solving which included both individual and team working requirements. All activities needed to be and were believably achievable in the student cohorts’ minds which is very important for their buy in to the day. (Specific point scoring activities that were used that day will follow further on in the chapter)
5. Ensure that the activities are evenly spread across the outcomes that you want to focus on. Also depending on the student cohort, it is a good idea that at least close to half the activities involve some type of fun physical activity and skill contest that they will enjoy. Make sure that you timetable the different types of activity at different times throughout the day. For example, academic followed by physical. This will help keep the students engaged throughout the day. Make sure with your most challenging cohort that they do an activity they will be very successful with at the start and also that they will find fun toward the end of the day. This will assist you with their engagement levels.
6. Allocation and personality of staff is very important for these activities. Teachers which are very patient and good at building team spirit and communicate well with the students should be used as a team coach which travel with the cohort all day and help mentor them into a positive mindset and praise their positive achievements constantly throughout the day. Teachers who are more direct in nature and expectation are often better suited to running the different individual activities and promoting the rules and the scoring.
7. Award bonus points for different positive actions throughout the day. Ensure that scores are regularly updated and always close together so that all students feel like they are achieving success and a chance of winning.
8. Every student group that goes into different activities the staff member should be challenging the students to set a record. The record though can be completely arbitrary and made up as no students will remember or know from year to year. This will help assist you motivate them and work with their positive mindset.
9. Include points systems which also include points for teamwork and positive talk at each event. The more positive talk and encouragement that occurs the better the short, medium- and long-term effect it will have on the students and their relationships with one another.
10. End the day on a positive note with all students who participated well winning/earning a prize of some form. In the case study instance all the students received ice creams, with the winning cohort also receiving pizza and a trophy.

**Example Activities**

1. The Silent Treatment – The whole class needs to go a period of time without saying a word to anyone else in the room. Points allocated either by minutes completed or segments of time completed. (Has worked on the nosiest and rowdiest classes that I have come across) Promote patience, positive decision making and team work.
2. General Knowledge Quiz – Tailor the quiz to the student cohort and work out your points system based on how you allocate points across your other events. Focus on providing questions that will likely require the knowledge of different students in the group to be able to answer. This is a less effective activity if all students know the answers to all questions as that could allow the most dominant students in the group to inadvertently take over the activity.
3. Sharpshooter (football) – Set up 2 markers to form a goal for the students to kick the ball through to score points. Set up 3 different stations for the students to kick from. Divide the students into three groups, with each of the groups standing behind on marker. Have three footballs/soccer balls etc so each group can kick the ball at the goal. Have the students either get the ball themselves when the kick it or allow them to problem solve the situation and put someone behind the goal. Allocate a points value at each station based on the degree of difficulty. Have a time limit for each group at each station, rotating the groups through each station.
4. Basketball shootout – Place a series of markers out on the basketball court and allow the students to stand to shoot behind whichever marker they choose. Teach a risk and reward system with the harder the shot the more points it being worth. Discuss at the end which shooting system would the students be better off using next time. Often it should be the easiest shot with the least point or a a more moderately hard shot but worth more points and still a very high level of success. The extremely hard but very advantageous shot should demonstrate that overall the risk is not generally worth the reward. Make sure the students line up behind the markers to ensure that all students receive equal turns as it a focus on teamwork. You may wish to add incentive points at the end of bonus positive talk.
5. I Went To The Shop – (Memory game) Students sit in a circle and recite the following easy to remember sentence, “I went to the shop and bought a ???? something” The next person in the circle then recites the sentence and adds an item to the shopping list “I went to the shop and bought an apple and a hotdog” and so on the game goes. You can score this game for points on how many items the students can remember before someone forgets one. At this stage you can either make the group start again or pass it onto the next person in line to again continue until there are no players left or if you are using a time limit it has expired.
6. School Explorer Scavenger Hunt – Have the student group decode clues and follow a trail around the school. Ensure that the whole class group does this together by requiring a photo of all students at each site. Watch as big groups of students rush together to get to each different place. This should again promote positive behaviour and teamwork. Points can be allocated based on times/items found or a combination of both.
7. “Blind Freddy” – Have the students pair up. Students can do this either themselves or if you have time you can do so through a problem solving activity such as having the students line up from tallest to smallest, but without talking and then having them pair up with the person next to them from tallest down etc. Once the students are paired up have one student from each pair put a blindfold over their eyes. Then throw balls/beanbags etc out around a particular area. The student which is non-blindfolded then needs to guide their blindfolded partner around the area through verbal communication so that they can pick up the beanbags. Time how long it takes the students to find all the beanbags. The students should then swap roles and follow the same process. Points can be allocated based on the time taken to find the beanbags etc. The game should promote teamwork and communication.
8. How many words in a word? – Divide your class of students into some smaller work groups, 2, 3 or 4 for example. Write up a longer type word on the board eg. Australia, Give each group some paper and pens and have them brain storm as many words as possible that they can make with the letters from your chosen word. After a pre-arranged time-limit go around the groups and write the words on the board and have the students cross them off their list until all of the words of the groups have been counted. Points can be allocated per word.
9. Push up/situp/bridging challenge – Divide students into groups of 2 or 3. Have them do as many push ups, sit ups as they can do in a certain time limit. Once one of the groups is to fatigued to continue the next person starts while the other gets some recovery time. The student can have multiple goes at recording down points.
10. Putting the Pieces Together – This activity requires a series of jigsaw puzzles placed around the room and students broken up into groups to work on the jigsaws. Points allocated on either the number of pieces correctly fitted together and/or the time taken to complete the tasks.

***CHAPTER 8 – How To Read Your Students Mind !***

As teachers or parents, we often see children do things which make no sense to us, seem crazy and that we know just aren’t great options for them to take now and in the future.

This activity will allow you to truly read your students mind and may give you a decisive advantage as a teacher or guidance officer in how they are thinking and rationalizing their decision making.

(**Warning though – This is a very powerful tool and for most students it ends up being a very happy experience but for some can be quite confronting for both student and teacher**)

1. Find a quiet space where the student can sit or even lay down for this activity.
2. Ask them to think about their breathing and take some long slow deep breaths in and out. (We want them to be in a calm place and take control of their body)
3. Ask them to close their eyes and then name the different parts of their body to clench and then release from bottom to top.
4. Ask them to visualize some different objects and describe what you want them to see. For example – “Picture a blue coloured number 6”. Always check and ask if they can visualize/see what you are asking. (Once they are able to do this we know their mind is focussed and they are obtaining their information from listening.
5. Tell them that you now want them to imagine that they are 10 years older and that they can see themselves in a mirror. (Give them some time here and go slowly – ask them if they can see what their hair looks like, their face and any other features). When they can picture themselves move on.
6. Tell them that they are driving home in their car now and then tell them they get out of the car and close the door, ask them if they can see their car, what colour is it, what type of car is it, is it clean or dirty etc. (the student does not need to describe what they see but they may).
7. Tell them they are walking up the path and opening a gate and here is their house. Ask them to see their yard, what is in it, what they can see there because this is their house. What colour the house is, what type of house is it.
8. Ask them to open the door and then tell them they are walking into different rooms (you choose) kitchen, bathroom bedroom etc. Ask questions about what you might see in the room Eg is there a bed, is your bed clean, are their windows in the room, what colour is it, etc etc.
9. In one of the rooms tell them there is a mirror, ask them how they are dressed, (work clothes/going out clothes) ask them if they can see themselves.
10. Now tell them they hear a noise at the door and someone is coming in. Ask them is it a partner, child their parents a friend. Ask them who has come in. Ask them to imagine what they say or are doing.

Ask the student to now open up their eyes. If them how they are feeling? IF they have not given you much detail before during the exercise ask them what they saw themselves doing, what the house was like, how they were dressed, who came into the house etc.

Nearly all students that I do this activity with have felt very good, uplifted, been smiling and happy afterwards. These students in their eyes and mind can see great happy futures for themselves (even though we as teachers might see that what they imagine is not going to happen with their current decision making). Now we can see their future, it makes it very easy to teach towards reaching that goal and explain everything we do in the classroom in a way we can show them how that helps meet the reality they are wanting.

Some students though may be very upset after this exercise and quite disillusioned. This is so important to know however and is vital for a teacher to know quickly about. A student who is unhappy after this exercise cannot see a happy future or one where they are succeeding, happy and safe. Now that we know this we can quickly intervene and seek extra support. This child needs to experience some form of success quickly and be shown that they can succeed and how they can build a positive future for themselves.

***CHAPTER 9 - POSITIVE SUSPENSION AND REFLECTION ROOMS***

**DEFINITIONSUSPENSION** – STUDENT CONTINUES STUDIES AT HOME OR AT SCHOOL AWAY FROM CLASS ENVIRONMENT

**REFLECTION ROOM** – WHERE STUDENTS ATTEND AT REQUEST OF STAFF MEMBER OR THEMSELVES TO HAVE TIME TO REFLECT ON MAKING BETTER CLASSROOM DECISIONS OR TO ENSURE THEY CAN MAKE A BETTER EMOTIONALLY CONTROLLED DECISION.

Suspensions and Reflection rooms are key tools in any administrator or teachers tool belt. These are regularly used as it allows for a reset for the both the individual who has not acted appropriately and also allows the class to recontinue on track.

These tools though often can often be used as a negative consequence by a school and when doing so it does both an injustice and disempowers both themselves and the student involved.

**POSITIVE SCHOOL SUSPENSION/TIMEOUT**

Using a positive school suspension or timeout when communicated and used in the right manner is a key tool to keeping the student at school long term, engaging positively with their family and teaching then managing their behaviour. A positive suspension which I communicate to families as a positive time out occurs when the student is demonstrating a continual negative behaviour that day and is having a hard time with their level of self-control due to immaturity, anger, trauma or some other need for attention or escapism. A positive timeout generally only lasts for the remainder of the day or at most inclusive of the following day. This timeout is used before a greater negative behaviour occurs of a more serious nature which then requires much more serious consequence and often can result in higher level disengagement and problems with the student. By intervening early we are nipping the problem in the bud when it needs a band aid rather then waiting for the issue to require stiches or surgery.

When using this system in a school I was leading I had overwhelming positive support from the student’s families (much to the surprise of some administrators and staff members). This was due to the way the timeouts were explained, used and communicated to both the students and families.

The following explanation was very effective in helping the families and students respond positively and embrace timeouts or positive suspensions.

“When you go to the gym and workout you get stronger, but between each gym session you need to rest so the body can recover and get bigger and stronger. When your brain feels tired, or its feeling stressed or angry it is very normal. So when this happens we just need to go and give our brain a rest, often this means having a sleep and something to eat and drink. Then we can come back stronger again the next day just like we do at the gym. If we don’t rest our body we will often pull a muscle at the gym or make a bad choice that hurts us at school. This timeout is to make you stronger, not because you are in trouble.”

POSITIVE REFLECTION ROOM USE

Reflection or time out rooms used in many schools often are associated with restorative justice principles to better enable a student to understand and reflect on their actions and get help in deciding on a new more positive set of actions they wish to take. When used appropriately it is an excellent tool as it gives the student the opportunity to plan a better course and also resolve the issue which saw them leave. It also allows the classroom teacher to continue teaching the class with less disruption and time wasted.

To further enhance the use of this system a proactive school will encourage a child who is unsettled at that time to self-refer to the room. This empowers the student to be able to deal with their feelings positively and prevents both wasted negative time use and experiences for both the teacher and student.

**APPENDIX 1 – EXAMPLES OF POSITIVE INVOLVEMENTS IN THE CLASSROOM**

|  |
| --- |
| * Correct amount of words met * On task * Not talking (for a certain time period Eg 1 min, 5 min whatever is suitable) * Helping another person * Using manners * Encouraging someone * Cleaning up * Giving an answer * Attempting work * Giving a correct answer * Period of time without doing a negative activity. * Extra work completion * Finishing sections of a project * Time period without swearing/using negative language * Whole class behaving (time period based) |

**APPENDIX 2 – SCHOOL LIFE SUCCESS TEACHIG PROTOCOL STEP BY STEP (FOR COACHES, TEACHERS, PARENTS AND MENTORS)**

1. IDENTIFY ALL ACTIONS THAT YOU WANT YOUR STUDENTS TO BE COMPLETING DURING YOUR LESSON, ACTIVITY OR DAY. THINK ABOUT WHAT YOU WANT EVERY STUDENT TO BE DOING AT EVERY MOMENT IN THE CLASSROOM TO MAKE THEM THE MOST PROFESSIONAL AND LEARNING READY STUDENT. (THESE ARE ACTIONS WHICH THEY CAN CONTROL THEMSELVES)

2. IDENTIFY HOW MANY OF THESE ACTIONS IN TOTAL YOU BELIEVE WOULD BE AN EXCEPTIONAL STANDARD AND THEN WORK BACKWARDS USING A SLIDING SCALE TO CREATE 4 (AS A SUGGESTION) LEVELS IE BRONZE 10-20, SILVER 21-35, GOLD 36-50, PLATINUM 51+ POSITIVE INVOLVEMENTS

3. CREATE A CLASS LIST WITH ROOM TO RECORD TICKS NEXT TO EACH STUDENTS NAME FOR EVERY TIME THEY DO ONE OF YOUR IDENTIFIED POSITIVE CLASSROOM INVOLVEMENTS.

4. AT THE END OF THE ACTIVITY OR SESSION ANNOUNCE AND ACKNOWLEDGE TO THE STUDENTS WHAT LEVEL OF AWARD THEY WILL RECEIVE. (FOR EVEN MORE EFFECT HAVE CERTIFICATES AND PRESENT AT THE END OF LESSON, DAY OR ON A SCHOOL ASSEMBLY)

**KEY TEACHING NOTES**

A) BASE YOUR LANGUAGE AND EXPECTATION OF SUCCESS AROUND THE STUDENTS POSITIVE INVOLVEMENTS AND ACTIONS IN THE CLASSROOM AND AWARD LEVELS. THESE ARE ACTIONS THAT THEY CAN CONTROL AND CAN CONTINUE TO IMPROVE ON. DO NOT FOCUS AND DEFINE THEIR SUCCESS ALL THE TIME BY THE ACADEMIC GRADE. THE HAPPIER, MORE CONFIDENT AND BETTER YOUR LEARNING ENVIRONMENT IS THE MORE CHANCE YOUR STUDENTS HAVE OF ACHIEVING ACADEMICALLY. IF YOUR STUDENTS ARE WORKING IN A GREAT LEARNING ENVIRONMENT AND NOT PROGRESSING AS QUICKLY ACADEMICALLY AS YOU WOULD LIKE, YOU CAN THEN REFLECT ON HOW YOUR CONTENT IS BEING TAUGHT, KNOWING THAT YOUR STUDENTS ARE ACTIVELY WANTING TO ENGAGE.

# TO INCREASE THE BENEFITS OF THE SLS COACHING PROTOCOL USE THE SPORT/SCHOOL LIFE SUCCESS APP DOWNLOADABLE AT THE PLAY STORE FOR ANDROID.

1. TEACHERS/COACHES OR PARENTS CAN RECORD RESULTS DURING THE ACTIVITY AND WITHIN LESS THAN 3 MINUTES AFTER A LESSON, HAVE PLAYERS AWARD CERTIFICATES SENT TO THE PLAYERS THEMSELVES, THEIR PARENTS, TEACHERS AND ANY OTHER SUPPORTERS. (SAVES HOURS OF TIME MAKING HANDMADE CERTIFICATES AND ENSURES NO ONE MISSES OUT)

2. EACH CERTIFICATE USING THE APP HAS THE OPTION FOR A CLASS PHOTO TO BE TAKEN THAT DAY AND INSERTED SO THAT PLAYERS AND FAMILIES HAVE A SPECIAL MEMORY OF THEIR PEERS AND THE DAY.

3. THE SLS APP PROMOTES POSITIVE CONVERSATIONS BETWEEN THE PLAYER AND THEIR PARENTS WHERE THE CONVERSATION ABOUT THAT DAY'S ACTIVITIES NOW RELATES TO THE POSITIVE ACTIONS THE PLAYER COMPLETED RATHER THAN A NEGATIVE CONVERSATION WHICH OFTEN OCCUR IN INSTANCES BASED AROUND A PURELY ACADEMIC RESULT.

In my extensive experience SLS has always left players feeling happier, more recognized, stronger, resilient and active, with both better personal physical and academic performances in the classroom and on the sports field.

**APPENDIX 3 – SUPERCHARGING YOUR SCHOOL LIFE SUCCESS TEACHING PROTOCOL WITH ITS APP (HIGHLY RECOMMENDED)**

For coaches, teachers, schools or clubs who want to supercharge the benefits that they and their players and supporters receive, then downloading the Sport/School Life Success Coaching App is a very good idea.

The SLS App allows coaches or teachers to save hours of work each week while using the Sport/School Life Success Teaching Protocol and ensures that all of their students are getting the constant, personalized positive feedback and recognition that underpins the program.

The App allows teachers to quickly add their students to their class/team list for the game that day and actively record the positive involvements for each of them with a tap of their finger while the lesson progresses in real time.

As the teaching protocol does not focus on each type of individual skill performed in a lesson, but rather a total of all efforts, it allows the teacher or user to keep up with the pace of the lesson with lots of active students involved. At the end of the lesson, the user has the ability to take a class photo to upload to all of the students’ certificates. The certificates can be sent directly to each student, their family members and even another school teacher, so that everyone can be aware of the success and efforts of the player that day.

Certificates can be sent out within three minutes of lesson completion, saving the teacher or user hours of time that would otherwise be needed to make them and communicate the results to both students and families so as to inform them and acknowledge the efforts of that day.

By having the App inform the families/teachers of the players results immediately, it helps direct and position the next conversation between the student and their family member who would not be aware of that days activities in the classroom. The certificates inform the reader of what award level the student got and how many positive involvements they had. It allows the supporter to talk to the student about the good things that they did during the day.

Another advantage is the ability for teachers and families to work with teachers or other mentors to transition the success that the student is achieving through the positive skills they are practising in that classroom into other classes or parts of their outside school life. With both a more positive and engaged relationship with a teacher or parent, through to the confidence, resilience and leadership skills they can take from the classroom, children can succeed in the classroom and around the home.

**APPENDIX 4 – ABOUT THE AUTHOR, JOE CHRISTENSEN**

Joe Christensen is a person who has always had a passion for helping those around him and thinking outside the box to break down barriers and better others lives both using school and sports to do so.

Joe is an experienced teacher and life educator, as well as a sporting coach across an array of sports including AFL, Rugby league, soccer, Touch Football, Cricket and Athletics.

Joe grew up on a cattle property near Biloela in Central Queensland. Here he was fortunate enough with his three younger brothers to be able to play many sports at both junior and senior level (such as cricket, rugby league, touch football, boxing, soccer etc) as many country children do. Joe benefitted greatly from growing up in an environment where he and his brothers were taught to be opened minded and look at ways to solve different problems on a daily basis.

At school Joe was generally able to perform well in the classroom, but his ideas and questioning of the way and why things were done, saw him at times disengaged from some of his well-meaning but controlling and autocratic style teachers and at times the education system in general.

After attending university to study teaching, Joe was lucky enough to begin experiencing a colourful range of jobs and teaching and coaching appointments. Joe’s first teaching appointment was at St Brendan’s College, Yeppoon, which was an all boys boarding school. He then went on to work at the Timberlake west Summer Camp in New York State as a specialist lake supervisor and camp counsellor. After this he joined the Australian Technical College North Queensland branch where he enjoyed being able to write an English Curriculum that was focused on Trades rather than normal standard requirements. After this he went on to Shalom College where he was really able to follow his passion of helping putting students and their lives first rather then an academic focus only. Joe currently works with students in the youth justice system towards empowering them to make better decisions and be able to lead happier stronger lives of opportunity.