DISENGAGED AND DISRUPTIVE: BEHAVIOUR INTERVENTION FOR BOYS FROM YEAR FOUR TO YEAR SEVEN

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Abstract

Disengaged and disruptive students have been an ongoing concern for teachers for many years. Teaching is complex—complex students with complex lives and complex behaviours. How best to help these students is an ever-present question without a simple answer. Solutions need to be found.

Under a positive behaviour support framework when serious, disruptive behaviour requires intervention, an individualised positive behaviour support plan (PBS plan) is developed and implemented. This multicase study (Stake, 2006) investigated how task engagement was changed for boys from year four to year seven who demonstrated serious, disruptive behaviour. The individualised PBS plan was the primary tool of behaviour intervention in each of the five cases. Using the Behaviour Support Plan Quality Evaluation Scoring Guide II (BSP-QE) (Browning-Wright, Saren & Mayer, 2003) the five PBS plans were evaluated prior to implementation and rated highly in terms of technical quality. Positive changes in student task engagement were forthcoming in all five cases.

Eleven advisory visiting teachers in behaviour and eleven classroom teachers, five of whom were case-study participants, took part in this study. The classroom teachers were employed in south-east Queensland primary schools located in suburbs of economic disadvantage. All 22 participants expressed very similar perceptions of serious, disruptive behaviour emphasising the collateral impact upon the teaching and learning. Data obtained through direct observations, surveys and semi-structured interviews confirmed previous research to reveal a strong link between integrity of PBS plan implementation and student behaviour change. While classroom teachers, in the main, effectively managed the implementation of the PBS plan, social validity of goals, procedures and effects; in-class technical assistance and performance feedback were identified as three enablers to effective teacher implementation of the PBS plan.

While the purpose of each PBS plan was to influence change in student behaviour, this study found that changing teacher behaviour was also instrumental in achieving positive student outcomes. Changing teacher behaviour and building

capacity was facilitated by trusting, collaborative partnerships established between the Advisory Visiting Teacher-Behaviour and the classroom teacher responsible for the plan implementation. The Advisory Visiting Teacher-Behaviour provides assistance to teachers dealing with students who demonstrate ongoing, problematic behaviour. The inclusion of a teaching component as part of the implementation stage of the consultation process appeared to have considerable influence upon successful intervention. Results substantiated earlier understandings of the importance of teacher instruction highlighting the value of explicit teaching and performance feedback to the delivery of effective behaviour intervention.

Conclusions drawn from this study have had a major impact upon the work of a regional team of Advisory Visiting Teachers-Behaviour. The focus of behaviour intervention has moved from being primarily upon the individual student to include a greater emphasis upon the critical role of the teacher. Procedures and processes are being re-evaluated to align with evidence-based practice and to include a collaborative consultation approach to improve teacher assistance. The framework and content of staff development and training is being created directly from the findings of this study. This practical application of the results has informed better ways of providing behaviour intervention for students demonstrating serious, disruptive behaviour. What this study has clearly shown is that when it comes to behaviour intervention, the important role of the teacher cannot be underestimated.

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STATEMENT OF ORIGINAL AUTHORSHIP

"The work contained in this thesis has not been previously submitted to meet requirements for an award at this or any other higher education institution. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made."

Signature   QUT Verified Signature

Date   28/3/2013

For my parents Jack and Nancy Ayre

Two remarkable people whose love and wisdom gives me

the courage to be the best me I can be.

Acknowledgements

1 Introduction

Understanding children's behaviour is difficult. Levine (2007) stated, "children are complex, and it can be a difficult and time-consuming challenge to make sense of their behavior and generate interventions that work" (p. xxvi). For the children who demonstrate serious, disruptive behaviours, current research paints a dismal picture with regards to the effectiveness of interventions and subsequent overall improvements (Bradley, Doolittle, & Bartolotta, 2008; Kern, Hilt-Panathon, & Sokoi, 2009; Landrum, Tankersley, & Kauffman, 2003; Lane, Kalberg, & Menzies, 2009). Such disappointing evidence precipitated this study which investigates the influence of individualised behaviour intervention in changing task engagement for boys. The study uses a case study approach to detail the development, implementation and effectiveness of individually designed positive behaviour support plans (PBS plans) in assisting students to engage more successfully with learning.

This chapter introduces the foundational framework for intervention practices and processes within the context of schools. A description of the research questions is followed by an explanation of the significance of the study. The research design and methods are overviewed with a summary concluding the chapter.

1.1   THE RESEARCHER

For 25 years I have worked in schools with students who display difficult behaviour. As an Advisory Visiting Teacher-Behaviour (AVT) in 2008 I noticed with growing concern many boys were repeatedly being referred to the behaviour service for very challenging behaviours. This was apparent on one occasion in particular when I was visiting one of my students in an Intervention Centre when the following situation unfolded:

Ashley had been placed in the Intervention Centre having recently been suspended for 20 days for physical violence and property destruction. He arrived 20 minutes late at the Centre and immediately refused to follow teacher instructions. He roamed the Centre's classroom pushing other students' belongings to the floor and making derogatory comments. Ashley took exception to another student's response

and started punching and kicking the student. After repeated teacher requests to stop, Ashley upturned furniture and left the room. The Principal in charge of the school site where the Intervention Centre was located was called. Once in the school grounds, Ashley collected rocks and climbed onto the roof of a walkway, throwing rocks at anyone who passed by. The school was put into lockdown as per policy. Ashley's parents were phoned but refused to come and get him. The police were called. Returning to the Centre's classroom he threw his largest rock at a plate glass window, cracking it in multiple places, kicked the walls, threw school bags to the ground and was verbally abusive. The police removed Ashley and took him home.

Sparked by this incident was my desire to find the best ways to deliver behaviour intervention for the most difficult students. I was committed to undertaking this study. With the number of referrals for severe, challenging behaviour continuing to increase, the behaviour service delivery model, the nature of its processes and practices, was brought into focus. In 2010, my position as team leader provided a platform to investigate the daily practices of the AVT, in particular, and the implementation of the primary tool of intervention, the PBS plan.

As a working professional in the behaviour team, both as an AVT and a team leader, my practical knowledge and experience has given me a deep understanding of this unique context from both perspectives. I acknowledge that this insider perspective while a valuable asset could possibly be viewed as a limitation to the study. I bring particular values and perceptions about behaviour that influence the interpretation of findings and what is written. However, as an active participant 'inside' the study, my experiences provide valuable insight into what is happening in real time in school contexts. As the researcher 'outside' the study, I build pictures from these experiences and those of others, portraying them as accurately and truthfully as possible for the reader.

Acknowledging my participation in this study encompasses dual roles, I have made every effort to balance my researcher role with my professional role. To assist this balance, multiple sources of data, multiple viewpoints and ongoing self-reflections through dialogue with professional colleagues and supervisors were brought to bear on this situation.

1.2 THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

A child's serious, disruptive behaviour is demanding. Such behaviour is characterised by high levels of physical and verbal aggression and an ongoing disregard for self, others and property. This serious behaviour significantly impacts upon administration, teachers and students in terms of increased teacher stress, ongoing disruption to teaching and learning, and the potential risk to personal safety. Many children exhibiting serious, disruptive behaviour have a family life fraught with chaos and unpredictability. This chaos can include "unresponsive parenting" and often leads to social maladjustment evidenced by problematic behaviour at school (Bronfenbrenner & Evans, 2000). School life for these children is characterised by negative and aggressive patterns of behaviour resulting in detentions, suspensions and subsequent limited access to learning. It is the role of the specialist teacher called an AVT, to assist these very challenging students and their teachers in managing the behaviour.

Students demonstrating serious, disruptive behaviour are often relentless in using their behaviour to sabotage teaching and learning experiences. Such behaviour is not only difficult to handle but has an element of fear due to the threat it poses to the personal safety of those present. It usually involves physical assault with or without a weapon, wilful property damage and high-level verbal abuse. Teachers can become fearful because the unpredictability of this externalised behaviour diminishes the teacher's ability to anticipate and ensure the safety of themselves and their class. Jenson, Olympia, Farley and Clark (2004) concluded students demonstrating problematic, externalising behaviours "are some of the most difficult to manage in an educational setting" (p. 67).

Researchers from the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada and Chile substantiate the international concern that disruptive behaviour is an ongoing challenge for teachers (Gulchak & Lopes, 2007). Concern within Australia is of a similar intensity, exemplified by the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) which established the Student Behaviour Management Project in 2003 to identify core principles of best practice with regard to effective student behaviour (de Jong, 2005b). The project was in response to the serious behavioural problems occurring across Australia. Frequent newspaper reports in Australia have recently discussed violent student behaviour, suspension rates and

the escalation of serious, disruptive behaviour in state schools across all year levels. A snapshot is provided in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1

Examples of Australian Newspaper Articles on Student Behaviour

DATE	TITLE	CONTENT SUMMARY	NEWSPAPER
August 18, 2010	Special schools a fast track to prison	Boys segregated for behavioural and emotional disorders at six times the rate of girls	*The Australian* Canberra
January 22, 2011	Problems at troubled schools	Disruptive behaviour is impeding learning. Increasing violent behaviour	*The Sunday Times* Perth
January 31, 2011	SA schools suspend 100 students a day	Increasing suspension rates with boys 13 to 16 the most prevalent	*The Advertiser* Adelaide
March 20, 2011	Schools powerless to stop violence	Violence in NSW schools is becoming uncontrollable	*The Sunday Telegraph* Sydney
June 9, 2011	Principals plead for help over disturbed students as behavioural problems worsen in schools	Every Queensland state school should have a specialist to support 'at-risk' students	*The Courier Mail* Brisbane
January 30, 2012	Amid the classroom, there's violence	Seven in 10 teachers surveyed report being subjects of threatening student behaviour	*The Herald Sun* Melbourne.

Note: retrieved on April 12 2012
http://search.news.com.au/search?q=%22student+behaviour%22&sid=5003564&us=ndmcouriermail&as=NEWS.ARCHIVES&ac=TCM&r=typed

Students' serious, disruptive behaviour is compounded by factors that can include limited family support, poverty and mental health problems (Black, 2007; Danforth & Smith, 2005; Sugai & Evans, 1997; Sugai et al., 2000). An Australian survey of Mental Health and Well Being reported by Jacob (2005) found 14% of young people aged four to 17 have mental health problems and 3% with conduct disorders. In the education region in which the current study is situated, 49% of the students referred for serious, disruptive behaviour also had diagnosed mental health problems.

The prevalence of children with serious behaviour disorders internationally was summarised by Visser and Cole (2003) as follows: 3% and 6% of American

children, 4% Canadian, 10% Danish and 11% Norwegian. Boys with difficult behaviour far outweighed girls. In England for example, 10 to 12 times more boys than girls were diagnosed with emotional/behavioural disorders (EBD). There was a 5:1 boy to girl ratio in Denmark's segregated facilities; and 80% occupancy of boys in specialist centres in Scotland. In addition, McCulloch, Wiggins, Joshi and Sachdev (2000) reported that boys were identified in two longitudinal studies as more problematic with regards to behaviour than girls. An Australian study conducted by Arbuckle and Little (2004) reported similar findings with boys being identified by teachers as more problematic than girls. It was noted that 18% of boys, compared to 7% of girls, were described as having behaviour serious enough to warrant additional help.

Graham, Sweller and Van Bergen (2010) concluded that the number of boys enrolled in segregated settings far outweighed the number of girls—especially for those categorised as emotionally disturbed and behaviourally disordered. In fact, boys were five times more likely to be placed in such a setting as well as 16 times more likely to be placed in a juvenile justice school. This suggests that intervention to date for these students has been less than successful.

Table 1.2

Queensland School Disciplinary Absences Term 3, 2010 to Term 2, 2011

Reason	Short Suspensions (1-5 days)	Long Suspensions (6-20 days)	Exclusion
Other conduct prejudicial to the good order and management of the school (including serious conduct)	8185	1338	178
Persistently disruptive behaviour adversely affecting others	5186	582	45
Physical Misconduct	17784	2465	334
Property Misconduct	3531	441	46
Refusal to participate in the program of instruction	3825	346	21
Verbal or Non Verbal Misconduct	12701	1331	87

Source: Department of Education and Training at http://deta.qld.gov.au/publications/annual-reports/10-11/resources/graphs-tables.html

While not specifically detailing suspension data for boys, the Queensland school disciplinary absences data (see Table 1.2) clearly indicate physical misconduct was the most prolific behaviour attracting both short- and long-term suspensions and exclusions from Term 3, 2010 to Term 2, 2011.

Data for the three year period 2009, 2010 and 2011 from the region in which this study was conducted reinforces these figures. More specifically, from the 23 schools serviced by the behaviour team, 150 referrals were received in 2009 with boys constituting 91% and 98 referrals in 2010 with boys accounting for 85.7%. In 2011 the same behaviour team serviced almost double the number of schools (41 schools) and received 97 referrals, 88% of which were boys. Table 1.3 clearly indicates the high number of referrals received for boys. Table 1.4 provides data indicating the high frequency of serious, disruptive behaviour. These data highlight the need for the current study to focus on boys demonstrating serious, disruptive behaviour.

Table 1.3

Total Referrals for Boys and Girls 2009-2011

Year	2009	2010	2011
Total no. referrals	150	98	97
Boys	137	84	86
Girls	13	14	11

Source: Education Queensland Regional Behaviour Team Database

Serious, disruptive behaviour which includes the categories of non-compliance, persistent disruptive behaviour, physical aggression and verbal aggression, has been the most prominent referred behaviour to this behaviour team (see Table 1.4). Students are often referred with multiple behaviour descriptors, behaviour characterised by high levels of aggression and persistent non-compliance.

Table 1.4

Behaviour Descriptors for 2009-2011

Year	2009	2010	2011
Total no. referrals	150	98	97
Non-compliance	60	28	57
Persistent disruptive behaviour	38	35	33
Physical aggression	65	42	41
Verbal aggression	32	28	17

Source: Education Queensland Regional Behaviour Team Database

These serious, disruptive behaviours pose very real concerns for teachers in the region of this study and constitute the majority of the referrals requesting additional support. The need for support has rapidly escalated with the total number of referrals for both behaviour teams in the region for the *first quarter* of 2012 equalling 183, when the *total* for the entire 2011 school year was 332. With one out of five children and adolescents reported to have seriously disruptive, emotional and behavioural disorders, catering effectively for these students and their teachers is of paramount importance (Lechtenberger, Mullins, & Greenwood, 2008).

In the United States, changes made to the Individuals with Disabilities Education and Improvement Act (IDEIA) (2004) required the consideration of positive behaviour support (PBS) and interventions, including functional behavioural assessment (FBA), to be implemented when designing interventions for students' serious behaviour (Bambara, Nonnemacher, & Kern, 2009). Both are proactive approaches to prevent behavioural issues occurring by focusing on positive behaviour strategies and the understanding of the function of the behaviour. As highlighted by Sugai, Horner, et al. (2000), PBS and FBA are not new; however, with the IDEIA requirements they have an important role to play in behaviour intervention. The AVTs in this study deliver function-based behaviour intervention under a PBS framework.

Policy changes in Australia emphasising inclusion have forced schools to scrutinise the way they 'do business' as they reorganise in an effort to accommodate recommendations to meet behavioural student needs (de Jong, 2005a; Sugai & Evans, 1997). In Queensland, Education Queensland's The Code of School Behaviour 2006, outlined behaviour standards inclusive of all students, and

mandated positive behaviour supports be implemented to "promote high standards of achievement and behaviour" (p. 1). Further, the Believe Achieve Succeed (BAS) strategy 2008-2011 and the National Partnerships Project 2009-2015, have identified disadvantaged school communities and employ targeted strategies which include the implementation of school-wide positive behaviour support (SWPBS).

When providing support to schools, an objective of the AVT's consultation is to produce an intervention documented in an individualised, positive behaviour support plan or PBS plan[1]. This plan outlines proactive and preventative strategies to assist in reducing and ultimately eliminating problematic student behaviour (Bambara & Kern, 2005). Investigating the implementation and efficacy of quality PBS plans was the purpose of this study, guided by the following primary research question and three sub-questions:

1.3   RESEARCH QUESTIONS

How do individually designed positive behaviour support (PBS) plans influence change in task engagement of year four to year seven boys who display serious, disruptive behaviour?

1. How do participants perceive serious, disruptive behaviour?

2. What are possible enablers to effective teacher implementation of the PBS plan?

3. Which elements of the problem-solving consultation model might facilitate integrity of PBS plan implementation?

1.4   DEFINITIONS

1.4.1   Serious, disruptive behaviour

The following operational definition of serious, disruptive behaviour will be used throughout this study: *Disruptive behaviour is any act which interferes with the learning, teaching or happiness of any child, his/her peers or teacher* (adapted from Mortimore et al., 1983, p. 1). Disruptive behaviour includes both verbal and physical aggression, destruction of property, stealing, lying and tantrums (Goldstein &

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[1] In the region of study the term PBS plan was chosen to avoid any confusion with individualised plans already in place such as: IEP (Individual Education Plan, EAP (Educational Adjustment Plan, BIC (Behaviour Intervention Contract) and Individual Behaviour Plan (BIP).

Brooks, 2007). This behaviour is characterised by rapid escalation. It is the dangerous, harmful nature of the behaviour that defines it as 'serious'. Disruptive behaviour manifests itself "when the demands being placed on a kid exceed his capacity to respond adaptively" (Greene, 2008, p. 11).

With the focus of the definition on the actual behaviour, not the child, this definition subscribes to behaviour being contextual and influenced by systems that include family, home, peers, neighbourhood and school cultures (Bronfenbrenner, 1992). Factors arising from the relationships and interactions within the systems such as hunger, tiredness, high-level anxiety, the lack of opportunity to learn and poor academic performance have a significant impact upon the student's capacity to be engaged at school. The underlying assumption being that a student demonstrating disruptive behaviour is rarely (if ever) solely responsible for it (Mortimore, et al., 1983).

1.4.2 Task engagement

For the purpose of this study, task engagement is defined as working on or participating in teacher-assigned academic activities (Lane & Beebe-Frankenberger, 2004; Shumate & Wills, 2010). Behaviours demonstrating task engagement could include: following teacher directions, raising a hand to speak, reading associated texts and answering related questions either orally or in written form. Task engagement will be explicitly defined in operational terms for each individual case study student based upon the direct observational and teacher interview data collected by the assigned AVT. Behaviour intervention is the key to helping students who display serious, disruptive behaviour build capacity to reengage with schooling. In conjunction with programs that focus upon empowering families, small steps of progress in what are very complex situations maybe forthcoming.

1.4.3 Consultation

Based on the strong tradition of behavioural consultation, consultation within the context of this study broadens this tradition to include an ecological systems perspective acknowledging the significant influence multiple systems can have on an individual (Bronfenbrenner, 1992). The individual is surrounded by systems of influence such as family, peers, community and school. The interactions and relationships occurring in and across these systems have a direct impact upon the

development and therefore the behaviour of the individual. Consultation is a collaborative problem-solving process that must consider the nature of these systems of influence when devising supportive interventions for students—a responsibility shared between the consultant and consultee.

Consultation is defined for this study as a school-based problem-solving process where the AVT (consultant) collaboratively assists the teacher (consultee) to benefit the student with serious, disruptive behaviour (client) (Conoley, Conoley, Ivey, & Scheel, 1991). The goal is to alter systems to produce positive outcomes for students.

This study investigates the current behaviour support systems and practices in a region of south-east Queensland, and the degree to which these practices deliver help to the greatest possible extent for those students with the greatest need. In this region, the majority of these students are boys in year four to year seven typically aged between nine and twelve years. The focus is on the examination of the PBS plan as the primary tool of intervention—its quality, implementation and effectiveness in supporting the reengagement of boys to learning.

1.5 BACKGROUND

Schools located in low socio-economic areas are prevalent in the region of study with many statistically defined as highly disadvantaged (Caniglia, Bourke, & Whiley, 2010). Families living in these communities can face a multitude of social challenges such as increased stress and related problems inclusive of disruptive behaviour, failure in school, substance abuse, depression and delinquency (Keating & Hertzman, 1999; Kratzer & Hodgins, 1997). Bronfenbrenner and Evans (2000) referred to these disordered home environments as "chaotic systems" that in turn lead to social dysfunction of the children who occupy them (p. 121). In the classroom environment the effects of this disarray manifest in the student's serious, disruptive behaviour.

Serious, disruptive behaviour has ramifications far beyond the individuals themselves. Reduced teaching time, physical exhaustion, elevated stress levels, physical harm, disruption and property damage to the classroom are possible elements that impact upon teachers. The negative effects serious, disruptive behaviour can have on other student's education has been termed "collateral impact"

and is "higher in schools which have a high proportion of students from poorer socio-economic backgrounds" (David, 2010, p. 262). Less teacher attention and assistance and lost learning time are some of the impacts upon fellow students (Thomson, 2002). Isolation from peers, lost learning hours due to suspension and heightened levels of anxiety are examples of possible personal impact for the student. Teachers can be faced with a daily siege from students who are often not skilled to cope with the ongoing hardship of home and the mismatch between the home and school environment (Freiberg, Homel, & Branch, 2010).

1.5.1 The behaviour support service

Throughout Australia, students with behavioural difficulties are supported in mainstream classes in preference to removal to an alternative setting or off-site program. Support to school staff in the mainstream class settings in the region of study is provided by AVTs. The role of the AVT is to work collaboratively with school staff to develop and implement effective PBS plans and strategies for students who exhibit problematic behaviours.

From a review of the regional behaviour service delivery model in 2004, in-house discussions with participants resulted in the following suggested six key recommendations:

- the development of a conceptual framework clearly outlining the role of the behaviour management resource within the region

- ensuring all behaviour advisory staff have a thorough understanding of contemporary curriculum and pedagogical practices and a deep understanding of behaviour interventions

- the investigation of a flexible, differentiated model of service delivery

- advisory behaviour staff to be identified, recruited and trained to develop a range of personal competencies that assist in the timely delivery of behaviour support

- the establishment of an advocacy group of representative principals to develop key principles for the delivery of the behaviour support service

- the focus of the behaviour support service to build capacity of school staff in delivering contemporary practices in behaviour management.

In 2006 a working party consisting of the executive director, human resource manager, school principals, deputies, guidance officers, and behaviour support staff, began the collaborative process of redesigning the model of service delivery. The new framework clearly identified the alignment between agreed practices and Education Queensland (EQ) policies including: Student Wellbeing; Learning and Disability Support; Student Protection Policy; Safe, Supportive and Disciplined Learning Environment; Inclusive Education and School Disciplinary Absences (SDA). These can be accessed from the Education Queensland website: http://education.qld.gov.au/studentservices/learning/index.html

This new model of service delivery gave rise to the creation of a new structure of working—the behaviour hub. Four hubs were created to service the 102 primary, high and special schools throughout the region. In 2011 the four hubs were reduced to two hubs due to regional restructuring and budget cuts. These two hubs continue to service 92 schools with a total student population of 43,154 students. Located at each hub are a support team consisting of AVTs, a guidance officer and behaviour intervention centre teachers. Each hub is led by an appointed team leader who in turn is supervised by a behaviour coordinator with the qualification of senior guidance officer. The behaviour hub that is the focus of this study consists of one guidance officer, two teachers in the Intervention Centre and seven AVT staff including the team leader. This team services 41 schools. These schools encompass primary schools (preparatory to year 7), secondary or high schools (year 8 to year 12) and special schools (students with disabilities from preparatory to year 12). Each AVT works on a needs basis so rather than assigning AVTs to a particular school or schools as was past practice, support is provided in response to requests through referrals.

Student referrals follow a formal process and are made by the school principal in consultation with the student's classroom teacher and parent/carer. Written permission from the parent/carer must be obtained before the referral can be lodged with the region. The referral is disseminated to the local behaviour team servicing the school concerned. An AVT is assigned to the referral and follows the steps outlined on the flowchart of service in Figure 1.1. These steps include interviews, observation

of the problem behaviour, data gathering and developing a PBS plan, intervention for the student and assistance to the classroom teacher. Throughout the process of intervention, classroom teacher performance feedback is encouraged at every level as indicated by the large rectangle spanning all the steps in the diagram. From beginning to end the process takes a school term or approximately 12 weeks, depending on the results and the complexity of the case.
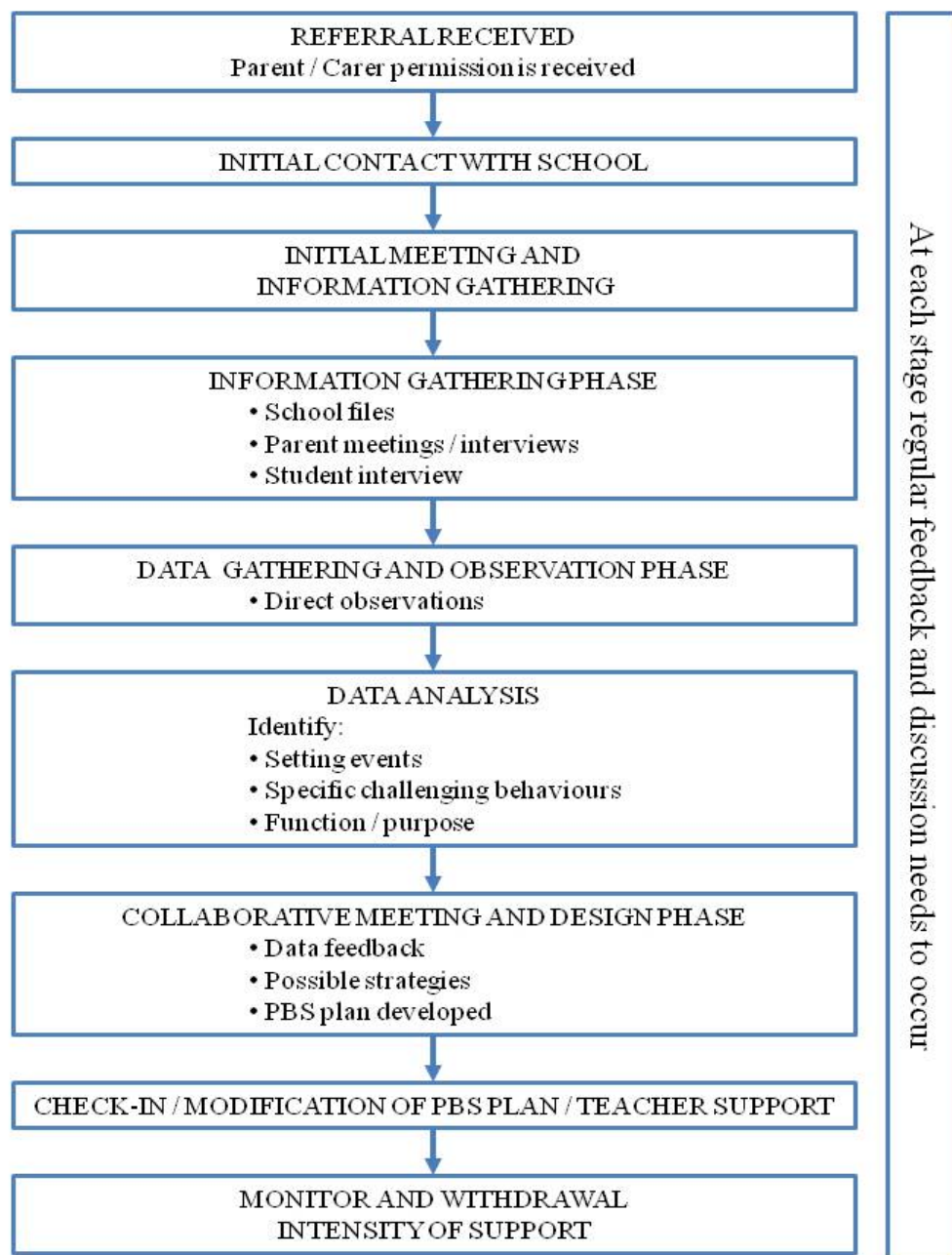
Figure 1.1. AVT flowchart of service

The behaviour hub referral data for serious, disruptive behaviour supports the necessity for the focus to be on boys from year four to year seven. Although there has been a steady increase in the total number of referrals for students in the early years, from preparatory (prep) to year three, the data over a three year period (see Table 1.5) indicates boys from year four to year seven represent the largest proportion of the student population referred for serious, disruptive behaviour.

Table 1.5

Referrals for Boys in Year Four to Year Seven

	2009	*2010*	*2011*
Total referrals in Years 4-7	65	42	57
Total boys referrals in Years 4-7	59	35	55
% of boys referred in Years 4-7	90.7%	83%	96%

Source: Education Queensland Regional Behaviour Team Database

Intervention Centres provide alternative education programs for students in year four to year ten (aged nine to fifteen years) who have been excluded, suspended from school for six to twenty days, or have been deemed 'at risk' of suspension. Mostly early adolescents, these students are typically perceived as persistently disruptive and exhibiting high-level serious behaviours. Data from one of these centres indicated 80% of referrals for 2009 to that centre were boys and the highest percentage of these referrals was from year six (aged eleven years). Similar data from 2010 saw 91% of referrals were for boys with 60% being for those in year four to year seven. In 2011, again 60% of referrals were for boys from year four to year seven.

Overall the data presented in the tables thus far are representative of findings throughout the literature. Studies support that boys are repeatedly reported as more problematic than girls (Beaman, Wheldall, & Kemp, 2007; Broidy et al., 2003); middle school students are at greater risk of disengagement than primary or senior school students (Marks, 2000); and persistent aggressive behaviour appears to lead to school adjustment difficulties and disengagement from ages 9 through 12 (Broidy, et al., 2003; Campbell, Spieker, Burchinal, & Poe, 2006). The data strongly suggest that boys from year four to year seven are at greatest risk of becoming disengaged from learning.

AVTs working in the region of this study refer to these students as the 'red zone' students. The red zone represents the tertiary level of intervention within the positive behaviour support framework. PBS is a systematic, preventative approach to support students based on their individual needs (Carr et al., 2002; Filter, Tincani, & Fung, 2009; Lane, Kalberg, & Menzies, 2009; Simonsen, Sugai, & Negron, 2008). All behaviour staff working in the region of this study promotes a PBS model of service delivery. A brief introduction to PBS follows.

1.6   AN INTRODUCTION TO PBS

PBS is a preventative process to address problem behaviour in schools at a whole school level, at the classroom level and at an individual level (Carr, et al., 2002; Hieneman, Dunlap, & Kincaid, 2005; Jackson, 2004; T. J. Lewis, Hudson, Richter, & Johnson, 2004; Sailor, Stowe, Turnbull, & Klienhammer-Tramill, 2007). As stated by Sugai, Horner, et al. (2000) "Positive behavior support is a general term that refers to the application of positive behavioral interventions and systems to achieve socially important behavior change" (p. 133). A continuum of support provides the framework for identification and organisation of best practice at whole school and individual levels of prevention. Originally conceived for students with disabilities in the late 1980s to early 1990s, positive behaviour support has only recently emerged as an effective alternative intervention for individuals demonstrating serious, unsafe behaviours (Dunlap, 2006; Warren et al., 2006).

PBS considers behaviour to be purposeful and maintained by environmental conditions. Characteristics of PBS summarised from Bambara and Knoster (2009) are:

- a problem-solving process

- team-based

- assessment-based (environmental impact and behaviour function)

- comprehensive behaviour support plans

- person-centred (values and respectful of the individual)

- applicable to everyday settings

- success seen in decrease in problem behaviour, acquisition of new skills and better quality of life.

PBS is an effective way to provide a safer, more supportive learning environment for all students in schools. When applied to the many varied and unique school contexts, the PBS process builds the capacity of school communities to develop and sustain a more disciplined space, where improved outcomes for all students can be achieved (Sugai, Horner, et al., 2000).

When applied to the whole school environment, positive behaviour support is termed school-wide positive behaviour support (SWPBS). George and Kincaid (2008) reported that 5,000 schools across the United States had adopted SWPBS as a proactive approach to school discipline. Further, in the same year, the National Technical Assistance Centre on Positive Behavioural Interventions and Supports reported nearly 8,000 schools across the United States were at various stages of adoption. By 2012 more than 14,000 schools in the US had completed SWPBS training (Debnam, Pas, & Bradshaw, 2012). Popularity of this approach is reflected, albeit on a small scale, within the region of this study where by 2011 in excess of 30 schools were in the process of, or had applied for, training to implement SWPBS. In response to this local demand, a full time SWPBS Regional Coordinator's position was created to commence in 2011. In addition, AVTs were trained and each assigned to two local schools as SWPBS coaches. Thus AVTs provide positive behaviour support not only at the individual level but also at the whole school level.

While the focus of this study is individualised intervention for boys demonstrating serious, disruptive behaviour, understanding where these boys fit within the continuum of a whole school system of behaviour support (SWPBS) is important. An overview of SWPBS is now given.

1.6.1 School-wide positive behaviour support (SWPBS)

School-wide positive behaviour support (SWPBS) as stated above, is positive behaviour support applied to the school context. The core elements of PBS are organised into a three-tier prevention model illustrated by the PBS triangle (see Figure 1.2) and systematically applied to the school environment.

The explanation of each tier of prevention is derived from Sugai and Horner (2006) and Simonsen et al. (2008). The terms green, yellow and red zone listed in the brackets, are site-specific terms coined by staff working in the region of this study.

• Primary Tier (the green zone)

This tier provides support for all students, staff and families throughout the school. Systems are selected and school-wide practices implemented.
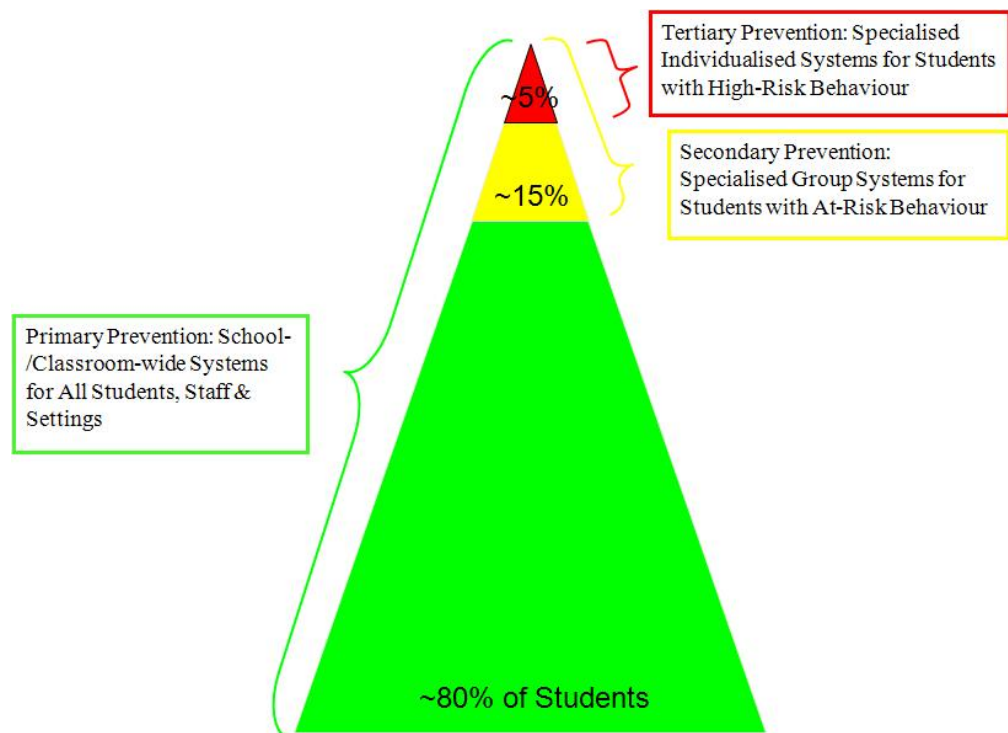
Figure 1.2. Continuum of school-wide instructional and positive behaviour support

Source: www.pbis.org/presentation/default.aspx

• Secondary Tier (the yellow zone)

This tier provides support for targeted small groups of students. Practices at this level 'step up' in intensity through increased intervention and supervision by school staff.

• Tertiary Tier (the red zone)

This tier provides maximum support for individuals and is characterised by intensive, highly individualised intervention for students demonstrating serious, disruptive behaviour (individualised PBS).

Represented by three-tiers of prevention, the top of the triangle is a space reserved for one to five percent of the school population who require intensive, individualised behaviour support. It is here (in the red zone) at the tertiary level where the disengaged, disruptive students, of whom the majority are early adolescent boys, are located.

1.7 BOYS IN THE RED ZONE

Early adolescent boys' disengagement and disruptive behaviour appears to go hand in hand. Disengagement has been strongly linked to problematic behaviour, including delinquency and general misbehaviour (Finn & Rock, 1997; Hirschfield & Gasper, 2011). Positive relationships within safe, supportive classroom environments with significant others, such as teachers and peers, is particularly important for the early adolescent to feel a sense of connectedness and belonging (Wang & Holcombe, 2010). Support from teachers and peers, including academic help and encouragement, has been found to increase task engagement (Marks, 2000; Patrick, Ryan, & Kaplan, 2007).

The extensive Australian literature is conclusive that the middle years of schooling require a unique approach to best support early adolescents in the best possible way (Carrington, 2002; Groundwater-Smith, Mitchell, & Mockler, 2007; Luke et al., 2003; Prosser, 2008). Early adolescent boys in the tertiary tier (red zone) of the PBS triangle are not just 'at risk' but are 'at greatest risk' of disengagement and disruptive behaviour because of the high concentration of additional contributing factors. Such factors include third generation unemployment, low socioeconomic background (Carrington, 2002; Marks, 2000), absence of caring relationships, poverty and abuse. Termed "cumulative adversity" (Newhouse-Maiden, Bahr, & Pendergast, 2005, p. 80) the road ahead to engagement is often long and arduous for all concerned.

Prosser (2008) cautioned care be taken with the introduction of blanket initiatives for adolescence and middle schooling. With a foundation in middle class values, the transfer of elements of the adolescence and middle schooling construct into disadvantaged communities can prove challenging. This is because students bring to school the unseen fabric of their economic class—the rules, values and ways of being that are very different from the middle class institution of school. Failure by

the child to negotiate this "cultural discontinuity" can, and does, result in student disengagement, truancy and suspension (Chadbourne, 2001, p. 24).

The increase in disengagement is of particular interest to this study as this can manifest into serious, disruptive behaviours with boys being identified as the target group with the greatest susceptibility (Carrington, 2002; de Jong, 2005b). Behaviour hub data for male referrals 2009-2011, shows higher numbers of referrals for boys from year four to year seven and particularly in years four, five and six, compared to the remainder of the middle years—years eight, nine and ten (see Figure 1.3).
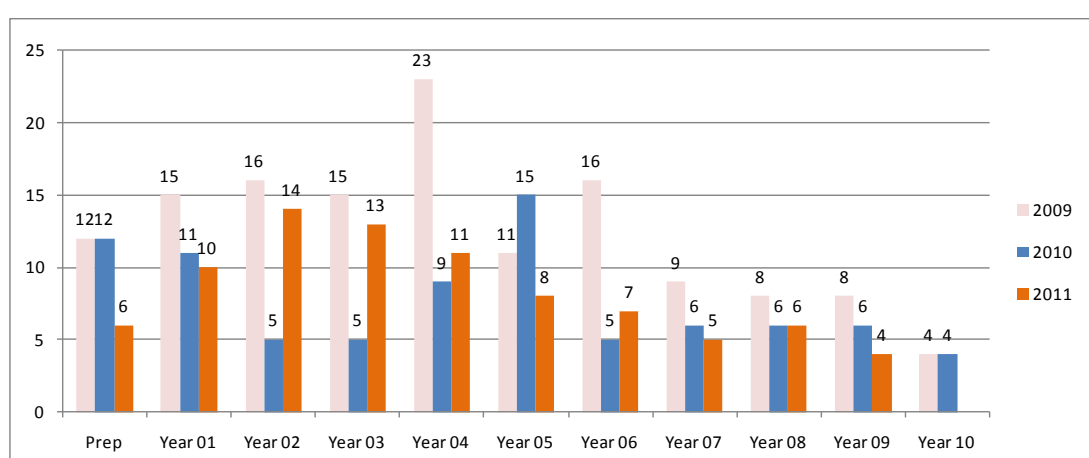
Figure 1.3. Male student referrals by year group 2009 to 2011.

Across Australia, 80% of students suspended or excluded from schools are boys (House of Representatives Standing Committee on Education and Training, 2002). Boys with an established and continuing pattern of aggressive behaviour from early childhood are more likely to demonstrate elevated risk-taking and problematic behaviour in adolescence (Lochman et al., 2010).

Five factors of good practice to support adolescents are: an ecosystemic perspective, student-centred learning, inclusiveness, a safe, caring environment and positive relationships (de Jong, 2003). These components reflected throughout the positive behaviour support framework are central to the development of effective behaviour intervention practices for early adolescent boys. Devising these interventions is the responsibility of the AVT who works collaboratively with the teacher to develop solutions to the problematic behaviour.

Many aspects of the model of service delivery employed by the AVT are closely aligned with the five stages of the school-based problem-solving consultation model (Kratochwill, Elliott, & Carrington Rotto, 1995). This is not surprising given that the PBS foundation for the service delivery model is one of problem-solving. The AVT follows each stage outlined in Table 1.6 when helping teachers cope with serious student behaviours. These stages are explained in detail in Chapter 3 within the context of consultation and the role of the AVT.

Table 1.6

The Five Stages of Problem-Solving Consultation

Stage	Description
Stage 1	Relationship building
Stage 2	Problem identification
Stage 3	Problem analysis
Stage 4	Intervention implementation
Stage 5	Program evaluation

Source: Kratochwill, Elliott and Carrington Rotto (1995).

1.8   SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS STUDY

Managing the behaviour of students in classrooms has been an ongoing concern to teachers for many years and remains one of the daily challenges they face. Compounded by escalating expectations, the diversity of student needs and the increase in serious behaviours, teaching can be an overwhelming task (Lane, Kalberg, & Menzies, 2009). Unfortunately, the current picture portrayed in the literature for students with behavioural difficulties is less than positive. In an Australian review of the literature in the last decade, Beaman et al. (2007) concluded little progress had been made with regard to overcoming the challenge of disruptive classroom behaviour and advocated the need for action to prevent school students who display serious, disruptive behaviour from becoming "the new excluded" (p. 58).

Minimal Australian research investigating behaviour support services and intervention processes is available (Gulchak & Lopes, 2007) particularly with reference to the intensive, individualised interventions at the level of tertiary prevention. Suggestions for future research have included the investigation of types

of support and their effectiveness for academic and behavioural outcomes (Kern, et al., 2009; Sutherland, Lewis-Palmer, Stichter, & Morgan, 2008).

With little or no evidence of Australian studies that have investigated either the influence of PBS plans in changing task engagement or PBS plan quality, this study begins to address this deficit by providing information to promote the development of PBS plans of the highest quality that result in positive outcomes for disruptive students. Research suggests that high quality plans may be improved with the inclusion of content reflective of best practice (C. R. Cook et al., 2007). This best practice is built on evidence, as opposed to unsubstantiated faith, because as Gable (2004) reminded us all, in education "we have a high opinion of too many truths for which there is too little proof" (p. 343).

Instrumental to and inseparable from, the provision of behavioural intervention is the AVT whose role parallels that of a consultant. With facilitation of intervention guided by the school-based problem-solving model of consultation, it is how these elements affect integrity of implementation and influence positive behaviour change that is yet to be fully explored (Frank & Kratochwill, 2008). Although an in-depth investigation was beyond the scope of this study, it is hoped that by examining the AVT consultation procedures in relation to individualised interventions, what works, in what situations and for whom, will be better understood.

The findings of this study should expand the knowledge base of all stakeholders by enhancing their skills and understanding of behaviour. This in turn, is likely to generate greater cohesion and consistency in the implementation of quality, individualised behaviour interventions. Such improvement of intervention practice has the potential to positively improve the task engagement for the most disruptive students. Considering very little progress has been made in this area over the last decade this is a highly valuable and practical contribution to the provision of "better designed interventions that are more efficacious and sustainable" (Sutherland, et al., 2008, p. 231).

1.9   RESEARCH DESIGN OVERVIEW

This study used a multicase design to investigate the implementation of individually designed PBS plans in five case studies. In addition, classroom teacher beliefs were explored with regards to behaviour, the social validity of PBS plans in

terms of goals, procedures and outcomes and treatment integrity. Together with generalisation and maintenance, social validity and treatment integrity constitute the core components model of the intervention process as represented in Figure 1.4. (Lane et al., 2009; Lane, Kalberg, & Menzies, 2009). Results have been analysed and provide practical guidance for effective behaviour interventions that deliver positive, desired outcomes for boys exhibiting serious, disruptive behaviour. A brief description of the three core components follows with greater explanation provided in Chapter 4.

From Lane & Beebe-Frankenberger (2004)
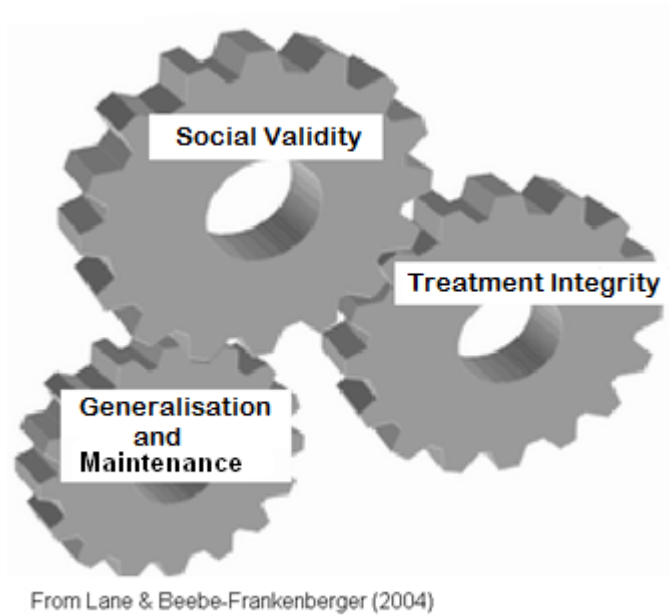
Figure 1.4. Core components model.

Social validity can be described as the perceived importance or value that society places on an intervention (Lane & Beebe-Frankenberger, 2004; Wolf, 1978). It is defined as "social significance of the goals, social appropriateness of the procedures and social importance of the effects" (Wolf, 1978, p. 207). Treatment integrity simply refers to whether the intervention was actioned as planned. Unless the accuracy of implementation of a PBS plan is known, it is difficult to make assumptions about its effectiveness. Generalisation and maintenance refers to sustainable, meaningful change and whether the new behaviours that have been taught to the student are lasting (maintained) and are demonstrated in a variety of settings (generalised) (Lane & Beebe-Frankenberger, 2004).

Through this investigation of what constitute quality behaviour intervention and how that intervention is applied in real school contexts, greater success in

influencing positive changes in task engagement for boys with serious, disruptive behaviours could be forthcoming.

1.10 STRUCTURE OF THE DOCUMENT

This thesis has seven chapters. In this introductory chapter serious, disruptive behaviour was introduced in relation to early adolescent boys and behavioural intervention. The research problem was discussed and the research questions identified within the context of a positive behaviour support framework. The research design has been rationalised and the significance of the study provided.

The literature review detailed in Chapter 2 supports the ongoing investigation into the effectiveness of behaviour interventions for those students demonstrating serious, disruptive behaviour. The literature that informs this study has been drawn from the key areas of positive behaviour support, middle schooling, behavioural consultation and behaviour intervention.

Chapter 3 provides a comprehensive account of the theoretical framework underpinning this study. Enhanced and supported by ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979b), applied behaviour analysis (Baer, Wolf, & Risley, 1968) is the foundation upon which behaviour intervention is built. The core elements of both applied behaviour analysis and ecological systems theory are explained.

Chapter 4 details the rationale and description of the research design and methods chosen to investigate the PBS plan as the primary tool of behaviour intervention. Associated key terms in relation to multiple case study design and behaviour intervention are defined. In addition, the selection of participants, data collection procedures and analysis are presented.

Chapter 5 documents the five case studies and investigates the influence of the PBS plan in producing meaningful outcomes for disengaged and disruptive boys. Comprehensive descriptions of each specific case are reported, with reference to the systems of influence impacting upon the student. Intervention results are presented discussing the change in task engagement achieved for each student. Evidenced by pre-student and post-student behaviour data, these results are displayed graphically.

Chapter 6 presents the findings and cross-case analysis. Interview excerpts, vignettes and observation data are combined with factual and interpretive results.

Categories arising from classroom teacher and AVT interviews are tabled. Comparisons are made between the results of the current study and behaviour intervention studies detailed in the literature review. Similarities and differences in relation to the development and implementation of individualised interventions, as well as the processes associated with behaviour consultation, are discussed.

Chapter 7 promotes the valuable contributions the study will make to the behaviour support service. Conclusions are drawn with regard to the practices and procedures of individualised behaviour intervention. Practical suggestions for implementation of the findings and implications for future research are outlined.

1.11 SUMMARY

This chapter has introduced the nature of serious, disruptive behaviour and the need for investigation into behaviour interventions to source best practices that improve task engagement for students. The literature presents a history of less than satisfactory findings in relation to progress made in helping students with behavioural difficulties. Early adolescent boys are overly represented as those experiencing greatest difficulty with behaviour. Further, there is minimal Australian research available that has investigated the effectiveness of individualised behaviour support plans for boys in the middle years (Arbuckle & Little, 2004; Gulchak & Lopes, 2007).

Serious, disruptive behaviour and additional key concepts were defined. The role of the AVT was introduced and behaviour intervention procedures and processes outlined. Primarily responsible for developing the PBS plan and facilitating its implementation, the AVT follows a school-based problem-solving consultation model when delivering behaviour intervention within the school context. Behaviour intervention elements such as social validity, treatment integrity, generalisation and maintenance were briefly introduced in relation to the integral role they play in determining the effectiveness of the individualised PBS plan.

It was established that early adolescent boys from year four to year seven constitute the overwhelming majority of behaviour referrals for serious, disruptive behaviour received in the region of this study. Situated in the red zone of the PBS framework of support, the behaviour intervention provided to these boys is centred upon an individually designed PBS plan. Investigating the procedures and processes

employed by the AVT in the development and implementation of PBS plans addressing serious, disruptive behaviour, may provide solutions that contribute to producing meaningful student outcomes. The literature substantiating the need for such an investigation will now be reviewed in Chapter 2.

2 Literature Review

This study investigated individually designed positive behaviour support (PBS) plans as the primary tools of behaviour intervention—their quality, implementation and effectiveness in supporting the reengagement of early adolescent boys to learning. Literature pertaining to PBS, behaviour intervention, the middle years and behavioural consultation is discussed in this chapter. These topics reflect strong commonalities, theoretical perspectives and evidence-based strategies informing best practice in providing behaviour support in primary school classrooms.

The vast array of terms used to define students' behaviour reflects the enormity of difficulties educators face in addressing problematic behaviours. In the UK, the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) commissioned a literature review to inform the report *Managing Challenging Behaviour* (Ofsted, 2005) and reported the international difficulty in defining disruptive behaviour of children. Terms used to categorise students' behaviour have included emotional or behavioural disorder (Danforth & Smith, 2005), emotional and behavioural difficulties and emotionally vulnerable (Visser & Cole, 2003). Furthermore, the magnitude of ensuring adequate help for students in need is compounded by the lack of clarity associated with terms and definitions (Kern, et al., 2009; Lane, Kalberg, & Menzies, 2009). As stated in chapter 1, the following operational definition of disruptive behaviour adapted from Mortimer et al. (1983) will be used throughout this study: *Disruptive behaviour is any act which interferes with the learning, teaching or happiness of any child, his/her peers or teacher* (p. 1).

Intervention for disruptive student behaviour reflects a foundation of both behaviour theory and ecological systems theory. Together, these theories view behaviour from the perspective that it is measurable, observable and is examined with attention strongly directed to the environment and the relationships within it that are facilitating the behaviour (Bambara, 2005). These factors have a significant impact upon maintaining behaviours and not only is their consideration crucial to understanding behaviour, they shift the focus of understanding beyond the individual to one of function and purpose within systems of influence (Ayers, Clarke, & Murray, 2000; Dunlap, Harrower, & Fox, 2005; Papatheodorou, 2005).

2.1 THE BOYS

Gender differences with reference to disruptive behaviour are marked, with boys identified by teachers at a much higher rate than girls. Prior, Sanson, Smart, and Oberklaid (2000) in an Australian longitudinal study on temperament and psycho-social adjustments, concluded that boys as a group tend to have greater aggression and school adjustment problems than girls. Furthermore, the relationship between aggression present at nine to ten years of age (year 4), problem behaviour and learning difficulties was highlighted as more commonly associated with boys. In an extensive study of trajectories of disruptive behaviours, Broidy et al. (2003) reported a very strong link between boys' disruptive behaviour in primary school and adolescent physical aggression. Boys who demonstrated chronic physical aggression in childhood were at greatest risk of demonstrating violent behaviour in adolescence. No such pattern was found for girls. The presence of anti-social behaviour in adolescence is predominantly demonstrated by boys and it appears that a definite parallel exists between gender and learning. Boys' early literacy and school adjustment difficulties are strongly related to challenging behaviour and poor engagement as they get older (Prior, et al., 2000).

Behavioural challenges become increasingly resistant to intervention as a student progresses through schooling (Bradley, et al., 2008). This has been evidenced by suspension data emerging from the United States reporting suspensions are more common in the middle schooling years with boys more likely to be suspended than girls (Skiba & Sprague, 2008). Similarly, boys in Australian schools in years seven and nine have student-reported suspension rates of 10.9% compared to 6% for girls (Hemphill et al., 2010). Graham et al. (2010) investigated the proportion of boys enrolled in segregated settings (behaviour schools, tutorial centres and suspension centres) in the Australian state of New South Wales and concluded boys were disproportionately represented. Further, in Scottish primary schools, boys are ten times more likely to be suspended than girls (Forde, Kane, Condie, McPhee, & Head, 2006). Lane, Kalberg and Shepcaro (2009) noted students with emotional and behavioural disorders represented from 2 to 20% of all school students with limited intervention research targeted at the middle and secondary years. These conclusions provide substantial support and justification for the current study which has

investigated how best to reengage disruptive, early adolescent boys with education and thus reroute their trajectory toward success.

The impact of student levels of engagement, attitudes and behaviour on academic outcomes for boys has been investigated internationally as well as in Australia and the results are conclusive—primary aged boys have a marked lower achievement in literacy than girls, with significant difficulty being experienced in reading (Cresswell, Rowe, & Withers, 2003; Forde, et al., 2006; Luke, et al., 2003). A longitudinal study undertaken by Trzesniewski, Moffitt, Caspi, Taylor and Maughan (2006) concluded the link between reading achievement and antisocial behaviour was much stronger for boys than girls. Conversely, Jackson cited in Forde et al. (2006) noted that often boys' failure to achieve was attributable to behaviour, not lack of ability.

Pressure for public demand of greater academic accountability and achievement has led to schools employing more punitive patterns of reactive management in an attempt to reduce the collateral damage caused by seriously, disruptive students. After the application of short-term, reactionary strategies such as detention, withdrawal of privileges and suspensions, the path of redemption is governed by longer-term interventions. These commonly include individual referrals to behaviour support teams and often temporary removal to an offsite alternative education facility. Evidence has suggested these exclusionary practices alone have little effect in reducing the severe behaviour displayed (Sailor, et al., 2007; Sugai & Horner, 2006; Tobin & Sugai, 1996). Applying practices of suspension and exclusion is somewhat of a 'catch-22' situation. Removal of the student while eliminating the opportunity for further disruptive behaviour to occur for a designated period of time can also can deny the student access to learning. For principals and administrators who have a responsibility to maintain a safe learning and teaching environment, it is an understandable response to a highly complex situation.

Finding answers to this situation is no mean feat given the multiplicity of stakeholders involved and the complexity and diversity of the school context. Diversity is notable from school to school and as acknowledged by Groundwater-Smith (2007) there is danger in the false perceptions that view all schools as being the same. By examining the efficacy of the PBS plan as the core tool of behaviour intervention, the current study may provide information that readers could transfer

and modify to fit their own unique school settings, ultimately facilitating improved outcomes for disengaged and disruptive, early adolescent boys.

2.2   STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

The extensive literature base discussing engagement in early adolescence includes investigations of life satisfaction (A. D. Lewis, Huebner, Malone, & Valois, 2011), student perceptions of school, engagement and academic achievement (Dotterer & Lowe, 2011; Marks, 2000; Patrick, et al., 2007; Yonezawa, Jones, & Joselowsky, 2009), as well as school failure and delinquency (Finn & Rock, 1997; Hirschfield & Gasper, 2011). In short, the research concludes that success in school is notably impacted by levels of engagement in learning tasks.

A conclusive, universal definition for engagement has not been established, however A.D. Lewis et al. (2011) stated that "student engagement refers to a student's degree of active involvement in school through his or her thoughts, feelings and actions" (p. 251). The three identified components of engagement proposed by Fredericks, Blumenfeld and Paris (2004) are emotional, behavioural and cognitive. Emotional engagement is concerned with the affective domain, feelings such as "boredom, happiness, sadness" (p. 63) and reactions toward tasks and people (Hirschfield & Gasper, 2011; A. D. Lewis, et al., 2011). Behavioural engagement is a measure of student participation in school and learning and includes: attending school, following the rules and showing on-task behaviour (Hirschfield & Gasper, 2011; Marks, 2000; Wang & Holcombe, 2010). Finally, cognitive engagement is the student's self-regulatory behaviour and investment in learning (Fredericks, et al., 2004). In the current study, the focus is upon behavioural aspects of engagement—specifically task engagement and the interventions that may result in meaningful outcomes for students. Understanding the nature of engagement in the context of the classroom environment is important for developing realistic goals and strategies of the behaviour intervention. Recognising that the three components of engagement are interconnected not only with each other but with the school environment, is a key factor in student participation (Dotterer & Lowe, 2011; Wang & Holcombe, 2010).

Recent studies of middle school students' perceptions of school environments have reported the important role the teacher-student relationship plays within caring, supportive environments to increase engagement positively, which in turn leads to

improved academic achievement. Incorporating the three dimensions of engagement, Wang and Holcombe's (2010) study of seventh grade students proposed that school climate may in fact serve as a "protective factor against further disengagement problems" (p. 656). Patrick et al. (2007) and colleagues concurred, finding that a classroom climate that fosters academic and emotional support, as well as teacher encouragement, does promote positive student engagement for early adolescents.

Employing an ecological systems perspective to increase engagement seems to hold great promise (Bronfenbrenner, 1979a). An ecological lens addresses the multidimensional nature of engagement by incorporating the influences beyond the individual and school to include family, community and work systems. Of paramount importance are the relationships in and across these systems and their impact upon the daily life of the adolescent student. Intervention for the early adolescent should begin with an ecological approach that logically places equal emphasis on the three components of engagement—behavioural, emotional and cognitive. Understanding the impact of classroom/school context, positive teacher-student relationships and quality instruction will improve the likelihood of increased engagement for the early adolescent requiring behaviour intervention (Dotterer & Lowe, 2011; Patrick, et al., 2007; Yonezawa, et al., 2009). The literature recommends intervention for adolescent students follows an ecological perspective and given that the behaviour staff in the region of this study adheres to a PBS philosophy based in part on ecological system theory, there is close alignment between research and the practical world of behaviour intervention in schools. Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory is discussed in detail in Chapter 3 as it constitutes the theoretical foundation for this study.

The key point of this section is to highlight the multidimensional nature of engagement and its critical role in learning at school. Students who attend school regularly, behave in a socially appropriate manner and have a clear sense of who they are and where they fit within the system of schooling, tend to display lower levels of disruptive behaviour and higher levels of engagement (Dotterer & Lowe, 2011). In contrast, disengagement becomes a downward spiral of disruptive behaviour which can lead to delinquency. Delinquency and engagement do affect each other with behavioural disengagement a key indicator of disruptive school behaviour and general disruptive behaviour (Hirschfield & Gasper, 2011).

2.3   THE MIDDLE YEARS, DISENGAGEMENT AND BEHAVIOUR

The vast majority of behaviour research to date has focussed on the early years and the secondary sector with little investigation of the early adolescent in the middle years (Arbuckle & Little, 2004). As stated in Chapter 1, early adolescents are defined as between 10 to 15 years of age (Luke, et al., 2003; Murphy, 2002; Pendergast & Bahr, 2005) with middle schooling pertaining to years four to nine (Carrington, 2002; Knipe, 2007; Luke, et al., 2003). Calls for a student-centred approach to teaching and learning in middle schooling based on a constructivist model are advocated throughout the literature (Burvill-Shaw, 2004; Carrington, 2006; Chadbourne, 2001).

Beaman et al. (2007) have identified growing rates of disruptive behaviour displayed by boys as they move into adolescence. Further evidence of the strong link between boys' disruptive behaviour in childhood continuing into adolescence, was found in an extensive study conducted by Broidy et al. (2003). In this study, physical aggression in primary school (ages 5 to 12) boys was a clear indicator of delinquent early adolescent behaviour. This correlation between patterns of aggressive/acting-out and risk-taking behaviours in early adolescent boys has continued to be well-documented in the literature (Campbell, et al., 2006; Granic & Patterson, 2006; Lochman, et al., 2010; Thompson et al., 2011). A noted presence of antisocial behaviour in early adolescence appears to parallel low academic success, inept social skills and problematic behaviour at school (Broidy, et al., 2003; Campbell, et al., 2006).

The early adolescent is becoming an increasingly independent and social human being, living in a rapidly changing world. Chadbourne (2001) noted challenges associated with adolescent students included being difficult to manage, high rates of disillusionment, disengagement, mental illness and minimal learning progress. Furthermore, Yonezawa et al. (2009) highlighted that the chasm between what schools provide and the needs of the adolescent had grown alarmingly. Without a sense of connection and belonging, growing isolation manifests itself and can become a perpetual negative influence fuelling disengagement (Marks, 2000).

In exploring early adolescent perceptions of teacher and peer supports relative to engagement, Patrick et al. (2007) concluded perceptions affect engagement which in turn affects achievement. Similarly, in a study of middle school students, Wang

and Holcombe (2010) established further evidence of the relationship between a supportive classroom context, engagement and academic achievement of seventh grade students. Recently, Dotterer and Lowe (2011) also confirmed classroom context to be a significant predictor of behavioural engagement (on-task behaviour and paying attention) for early adolescent students with prior achievement difficulties. A classroom environment that provides opportunities to participate through quality instruction will most likely increase engagement (Wang & Holcombe, 2010). An important component of this environment is quality relationships between the teacher and the student. Relationships beyond the family system are very important to the early adolescent. By establishing a strong connection with the early adolescent, the teacher can become a significant adult. This is particularly important in relation to students with challenging behaviour who are at risk of disengagement. A caring, respectful teacher can help to promote a sense of self-worth and belonging, improving behavioural engagement and subsequent academic outcomes (Dotterer & Lowe, 2011).

Early adolescence is a time of multiple points of impact from peers, adults (parents/teachers) and biological changes (Lochman, et al., 2010; Weisner & Windle, 2004). These can have a negative effect on some early adolescent boys, increasing the likelihood of high risk-taking behaviours such as unlawful activities, substance abuse and violence (Thompson, et al., 2011). Findings reported by Lochman et al. (2010) suggested successful interventions for these early adolescent boys be ongoing. Provision of sustained behaviour support and intervention requires long-term commitment. This study raises the very real practical considerations of human and financial resourcing at a regional level. In 2011 behaviour staffing and funding in the region of this study was all but halved, while the referrals from schools requesting behaviour intervention for problematic students had doubled in 2011 and tripled in number in the first quarter of 2012. Half the number of behaviour staff and triple the number of referrals has meant it is a huge challenge to provide timely and ongoing support for increasingly complex cases requiring extensive behaviour intervention.

From an ecological systems point of view, understanding serious, disruptive behaviour in terms of systems of influence surrounding the student demonstrating the problematic behaviour, is a step towards making intervention more purposeful and sustainable in the long term (Dotterer & Lowe, 2011; Marks, 2000). A suggested

element of long-term intervention was the involvement of the disruptive student's parents/carers in preventative programs. One of the indicators for the serious, disruptive behaviour identified in the literature was dysfunctional family environments. Wiesner and Windle (2004) used the term "unsupportive" (p. 432) while Lochman et al. (2010) described "unstable and risky contexts" (p. 595). In the middle school years contact between intervention staff and families decreased compared to that in the first years of schooling (Lochman, et al., 2010). If establishing productive partnerships between the interventionist and the family member(s) is flawed, the likelihood of successful intervention outcomes would seem greatly reduced. In contrast, Marks (2000) concluded parental involvement for middle school students had little effect on improving engagement. It is possible this may be due to the importance adolescents place on the support and approval of non-parental adults (Wang & Holcombe, 2010).

Relatively little research has addressed the connection between the developmental needs of adolescents and the supportive behaviour management processes required to produce improved outcomes (de Jong, 2003). The negative behaviours of disruption and disengagement demonstrated particularly by the boys, are indicative of a reactionary response to not having developmental needs met (Meece, 2003). To proactively prevent and reduce the likelihood of disengagement for early adolescent boys requires the provision of a quality school environment. Essential characteristics of such an environment include: strong student-teacher relationships, explicit instruction, clear expectations, consequences for inappropriate behaviour and a calm, non-confrontational tone (Dotterer & Lowe, 2011; Patrick, et al., 2007; Wang & Holcombe, 2010). Such characteristics are embedded within the PBS framework. PBS is now discussed in relation to its application to school-wide settings (SWPBS) and individualised interventions that support students demonstrating serious, disruptive behaviour.

2.4 POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR SUPPORT (PBS)

With the emphasis on preventative practice, PBS is a promising alternative to a reactive, punishment-type approach to behaviour (Hieneman, et al., 2005; Kern, et al., 2009; Medley, Little, & Akin-Little, 2008; Sailor, et al., 2007; Sugai & Horner, 2006; Warren, et al., 2006). It is within this PBS framework that intervention for early adolescent boys occurs and is the primary focus of this research. For this

reason, positive behaviour support can be considered a starting point for understanding behaviour intervention. When all the elements of PBS are applied school-wide, the result is school-wide positive behaviour support (Sailor, et al., 2007; Sugai & Horner, 2006). The focus upon the individual is expanded to incorporate the systems of the school community.

SWPBS endeavours to enhance a school's capacity as a learning organisation and to implement effective systems and practices to prevent problem behaviour (Senge et al., 2000; Sugai & Horner, 2006; Warren, et al., 2006). Combining components from PBS such as prevention, maximum participation, ongoing assessment and person-centred planning, SWPBS provides a foundation of effective practices to reduce problem behaviour and increase academic outcomes (Hieneman, et al., 2005; T. J. Lewis, et al., 2004; Simonsen, et al., 2008). When PBS is applied at the school-wide level, many commonalities can be drawn between best practice in middle schooling and behaviour support for early adolescents. SWPBS creates a school environment that is caring and supportive of all students and in doing so naturally addresses the specific needs of the early adolescent (quality student-teacher relationships, quality instruction and positive climate) to promote increased learning engagement (Dotterer & Lowe, 2011).

Throughout the last decade, research has provided ample evidence that the implementation of the SWPBS framework is a successful, proactive approach to addressing discipline problems in schools (Hieneman, et al., 2005; Kern, et al., 2009; T. J. Lewis, et al., 2004; Medley, et al., 2008; Sailor, et al., 2007; Simonsen, et al., 2008; Sugai & Horner, 2006; Warren, et al., 2006). The implementation of SWPBS is guided by four elements that are integrated within the organisational system (see Figure 2.1). Together, these elements provide schools with the opportunity to effectively organise resources and adopt effective practices (Sugai & Horner 2006). Outcomes to be achieved are decided upon and must be measurable using data specific to each individual school. Practices should be established that promote desired student social and academic competencies. Ensuring new or existing systems support teachers to implement practices effectively, is essential to achieving outcomes.
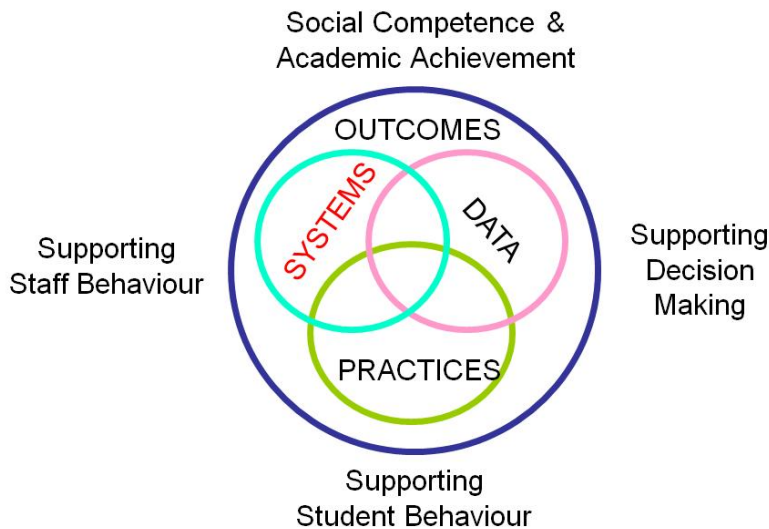
Figure 2.1. The four elements of SWPBS.

Source: www.pbis.org/presentation/default.aspx

Positive and safe behaviour is promoted within a three-tiered model of prevention with individualised intervention for those students at greatest risk being found in the tertiary tier or red zone of the PBS triangle (Figure 1.2). Provision of intervention for these students has greater likelihood of achieving and maintaining sustained outcomes if the systems surrounding that student are driven by evidenced-based practice such as PBS (Kern, et al., 2009; Sugai & Horner, 2006; Warren, et al., 2006).

The tertiary prevention tier (red zone) uses methods of a highly individualised nature to improve quality of life (QOL) and to reduce the frequency of serious, disruptive behaviour. Examples of QOL improvements can encompass developing a sense of belonging, establishing friendships within the school and community contexts and participating in meaningful activities. Like the secondary level (yellow zone), this tertiary tier is about reduction of the intensity and the impact of high-level behaviour (Sugai & Horner, 2006). Supports are governed by the data, outcomes and practices defined in terms of the individual student's needs. Individuals in the tertiary tier are the 1 to 5 % of the school population that fail to respond to universal and secondary tier (green and yellow zone) prevention strategies. Demonstrated behaviour at this tertiary level can be characterised by serious, unsafe behaviour that can place the student on suspension, or at risk of suspension and possibly school exclusion. It is essential that the nature and effectiveness of the primary and

secondary interventions are adjusted, reapplied and assessed prior to moving to the tertiary tier. "Simply put, this three-tiered system provides support to all students based on their level of need" (Sailor, et al., 2007, p. 371).

Gable (2004) pointed out all conceptual frameworks have their limitations and SWPBS is no exception. Much of the research details the components of SWPBS and provides factors to assist implementation. The majority of the research focuses on the primary and secondary tiers of implementation and whole school successes (Carr, et al., 2002; T. J. Lewis, et al., 2004; Luiselli, Putnam, Handler, & Feinberg, 2005; Sailor, et al., 2007; Simonsen, et al., 2008; Warren, et al., 2006). Bradley et al. (2008) noted that for many PBS schools, implementing the yellow and red zone levels was unsustainable due to the high level of human resources required on an ongoing basis. Without this level of support, it is highly unlikely the students in the red zone will function successfully within the parameters of the school system. As previously introduced, the ever-increasing rates of referrals requesting behaviour intervention for red zone students are testament to the validity of this opinion.

2.5   FUNCTION-BASED INTERVENTION

Literature from the United States voices grave concerns for the considerable lack of progress evident in the outcomes for children with emotional and behavioural disorders (EBD) (Bradley, et al., 2008; B. G. Cook, Landrum, Tankersley, & Kauffman, 2003; Kern, et al., 2009; Sutherland, et al., 2008; Wehby, Lane, & Falk, 2003). In a review of data from longitudinal studies investigating interventions and outcomes for students with EBD, Bradley et al. (2008) revealed disappointing progress, high rates of suspension and poor quality of life. Similarly, Kern et al. (2009) reported that for these students outcomes remain unaltered.

As previously mentioned, assessment of an individual's serious behaviour is conducted using a functional behavioural assessment (FBA) that looks in depth at the relationships between all systems and the occurrence of the problem behaviour (Gable, Hendrickson, & Van Acker, 2001). Function-based assessment tools such as indirect observation, direct observation, interviews, behaviour rating scales and environmental manipulation are commonly used to inform function-based interventions (Carr, Horner, & Turnbull, 1999; Lane et al., 2007; Sugai, Lewis-Palmer, & Hagan-Burke, 2000). Data from function-based assessments are used to

develop PBS plans based specifically on the needs of the individual student (Gable, et al., 2001; Scott et al., 2005). Extensive research supports the notion that function-based interventions are an effective and efficient method of reducing problem behaviours in the classroom situation (Blood & Neel, 2007; Filter, et al., 2009; Lane, Weisenbach, Little, Phillips, & Wehby, 2006; Liaupsin, Umbreit, Ferro, Urso, & Upreti, 2006; Newcomer & Lewis, 2004; Shumate & Wills, 2010). Newcomer and Lewis (2004) compared function-based interventions and non-function-based interventions in three case studies of primary school-aged students demonstrating problem behaviours in the classroom setting and concluded the efficacy of the function-based interventions was upheld in all three cases. The validity of using direct and indirect procedures to identify behaviour function for students demonstrating severe behaviours was highlighted. These procedures positively contributed to the development of more effective PBS plans. Similarly, Ingram, Lewis-Palmer, and Sugai (2005) compared function-based and non-function-based interventions for two early adolescent boys and found the most effective decrease in problem behaviour was evident when function-based interventions were applied.

Further evidence of the success of function-based interventions was reported by Shumate and Wills (2010) whose study was a functional analysis of the disruptive behaviour of three young students. Like Lane, Rogers, et al. (2007), the teacher was instrumental in the implementation of the intervention. Successful intervention was indicated by decreased rates of disruptive behaviour and increased instances of on-task behaviour.

By incorporating function-based interventions with an emphasis on academic variables, Filter and Horner (2009) have further confirmed the relationship between low frequency, disruptive behaviour and academic deficits. Moreover, in their study of two early adolescent boys, functionally-based classroom interventions yielded best results in reducing instances of problem behaviour perpetuated by academic difficulties. The lack of academic achievement for students with emotional and behavioural disorders is directly related to their behaviour problems, minimising access to effective instruction (Sutherland, Adler, & Gunter, 2003; Sutherland, et al., 2008; Warren, et al., 2006; Wehby, et al., 2003). Unfortunately many teachers perceive behavioural and academic deficits as distinct from each other when research clearly shows that the emphasis needs to be on interventions that address both the

academic and behavioural skill deficits of the student (Lechtenberger, et al., 2008; Sutherland, et al., 2008).

Effective interventions often result in increased opportunity for viewing both academic and behavioural deficits as "problems of learning" (Gable, et al., 2001, p. 249). In a longitudinal study of children from low-socioeconomic areas, S. Miles and Stipek (2006) investigated the connection between aggression and low levels of literacy—a connection found to strengthen over time. Furthermore, it was proposed that reading problems and an increase in task difficulty are likely contributors to aggression. Similarly, P. L. Morgan, Farkas, Tufis and Sperling (2008) reported reading difficulties strongly predicted challenging behaviours that included externalising behaviours and disengagement. The authors suggested the importance of developing interventions focussed on both reading and disengagement.

With minimal data from function-based interventions conducted with middle school students, Lane, Rogers, et al. (2007) investigated the effectiveness of function-based interventions with increased involvement from the classroom teacher in many aspects of the process. The interventions were for two students (including a year eight boy identified with antisocial behaviours) in the red zone of the PBS triangle who had failed to respond to all prior efforts of support. It was concluded teachers were able to implement function-based interventions successfully with favourable maintenance results.

Comprehensively and accurately implementing behaviour intervention is a key factor in achieving improved student outcomes and is known as treatment integrity (Gresham, 1989; Noell et al., 2000). Increasing the teacher's capacity to successfully implement the PBS plan and sustain that implementation in the long-term, is a primary objective of a consultant's role (DiGennaro, Martens, & Kleinmann, 2007). In this study that consultant is the Advisory Visiting Teacher-Behaviour who works collaboratively with the classroom teacher to develop and implement the PBS plan.

Finding practical, context-specific ways to produce meaningful change to serious, disruptive behaviours is vital if interventions are to be sustainable long-term. Several studies have examined the positive and negative implications for school staff in implementing behaviour interventions. Barriers to successful plan implementation are lack of time and poor contextual fit with daily school routines (Bambara & Knoster, 2009). Success is more probable if efficient, purposeful processes are a

'good fit' with the unique characteristics of the school setting (B. G. Cook, et al., 2003; Kern, et al., 2009; Van Acker, Boreson, Gable, & Potterton, 2005).

2.6   PBS AND ABA – A COMPATIBLE FIT

Guiding and facilitating behaviour intervention, the AVT works within a service delivery model of PBS. This in turn is built upon a solid foundation of the science of applied behaviour analysis (ABA). Together ABA and PBS are a compatible fit providing a framework of how best to assist staff in schools cope with very problematic student behaviour. ABA has its roots in behaviour theory. Behaviourists believe all behaviour is observable, measureable and influenced by environmental factors. An important objective of ABA is to change the conditions surrounding the behaviour to reduce or stop the undesirable behaviour and increase appropriate behaviour. The focus is upon determining the antecedents or events that trigger the behaviour, alter the consequences maintaining the behaviour and reinforce the desired behaviours.

ABA is the practical application of behaviour theory to real life contexts; hence the methodology, procedures and tools are used for and are integral to behaviour assessment and intervention. PBS, in addition to origins in ABA, draws from ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1992) and the influence of multiple systems on an individual's behaviour and development. Drawing on new perspectives is essential for the survival of PBS—if PBS is to be relevant and sustainable across an ever-widening range of contexts (Dunlap, Carr, Horner, Zarcone, & Schwartz, 2008). Moving beyond the prescriptive boundaries of the ABA emphasis on experiments and direct observations, PBS is inclusive of descriptive research methods, case study and qualitative data (Carr, et al., 2002; Dunlap, et al., 2008). This greater flexibility with research methodology is demonstrated in the current study which is a multicase study utilising data from description, interviews, self-reports and checklists in conjunction with traditional direct observations.

Recently, research outlining the relationships, commonalities and differences between PBS and ABA (Dunlap, et al., 2008; Filter, et al., 2009; Johnston, Foxx, Jacobson, Green, & Mulick, 2006; Tincani, 2007; M. J. Weiss, DelPizzo-Cheng, LaRue, & Sloman, 2010) has been accompanied by disquiet surrounding the defining of PBS and whether it is a standalone science (M. J. Weiss, et al., 2010) or a service

delivery model. This debate can be traced to 2002 when Wacker and Berg argued that PBS was a service delivery model almost indistinguishable from ABA. However, since then, there has been growing controversy over the integrity with which PBS applies core principles of ABA. Johnston et al. (2006) were critical of the emphasis PBS places on values and the lack of skill of PBS people in delivering authentic ABA competencies. From my position as an AVT implementing PBS in schools, it appears that ABA can become 'lost in translation' in the primary school setting. The majority of teaching staff appears to have little understanding or interest in the theory or technical language associated with ABA. PBS on the other hand 'speaks to the masses' in its practical application and context-specific language.

Over 20 years ago Axelrod, Moyer and Berry (1990) explored the inherent nature of the lack of take-up of behavioural procedures by classroom teachers. The authors highlighted the crucial need for behavioural consultants to understand the underlying reasons for teacher dismissal of behaviourally-based interventions. Reasons cited included 'an image problem' perpetuated by early animal studies; the perceived negativity of the language, for example, punishment, extinction; and the emphasis on control over another to effect a change in behaviour. While the AVT needs to take this point under consideration, there is minimal evidence of this line of thinking in the present study context. Skinner and Hales (1992) proposed a significant barrier to teacher use of ABA procedures stemmed from the differences in teacher "explanations of why people behave the way they do" (p. 221). This fundamental discrepancy in belief systems of the behaviour consultant and the classroom teacher gives rise to contrary views of where the source of behaviour change lies. Teachers believing the answers lie within the student are in direct contrast to the ABA emphasis on observable behaviour as the source of behaviour change.

One of the suggested strengths of behaviour consultation offered by Erchul and Schulte (2009) that has relevance to the context of the AVT, is its ABA foundation. Working within a framework of positive behaviour support has meant that processes and procedures used by the AVT are driven by a combination of behavioural and ecological systems theory and the science of ABA. This combination provides a broader perspective of behaviour intervention that is a closer contextual fit to the school setting. Factors such as collaboration, problem-solving, social validity and

relationships can encourage a higher rate of acceptability by staff of proposed interventions (Dunlap, et al., 2008; Tincani, 2007). Therefore, it could be suggested that PBS is contributing to bridging the gap between teacher and behaviour consultant beliefs regarding the origins of behaviour, as well as a more pragmatic model of service delivery. Gutkin (1993) argued for the compatibility between behavioural and ecological perspectives to be embraced and developed as teachers endeavour to address challenging behaviour. The AVTs operationalise this compatibility on a daily basis as an integral aspect of their professional practice. With common science, procedures and objectives, PBS and ABA endeavour to achieve sustainable behaviour change in a respectful manner (Dunlap, et al., 2008; M. J. Weiss, et al., 2010).

The combination of ABA and PBS provides a more teacher-friendly pathway to intervention. More often than not the classroom teacher has knowledge of information about school, classroom and family associated with the intervention. This ecological knowledge can be a significant, meaningful contribution not only to the data collection process of intervention but also toward strengthening the collaboration between AVT and the classroom teacher. As an active contributor to information collection in context, the classroom teacher develops greater understanding and knowledge around positive behaviour support interventions for serious, disruptive behaviours. As Tincani (2007) stated, "PBS provides a framework within which practitioners and parents can become familiar with evidence-based practices that are directly and immediately relevant to their everyday work without the necessity of expert training in behavior analysis" (p. 493).

Recently, Moreno and Bullock (2011) proposed the congruence between PBS and function-based interventions be utilised and applied in classrooms to assist students demonstrating challenging behaviour prior to the behaviour resulting in suspensions and exclusions. The AVT is well-positioned to help the teacher transfer the strategies that are developed for the student demonstrating serious, disruptive behaviour to other students in the class who may be displaying problematic behaviour. Crucial to the implementation of any intervention strategy is teacher acceptance. To increase the likelihood of acceptance, the AVT must secure a relationship of mutual trust and respect with the teacher. Relationship building is a critical step of consultation.

2.7   BEHAVIOUR CONSULTATION

Behavioural consultation is a model of human service delivery with the primary objective of intervening successfully into a school-based problem situation. It has been described as an indirect service where a consultant works collaboratively with the teacher (consultee) to bring about a change in another person's behaviour (Martens & DiGennaro, 2008).

Bergan's (1977) behavioural consultation (BC) model has become the model upon which all other consultation models are based. Components of Bergan's model of behavioural consultation are consistently listed in the research as: problem identification, problem analysis, plan implementation and problem evaluation (Bergan, 1995). In criticism of the behavioural consultation method, Witt, Gresham and Noell (1996) pointed out one of the many weaknesses associated with the method was a lack of adherence to behavioural practices. An ongoing debate ensued, culminating in Noell, Gresham and Duhon (1998) concluding that regardless of the differences of opinion outlined in the literature, the need to produce effective and efficient school-based consultation was a given. Greater attention to environmental influences across a wide range of contexts was suggested to enhance quality interventions (Gutkin, 1993).

Typically, consultation in the school situation is a teacher (consultee) working with a consultant (psychologist) to find a solution to a problem (learning/behavioural) the teacher is having with a student (client) (Bergan, 1995; Conoley, Conoley, & Reese, 2009; Erchul & Schulte, 1996, 2009; Kratochwill, Sladeczek, & Plunge, 1995; Kratochwill & Van Someren, 1995; Wilkinson, 2006; Witt, et al., 1996). The aforementioned literature has discussed behavioural consultation in an educational setting largely from the standpoint of the school-based psychologist as the consultant.

Within Education Queensland, the AVT is the behaviour consultant and the procedures used closely parallel the components detailed in the school-based problem-solving model set out by Kratochwill, Elliott and Carrington-Rotto (1995). While the four stages of the behavioural consultation model remain constant, a first stage of relationship building has been added to precede the problem identification stage. Represented in Figure 2.2, the process is cyclical and often the stages overlap and recur as needed.
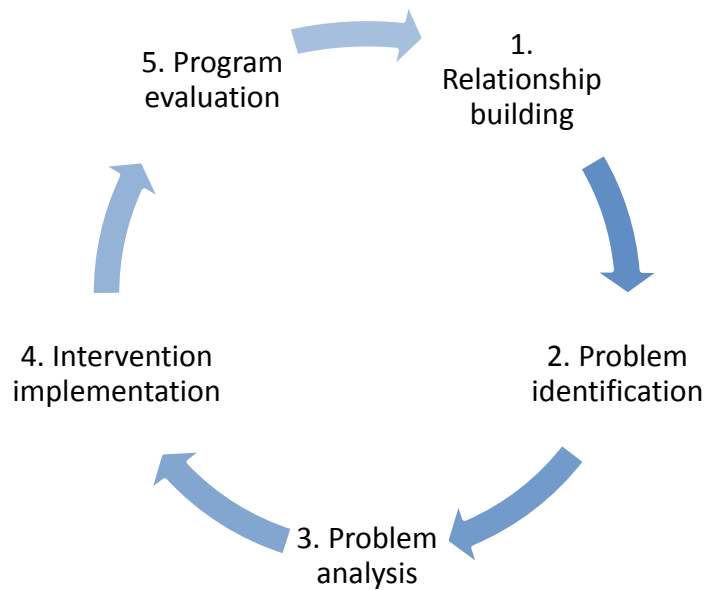
Figure 2.2. School-based problem-solving model of consultation.

A summary of the elements comprising the stages are firstly, establishing productive partnerships that consider time constraints, preferred ways of working and active listening. Secondly, the problem behaviour is defined in observable terms and data collection begins. Thirdly, data collection continues and the PBS plan is collaboratively written with the teacher. Fourthly, the plan is implemented by the teacher with the consultant supporting through teaching, demonstration and feedback. Finally, progress and the extent to which the outcomes were achieved for the student are evaluated (Bergan, 1995; Codding, Feinberg, Dunn, & Pace, 2005; Frank & Kratochwill, 2008; Kratochwill, Sladeczek, et al., 1995; Wilkinson, 2006). Throughout all stages of the model, the teacher is the linchpin in the delivery of the PBS plan and is instrumental in the plan's success or failure.

The inclusion of the ecological systems perspective is well-supported by the literature as the necessary expansion to the behavioural consultation model if it is to function effectively "in this era of high-stakes, team-based service delivery" (Martens & DiGennaro, 2008, p. 163). Gutkin (1993) argued for the "fusion of the behavioral and ecological perspectives for school-based consultants" (p. 96) and suggested that awareness of the influencing systems surrounding the student

warranted acknowledgement and investigation in an effort to provide comprehensive interventions. Similarly, Kratochwill, Sladeczek and Plunge (1995) advocated for the service delivery model of behavioural consultation to acknowledge the work of Bronfenbrenner's (1992) ecological systems theory, taking into account influences beyond the child. Recently, Conoley et al. (2009) echoed these sentiments when calling for attention to be paid in school-based consultation to "ecologically valid approaches" (p. 237). Furthermore, the complexity of the systems of influence impacting upon the student (the client of the consultation process) and the need for these to be incorporated as a logical aspect of consultation was emphasised. This is the nature of the consultation approach taken by the AVT staff of this study.

Because the work of the AVT is guided by a PBS framework based upon both behavioural theory and ecological systems theory, the nature of their work contains elements that expand the role of the AVT beyond that of the consultant described in the behavioural consultation model (Bergan, 1995). These include the ongoing direct observation of individual students and teachers in classrooms; face-to-face interviews with parent/carer, administration and community services staff throughout the consultation period; comprehensive data collection from a variety of sources (checklist, behaviour rating scales, test results); and regular, direct contact with the student (Martens & DiGennaro, 2008). These attributes characterise the AVT's role as practical, cooperative and a contextual fit with the realities of the school setting.

The PBS framework governing the work of the AVT equates to evidence-based practice that provides a comprehensive approach to the complex problems of behaviour intervention in schools (Bergan, 1995; Conoley, et al., 2009; Erchul & Schulte, 1996, 2009; Wilkinson, 2006; Witt, et al., 1996). After a comparative analysis of five models of consultation, Lopez and Nastasi (2008) proposed Bronfenbrenner's (1989) ecological systems theory as the core of future best practice for consultation service delivery. The authors listed change at various levels, links across systems, relationships between people in and across systems, and a framework for guiding consultation and intervention as the reasons for embracing an ecological perspective.

What appears to be absent from the PBS literature is discussion around what constitutes best practice in terms of consultancy and what impact this has upon intervention implementation (Illback & Pennington, 2008). While not the primary

purpose of this study, identifying possible facilitating elements of consultation that might improve plan implementation begins to address this research gap. Noell and Witt (1999) and Noell (2008) found there is little information about the extent to which teachers actually implement interventions and what enablers and barriers impact intervention including specific consultant behaviours that may affect teacher behaviour changes. For teacher behaviour change to occur, the relationship between the AVT and the teacher needs to be strong and mutually trustworthy.

2.7.1 Relationship building

As the first step in the problem-solving model of consultation, relationship building is worthy of close attention. Although portrayed as a single stage of the process (see Figure 2.2), developing and maintaining positive and encouraging relationships with all stakeholders involved with the student and the intervention should be ongoing and woven throughout all stages of consultation (Zins & Erchul, 1995). Establishing productive partnerships provides a safe, supportive situation for teachers to step out of their comfort zone and make changes to long-standing classroom routines and practices (Conoley, et al., 2009; DiGennaro, et al., 2007). Unsurprisingly, the relationship between the AVT and the teacher has a significant influence on acceptability and implementation of the plan. For an intervention to be acceptable, it must have social importance and be validated by those responsible for its implementation. If it is viewed as relevant and purposeful then it is much more likely to be implemented (Wolf, 1978).

Noell (2008) asserted there are few data to substantiate the claim that high acceptability promotes integrity of implementation. Low acceptability may be in some cases 'as good as it gets' because "we consult primarily to intervene on behalf of the students" (Noell, 2008, p. 323). Easton and Erchul (2011) recently reinforced the importance of continued investigation into the probable link between acceptability and outcomes. The acceptance of an intervention and the actioning of the intervention as planned, are central factors of successful consultation. Creating a supportive, trusting relationship can promote a safe and secure environment where the teacher responsible for the PBS plan implementation feels confident to take risks and employ new strategies.

Two essential factors that contribute to the building of supportive relationships are effective communication and interpersonal skills. Skills include showing

empathy through active listening, paying attention, questioning, conveying positivity, appreciation of differences and following through (Kampwirth & Powers, 2012; Rathvon, 2008; Zins & Erchul, 1995). Allen and Graden (2002) suggested checking for understanding, explicitly describing expectations and responsibilities and the use of simple, not complicated technical terms as enablers to building strong relationships. With a trusting, respectful relationship as a foundation, the AVT can potentially utilise social power and interpersonal skills to influence teacher behaviour (Erchul, Raven, & Whichard, 2001; Wilson, Erchul, & Raven, 2008).

Awareness and understanding of the nature of the consultant's influence on teacher behaviour is an important consideration in enabling the AVT to sustain productive relationships and be as effective as possible in helping teachers implement behaviour interventions. Beginning with the work of French and Raven (1959), social power and its place within the context of consultation has been debated throughout the literature (Erchul & Raven, 1997; Gutkin, 1999; Martin, 1978). Defined as the likelihood one person may be able to influence another's behaviour and attitudes, social power influences the interpersonal relationships inherent in consultation (Erchul & Raven, 1997; Erchul, et al., 2001; Martin, 1978; Wilson, et al., 2008).

Wilson et al. (2008) found soft power bases were those preferred by teachers and were most likely to produce change in their behaviour. Collectively gentle and considerate in nature, a soft power base is closely connected with the development of productive partnerships with teachers. In an effort to change aspects of a teacher's behaviour, it would seem that the AVT who provides encouragement, positive acknowledgement and portrays a genuine caring approach, may have greater rates of success. There is minimal research that provides descriptors of characteristics of the consultant that may facilitate teacher behaviour change with regard to increasing willingness, confidence and acceptance of suggested new strategies into their classroom system (Conoley, et al., 2009; Noell & Witt, 1999).

Martin (1978) proposed that the ideal relationship forged between the consultant (in this case the AVT) and the teacher reflects a balance of power. The AVT has the knowledge specific to behaviour and the teacher possesses the expert knowledge of their classroom context. Acknowledging this balance indicates to the teacher that their input and place in the intervention process is highly valued. It could

be argued that this respectful relationship that encourages teacher 'buy-in' increases the likelihood that an intervention will be implemented and with integrity (Wilson, et al., 2008).

2.7.2 Performance feedback

Implementing the intervention with a high degree of accuracy and quality places the goal of consultation firmly upon the behaviour changes of the consultee (the teacher) (Conoley, et al., 2009; Noell, 2008). Extensive research has been conducted in an effort to determine what factors positively contribute to the quality and ongoing implementation of an intervention. Noell et al. (2005) found that provision of performance feedback to teachers improved the likelihood of both. Same day feedback following direct observation and the sustained support of teachers by the consultant beyond eight weeks, were found to be beneficial to behaviour support plan implementation (Codding, et al., 2005). Some studies have examined intervention implementation in relation to academic performance (Noell, Witt, Gilbertson, Ranier, & Freeland, 1997; Noell, et al., 2000) or in special education facilities (Codding, et al., 2005; DiGennaro, et al., 2007). Integrity of intervention implementation is assisted by performance feedback which in turn helps the teacher acquire and master the necessary skills to implement the PBS plan strategies (Noell, Duhon, Gatti, & Connell, 2002; Noell, et al., 1997).

Variations in teacher ability to sustain the implementation of an intervention were found by Noell et al. (2000) who concluded that differences in teacher capacity are an important consideration for the consultant. More recently, Easton and Erchul (2011) investigated teacher perceptions of monitoring and feedback during the intervention implementation stage. Receiving performance feedback face-to-face and once per week was the preferred method expressed by teachers. Face-to-face communication with the consultant that focussed upon finding solutions for current and anticipated problems was highly valued as purposeful content for feedback sessions.

The extent to which the AVT applies aspects of the behavioural consultation model to daily practice is unknown. As seen throughout the previous discussion, this approach to behavioural consultation is well-supported by the literature as evidenced-based practice. It is hoped that the current study will contribute to this research through the investigation of research sub-question 3: Which elements of the

problem-solving consultation model might facilitate integrity of PBS plan implementation? It is expected that the AVT has a vital part to play in empowering the teacher toward effective implementation of the behaviour intervention. In future directions for consultation, Frank and Kratochwill (2008) proposed the creation of a document summary containing "an organized, sequential set of recommended practices, considerations and activities" (p. 27) to guide effective consultation practices in schools.

2.8   INDIVIDUALISED BEHAVIOUR SUPPORT PLANS

Unfortunately, as emphasised by Akin-Little, Little and Delligatti (2004), intervention is largely a reactive process rather than a preventative one. Schools in the region of this study for example, more often than not refer a student *after* the serious, disruptive behaviour has occurred. Following a request for assistance via a behaviour referral, the primary tool used to facilitate behaviour change is the individualised positive behaviour support plan. PBS plans are centred on prevention. They are multi-elemental, containing many strategies including teaching alternative or new skills to the student, as well as achieving sustainable outcomes (Bambara, 2005b).

The PBS plan is based on the applied behaviour analysis core principle of behaviour being functionally relative to the environment. Behaviour is scrutinised in terms of its function in relation to the events before the serious, disruptive behaviour and the consequences that follow. The focus is on observable patterns of behaviour in the context in which it occurs. The context is the classroom that is viewed as an ecological system exerting influence on the student (Bronfenbrenner, 1992; Conroy, Sutherland, Haydon, Stormont, & Harmon, 2009). The AVT uses the function-based data to inform further investigation into the possible impact of wider systems of influence. It is the interconnectedness of the information that is the content of the PBS plan.

Blood and Neel (2007) looked at the application of functional behaviour assessment by school staff in developing behaviour support plans for students in the red zone demonstrating serious, problematic behaviours. The findings showed very little assessment information had been used to formulate individualised interventions resulting in the majority of the behaviour support plans being generic. Supportive of

these findings, Scott et al. (2005) found school teams failed to use behaviour function information to inform intervention. Likewise, Van Acker et al. (2005) pointed out that school teams omitted to transfer FBA information to the behaviour support plan.

With implementation of the PBS plan primarily the domain of the classroom teacher, Lane, Rogers, et al. (2007) showed that classroom teachers have the capability to implement behaviour interventions for serious behaviour with integrity and success. Collaboration with local behaviour specialist staff was paramount to the more effective use and monitoring of the function-based data incorporated into the behaviour support plan. The success of intervention implementation was significantly influenced by factors such as technical quality, social validity and integrity of implementation or treatment integrity which are key considerations when measuring the effectiveness of the individualised behaviour support plan (Benazzi, Horner, & Good, 2006; C. R. Cook, et al., 2007; Gable, et al., 2001; Hieneman, et al., 2005; Medley, et al., 2008). These components briefly introduced below are central to this study and are discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4. While not further detailed in Chapter 4, quality of life is also an important contributing factor to the success of an intervention and it too is discussed in the following section.

2.8.1   Technical quality

The technical quality of the PBS plans in this study refers to the quality of the plan. This was measured using an evaluation tool: the Behaviour Support Plan Quality Evaluation Guide II (BSP-QE) (Browning-Wright, Saren, & Mayer, 2003). Plan content is assessed in relation to "principles of behaviour change found in applied behavior analysis" (Medley, et al., 2008, p. 97). Key components are rated according to explicit definitions. Plan quality reflects the probable positive influence on behaviour change for the student.

Utilising the BSP-QE, individual studies conducted by C.R. Cook et al. (2007) and Medley et al. (2008) examined the technical adequacy of behaviour support plans within differing contexts. The results were troubling, with most of the plans analysed in the C.R. Cook study found to be inadequate in their quality—35% of which were written by trained staff. Medley et al. (2008) deemed the plans underdeveloped. Similarly reported, Van Acker and colleagues (2005) concluded plan quality to be disappointing. With the PBS plans in the current study also developed by trained staff, these findings raise concerns. This concern is

compounded by the fact that an assessment of PBS plan quality in the current region of study has never been undertaken. Furthermore, unlike colleagues in the United States, PBS plans are not required by law, therefore it could be suggested the AVT staff do not have the same necessity to adhere to strict requirements governing their PBS plan content as do their overseas counterparts. The quality of PBS plan content is critical because it is the blueprint for action. However, technical quality alone is not enough—the plan must also fit the context for which it is intended. This is called contextual fit.

2.8.2   Contextual fit

In evaluating the quality of a PBS plan a key consideration is how the elements of the plan "fit well with the people and environments where implementation occurs" (Koegel, Koegel, & Dunlap, 1996, p. 10). This is termed contextual fit and the key role it plays in behaviour interventions is well-documented (Bambara, et al., 2009; Benazzi, et al., 2006; Carr, et al., 1999; Crone & Horner, 2003; Gable, et al., 2001; Koegel, et al., 1996; Sutherland, et al., 2008). There is little chance of success if attention has not been paid to the values, routines, predicted length of sustainability and resources associated with plan implementation. Without a match of the strategies and requirements of the PBS plan to the unique characteristics of the teacher and the classroom, acceptability of the intervention by the teacher responsible for the implementation is less probable. Flexibility from the AVT is necessary in incorporating elements that promote as close a match as possible of the PBS plan to the context. Elements that may be considered include teacher belief and attitude about student behaviour, teaching style, classroom environment and the organisational school systems. It can be argued that contextual fit is a prerequisite to social validity. Moreover, social validity as described by Filter et al. (2009) "plays an essential role in developing PBS interventions with contextual fit" (p. 222).

2.8.3   Social validity

Schwartz and Baer (1991) described the original definition of social validity as "when applying programs in real-life settings, assess early how acceptable those programs will be to their relevant audience" (p. 191). Social validity seeks to determine the level of 'buy-in' of stakeholders involved in the intervention implementation and the importance they place upon it. Wolf (1978) introduced the notion of social validity to not only encourage a more user-friendly perception of

applied behaviour analysis but also to increase its importance in daily practice. Social validity is gauged according to the "significance of goals, appropriateness of procedures and importance of the effects" (Wolf, 1978, p. 207) held by those involved in the implementation—primarily the classroom teacher. Furthermore, as previously mentioned, this greatly influences the contextual fit and in turn the strategies contained in the PBS plan. Acceptance and importance of the intervention will be heightened if the PBS plan is closely aligned to existing school-wide systems and classroom procedures and practices (Gable, et al., 2001) leading to an increased chance of the plan being implemented with integrity.

2.8.4   Treatment integrity

Treatment integrity is the degree with which the intervention is implemented as planned. It is also referred to as intervention or treatment fidelity (Gable, et al., 2001; Lane & Beebe-Frankenberger, 2004). Behaviour interventions such as the individualised PBS plan are designed to change a targeted behaviour that is unacceptable within the environment in which it is occurring. Unless the treatment integrity is known, the reason for any behaviour change and the role played by the intervention cannot be determined. Identified as a crucial factor in behaviour change, poor treatment integrity becomes a barrier to improved learning outcomes (Jeffrey, McCurdy, Ewing, & Polis, 2009). Without the measure of treatment integrity, the researcher cannot be certain the behaviour change was directly attributable to the intervention and its absence "poses a major threat to the internal validity of the study" (Lane & Beebe-Frankenberger, 2004, p. 131).

Cook et al. (2007) suggested that the relationship between plan quality and student outcomes is dependent upon the treatment integrity. In assessing the treatment integrity together with the social validity of high quality plans, the effectiveness of the individualised PBS plan can be judged with greater accuracy (Gable et al., 2001). Together, these variables negate the question of whether a failed plan was the result of the plan quality, the implementation, or both.

The lack of acknowledgement of the influence of teacher behaviour upon students often impedes the implementation of the behaviour support plan (Kern, et al., 2009; Swinson, Woof, & Melling, 2003). Gable et al. (2001) pointed out the close link between teacher acceptance of the behaviour support plan and the fidelity of implementation. If the teacher is not committed to the intervention it is highly

likely the integrity of the implementation will be compromised (Gable, et al., 2001; Noell, et al., 2002). More recent insight has suggested investigation into the degrees of acceptability that contribute to intervention implementation be carried out (Forman & Zins, 2008; Noell, 2008).

Bambara et al. (2009) concluded that shifting a teacher's thinking about the student and the behaviour intervention is one of the biggest barriers to implementation. Other suggested barriers to implementation emerging from the involvement of the class teacher have included: difficulty of content, knowledge and understanding, teacher time required, lack of training and lack of confidence (Akin-Little, et al., 2004; B. G. Cook, et al., 2003). Ensuring teachers are active participants in the development of behaviour intervention and achieving social validity of goals, procedures and effects of the intervention, is crucial to promoting teacher confidence and in turn, integrity of implementation. An additional factor important to the success of implementation is quality of life (Carr, et al., 2002; Carr, et al., 1999; Crone & Horner, 2003).

2.8.5   Quality of life

When investigating the lack of effectiveness of individualised interventions for student diagnosed with emotional and behavioural disorders (EBD), Kern et al. (2009) proposed that a crucial oversight had been a lack of focus on the quality of life (QOL) of the student. Improving QOL and reducing problem behaviour are the central objectives for PBS (Dunlap, 2006). Progress in these areas provides the benchmark of successful intervention.

Making positive changes to QOL requires a holistic approach to the student's well-being, including mental health. Australian statistics have suggested that up to 14% of Australian children and adolescents have mental health issues, with 10% of boys aged 13 to 17 years diagnosed with Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) (Sawyer et al., 2000 cited in Maybery & Reupert, 2006). QOL improvements are reflected in lifestyle changes which encompass a vast number of aspects situated within the social and personal spheres. It is impractical to suggest that every PBS plan can reflect such a detailed and comprehensive approach. Nonetheless, Carr et al. (2002) stressed the significance of collective positive lifestyle changes for the long term.

The literature is conclusive that early adolescents are at risk of mental health issues (Carrington, 2002; de Jong, 2003; Lechtenberger, et al., 2008; Pendergast & Bahr, 2005). Maybery and Reupert (2006) presented a student-centred approach to mental health that articulates support mechanisms within the same framework of tiered prevention advocated by PBS. This approach demonstrates the vital connection of PBS to the mental health community focus on systems thinking (Levine, 2007) and the imperative need to establish interagency connections (psychologists, Department of Child Services, Mental Health Agencies, Guidance Officers and the like) to help meet the needs of these children, and in doing so improve their quality of life (Carr et al., 2002).

With the majority of the behaviour intervention research coming from the United States, there is a distinct lack of Australian studies that have addressed effective intervention for boys in the middle years who display serious, disruptive behaviour (Gulchak & Lopes, 2007). Furthermore, the US research primarily focuses on students contained in special education classrooms (Blood & Neel, 2007), the early childhood sector (S. Miles & Stipek, 2006; P. L. Morgan, et al., 2008; Shumate & Wills, 2010), students with diagnosed disabilities (Ingram, et al., 2005) and students demonstrating low-frequency behaviours (Filter & Horner, 2009). Therefore, there is clearly a need for Australian research into effective behaviour intervention for early adolescent boys who display serious, disruptive behaviour.

2.9   SUMMARY

This chapter has reviewed the literature surrounding behaviour intervention for students displaying serious, disruptive behaviour. Literature pertaining to early adolescent boys and middle schooling has brought into focus the unique needs of this group of young people. Adolescent boys generate increased concern given their higher levels of disengagement from learning that often manifests itself in the form of serious, disruptive behaviours.

Emotional, behavioural and cognitive engagement were introduced as the three identified components of engagement needing due consideration to increase the likelihood of achieving increased student participation in learning. It was proposed that this is best achieved through the application of an ecological systems approach which addresses the multidimensional nature of student engagement. The importance

of a caring, safe classroom environment to encourage positive student engagement was also suggested.

PBS was reviewed in this chapter with the focus upon establishing clear expectations and explicit teaching of the skills students need to function successfully within the school environment. Provision of support for not only the problematic early adolescent boy but for all students, has the greatest chance of success if provided within an PBS framework (Bradley, et al., 2008; Conroy, et al., 2009; Jeffrey, et al., 2009; Kern, et al., 2009). The efficacy of function-based interventions that include necessary environmental changes was presented as most successful in reducing the frequency of problem behaviour.

The foundations of the behavioural consultation model were discussed as they pertained to the role of the AVT when helping teachers to co-construct and implement behavioural interventions to address challenging student behaviour (Kratochwill, Elliott, et al., 1995). The five stages of the problem-solving consultation process were explained, as was the importance of the AVT and the teacher working collaboratively to problem-solve and arrive at possible solutions. Relationship building and the importance of providing performance feedback were highlighted as two important enabling factors to increasing the likelihood of intervention success (Frank & Kratochwill, 2008; Rathvon, 2008; Zins & Erchul, 1995). Established in the literature as key elements of successful PBS plan implementation, technical quality, contextual fit, social validity, treatment integrity and quality of life were outlined emphasising the crucial role each plays in contributing to effective intervention outcomes.

Central to this research is the belief that students' behaviour is best understood from a positive behaviour support perspective that is informed by both applied behaviour analysis (Baer, et al., 1968) and ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1992). In the past, many developmental theories have investigated children and adolescents from a narrow contextual focus. What has transpired with the advent of ecological systems theory is the consideration of a multitude of contexts that are actively influencing not only the individual, but also one another. The strength in the union of both theories encourages a balanced and comprehensive approach to intervention for problematic behaviour. Each theory will now be introduced and discussed in Chapter 3.

3 Theoretical Framework

As introduced in Chapter 2, the practical application of behavioural theory to real life situations is known as applied behaviour analysis (ABA) (Powell, Symbaluk, & MacDonald, 2005; Simonsen & Sugai, 2009). The combination of ABA and ecological systems theory underpins the behaviour service delivery model of the current study. Together they provide the theoretical foundation which informs behaviour intervention practices for students displaying serious, disruptive behaviour.

Many of the practices and strategies provided by ABA are utilised by the AVTs, beneath the umbrella of PBS, to understand and change problematic student behaviours (Bambara, 2005). From a behavioural and ecological standpoint, PBS promotes problem behaviour as being sustained by environmental factors and utilises function-based assessment to analyse behaviour to collaboratively develop comprehensive interventions (Carr, et al., 2002; Sugai, Horner, et al., 2000).

In this chapter, ABA and ecological systems theory are further expanded in terms of the inclusion of key principles into the PBS framework in relation to behaviour intervention in the school setting. Informed by both theories, the composition of the PBS plan is discussed. The PBS plan is used by the AVT to guide the intervention from paper to action. Essential to facilitating this transporting of strategies is the consultation process. Behavioural consultation, its origins and application to role of the AVT, are also considered.

3.1 APPLIED BEHAVIOUR ANALYSIS (ABA)

Up until the 1960s the majority of behavioural research was conducted in laboratories with animals as the subjects of experiments (Landrum & McDuffie, 2008). Recognition of the possibility and value of the application of behavioural theory to problems being experienced by real people in real contexts, led to the emergence of ABA (Baer, et al., 1968; Landrum & McDuffie, 2008; Simonsen & Sugai, 2009). As noted by Baer et al. (1968), ABA scrutinises behaviour through observation and measurement to determine what environmental factors are maintaining the problem behaviour. Similarly, Powell et al. (2005) defined ABA as

"a technology of behavior in which the basic principles of behavior are applied to real-world issues" (p. 36). Behavioural theory used in the practical sense in schools to study and analyse behaviour, saw the growth of ABA.

ABA views behaviour to be observable, measurable and environmentally controlled (M. J. Weiss, et al., 2010). Apart from being applied, behavioural and analytic, an ABA approach to investigating behaviour is focussed upon clear descriptions, procedures, the importance of behaviour change and generalisation of behaviour to other settings (Baer, et al., 1968). As previously introduced, PBS was derived predominantly from ABA and it is a PBS framework that guides the behaviour intervention delivered by the AVTs in this study. The principles of ABA constitute the procedures and strategies used for behaviour intervention. These include direct observation of the behaviour in the setting in which it is occurring, collection and analysis of data, and identification of possible reinforcement subject to the demonstration of socially appropriate behaviour (Baer, Wolf & Risley, 1968).

When collecting information to aid with intervention, the strategies employed by the AVT are centred on the elements of function-based assessment derived directly from ABA. Consideration of all the elements of function-based assessment is imperative to understanding behaviour from a functional perspective (Bambara & Kern, 2005; Dunlap, et al., 2008). The information gathered is used primarily to decide the function of the behaviour. Function of behaviour is at the core of intervention and means we ask questions such as: What purpose does the behaviour serve for the student? Does the behaviour allow the student to escape something or obtain/get something? Information about the form, context, setting events and triggers of the behaviour helps to isolate contributing factors and inform effective strategies of prevention.

Form is what the behaviour looks like and includes specific actions that constitute the behaviour (topography), how often the behaviour occurs (frequency), and how long a behaviour instance may last (duration) (Dunlap et al., 2010). Context is the environment within which the behaviour is located. The context includes setting events, triggers and maintaining consequences. Setting events are circumstances the teacher usually has little influence over, often occurring in contexts beyond the classroom but influencing student behaviour considerably. These may include tiredness, medication, noise, fighting and removal from family.

Maintaining consequences are the elements that the student can escape and/or access as a result of performing the disruptive behaviour. Finally, triggers are the specific events that instantaneously cause the particular problematic behaviour to occur (Bambara & Knoster, 2009; Dunlap, et al., 2010).

ABA function-based tools assist the AVT to define the behaviour function, collect data, alter the environment and develop multiple intervention strategies to reduce problem behaviour (Bambara, 2005; Dunlap, et al., 2005). As a result, aspects of ABA become common inclusions in classroom behaviour management practices and are regular features in behaviour intervention procedures (Wearmouth, Glynn, & Berryman, 2005). As noted by Simonsen and Sugai (2009) the most common application of the principles of ABA has been in support of individuals requiring a PBS plan as part of the intervention process.

ABA methods have been criticised for being controlling and coercive (Leslie, 2005; Wilcyznski, Fisher, Christian, & Logue, 2009). This is, according to Akin-Little et al. (2009), one of the many misconceptions held about ABA. Other criticisms include the absence of attention to emotion, an over-emphasis on praise and disregard for the cognitive ability of the student exhibiting disruptive behaviour (Wearmouth, et al., 2005). Counter to these criticisms is extensive research substantiating behavioural interventions as highly effective (Blood & Neel, 2007; Dunlap, et al., 2010; Filter & Horner, 2009; Ingram, et al., 2005; Ishuin, 2009; Lane, Smither, Huseman, Guffey, & Fox, 2007; Lane, et al., 2006; Newcomer & Lewis, 2004; Shumate & Wills, 2010). Many common teaching practices such as direct teaching, pre-correction, explicit teaching of rules and contingent praise, reflect behavioural principles that have been found to be highly effective (McInerney, 2005; Sutherland, et al., 2003; Sutherland, Wehby, & Copeland, 2000).

ABA has provided the foundational elements for behaviour intervention services for this study. Under a PBS framework this foundation has been overlayed with ecological systems theory thus expanding ABA to include influences from wider contexts that impact behaviour. With the focus of behaviour analysis on environmental influences, intervention has moved toward the incorporation of ecological perspectives when supporting teachers coping with serious, disruptive behaviour. Previously, a student-withdrawal model isolated intervention from environmental influences. The key role of the teacher and relationships affecting

student behaviour were largely ignored. Locating the behaviour firmly within the environment in which it is happening reflects the greater inclusivity that is characteristic of an ecological approach to behaviour intervention. Used in conjunction with ABA, this approach provides a depth of understanding of students and their behaviour that is absent in either theory alone (Gutkin, 1993).

Ecological systems theory views the child as immersed in complex, connected relationships and directs behaviour intervention practices toward a detailed examination of the relationships integral to student development. Utilising knowledge of impacting systems of relationships, ecological systems theory provides the detailed information necessary to build a comprehensive picture of the child and his/her problematic behaviour. Together with a firm foundation of applied behaviour analysis, ecological systems theory provides a valuable contribution to behaviour intervention practice and is discussed in greater detail in the following section.

3.2   ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS THEORY

Ecological systems theory draws heavily upon the work of Kurt Lewin (1935) who defined the environment in terms of "topological territories" and represented the relationship between the person and the environment in the following formula: $B = f(PE)$ [Behaviour is a joint function of person and environment] (Lewin, 1935, p. 73 as cited in Bronfenbrenner, 1992). Bronfenbrenner (1992) transformed the formula substituting development for behaviour: $D = f(PE)$ [Development is a joint function of person and environment] (p. 190). Characteristics of the person occur on both sides of the equation as stated by Bronfenbrenner, "simply put, the developmental outcomes of today shape the developmental outcomes of tomorrow" (p. 191).

Child and adolescent development has undergone many theoretical changes over time (Jensen & Larson, 2005). In the past, the primary focus of investigation from a behaviourist perspective has been restricted to a single context such as the family and its impact on the child. With the advent of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory, came the inclusion of multiple contexts in the study of child development. Bronfenbrenner (1979b) defined development "as a lasting change in the way in which a person perceives and deals with his environment" (p. 3). The environment is scrutinised in terms of a system incorporating multiple contexts within which are influences such as mothers, fathers, teachers, spouses,

friends, relatives and community members. The child is embedded within these multiple "co-constructed contexts" (Jensen & Larson, 2005, p. 9) moving backwards and forwards between them, absorbing beliefs and behaviour patterns that impact development (Bronfenbrenner, 1992; Fine, 1985; Palincsar, 1998; Schunk, 2008).

Acknowledgement of the important role these belief systems and patterns of behaviour play in shaping behaviour is fundamental to effective behaviour intervention because it is from these belief systems teachers and parents draw when making decisions regarding the student (Bronfenbrenner, 1992). It is the nature and complexity of the interrelationships occurring in the child's environment that constantly influence the behaviour patterns and behaviour function (Fine, 1985). Further, if the participants in the development process are supportive, development will be positive. However, if the participants' roles are characterised by dysfunctional behaviour, the development process will become fractured and delayed, often leading to disengagement (Marks, 2000; Yonezawa, et al., 2009).

In the classroom environment student behaviour and attitudes interact with teacher behaviour and attitudes producing and sustaining patterns of behaviour. The social relationships occurring in the context of the classroom have a notable impact upon the development of the adolescent and their engagement in school (Dotterer & Lowe, 2011). Ecological systems theory views the relationship between teacher and student as being cyclical and part of the system of the classroom. The classroom system is positioned within the microsystem, one of five systems of influence defined in ecological systems theory. These systems of influence are now explained.

3.2.1 Systems of influence

The ecological environment is seen as a nested concentric structure with each circle representing a system and each system contained in the next. These systems are the micro-, meso-, exo-, macro- and chronosystems and are represented in Figure 3.1 (Santrock, 2007). The structure and substance of micro-, meso- and exosystems are similar and function in similar ways in a given society or social group.

From: Santrock, 2007
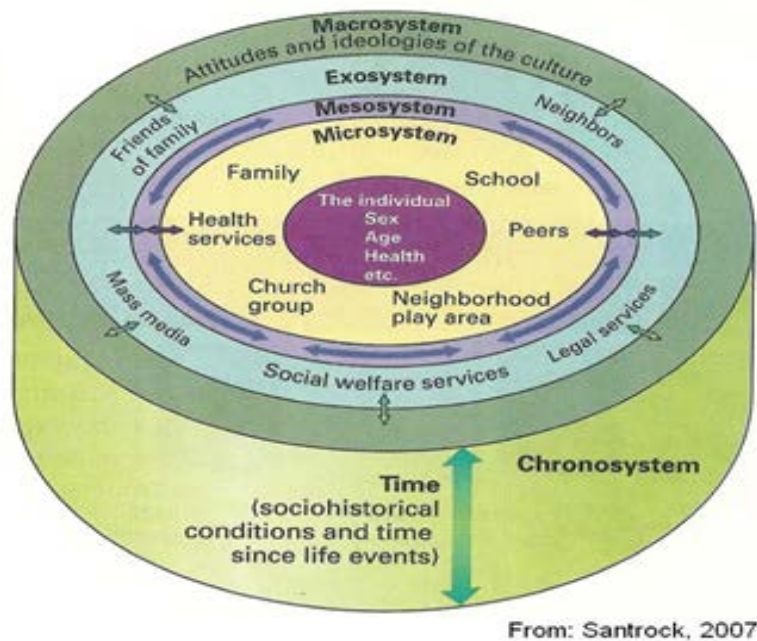
Figure 3.1. Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Theory of Development.

3.2.1.1 Microsystem

This is a single, immediate setting containing the developing person. In the context of this study the developing person is the child who displays serious, disruptive behaviour and the settings include family, peers, school and neighbourhood. Three elements of the microsystem are the activities, roles and relationships with which the developing person actively participates. In 1992, Bronfenbrenner extended the definition of the microsystem to incorporate the characteristics of significant others in the system with the emphasis being upon "temperament, personality, and systems of belief" (p. 227). From close scrutiny of the experiences and interactions within the microsystem settings of school and peers, the AVT gleans pertinent information that guides subsequent behaviour interventions.

3.2.1.2 Mesosystem

The mesosystem is the interrelations between settings (for the child this could be home, neighbourhood, school and peer group) in which the developing person participates—interconnections and events taking place continuously. These events are those that occur in the context of the family, school and peer environments and the relationship of the experiences from one context to the other. In terms of

behaviour intervention, it is within this mesosystem that behaviour in multiple settings can be observed.

3.2.1.3 Exosystem

The exosystem is the setting in which the developing person may not necessarily go but the events that happen there do have a significant effect upon their development. For the child this can include: parent's workplace, sibling's class, family friends and community support networks (Bronfenbrenner, 1986). "Exo- and mesosystems have a key feature in common: both deal with the *relations between two or more settings*" (italics in original) (Bronfenbrenner, 1992, p. 237).

3.2.1.4 Macrosystem

The macrosystem is the blanket term encompassing the general patterns of behaviour and development occurring within and across systems. It is the outermost environmental circle and includes all other systems. Change made here (and in the exosystem) may provide the greatest potential for sustainable change to occur (Bradley, et al., 2008; Fine, 1985) that results in improved outcomes for children with behavioural difficulties.

3.2.1.5 Chronosystem

This system encompasses time as a key factor of the developing person's environment. Changes that occur within this system can be either external or internal and as the developing person matures their reaction to change will vary. Changes can include a new job, starting school, going to a new school or moving house. These types of changes are termed ecological transitions (Bronfenbrenner, 1979a). Given that these transitions represent significant life events, the subsequent effect on the developing child and others requires a change in their behaviour to align with the new expected behaviours for the new situation.

Understanding serious, disruptive behaviour requires a comprehensive approach that has accounted for factors occurring in and across systems, as well as influences of environments both immediate and afar. The child displaying the serious, disruptive behaviour is the least empowered element of the system or systems within which they are experiencing conflict. Ecological systems theory has proposed that an individual does have a degree of control over their environment but

only if they have been given the opportunity to build their capabilities within the context of their environment. Therein, lays the purpose of behaviour intervention.

3.3 ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS THEORY, ABA AND BEHAVIOUR INTERVENTION

The combination of ABA and ecological systems theory provides a comprehensive approach to the complex problems of behaviour intervention in schools. The application of ecological systems theory to the school context has been referred to as an ecosystemic perspective and validated as a preferred approach to understanding challenging behaviours and strengthening intervention (Molnar & Lindquist, 1989). Understanding adolescent behaviour from this ecological perspective has been identified as a key principle of best practice in addressing disruptive student behaviour (de Jong, 2005a). From this viewpoint, the focus of behaviour intervention is on the problem context, not the behaviour (Carr, et al., 2002). The following points summarised from Fine (1992) outline underlying assumptions associated with this approach:

- the child is immersed in systems and settings that have reciprocal influences upon each other

- behaviour is contextual and interactive

- assessment is concerned with patterns of interaction and perceptions of behaviour

- improving the 'goodness of fit' between the child and the environment is of paramount importance to successful intervention.

Through this ecological lens the aim is to discover why there is a mismatch between the child and the environment and how the environment can be altered to lessen disruption and increase more desirable behaviour. The AVT typically operates in the classroom and playground environments and to a lesser extent has involvement with the home environment. These environments constitute the micro- and mesosystems of ecological systems theory (Fine, 1985). Relationships and connections occurring in and across these environments are systematically observed. In addition, the nature of the behaviour and the factors fuelling the disruptive behaviour are investigated using function-based assessment procedures from ABA.

As introduced earlier in this chapter, three important elements of this function-based assessment are form, context and function. Data about these elements are collated and collaboratively analysed to draw conclusions and devise suitable intervention strategies to be articulated in the PBS plan. The necessity for a PBS plan arises when intervention strategies have failed to improve challenging student behaviours by way of conventional classroom management techniques (establishing clear expectations, explicit teaching of desired behaviours and positive reinforcement). The PBS plan is individualised and specific to the student and the function of their problematic behaviour.

In the United States it is a mandatory requirement that behaviour plans be developed for students with problematic behaviours. These plans also require functional behaviour assessment (FBA) as the foundation for data collection prior to implementation (Bambara, et al., 2009; Benazzi, et al., 2006; Killu, 2008; Shumate & Wills, 2010). In contrast Australia has no such statutory requirements, however behaviour staff in this study do follow similar practices and guidelines as already introduced and have completed training in conducting FBAs and PBS plan development (Conway, 2006; N. R. Weiss & Knoster, 2008).

An extensive literature base has detailed essential elements to be contained in effective plans and interventions, as well as identifying potential barriers and enablers to successful implementation (Blood & Neel, 2007; Ingram, et al., 2005; Ishuin, 2009; Killu, 2008; Lane, Smither, et al., 2007; Newcomer & Lewis, 2004). The PBS plan is multi-elemental, can be presented in various formats and contains key elements. The sections of the PBS plan used by the AVTs in the region of study are shown in Figure 3.2. Briefly, these sections are: a behavioural statement (also called an hypothesis) in which the target behaviour is defined in clear, operational terms; proactive strategies for teaching alternative behaviours; strategies for altering the environment and reducing the impact of setting events; procedures for responding to critical situations (reactive strategies); and long-term supports (Bambara, 2005b; Bambara & Knoster, 2009; Sugai, Lewis-Palmer, et al., 2000). Ideally, the formulation of the PBS plan is carried out collaboratively with the AVT, teacher, parents/carers, other school personnel and any additional stakeholders influential in the child's life. As an ecological intervention, the aim of the PBS plan is to replace

negative behaviours with positive behaviours and subsequently effect positive change throughout the overlapping systems (Ayers, et al., 2000).

POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR SUPPORT PLAN

Student Name: **Year:**   **Class Teacher:**   **Start Date:**   **Review:**

__Hypothesis:__

Behaviour Concerns	Triggers/Antecedents	Goal
		• **Behavioural Goal (broad):** • **Behaviour Goal (specific):** • **Social Goal:**
Operational Definitions: • **Off task behaviour includes** • **On task behaviour includes**		

PROACTIVE STRATEGIES			REACTIVE STRATEGIES
ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGIES	**PROGRAM/SKILL DEVELOPMENT**	**FOCUSSED SUPPORT/ REINFORCEMENT**	**SITUATIONAL RESPONSES**

Figure 3.2. Positive behaviour support (PBS) plan headings.

The person primarily responsible for the actual implementation of the PBS plan is usually the classroom teacher. Many variables affect the extent to which the plan is implemented with integrity. Most commonly labelled in the literature as treatment integrity, treatment integrity simply means: Was the PBS plan put into practice the way it was supposed to be? Because the AVT as the consultant is the chief catalyst in this paper to action process, it is important to address the theoretical foundations of consultation and its relevance to the current model of service delivery and PBS plan implementation.

3.4   FROM PAPER TO ACTION

Introduced in Chapter 2, the evolution of behavioural consultation has been ongoing from an article written in 1967 (Bergan, 1995). Borrowing from and building upon the work of D'Zurilla and Goldfried (1971) the model included four stages and an emphasis on problem-solving (Erchul & Schulte, 2009; Martens & DiGennaro, 2008). Kratochwill, Elliott, et al. (1995) added an additional stage— relationship building—as the first stage. It is this problem-solving model that guides AVT practice when providing behaviour intervention in the school setting.

Goldstein and Brooks (2007) defined behavioural consultation as including "indirect service delivery, a problem-solving focus, and the development of a collegial relationship between consultant and teacher" (p. 33). These three factors are characteristic of the procedures and processes used in the daily practices of the AVT. Although behavioural consultation shares many core beliefs with other consultation models, it is the focus upon a problem-solving process and elements of ABA that ensure close alignment with the service delivery model adhered to by the AVTs. It is a service delivery model of evidence-based practice that utilizes ABA practical tools with a focus upon the impact of multiple environments on the student (Kratochwill et al., 1995). Building strong relationships with teachers to obtain trust and confidence is pivotal to successful consultation and implementation of the PBS plan (Conoley, et al., 2009).

Behavioural consultation targets individual students and their problematic behaviour and has a long history of empirical support (Lopez & Nastasi, 2008). Consultation has been referred to by Erchul and Schulte (1996) as a "work in progress" (p. 346) and that is also the case in the workplace of the AVTs. Methods and practices are continually evolving with the increased demand for effective behaviour intervention services to be provided to schools. More and more, meaningful behaviour change for students increasingly hinges upon consultation as the effective means of transporting behaviour intervention from paper to action in schools (Frank & Kratochwill, 2008).

3.5   SUMMARY

The application of behavioural theory to the classroom in the 1960s encouraged the growth of applied behaviour analysis (Landrum & McDuffie, 2008). In this chapter, applied behaviour analysis was described detailing the procedures and processes used in addressing serious, disruptive behaviour. In particular, the function-based elements used for the assessment of student behaviour were discussed.

A comprehensive description of ecological systems theory was provided and its application to the school context explored in relation to behaviour intervention practices. Ecological systems theory was suggested as an avenue towards an in-depth understanding of children, their relationships and the environments in which they

function. The strength in using a combination of elements from both ABA and ecological systems theory to deliver behaviour support to teachers of students with challenging behaviour, was emphasised (Carr, et al., 2002). The practical application of both theories was reflected in the composition of the PBS plan which was outlined and an example of its structure provided. Of prime importance to the success of any behaviour intervention is the integrity of implementation. Ensuring this is considered was reiterated within the context of the problem-solving consultation model and the daily practices of the AVT.

It was suggested that because the student demonstrating the serious, disruptive behaviour is the least empowered member of the system within which he or she is experiencing conflict, it is the responsibility of the teacher and the AVT to provide opportunity for the student to build and develop the necessary skills to cope within that system. The ability of the AVT to influence teacher behaviour was noted as a key factor to ensuring these opportunities are forthcoming for the student. It was argued that changing teacher behaviour is contingent upon the quality of the relationship established between the AVT and the teacher. The purpose of intervention is to help the student. The job of the AVT is to help the teacher help the student.

The focus of this study was to look closely at individually designed PBS plans and their influence in changing the task engagement of boys displaying serious, disruptive behaviour. Enablers to PBS plan implementation from the perspective of the teacher and the process of consultation were sought. Measurement of technical adequacy, social validity and treatment integrity will contribute to comprehensive data on the PBS plan and its success in generating positive student outcomes. Data collection and analysis using multicase study research will be detailed in the following chapter in addition to the context for the study and a discussion of the nature of the research design and methods.

4 Research Design and Methods

A multiple case study approach was used to investigate behaviour intervention for boys displaying serious, disruptive behaviours. This chapter provides the rationale and a description of this approach within a primary school context. The focus of the study is articulated in the primary research question: How do individually designed positive behaviour support (PBS) plans influence change in task engagement of year four to year seven boys who display serious, disruptive behaviour? I believed that the acquisition of a deeper understanding of behaviour intervention would inform quality practice in supporting disengaged and disruptive students. In seeking to understand behaviour intervention in greater detail, this study also addressed the following three sub-questions:

1. How do participants perceive serious, disruptive behaviour?

2. What are possible enablers to effective teacher implementation of the PBS plan?

3. Which elements of the problem-solving consultation model might facilitate integrity of PBS plan implementation?

The investigation consisted of two phases. Phase 1: Perceptions provided vital perceptual information utilising data collected from 22 semi-structured interviews. Perceptual information is the participant's view of their world and their perception is their reality (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). Detailed descriptions of AVT understandings of their core business—behaviour intervention, with particular reference to serious, disruptive behaviour and individualised PBS plan development—were obtained from 11 interviews. Exploring teacher perceptions related to the nature of serious, disruptive behaviour, strategies employed and student-specific goals for intervention, was the purpose of the 11 classroom teacher interviews of this phase.

Phase 2: Plan Implementation, detailed the complexities of the development and implementation of five individually designed PBS plans for boys from year four to year seven displaying serious, disruptive behaviour. Classroom teacher perceptions of serious, disruptive behaviour, as well as enablers and barriers to PBS

plan implementation, were also sought. Contextual information played an important role in this phase, providing a snapshot of the school culture and classroom environments in which each case study was situated. As noted in Chapter 3, the reciprocal relationship between a person's behaviour and their environment is the basis of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory—the theoretical framework for this study. Primarily conducted through direct observation in the classroom setting, this phase mapped the steps followed by the AVT from paper (receiving the referral for a student with serious, disruptive behaviour) to action (development and implementation of the individualised PBS plan). Significant to this phase was determining the influence of each PBS plan in producing desired outcomes for the targeted students.

Influencing positive change in behaviour is the main objective of the PBS plan. The underlying assumption of the current study was that a technically high quality PBS plan implemented with integrity would most likely influence positive changes in student task engagement because:

- the function of the behaviour was clearly outlined in the plan

- specific individual intervention strategies outlined in the PBS plan to address the specific function were a contextual fit

- there was a high degree of social validity prior to and following implementation (Benazzi, et al., 2006; Van Acker, et al., 2005).

This assumption was tested through the three research sub-questions designed to provide the maximum information about the effectiveness of the PBS plan implemented in the classroom context. Behaviour intervention for students with complex behaviours has been less than effective in producing improved outcomes (Bradley, et al., 2008; Kern, et al., 2009). This study is significant in that the findings are being used to improve PBS plan quality and implementation and are providing guidelines to inform the consultation process between AVT, the teachers and the schools they help.

The research design is presented in this chapter together with an explanation of the intended case selection, data collection, data analysis processes and procedures, ethical considerations and issues of trustworthiness. A brief summary concludes the chapter.

4.1 CASE STUDY DESIGN AND METHODS

Examining the complex nature of serious, disruptive behaviour is best suited to both the descriptive detail and reflective nature of case study design (Stake, 2005). Case studies are typically, albeit not exclusively, associated with the constructivist paradigm. Constructivist elements such as co-construction between researcher and participant; observations and interviews in natural settings; and descriptive methods are reflected in this study (Hatch, 2002). Simons (2009) described the main objective of case study research as "to present a rich portrayal of a single setting to inform practice, establish the value of the case and/or add to knowledge of a specific topic" (p. 24). Case study design is most applicable to the current study because it allows an in-depth study of a real life situation—boys displaying serious, disruptive behaviour within the classroom environment (Denscombe, 2007; Hatch, 2002; Marshall & Rossman, 2006).

Case study design operates within explicit parameters of space and time (Merriam, 2009; Simons, 2009; Stake, 1995). As stated by Stake (1995) "we take a particular case and come to know it well, not primarily as to how it is different from others but what it is, what it does" (p. 8). Through five case studies, the current research aimed to understand more fully how behaviour intervention influenced students demonstrating serious, disruptive behaviour. In exploring the complexities of implementing behaviour intervention for boys, Merriam's (2009) three features of case study design were integral to each case. These were particularistic (focus on the phenomenon of behaviour intervention), descriptive (a descriptive final product) and heuristic (a deeper understanding of behaviour intervention for serious, disruptive behaviour).

Three types of case study—intrinsic, instrumental and collective (or multiple) case study—have been identified (Stake, 2005). Multiple case study or multicase study is defined by Stake (2005) as occurring when "a number of cases may be studied jointly in order to investigate a phenomenon, population, or general condition. It is instrumental study extended to several cases" (pp. 445-446). With the current study's objectives focussed upon an accurate understanding of the influence of intervention, multicase study design is a highly pertinent choice (Bassey, 1999; Stake, 2006).

4.1.1   Multiple case study

Through five individual case studies this multicase study examined the complexities of behaviour intervention for boys displaying serious, disruptive behaviour. It was conducted with beliefs and assumptions about behaviour emanating from both applied behaviour analysis and ecological systems theory. As outlined in Chapter 3, this theoretical foundation has at its core the relationships and influences of systems on behaviour and development in context. Portraying unique contexts, the people and the happenings within, is an important aspect of multicase study. In the current study, observing and describing the implementation of the PBS plan in each of the five different contexts created five different pictures of intervention. The activities within each context provided insight into the interactions and influences specific to each situation (Stake, 2006). Each case study student and their problem behaviour were inextricably linked with environmental and contextual influences. Through close observation, data collection and analysis, these contexts were more fully understood.

Multicase study design provided the opportunity to deliver more robust findings given that the cases to be studied were deliberately chosen. Five were selected because "the benefits of multicase study will be limited if fewer than, say, 4 cases are chosen, or more than 10" (Stake, 2006, p. 22). The cases selected are representative of a purposive sample of behaviour intervention for boys displaying serious, disruptive behaviour. The PBS plan is the unit of analysis. Each of the five case studies constituted a thorough analysis of PBS plan technical adequacy, social validity, interviews, surveys and observations of the behaviour intervention process. Each case has been reported as a case and true to multicase design, has not been compared (Stake, 2006).

4.2   THE STUDY

This multicase study investigated the influence behavioural interventions have on student outcomes. The target participants were boys displaying serious, disruptive behaviours and the focus was upon the changes to task engagement influenced by the PBS plan designed specifically to change their behaviour (Conroy, Stichter, Daunic, & Haydon, 2008). The findings of this study extend the research which describes the effects of function-based interventions, in particular, interventions for early adolescent boys in general classroom settings. Following is an outline of the two

phases of the study. Table 4.1 provides a summary of each phase and associated data collection procedures.

Table 4.1

Data Collection Methods and Participants

Phase	Methods	Participants
Perceptions	Semi-structured interview 1	11 AVTs
	Semi-structured interview 1	11 teachers
	Pre-intervention acceptability rating survey	6 teachers
	30 minute partial interval (baseline data)	AVTs Researcher
	Evaluation of technical adequacy of 5 PBS plans	Researcher Reviewer
PBS plan implementation	Semi-structured interviews 2	6 teachers
	Semi-structured interviews 3	5 teachers
	30 minute partial interval (intervention data)	AVT Researcher
	Implementation checklist	AVT Researcher
	Post-intervention acceptability and importance of effects survey	5 teachers
	Treatment integrity self report	5 teachers
	Problem-solving consultation checklist	AVT Researcher

4.2.1 Phase 1: Perceptions

The focus of this phase was AVT and teacher perceptions of behaviour. For the AVT staff, particular attention was paid to his/her role as consultant within the current service delivery model. Understanding the role of the AVT required an in-depth look at processes and procedures of the service delivery model, PBS plan, and knowledge and perceptions of serious, disruptive behaviour. Phase 1 addressed

these elements by applying coding techniques to the data generated from semi-structured interviews with all participants.

Eleven AVT interviews were conducted to construct a comprehensive picture of their perceptions with reference to serious, disruptive behaviour and the phenomenon of behaviour intervention. Collection of descriptions of ways of working and the identification of strengths and weaknesses of current practice were the objectives of the interviews. I asked the AVT staff questions that explored their perceptions of serious, disruptive behaviour and the central purpose of their role (Appendix A).

Continuing the focus upon serious, disruptive behaviour, classroom teacher interviews explored perspectives on firstly, general student behaviour expectations and strategies and secondly, those specific problematic behaviours of the individual student targeted for intervention (Appendix B). Eleven teacher interviews were completed with the aim of gathering information about the nature of specific behaviours and the teacher's goals for the individualised intervention.

Developing a clearer understanding of beliefs and matters of behaviour provided a frame of reference from which to view phase two of the study—plan implementation. Cross matching the AVT perspective with the information from the classroom teacher interviews was essential to developing assumptions about the elements that are useful to the implementation integrity of the PBS plan.

4.2.1.1 Data Procedures

The current study, like many studies conducted under a PBS framework, utilised procedures of data generation from the science of ABA. Acknowledging that ABA procedures originated for experiments in controlled settings, greater flexibility in application was necessary in this study as it occurred within a school setting (Carr, et al., 2002). Supported by the literature, latitude is extended to the PBS researcher. I was therefore able to relax the tight control that traditionally accompanies the application of ABA procedures focussed predominantly on factors impacting behaviour in the immediate environment. While maintaining the integrity of ABA, this flexibility encouraged me to look at systems and factors of influence beyond the classroom. This broader view was intended to increase the effectiveness of these

procedures when utilised in case studies (Carr, et al., 2002; Dunlap, et al., 2008; Tincani, 2007; Wacker & Berg, 2002).

Together with the interviews, additional procedures used for data collection in this phase were those typically employed by the AVT during the normal course of providing intervention assistance to teachers and students. Direct observation procedures are the predominant method of data collection for both ABA and PBS and this was also the case for both phases of this study (Baer, et al., 1968; Dunlap, et al., 2008).

4.2.1.2 *Baseline data*

When problematic behaviour requires intervention, characteristics must be observed to build a picture of what the behaviour looks like. Observations conducted prior to any intervention being implemented are called baseline observations. Baseline observations provide detailed information that helps to confirm or question the initial perception of the problematic behaviour and determine if it is the behaviour to be targeted for intervention. It is from the baseline data that the AVT operationally defines the target behaviour and with the teacher, begins to develop appropriate intervention objectives and strategies. These are documented in the PBS plan.

Four to five baseline observations were collected by the AVTs and me for each of the five case study students. A partial interval recording tool (Appendix C) was used in each case and these data were complemented by information gleaned from interviews with relevant stakeholders, descriptive records of the behaviour and school behaviour records. In all cases, observations were conducted in the classroom environment where the problematic behaviour occurred. Ideally, baseline observations are continued until the data shows stability, however this was not practical or ethical in these five cases due to the serious nature of the behaviour and the subsequent collateral impact on school students and staff. Inter-observer agreement was calculated to ensure consistency and accuracy across observers. Agreement was strengthened because the target behaviours were explicitly defined and both observers are well-trained in function-based data collection techniques.

Baseline data are usually displayed graphically. Graphs display both baseline and intervention data showing behaviour change (Horner et al., 2005; Zirpoli, 2005).

Identifying behaviour changes between the baseline and intervention data is called visual analysis (Gresham & Vanderwood, 2008). The simplistic nature of the process (as opposed to complex statistical reports) means that it is more easily understood, interpreted and applied by a greater variety of people—for example, members in the school setting. Visual analysis has been used extensively in this study to report data associated with each case study's intervention results (see Chapter 5).

After the baseline data had been collected, targeted behaviour defined and behavioural objectives identified, the AVT and teacher collaboratively developed the PBS plan. It is important that the PBS plan is a contextual fit with the classroom environment and the teacher's skill and beliefs about behaviour. If so, there is greater likelihood the plan will be acceptable to the teacher and implemented with accuracy (Benazzi, et al., 2006; Forman & Zins, 2008).

While not a stage of the research as such, ensuring the five individually designed PBS plans implemented in the phase two case studies were of high technical adequacy was key to the validity of the findings of this study and a prerequisite to PBS plan implementation. PBS plans of high technical quality are more likely to be a contextual fit with the classroom environment and teacher beliefs and skills (Benazzi, et al., 2006). It is logical to assume the quality of PBS plans would influence effectiveness of intervention and subsequent student outcomes (C. R. Cook, et al., 2007). A description of the steps taken to assess the five PBS plans as high quality is now provided.

4.2.2   Quality behaviour support plans

The five PBS plans were analysed for high technical quality using the Behaviour Support Plan Quality Evaluation Scoring Guide II (BSP-QE) (Browning-Wright, et al., 2003). This scoring guide is a research-based tool for rating the content of behaviour support plans according to key elements of positive behaviour support planning. Twelve items are rated from 0-2 on a Likert scale to total a maximum of 24 points. Points are allocated as such: weak (0-12 points), underdeveloped (13-16 points), good (17-21 points), superior (22-24 points). Six assessable components were derived from the extensive research base surrounding ABA, PBS and teaming, to ensure alignment with best practice (see Table 4.1) (C. R. Cook, et al., 2007, p. 196).

Table 4.2

Descriptions and Reasons for Inclusion of Six Key Concepts of Positive Behaviour Support Planning

Key Concept	Description	Reason
Behaviour function	Behaviour serves a particular purpose for the student (e.g., positive or negative reinforcement).	The PBS plan must identify the function of the problem behaviour in order to develop a plan that teaches functionally equivalent replacement behaviour.
Situational specificity	Behaviour is related to the context/environment in which it occurs.	Something is either in the environment or NOT in the environment which increases the likelihood the behaviour will occur.
Behaviour change	Changing behaviour involves addressing both the environmental features and teaching a functionally equivalent behaviour that a student can use to satisfy the function of the behaviour in an acceptable way.	A complete PBS plan must address both strands: make environmental changes that support acceptable behaviour and specify how to teach or prompt functionally equivalent acceptable behaviour. When a plan is implemented well and change is not occurring, evaluating whether both strands were addressed is the first step.
Reinforcement tactics	New behaviour must be reinforced to result in behavioural increases, generalised performance and maintenance.	PBS plan must specify reinforcement for new functionally equivalent behaviour (PBS plans may also wish to specify general reinforcement for positive behaviours).
Reactive strategies	Implementers need to know how to handle problem behaviour if it occurs again.	PBS plan must specify reactive strategies ranging from planned ignoring, prompting the alternative replacement behaviour through distraction, redirection, and school and disciplinary required actions.
Team coordination and communications	For optimal team performance, it is important to indicate who is responsible for carrying out each element of the plan. Communication needs to be between all important stakeholders and occur frequently enough to result in the progress monitoring necessary to achieve success.	PBS plan must specify who is responsible for implementing each of the plan components in order to build a system of accountability and evaluate the fidelity of the plan. PBS plan must specify who communicates with whom, how frequently, and in what manner.

Medley et al. (2008) conducted a study into the technical adequacy of 40 behaviour support plans to examine whether schools implementing SWPBS produced better support plans than non SWPBS schools. The behaviour support plans were drawn from schools implementing SWPBS and those not (21 SWPBS and 19 non SWPBS). Two of the strategies used by Medley et al. (2008) were replicated in the current study. Firstly, identifying information was removed from the plans before evaluation with the aim of reducing response bias. Secondly, I enlisted a second reviewer, a behaviour colleague with thorough knowledge and experience in the development and writing of behaviour support plans, to evaluate the five plans I had deemed as high quality. High quality plans were defined as plans that scored within the good (17-21 points) or superior (22-24 points) categories (see Table 4.2) (Kraemer, Cook, Browning-Wright, Mayer, & Wallace, 2008, p.182). The five PBS plans were rated in the good or superior categories.

Table 4.3

Categories of Plan Quality According to the Behaviour Support Plan Quality Evaluation Guide II (BSP-QE)

Category	Points and percentage range	Description
Weak	Fewer than 12 points (< 50%)	This plan is unlikely to produce change in problem behaviour. It weakly expresses the principles of behaviour change. This plan should be rewritten.
Underdeveloped	13-16 points (51% to 69%)	This plan may produce some change in problem behaviour but would require a number of alterations for the written plan to clearly embody best practice. Consider alterations.
Good	17-21 points (70% to 90%)	This plan is likely to produce a change in problem behaviour and encourage pro-social responding, and elements of best practice are present.
Superior	22-24 points (> 91%)	This plan is evidenced-based and is likely to produce a change in problem behaviour, encourage pro-social responding, and be legally defensible.

Technical quality alone may not be sufficient to produce the desired goals of the individualised PBS plan. How the stakeholders implementing the plan perceive it is crucial to the fidelity of implementation. The teacher as the primary vehicle for implementation must believe the plan is doable and that it has socially valid goals, procedures and outcomes. This social value and acceptance is termed social validity (Lane & Beebe-Frankenberger, 2004; Miramontes, Marchant, Heath, & Fischer, 2011; Wolf, 1978). Social validity increases the likelihood of the plan being implemented as intended and ultimately, goals being achieved (Lane, Kalberg, Bruhn, et al., 2009).

As stated earlier, the social validity of an intervention is defined by the:

• social significance of goals

• social acceptance of procedures

• social importance of effects (K.L. Lane et al., 2009, p. 95).

The assessment of teacher social validity of the plan prior to implementation provided information regarding the level of commitment and acceptance of the PBS plan and whether the teacher was 'on the same wave length' as the AVT. If not, conflict of opinion and lack of commitment may have reduced the integrity of the implementation. This could produce a negative effect on the success of the PBS plan and subsequently the task engagement of the targeted student. Often not adequately addressed in the literature, social validity was thoroughly examined in this study in an effort to illuminate enablers and barriers to PBS plan implementation (Miramontes, et al., 2011).

Pre-intervention social validity was assessed through the combination of the significance of the goals section of interview 1 (Appendix B), interview 2 social acceptability of procedures (Appendix D) and a teacher pre-intervention acceptability rating survey (Appendix E). The survey used a Likert scale to determine the social significance of goals and procedures from the perspective of the teacher involved in the intervention. The interviews also focussed upon goals and procedures, checking for alignment between teacher skills and beliefs and the plan strategies. It was concluded by Lane and Beebe-Frankenberger (2004) that "constructing socially valid, effective interventions is paramount to producing academic and social gains" (p. 92). Therefore, ascertaining the social validity of the plan prior to implementation

provided the opportunity for any necessary alterations to be made to ensure the plan was purposeful and meaningful to the teacher.

In summary this phase investigated perceptions of behaviour, established baseline data of the problematic behaviour and evaluated PBS plan technical adequacy and social validity prior to implementation. Phase 2 involved the monitoring of the implementation of the plan, social validity following implementation and how the PBS plans influenced changes to student behaviour.

4.2.3 Phase 2: Plan implementation

Phase 2 was undertaken to investigate the implementation of the five individually designed PBS plans. Through five case studies, this phase sought to address the primary research question: How do individually designed positive behaviour (PBS) plans influence change in task engagement of year four to year seven boys who display serious, disruptive behaviour? In addition, investigating factors that may assist the teacher to implement the plan and the AVT to help the teacher were guided by research sub-questions two and three:

2. What are possible enablers to effective teacher implementation of the PBS plan?

3. Which elements of the problem-solving consultation model might facilitate integrity of PBS plan implementation?

Five high quality PBS plans were monitored as they were implemented by the classroom teacher with assistance from the AVT. Throughout the implementation stage, the data collected are called intervention data.

4.2.3.1 Intervention data

Intervention data were collected using the same data collection tools and in the same setting as the baseline data. These data measured behaviour changes during the implementation of the PBS plan. The data included measurement of disruptive behaviour and on-task behaviours. As with the baseline data, intervention data were collected regularly over many weeks by both the AVT and me. The data were charted on the same graph as the baseline data so the two could be compared to note any improvement in behaviour. Trends were looked for in the data to indicate progress. In this study it was desirable for the on-task behaviour to show an upward trend and the disruptive behaviour to show a downward trend. From the visual

analysis of the data, any needed alterations to the plan are highlighted and the effectiveness of the intervention can be presumed (Barlow & Hersen, 1984; Zirpoli, 2005). As with the baseline data, the partial interval tool was used for data collection and again, reliability of observations was checked through inter-observer agreements.

Phase 2 shared similarities with two studies by Lane and colleagues conducted in 2006 and 2007 respectively. Both studies investigated function-based interventions for students displaying problem behaviour where the teacher played a primary role in the implementation. K.L. Lane, Rogers, et al. (2007) focussed upon children in the red zone for whom other levels of intervention and support had failed. Both studies incorporated the components of treatment integrity, reliability, social validity, generalisation and maintenance. Integral to the intervention process, these components were also important to the current study.

Treatment integrity, or how comprehensively and accurately the PBS plan is implemented, was measured frequently by the AVT and me. Treatment integrity is a key component of intervention because the degree to which the plan is implemented as written has a direct effect on its success in producing meaningful student outcomes (B. G. Cook, et al., 2003). Social validity of the PBS plan effects was the focus for the third interview and is the key to drawing conclusions of teacher satisfaction with the outcomes and the support provided by the AVT. Both integrity of implementation and social validity are discussed in greater detail as they occur throughout the data collection and analysis process.

From the beginning to the end of the intervention period, the AVTs practical usage of the elements of the problem-solving consultation model (Kratochwill, Elliott, et al., 1995) were identified through direct observation and self-reporting. As I observed the AVTs follow the stages of the consultation model, I highlighted the elements being demonstrated on checklists (Appendix F). These checklists were examined for patterns and collated to indicate which elements of the problem-solving consultation model might possibly facilitate integrity of PBS plan implementation.

The goals of phase two were threefold, firstly, to determine the influence of the PBS plan in changing task engagement for the targeted student. Secondly, to identify possible facilitators of the problem-solving consultation model that positively contributed to successful implementation. And lastly, to add to the phase one data by exploring possible enablers of effective PBS plan implementation.

4.3 THE SETTING

Behaviour support services are provided in the region of study via a behaviour support team based at a local school site. This team comprises between six to eight AVTs and a guidance officer who together service the surrounding schools (currently 41 in number) on a needs basis. Schools refer students displaying problem behaviours for behaviour intervention assistance. An AVT is assigned to support the student, with the duration of that assistance dependent upon the complexity of the case. Behaviour support can be short-term (a number of weeks) or long-term (six months to one or two years) and often involves temporary placement of the student at an alternative education site. In the region of this study, alternative education programs are provided at two Intervention Centres located in each of the behaviour hub sites, and one Positive Learning Centre at a separate location.

The settings for phase two of the research were five primary schools in south-east Queensland located in the same geographical area. The majority of the schools in this area are situated in low-socioeconomic suburbs characterised by high unemployment and poverty. They are public co-educational schools catering for students from preparatory to year seven (aged 5 to 12 years). These schools were chosen for the following reasons: they regularly access the behaviour support services for assistance in dealing with boys from year four to year seven who display serious, disruptive behaviour; two of the schools had recently begun to implement SWPBS and were working closely with members of the behaviour team; the schools' locations were feasible (15-30 minutes from my workplace) therefore reducing time constraints associated with some factors of data collection (Marshall & Rossman, 2006).

Because I am an AVT currently working in the role of team leader, there was not the usual concern associated with transitioning from a comfortable position within the setting to the outside position of researcher. Furthermore, regular communication with staff at all schools including ongoing team work, the delivery of professional development and site visits, enabled good rapport and respectful working relationships to be established between myself, the AVT and school staff.

Written permission to conduct the research was sought from the principal of each school prior to me approaching any teachers or parent/carers. This was done in a meeting format of 30 minutes in which I clearly outlined the research purpose to

the principal and deputy principal of each school and the procedures, including the commitment required from the classroom teachers. Copies of Education Queensland's and my Queensland University of Technology's ethical clearance letters were provided to each principal together with the letter of consent for participation.

4.4   SELECTION OF ADULT PARTICIPANTS

Adult participants selected for inclusion in this study comprised AVT staff and classroom teachers. A purposeful sampling method was used to govern selection. Purposeful sampling is a common method associated with case study methodology and in this case the samples were typical by nature (Flick, 2009; Merriam, 2009). Flick (2009) referred to typical sampling as where "the field is disclosed from inside and from its center" (p. 122). Working inside the school context at the heart of behaviour intervention are the classroom teachers and the AVT. Twenty-two adult participants in total were involved in the research. Because there were differences as well as similarities between each group of adult participants, each will be discussed in turn, beginning with the AVT staff.

4.4.1   AVT staff

Before being seconded into their current behaviour positions, all AVTs were classroom teachers. At the time of the study the 11 AVT participants were team members working in the regional behaviour team on a part-time or full-time basis. With the primary purpose of their role being behaviour intervention for students with problematic behaviour, they were frequently involved in cases of serious, disruptive student behaviour making them both a mandatory and ideal choice for inclusion in the study. It was anticipated these AVTs would possess the depth of knowledge and experience in behaviour necessary to answer the interview questions effectively. Criteria for those AVTs involved in the case study phase were proficient use of observation tools, willingness to use new observation tools, the ability to reflect on procedures, and being able to allocate additional time for ongoing discussions and feedback with myself.

4.4.2   Classroom teachers

As with the AVTs, the classroom teacher participants totalled 11 in number. However, the degree of participation in the study varied with five of these 11

teachers not completing the second and third interviews. Not being included in the remainder of the study was the natural consequence of the targeted student no longer being eligible for the case study due to unforeseen circumstances—the situation no longer provided an opportunity to study behaviour intervention for serious, disruptive behaviour (Stake, 2006).

Classroom teacher criteria for inclusion in the study were firstly, being a teacher of either year four, five, six or seven and secondly, having referred a boy for serious, disruptive behaviour to the regional behaviour team. There were some marked variations in classroom teacher age and length of teaching experience—the latter ranging from 11 weeks to 39 years. Arbuckle and Little (2004) highlighted the influence teacher experience has on teacher perceptions of disruptive behaviour in their study of teacher perceptions and behaviour management in the middle years. While this correlation was not investigated in this study, future research could address this relationship.

4.5   SELECTION OF CASES

In the current research, behaviour intervention was closely examined through a multicase study, that by definition extended to more than one case to draw collective conclusions and deeper understandings about the phenomenon being studied (Simons, 2009; Stake, 2005). With a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon investigated as the major objective, the cases were purposely chosen to provide the substantive information needed to fulfil such an objective (Merriam, 2009).

The scope of the study was focused in terms of the restricted numbers of people and settings to be involved (Denscombe, 2007). Following Stake's (2006) recommendation that between four and ten cases be selected for maximum benefit to be achieved, this study detailed five cases. Also considered when deciding on the number of cases to be studied, was the fact that as the researcher I was working alone and any more than five case studies would prove unmanageable in terms of collection and analysis of data. All five cases were representative of boys from year four to year seven displaying serious, disruptive behaviour. The following criteria were adhered to:

- An early adolescent boy in year four to year seven (nine-12 years age range) who was displaying ongoing, serious, disruptive behaviour evidenced by verbal and/or physical aggression, refusal to enter classroom/and or remain in classroom, damage to school property, leaving school grounds without permission, refusal to follow instructions and/or participate in instruction.

- Behaviour intervention was being provided by an AVT.

- An individualised PBS plan of high technical quality was to be written for implementation in the school setting.

- A minor but relevant consideration based upon convenience, was the proximity of the schools to both the researcher's place of work and to each other, in an effort to maximise available time (Denscombe, 2007).

Of the five cases reported in the research, two remained that were originally chosen at the outset of this study. Circumstances beyond my control eliminated the other original three cases at various stages of the data collection process. These circumstances included a student being moved by his parent to a nearby school where after 12 weeks of monitoring by the AVT no evidence of serious, disruptive behaviour was recorded. Another student commenced medication and all serious, disruptive behaviour ceased. The third student was suspended from his school pending exclusion and placed in an alternative program indefinitely. All three cases had long-term consequences for the study so they were deemed not suitable and another three cases were selected.

Stake (2006) highlighted the fact that how the phenomenon behaves in varied contexts is an important aspect of multicase study. Therefore, the five case studies each represented a different year level of primary mainstream education from year four to year seven. One case study student who did not have a departmentally-recognised diagnosed disability was attending a special school setting which catered for students with differing degrees of diagnosed intellectual impairment. Further, during the data collection process, the aforementioned student and another case study student were moved into new classroom settings.

Written permission was granted from the parents/carer of every student whose PBS plan would be included in the study. During a meeting with the parent/carer I presented the information and in cases where the parent/carer indicated they

struggled with literacy, I read aloud the information, checking for understanding throughout. After parent/carer permission was granted, the research project was explained to the student who also signed a permission form in the presence of their parent/carer and me.

Each case consisted of the referred student who required behaviour support and the classroom teacher primarily responsible for implementing that student's PBS plan in the classroom setting. Observations were conducted to monitor implementation of the plan and the teacher responsible for that implementation was interviewed prior to and following implementation. Serious, disruptive behaviour demonstrated in the classroom environment is inseparable from that environment. The behaviour and the environment do not exist in parallel (Bronfenbrenner, 1992), therefore all the relevant behaviour to be observed for this study was done so within the context of a classroom setting.

The selected cases demonstrate relevance to the focus of study (behaviour intervention) as they are typical examples of a behaviour referral requesting assistance for boys in year four to year seven displaying serious, disruptive behaviour.

4.6   DATA SOURCES

Multiple sources of data were assessed during the study. Data were collected from semi-structured interviews (AVT and classroom teacher), direct observations (classroom), teacher self-surveys, checklists and unobtrusive data in the form of documents (PBS plans, referral data, school Responsible Behaviour Plan for Students and Student Disciplinary Absences suspension data).

4.6.1   Interviews

Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) have described the qualitative research interview as based on a conversation where two people exchange their ideas on a topic of interest to them. Interviews are conversations directed by a framework of questions, controlled by the interviewer for the express purpose of obtaining knowledge of a particular issue (Denscombe, 2007; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Merriam, 2009; Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Rubin and Rubin (2005) categorised qualitative interviews according to the focus of the questions being asked. Similarly, Merriam (2009) has

segmented interview types from highly structured to unstructured. Logically, semi-structured interviews are positioned in between both of these.

True to semi-structured interview format the questions were set and asked in the same way in each interview, thus ensuring consistency throughout the interviews. This structured approach was beneficial in keeping the interview time to an efficient length given that participants, especially the classroom teachers, were afforded minimal time off class and found it difficult to set aside uninterrupted time for the interviews (Patton, 2002).

Semi-structured interviews were chosen for this study because of their potential to invite in-depth discussions around the central issue of research which in this case was student's serious, disruptive behaviour. Kvale (2007) defined the semi-structured interview in part "as an interview with the purpose of obtaining descriptions of the life world of the interviewee" (p. 8). Developing an understanding of how the world of behaviour intervention was perceived by participants as well as their interpretation of the phenomenon of serious, disruptive behaviour, were two intended outcomes of the interviews. For me, the underlying purpose for all interviews was to pay close attention to these valuable conversations by capturing the essence of what was said.

The most common form of semi-structured interview, the face-to-face situation, was used in this study. Face-to-face interviews can take huge amounts of time in terms of travelling, transcription, analysis and reporting (Gillham, 2000). Within the context of this study however, the strengths outweighed the weaknesses. Attention to detail in the organisation and planning of the interviews was paramount to ensuring efficiency and success. All interviews sought to produce a greater understanding of behaviour and the key factors impacting upon the effective implementation of the PBS plan. Face-to-face interviews combined with systematic direct observations were well-suited to acquiring specific information centred upon thoughts and actions (Hatch, 2002; Kvale, 2007; Seidman, 2006).

4.6.2   Interview process

The semi-structured interview conducted with each participant was conversational in nature with a characteristic set time frame of approximately 30 minutes to one hour (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). I provided all participants with a hard copy of the interview questions. In each case I then read aloud the questions

before commencing the recorded interview. Participants were encouraged to make notes beside the questions and bring these with them to the interview. In the week prior to the scheduled interview, the questions were emailed not only to provide a back-up copy and a reminder, but to allow participants to familiarise themselves with the content. Immediately prior to the commencement of each interview I outlined the format the questions were to take and in the first interview with each teacher, I clearly explained the distinction between the general questions and those specifically related to the case study student.

A crucial aspect of these interviews was participant opinion of what constituted serious, disruptive behaviour. The common question I asked of both the classroom teachers and the AVT staff was, "In your opinion what constitutes serious, disruptive behaviour?" Definitions of serious, disruptive behaviour (or any behaviour) are dependent upon the context, the environment and the multiple interactions between the people involved. Dunlap et al. (2005) listed the three basic principles of behaviour as lawful (understandable and predictable), functional (occurs for a reason), and context-related. Determining whether classroom teachers' and AVTs' basic assumptions of serious, disruptive behaviour were analogous, was an important consideration with regards to the social validity and success of each PBS plan. Teacher perspectives about behaviour directly influence the choices they make for managing behaviour, which in turn has considerable impact upon the implementation of an intervention (Tillery, Varjas, Meyers, & Smith Collins, 2010).

4.6.2.1 AVT interviews

AVT interviews took place within a two week time frame in November to December 2010. Eleven interviews were completed.

I interviewed AVT staff face-to-face on an individualised basis for up to an hour's duration. The interviews began with a short description of the participant's length of service in the role of AVT to not only acquire general information but to begin the interview process with a familiar topic helping to put the participant at ease (Denscombe, 2007; Kvale, 2007). Arriving at a consensus of opinion of what constitutes serious, disruptive behaviour was an important starting point so the question was asked, "In your opinion what constitutes serious, disruptive behaviour?" (Appendix A). Clearly establishing exactly what this behaviour looked

like for each individual participant provided a reference point for the remaining interview questions.

The AVT's role is to provide assistance to the classroom teacher in coping with serious, disruptive behaviour. Evaluating what this assistance comprised in terms of procedures and support strategies was an important objective of AVT interviews. After having clarified the role of the AVT and described in detail the steps taken in providing intervention, I asked participants to identify explicitly how they assisted teachers with PBS plan implementation. I continued with further questions aimed at guiding the discussion towards factors impacting the PBS plan in terms of measuring and increasing effectiveness and also the effectiveness of the classroom teacher.

These interviews addressed research sub-question 2: What are possible enablers to effective teacher implementation of the PBS plan? Interview transcripts were closely scrutinised to ascertain barriers to and enablers of the integrity of the intervention implementation. Throughout the descriptive details of the transcripts, I highlighted AVT actions that corresponded to stages of the problem-solving consultation model. The goal was to achieve clarity of what the current elements of the AVT consultation process are and their effectiveness in supporting implementation of the PBS plan. This information would contribute to research sub-question 3: Which elements of the problem-solving consultation model might facilitate intervention integrity? Further, increasing AVTs' knowledge and understanding of these data may contribute to more successful interventions.

4.6.2.2 *Reducing research bias*

Several challenges presented themselves to me given that I was a colleague of the AVTs and the supervisor of many who were interviewed. Such a situation with inherent difficulties can easily become problematic if not carefully planned for. Seidman (2006) recommended that the interviewing of participants under supervision of the researcher be avoided. Nevertheless, acknowledging and addressing challenges as thoroughly as possible when and if they arose, provided a degree of control in minimising bias. Rubin and Rubin (2005) suggested that one way to achieve this control is for the researcher to clearly define their research role so that "obligations and responsibilities are known to both parties" (p. 84).

I did this by attending the AVT staff meetings at each hub location to present my research and invite staff participation. The researcher role I presented to the staff was that of a student. The AVTs were aware that I was studying and a thesis was to be written, the subject of which was to be behaviour intervention. In addition, many of the AVTs who have known me beyond the last few years, are aware that studying as a student at university is an ongoing, integral part of who I am. Furthermore, many factors contributed to my confidence that participants would not feel overly at risk or uncomfortable in their role as the researched. These were: I was not responsible for the employment of staff; there was an established close working relationship between myself and AVT staff; and emphasis was placed on participation being voluntary. This was particularly important to ensure there was no misunderstanding with regards to my position of team leader and possible perception of 'power over' the AVTs. In this study, the fact that I am an active AVT in the field may have contributed favourably to AVT perceptions of me possessing greater understanding and empathy, due to experience in real settings on a daily basis (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). I ensured all participants received detailed information—both written and verbal. I disseminated the information to all AVTs and received 100% signed participation consent in return.

4.6.2.3 *Classroom teacher interviews*

In total, 11 classroom teachers participated in the first interview which was focussed upon perceptions of serious, disruptive behaviour, its impact and strategies associated with highly challenging behaviours. Six of the 11 teachers originally interviewed became participants for the duration of the research because their students became the subjects of the five case studies. Due to factors beyond my control, the other five teachers were unable to remain involved in the study because the students left the school, were excluded from the school or were placed in a behavioural intervention program at an alternative site. Nevertheless, the content of their initial interviews provided valid data that contributed equally to understanding teacher perceptions of serious, disruptive behaviour.

I conducted the semi-structured interviews with the six teachers using a combination of direct questioning, probing and follow-up type questions (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Active listening throughout the interviews invited the purposeful use of prompts both verbal and non-verbal to direct the discussion content from the

general to the specific. Non-compliant student behaviour is a topic that can lend itself to lengthy anecdotal retells of general incidences of misbehaviour. It was important to redirect the conversation to the specific, in order to extract the pertinent information and also adhere to a manageable timeframe. Review and clarification of any information, future interviews and expression of appreciation constituted the end of the interview.

Three interviews in total were conducted with each teacher (the exception being Elliot's first teacher who completed the first and second interviews only). The semi-structured interview format from Gresham and Lopez (1996) was used with slight variations. The first interview (Appendix B) began with a focus on student behaviour in general to set the tone and invite a relaxed, non-threatening situation. This was followed by teacher perceptions and experiences of serious, disruptive behaviour. As previously stated, understanding teacher perceptions of behaviour and the management of that behaviour are fundamental to successful behaviour intervention (Arbuckle & Little, 2004; Skinner & Hales, 1992; Tillery, et al., 2010). The bulk of the interview concentrated on the social significance of the goals for the referred student. Conducted before PBS plan implementation, this interview provided an introduction to teacher attitudes about behaviour and what they deemed important to their unique classroom and teacher system.

The second interview conducted prior to PBS plan implementation, continued the focus upon social validation with an emphasis on the social acceptability of procedures (Appendix D). In the time leading to this interview, the AVT and the teacher had been involved in ongoing discussions around possible strategies for plan implementation. Ascertaining teacher commitment and level of acceptance of the PBS plan was crucial to successful implementation. This interview was important in highlighting any mismatches between the environment and the PBS plan. Borrowing from Bambara et al. (2009), it was envisaged discussion of beliefs and attitudes should help establish what teachers perceived as potential barriers to implementation and subsequently, the supports necessary to sustain their hard work.

In the third interview teachers were asked, "What aspects of the support provided by the AVT have you found to be helpful?" and "What are possible barriers to effective implementation?" (Appendix G). This interview was conducted after PBS plan implementation and focussed upon teacher perceptions of the results

achieved from the PBS plan intervention—the social importance of effects or outcomes. Establishing the value of the intervention in terms of its success is a key indicator as to whether those involved will be motivated to sustain the intervention into the future (Lane & Beebe-Frankenberger, 2004). Of paramount importance to the success of an intervention is the social validation of the intervention by the people who are instrumental in its implementation. Hence, the three teacher interviews aligned and dealt specifically with the three aspects of social validity outlined in the literature—social significance of goals, social acceptability of procedures and the social importance of outcomes (Wolf, 1978).

The timeframe for the completion of all classroom teacher interviews spanned a twelve month period from November 2010 to November 2011. The interviews were audio-taped for later transcription. As suggested by Simons (2009), note-taking was employed to provide opportunity to target information to begin analysis and record factors of the process. Interviews and observations are complementary data collection methods. Observations provided the opportunity to see the content of the interviews manifest itself (or not) in the classroom setting. Even though the concentration of data I gathered through direct observation was of student behaviour, I also observed teacher and AVT behaviour. Multiple factors influence student behaviour, however there does appear to be a very strong link between student and teacher behaviour (Sutherland & Oswald, 2005). Observation of the impact of this relationship on the implementation of the PBS plan was noteworthy, albeit not formally investigated.

4.6.3 Observations

Direct observations were descriptive and in a variety of forms. The forms of the observations included anecdotal, checklist and partial interval recording tools to look closely at the classroom environment, relationships and interactions therein. Simons (2009) has termed this type of observation "direct and naturalistic" (p. 56). The information retrieved from the direct observations followed Simons' (2009) five reasons for conducting observations. These are providing rich description; "a sense of setting"; discovering the idiosyncratic factors of the setting; providing an alternative avenue to speech for conveying personal knowledge; and providing another source for checking the interview data (p. 55).

Direct observations ordered and planned with a narrow agenda in mind, often using a particular observational tool to collect specific data "provide a more accurate measure, even when manualized" (Conroy, Stichter, et al., 2008, p. 218). Such a focussed approach to observation is referred to as systematic direct observation. Systematic direct observations, as the name implies, have a system or structure applied to the observations to ensure they are centred on explicit details (Chafouleas, Riley-Tillman, & Sugai, 2007). This definition best defines the nature of the observations conducted throughout the current study. Because the observation tools used are founded in ABA, they are function-based, prescriptive and follow a specific structure.

After defining the targeted behaviour in operational terms, the method of systematic direct observation to be used can be determined. Spanjers, Burns and Wagner (2008) used the systematic direct observation of time on-task to explore relationships between aspects of student engagement and assessment. Investigating on-task and disruptive behaviour using systematic direct observation, Riley-Tillman, Chafouleas, Sassu, Chanese and Glazer (2008) concluded a definite link between teacher perceptions of behaviour and that of an outside observer. The primary method used was partial interval recording where the behaviour of concern is recorded whenever it occurs within the stipulated interval, in this case, every ten seconds (Chafouleas, et al., 2007).

Systematic direct observation data for this study were collected by paper and pencil recording. At the conclusion of the implementation period, data were analysed in relation to the specific behaviour goals stipulated on the PBS plan to establish the degree of success. The criteria used to determine the success of the PBS plan was based on "successive approximations" toward achieving the target behaviour (Gable et al., 2001, p. 256). Realistic incremental changes in behaviour were the behaviour standard by which success was judged. This meant the new behaviour was at an acceptable standard according to stakeholders involved and it served the same function for the student as did the serious, disruptive behaviour (Gable, et al., 2001).

From an ecological systems viewpoint, systematic direct observations allowed me to make sense of the microsystem (the classroom) and the perceptions, actions and relationships of those within it. Within this microsystem, the student was viewed from the ecological system theory belief of an active participant being impacted upon

by the perspectives of others and self-perception. The classroom is where "each member of a microsystem influences every other member" (Bronfenbrenner, 1992, p. 239). Systematic direct observations took place within classroom settings to primarily measure student task engagement and assess teacher treatment integrity. Without monitoring through direct observations, impromptu modifications can be missed.

4.6.3.1   Treatment integrity

To reiterate, treatment integrity is the degree to which the PBS plan is implemented as intended. Implementing a PBS plan comprehensively and accurately is essential to its success; therefore the measurement of same is crucial. The importance of measuring and improving treatment integrity is highlighted repeatedly throughout the literature (Gresham, 1989; Lane & Beebe-Frankenberger, 2004; Umbreit, Ferro, Liaupsin, & Lane, 2007; Wilkinson, 2006). As noted by Liaupsin, Umbriet, Ferro, Urso and Upreti (2006) "observing treatment integrity at the same time as the behavior makes collecting inter-observer agreement data more efficient and effective" (p. 588). Unless the implementation of the plan is monitored, it is difficult to infer with any certainty how successful the intervention actually was.

The AVTs and I completed treatment fidelity checklists simultaneously at various times and on various days for the duration of the implementation of each PBS plan. Direct observation of the teacher was of no less than 30 minutes duration. The template used was PTR Fidelity of Implementation (Dunlap, et al., 2010) which evaluated the adherence and quality of the intervention strategy (Appendix H). For each aspect the intervention strategy was scored either yes, no or not applicable. After tallying the scores a percentage for adherence, quality and an overall integrity of implementation score was given (Dunlap, et al., 2010). Each strategy observed was taken directly from the student's PBS plan and had been discussed with the teacher. It was intended that by closely monitoring plan implementation the success of the plan could be more accurately decided as well as any ongoing support for the teacher addressed.

4.6.3.2   Reliability

Various threats to the data were controlled in the following ways. Firstly, the on-task behaviour of each student was operationally defined by the AVT and me. It is imperative to increase the likelihood of accurate data that the observers know

exactly what the observed behaviour looks like. Because all the observations relied on people for completion, inter-observer agreement was also employed to establish reliability. Inter-observer agreement (IOA) means calculating the percentage of agreement between the two observers to support the accuracy of the data presented (D. L. Morgan & Morgan, 2009; Umbreit, et al., 2007). IOA was collected for approximately 25% of the total observations during baseline and intervention and once during the follow-up visit. Follow-up was approximately one month after intensive AVT support had been considerably reduced and the AVT was confident the PBS plan was being implemented with an acceptable degree of success. The AVT and I collected data using the partial interval recording procedure as described earlier. The literature has suggested an 80% agreement is a generally acceptable level of reliability (Umbreit, et al., 2007). IOA results from this study ranged from 67% to 94% agreement.

Finally, it could be assumed that because each case study student had received AVT support previously, and often on an ongoing basis, the students were familiar with being watched and did not markedly alter their behaviour when being observed. When a person under observation changes their behaviour so that the behaviour being demonstrated is atypical and not a true representation of the behaviour of concern, it is called reactivity. The likelihood of reactivity was lessened through the prolonged periods of observation and the frequency with which they were carried out (Chafouleas, et al., 2007; Umbreit, et al., 2007).

4.6.3.3 Generalisation and maintenance

If a newly acquired behaviour is to have lasting positive effects, it must be demonstrated with competence across different settings, different times and with different people. Appropriate behaviour generalised to new situations is called generalisation (Lane & Beebe-Frankenberger, 2004). While generalisation of behaviour to a different setting was not the focus of the intervention for each case study, it is still a very important component that should be planned for and documented in the PBS plan. Chosen by the teacher, the setting deemed most critical for increasing task engagement and decreasing serious, disruptive behaviour was the classroom. This setting constituted predominantly academic-type instruction environments characterised by written work, completed sitting at a desk and was

where the student spent the majority of the school day. It was the classroom environment that was the focus of the PBS plan content for each case study.

Did the change in the behaviour last beyond the active support and intervention period? This is called maintenance (Knoster & Kincaid, 2005; Umbreit, et al., 2007). Maintenance data were collected four to six weeks following the main data collection period. This was done through brief discussions with the teacher, at a stakeholder meeting and a one 30 minute partial interval observation of off-task behaviour. During this maintenance period the teacher was receiving minimal help from the AVT which predominantly took the form of a check-in visit once a week and email contact. Known as the monitoring phase of the process, the AVT monitored the ongoing use of the plan 'from afar' with the view to withdrawing help completely and closing the case.

4.6.4   Documents

Marshall and Rossman (2006) pointed out that the use of documents invariably requires the analysis of the content. The primary documents analysed in this study were the individualised PBS plans. As previously stated, five PBS plans were analysed for their technical quality using the BSP-QE tool. The implementation of these five high quality plans was the basis of the case studies.

The PBS plans served as the core content for discussions and acted as a springboard for interview conversations. In addition, two other significant school documents were collected from each school: Student Disciplinary Absences (SDA) and the Responsible Behaviour Plan for Students. SDA data lists behaviour infractions (major and minor behaviours), detention and suspension information for individual students. The Responsible Behaviour Plan for Students outlines behaviour support strategies specific to the site in terms of whole school, targeted and intensive systems of supports. Information gleaned from both documents contributed to the development of a comprehensive description of the environmental context of each case to be studied. Aspects pertaining to beliefs about behaviour, current procedures and consequences for unacceptable behaviour, evidence of mismatches with each other and with teacher practice, were noted. Mismatches were identified through comparison of the data obtained via interviews and observations being compared with the content of the policy documents. As pointed out by Stake (2006), documents are purposeful in the triangulation process where content is compared with that of the

observation and the interview to ensure a clear and accurate portrayal of the context is being presented.

4.6.5   Surveys, self-reports and checklists

Surveys were used in conjunction with interviews to assess classroom teachers' perception of the social validity of the PBS plan. Pre- and post-intervention acceptability rating surveys were completed by each classroom teacher (Appendix E and Appendix I). The surveys used a Likert scale to determine the social significance of goals, procedures and outcomes from the perspective of those people involved in the intervention (Lane & Beebe-Frankenberger, 2004). The surveys indicated the degree of teacher commitment and illuminated any barriers to implementation. The use of surveys complemented interview data in measuring social validity.

A self-report was completed by each classroom teacher which served as a method to evaluate the application of the plan into practice—the treatment integrity (Appendix J). This tool followed the recommendations of Lane and Beebe-Frankenberger (2004) that tools used be "as direct as possible" (p. 144) while matching the nature of the time constraints and resources of the study. Therefore, because this tool was being completed by an informant—the classroom teacher—it was subject to observer bias (Conroy, Sutherland, Snyder, & Marsh, 2008). Reducing the degree of bias was done by the AVT and me also collecting treatment integrity data and the frequent use of a partial interval recording sheet, both via direct observation. The partial interval recording sheet checked both the student's behaviour and the teacher's behaviour in implementing the PBS plan. The AVT and I used these tools simultaneously as a means of reducing bias for the self-reports (Umbreit, et al., 2007).

Data were collected to identify what stages and elements of the problem-solving consultation model were being implemented throughout the provision of behaviour intervention. Taken directly from Frank and Kratochwill I constructed a checklist (Appendix F) listing the stages and components of consultation (Frank & Kratochwill, 2008, pp. 17-19). The AVT was instructed to date and highlight the relevant phase and elements enacted throughout the consultation process. In the early stages of data collection it became apparent to me that reflecting on the actual stages and components that naturally occur in the daily process of helping a teacher was not a high priority for the AVTs. Consequently, I also completed the checklist to ensure

adequate samples were collected. Completed as regularly as possible, via the direct observation of the AVT, a total of 83 observations of AVT consultation procedures were completed across the five case studies.

The checklist data were analysed to determine what stages of the problem-solving consultation model were actually used by AVT staff, which stages (if any) were used more than others, and what elements within the stages were used more frequently than others. By identifying the elements used most often, possible answers to research sub-question 3: Which elements of the problem-solving consultation model might facilitate integrity of PBS plan implementation? began to emerge.

4.7   DATA ANALYSIS

4.7.1   Phase 1: Perceptions

Understanding the significance of data means carefully reading, looking, thinking and deciding as a recursive process to arrive at meaning (Merriam, 2009). The raw data in this phase were the AVT and teacher interview transcripts which detailed descriptions of serious, disruptive behaviour; AVT processes and procedures employed in behaviour consultation; behaviour strategies and goals for intervention. Two types of coding were applied to categorise the interview scripts in an effort to understand how participants understood the nature of behaviour intervention.

Before coding was applied to the data, the transcripts were read in their entirety to gain a sense of the whole picture being painted by the words of participants. Miles and Huberman (1994) describe codes as "tags or labels for assigning units of meaning" (p. 56) to the contextual information contained within the data. Codes were operationally defined as per their suggestion. Following the initial reading of the transcripts, I began to assign codes to pieces of the data that reflected words, sentences and/or phrases used by AVTs and teachers. The text was manually highlighted and codes written in the spaces beside the text. This step was descriptive coding and as a first step in the cycle of data analysis required little interpretation (M. B. Miles & Huberman, 1994; Saldana, 2009). The transcripts were read repeatedly and phrases commonly used were identified to illuminate the participant voice. This process is referred to as in vivo coding. This was used to capture the AVTs' understanding of how teachers view behaviour intervention and support. Miles and Huberman (1994) describe initial coding practices such as descriptive and

in vivo coding as "summarizing segments of data" and pattern coding as "grouping those summaries" (p. 69). Following the combination of descriptive and in vivo coding, a more interpretive level of analysis was applied to the data—pattern coding—which further reduces these codes into categories with specific descriptive elements.

During pattern coding the transcripts were re-read specifically to find similarities in the existing coding so that these could then be grouped together to form categories. I viewed categories as "the same as a theme, a pattern, a finding or an answer to a research question" (Merriam, 2009, p. 178). The analysis focussed upon constructing a definition that characterised the way AVTs and classroom teachers conceptualised serious, disruptive behaviour. The analysis process identified a high degree of common words and phrases hence the final definition incorporated the actual words stated by AVTs and teachers. Further, two key in vivo codes emerged that captured AVT perceptions of the ways teachers viewed behaviour intervention. These were 'magic wand syndrome' and 'quick fix'.

Three categories emerged that were similarly linked and together described behaviour intervention. Once the data were repeatedly read and codes and categories devised, these were compared across the interviews to validate the findings (Safran & Oswald, 2003). The analysis of the categories was supported by direct quotes from the AVTs in an effort to paint a truer picture of their lived experiences.

Given that I experience the phenomenon of behaviour intervention on a daily basis, setting aside bias and judgement was particularly difficult. Steps taken to increase my researcher objectivity were to view what is a familiar situation as an outsider with no prior knowledge; and to be an open, receptive and active listener (Flood, 2010; Grbich, 2007; Hatch, 2002). My strong connectedness to the lived world of the participants emphasised the necessity for the transcript content to be reported with clarity and integrity. Connelly (2010) suggested that to increase trustworthiness regular discussion with colleagues would illuminate bias. Given that my colleagues played key roles in the study, ongoing discussion about the collection and analysis of data became an integral part of the research process.

4.7.2 Phase 2: Plan implementation

The case study researcher endeavours to develop a deep understanding of a unique situation through the analysis and interpretation of data from multiple sources (Patton, 2002; Simons, 2009). Each case study was undertaken to gain a thorough understanding of behaviour intervention. The influence of the PBS plan in changing task engagement was the common focus binding the five case studies. Data analysis for each case study was applied to classroom teacher interviews and systematic direct observation of student behaviour. This analysis followed the same steps as described for the AVT interviews in phase one. It was expected that both similarities and differences between the five cases would emerge after a detailed review of the data for each case was completed and a cross-case analysis undertaken.

4.7.2.1 *Classroom teacher interview data*

Classroom teacher interview data for this phase comprised interview two and interview three. Capturing the essence of serious, disruptive behaviour and gaining insight into teacher ways of managing behaviour were the objectives of interview one in phase one. The degree of social acceptability of the procedures and the importance of the effects of the PBS plan, together with the degree of successful outcomes attained, were the objectives of interviews two and three (Lane & Beebe-Frankenberger, 2004).

Classroom teacher interviews were transcribed and coded, guided by the research issues for the study of serious, disruptive behaviour, intervention and enablers to intervention implementation. Data were coded using the same processes previously described above, namely descriptive coding followed by pattern coding (M. B. Miles & Huberman, 1994; Saldana, 2009). As was the case in the interview transcripts in phase one, words and phrases were used to describe the topics of specific parts of the text. Hard copy printouts were written on, key terms underlined and different ideas highlighted using a colour key with supporting phrases written in a notes column. Moving from descriptive coding to pattern coding meant the basic codes derived from descriptive coding were further examined for common patterns and then combined to form a category. Each category embraced the commonalities across the data. These categories were revised and reworded, some remained, some were eliminated (Merriam, 2009). Direct quotes from the interviews that captured the essence of that category were marked for later inclusion to illustrate findings. Miles

and Huberman (1994) state the reason for using pattern coding in multicase studies is because "it lays the groundwork for cross-case analysis by surfacing common themes and directional processes" (p. 69).

Merriam (2009) referred to "within case" analysis and "cross-case analysis" as the two steps undertaken for data analysis in multicase studies (p. 204). Within case analysis means the data for each case are analysed viewing the case as a unique single case in its own right. Data are contextual and pertain to the specific situation and experience of that case (Stake, 2006). In addition to the classroom teacher interview data, the primary source of data collection for within the five case studies was systematic direct observation. The problematic behaviour was directly observed in the classroom environment with specific criteria and tools for collection employed. The data analysis for this study was completed, where possible, concurrently with the data being collected.

Visual analysis of the systematic direct observation data of the five case studies was completed to reveal patterns of student behaviour. Trend, stability and improvement data provided information from which inferences were drawn regarding progress made (Conroy, Stichter, et al., 2008; Horner, et al., 2005). The visual analysis of the data was collaboratively assessed with the AVT assigned to the particular case that had also been jointly responsible for the data collection. Each of the five case studies is presented individually and in detail in Chapter 5.

4.7.2.2 *Cross-case analysis*

Following data analysis of each single case, cross-case analysis takes place. Stake (2006) cautions the researcher not to allow this process to overwhelm the uniqueness of each case by becoming lost in the commonalities. The details of the individual cases are paramount and should be given greater attention than the cross-case analysis. However, the cross-case analysis plays a major role in determining and reporting the findings from each of the case studies. The cross-case analysis for this study closely followed the procedural recommendations made by Stake (2006) utilising a series of worksheets and the tasks associated with each. The worksheet formats were adapted accordingly for this study and their inclusion in the cross-case data analysis process is now explained.

Stake (2006) offered three sets of worksheet options, Tracks, 1, 2 and 3 for recording cross-case procedures. Stake stated, "I consider Track 1 the preferred track, because it best maintains the Case Findings and the situationality" (p. 46). Heeding this advice I followed the direction of Track 1 when analysing the data. The worksheets offered provided technical procedures to guide the management and sorting of the data under headings incorporating the research questions, the cases and findings. The worksheets used were as follows: Worksheet 2: The Research Questions, Worksheet 3: Researcher's Notes, Worksheet 4: Estimates of Ordinariness and Worksheet 5: A Map of Findings. The titles of the worksheets were changed slightly from the originals to provide consistency in the use of terms for the current study.

Worksheet 2 served as a tool to clarify the research questions and to match finding information with each question. The research questions were slightly altered from the original questions and continued to be refined throughout the study as new information emerged. Worksheet 3 particularly noted site-specific features and situations enhancing the differences across cases. Individual case summaries were created from case notes including direct observations and informal discussions with the teacher and the AVT. Direct quotes justifying findings were taken directly from the transcript texts and included in the summary notes. Stake (2006) advised that each case be allowed to sit for awhile on its own before being subsumed into the multicase study. Regularly referred to and added to throughout the analysis process, the summaries helped me to "remember the situationality of the Case" (Stake, 2006, p. 44).

Worksheet 4 was used to collate to what extent there was evidence of the research questions in each case. Each case was rated: to a high extent, to some extent or almost no extent in terms of the demonstration of the research questions. Also, a general category describing the situation of each case in terms of uniqueness was determined via three criteria: highly unusual, somewhat unusual or ordinary. I constantly revised the data as findings were ascertained. The focus of Worksheet 5 was on how important the findings specific to each case were to understanding behaviour intervention. The findings were aligned with each research question. Similar to Worksheet 4, a three point rating scale of high, mid and low importance

was used. The different findings for each individual case were rated and the information from Worksheet 3 and Worksheet 4 were included where applicable.

Interpreting and describing the data was the next step. Examining the information gathered to arrive at an understanding of what the data may mean was the purpose of interpretation. The information was considered under the following four headings: Findings ("if I find this..."); Interpretations ("then I think this means..."); Conclusions ("therefore I conclude, or what I know to be true is..."); and Recommendations ("thus I recommend...") (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008, p. 156). Sorting the information in this way helped to clarify my thinking by cross-checking to ensure all research questions had been answered and that there was continuity between the data and possible conclusions drawn.

4.8 DATA VERIFICATION

Lincoln and Guba (1985) pointed out the mismatch associated with the conventional categories of validity, reliability, generalisability and objectivity when judging the quality of naturalistic studies. In response to the difficulty of these 'absolutes' or categories, when it comes to qualitative approaches, the authors proposed the alternative terms credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. While acknowledging that verification of research is a given, these alternative terms will be used for establishing the trustworthiness of this study. That is: Is this study believable, reliable and demonstrative of integrity? Is it worthy of trust?

4.8.1 Credibility

Validity of findings means: Is there a match between the findings and what actually happened? The researcher's portrayal of reality cannot be validated because there are multiple realities occurring for multiple participants in multiple contexts, that is, "multiple constructions" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 296). Reality in this study was captured primarily through interviews and direct observations with real people in real settings. The length of time I spent regularly visiting the classroom settings averaged six months to a year. Such a substantial period of time considerably helped the development of trust and rapport and an unobtrusive presence in the school, teacher and classroom systems. In addition, the natural disturbances and irregularities that occur over time within these systems were brought to the fore.

Weekly systematic direct observation afforded me the opportunity to examine the data closely as an integral process to determine what was pertinent and worthy of attention and what was not. As an AVT I was immersed in the situation, allowing ongoing reflection, interpretation and adjustments to occur throughout the data collection period (Merriam, 2009).

Triangulation has been defined by Stake (2006) as "mostly a process of repetitious data gathering and critical review of what is being said" (p. 34). With particular reference to multicases, Stake (2006) advocated ongoing collaboration and discussions with knowledgeable people. In this study, colleagues including guidance officers and the SWPBS regional coordinator were sourced as critical friends throughout the data gathering process. Known as peer debriefing (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) these peers were engaged in discussions around possible findings, interpretations and conclusions. Peer debriefing provided a 'sounding board' for me to test and clarify assumptions.

Member checks were also implemented and more formalised than the impromptu nature of the peer debriefs (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Member checking required the classroom teachers and the AVTs directly involved in the production of data to check interview content for accuracy and cross-check direct observation data and visual analysis results. AVTs and teachers were given the opportunity to read through their interview transcripts to ensure what was represented was a true and accurate account. Furthermore, the interview data have maintained credibility because they were transcribed exactly as said.

4.8.2   Dependability

Keeping detailed records such as research notes in an organised and systematic format, together with a reflexive commentary have been integral strategies of this current study to promote dependability. With regard to the observation data, the AVTs and I have had extensive experience in the use and analyses of the tools used and so were confident in ascertaining consistent and dependable procedures. Dependability is a question of "reputable procedures and reasonable decisions" in methods and practice (Denscombe, 2007, p. 298). The adherence to the methodologies of multicase study (Stake, 2006) add dependability to this study due to the detailed prescribed procedures and criteria outlined (Flick, 2009). Triangulation, reporting of bias and the creation of an audit trail are the common

suggested strategies for demonstrating dependability and were implemented for this study (Burns, 2000; Denscombe, 2007; Marshall & Rossman, 2006).

Written case notes provided a thinking or audit trail with regard to justifications for change in direction, decisions and focus (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Each case study was allocated its own research folder (journal) where notes were recorded with regards to issues, questions and thoughts that arose throughout the data collection period. All entries were dated and most were handwritten on site. Depending on the time available and the physical situation some entries were typed and edited. As a requirement of Education Queensland, each case study student has a registered behaviour file containing all observations, data, associated school-based plans, PBS plan, assessment details and a running record of the intervention provided. This audit trail provides confirmability of the data while simultaneously establishing dependability. The two have a reciprocal relationship where one justifies the other and together they reflect the extent of trustworthiness of the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

4.8.3   Confirmability

Following the guidelines proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985) the audit trail and audit process for this study incorporated triangulation and my personal reflections in a reflective journal. In addition to the information provided for dependability, I wrote reflections as regularly as possible and when pertinent.

The researcher's self is acknowledged as inseparable from all aspects of the data. My self-awareness of my own beliefs and attitudes and their influence on the data decisions were documented when necessary, providing a transparency to aid confirmability. Furthermore, both successful and not so successful case studies were included in the final product. Negative occurrences and contrary data were treated as having the same level of importance as the favourable data. Both were viewed as worthwhile contributors to findings and conclusions (Denscombe, 2007).

4.8.4   Transferability

Bloomberg and Volpe (2008) noted that transferability "refers to the fit or match between the research context and other contexts as judged by the reader" (p. 78). Deciding on the extent of the usefulness of the data relative to a particular context is only possible if substantial and comprehensive information is provided by

the researcher to the reader. The researcher invites the reader to transfer the information presented to them and apply it to their own set of circumstances. Lincoln and Guba (1985) called this "fittingness" (p. 124). It is up to the reader to judge whether the findings fit and if so, how. The researcher cannot know to what contexts their information may be applied, however, he or she does have a responsibility to bring any issues about the transferability of findings, albeit secure or insecure, to the attention of the reader (Merriam, 2009; Simons, 2009; Stake, 2006).

Stake (1995) has described this issue of transferability as naturalistic generalisation where the reader filters the descriptions and proposed findings through their private understandings to draw their own conclusions. Many components of the current study have contributed to assisting the reader to make naturalistic generalisations. For example, I have described the setting and the participants of the study explicitly including the nature and circumstances affecting behaviour prior to intervention. Further, case study participants are representative of the 'typical' boy displaying serious, disruptive behaviour and chosen according to set criteria.

Some cross-case generalisation is inevitable in a multicase study. Through cross-case analysis, themes are closely examined for how they are connected, their coherence across cases and the substance of what is inferred from them. However, this is not extrapolated to the community at large but remains true to the particular case and situation (Simons, 2009; Stake, 2006). The worksheets offered by Stake (2006), already introduced, provided me with a framework to focus my thinking and data analysis firmly on each individual case.

It is highly likely that this study's findings are transferable to other behaviour teams. The transfer of processes arising from case study data analysis is referred to as process generalisation (Simons, 2009). Generated from the analysis of each case, it is the processes of effective behaviour consultation and intervention that have the potential to be transferred and applied to different contexts successfully. It is the quality of the researcher's description—the telling in detail—that provides the information necessary for the reader to make inferences about the transferability of the study. The responsibility falls to the reader (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Stake, 2006).

4.9 RESEARCH BIAS

Data are produced through interpretation and shaping interpretation is the researcher's beliefs, prior knowledge and experiences—in other words personal bias. Ever-present and inescapable, researcher bias can be 'kept in check' by the commitment of the researcher to produce an honest, transparent study. Strategies I employed to promote honesty and reduce bias included the use of cross-case procedures (Stake, 2006) and the inclusion of contradictory data and problematic explanations and their significance to the research (Denscombe, 2007). Moreover, copies of all elements of the study are accessible for confirmation of findings, including field notes, cross-case worksheets, transcripts of interviews, observation notes and copies of documents.

Johnston, Foxx, Jacobson, Green and Mulick (2006) suggested that findings from studies of PBS and associated interventions can be laden with non-specific information such as personal opinions that fail to explicate intervention outcomes. To reduce the likelihood of this occurrence, this study used the multiple data collection methods described above. Adhering to ABA procedures of data collection during direct observations and using worksheets to assist with cross-case analysis, assists in addressing my potential bias. Simons (2009) proposed procedures used to reduce bias be documented. For this study this documentation included a reflexive approach heightened by the fact that I was evaluating processes and procedures integral to my workplace. Throughout the research project it was my intention to engage in reflexivity as defined by Simons (2009) as "to think about how your actions, values, beliefs, preferences and biases influence the research process and outcome" (p. 91).

4.10 ETHICAL ISSUES

Simons (2009) proposed "do no harm" and be fair as essential, albeit simplistic phrases that encapsulate best practice of the researcher (p. 96). I conducted the research with these two phrases as my guiding principles of ethical behaviour.

4.10.1 Protection of the interests of participants

The major contributors to the study were the AVTs and classroom teachers. Teachers, as a group can be vulnerable given a history of low status and minimal power. They can feel intimidated by people they perceive as 'higher up' (Hatch, 2002), therefore all AVTs and classroom teachers were explicitly told that their

participation was completely voluntary. Because they were viewed as equal participants in the co-construction of knowledge, I genuinely promoted a philosophy of research as happening 'with others' not 'to others'. Considerations of personal safety were addressed by awareness of risk and subsequent planning. The potential for personal harm was addressed through stringent attention to confidentiality and anonymity.

4.10.2 Avoiding misrepresentation of participants

An open and transparent approach was used at all times by me to ensure AVTs and teachers had a thorough understanding and knowledge of the ways of working of the research. Researcher intentions and purposes were made clear to all participants from the outset to further establish a sense of trust and rapport. Moreover, adhering to procedures in a consistent manner and being continuously reflective of my own practice minimised the likelihood of misrepresentation or unfairness (Simons, 2009).

4.10.3 Informed consent of participants

As stated above, participation in the research was completely voluntary and I made it clear to all that they could withdraw at any time. AVTs and teachers were fully briefed on the research objectives and procedures. Informed consent was sought in written form from each participant.

Every effort was made to keep time demands, the number of intrusions and any other interruptions to the normal daily routine to a minimum. These constraints were presented openly and honestly to the AVTs and teachers prior to them agreeing to take part in the study.

4.11 ETHICS APPROVAL

Approval was given by the Human Research Ethics Committee at Queensland University of Technology for this study to be carried out in sites nominated by Education Queensland. These included schools in suburban sites within the greater Brisbane area. Approval number: 1000000742.

4.12 SUMMARY

This chapter discussed and justified the selection of a multicase design to investigate behaviour intervention for boys from year four to year seven who display serious, disruptive behaviour. It was established that multicase design affords the

researcher the opportunity to closely examine an issue or phenomenon in a real setting, in real time. Individual cases detail unique situations and the variables contained within, to tell a story—a story that will be of value to others. Multicase design was selected as the primary type of methodology used for this study because the "complexity, and situational uniqueness" (Stake, 2006, p. 6) common to each individual case, links the cases together with the goal of a better and richer understanding of serious, disruptive behaviour.

The two phases of the study were outlined. Phase 1: Perceptions, investigated the understandings and perceptions of serious, disruptive behaviour and the processes of behaviour intervention from 11 AVTs and 11 teachers. Phase 2: Plan Implementation outlined the development and the implementation of the PBS plan. Data collection and analysis methods were discussed in relation to the semi-structured interviews, systematic direct observations and cross-case analysis. Cross-case analysis procedures were detailed and the information collated using a series of five worksheets devised by Stake (2006). A brief description of the content and purpose of these worksheets was provided.

Few studies have investigated changes in student task engagement utilising high quality PBS plans developed and facilitated by an AVT. The assessment of all five plans as high quality was justified with a detailed explanation of the BSP-QE tool used, its categories of quality and key concepts for rating plan content. Data verification was discussed according to the categories of credibility, dependability, confirmability and transferability. Research bias was highlighted throughout the chapter and strategies for its reduction explicitly stated.

Using a multicase study design underpinned by applied behaviour analysis and ecological systems theory, this study investigated how behaviour intervention processes and strategies influenced change in student task engagement. The following chapter describes five cases detailing the implementation of five individually designed PBS plans. The influence of the PBS plans in changing task engagement, plus the relationship between effective intervention implementation and consultation, are presented.

5 Case Descriptions

True to multicase design, each case study is presented in detail in this chapter to increase understanding of behaviour intervention in multiple unique contexts (Stake, 2006). Each case study has been organised under systems headings to reflect the theoretical foundation of the study, ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1992). These mini systems have been made explicit to highlight the "complex, situated, problematic relationships" and their significance in relation to behaviour intervention in the school context (Stake, 2006, p. 10). The mini systems of greatest impact upon the student at school have been labelled by me as: personal system, family system, school system, classroom system and teacher system and are represented in Figure 5.1. (Bronfenbrenner, 1979b).
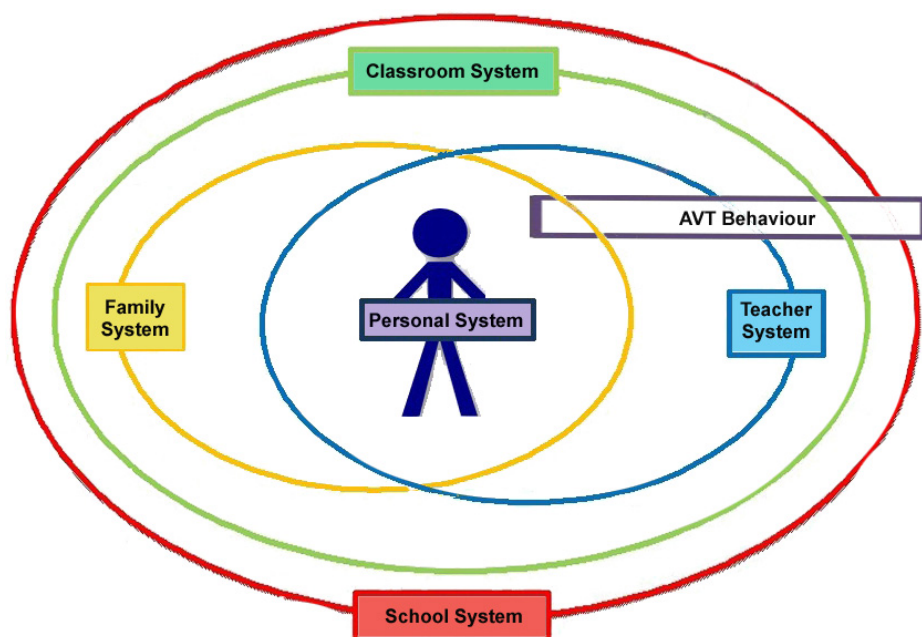
Figure 5.1. Mini systems of impact on a student in the school context.

The ellipses in Figure 5.1 represent the mini systems of the student's world. These mini systems make up the student's microsystem with the ellipses representing the reciprocal relationships between them. Ellipses of influence surround the student who remains at the centre of all the mini systems. The happenings that are constantly

occurring across and within these mini systems appear to directly affect the student's behaviour. If the happenings are characterised by chaos and dysfunction then the student will most likely respond with higher levels of anxiety and negative behaviours (Bronfenbrenner & Evans, 2000). The teacher system (particularly beliefs about behaviour and style of instruction), the classroom system (the organisation of the physical environment, rules, routines and management of students) and the school system (culture, vision and policies of behaviour for students) constitute the community of learning in which the student operates. While the primary focus of behaviour intervention is the student, the AVT observes behaviours and collates information from the mini systems, with particular emphasis on the interactions within and across them. Aligning aspects of the systems that are in conflict increases the likelihood that positive student outcomes will be achieved, hence the AVT works across all mini systems (Figure 5.1). A participant in the teacher, classroom and school systems, the AVT endeavours to have all the significant adults operating within the mini systems move in the same direction with a common purpose.

Systematic direct observation was used to observe targeted, predefined behaviours collected across settings (Chafouleas, et al., 2007). Procedures employed were: 30 minute partial interval (10 second interval) recordings where the number of occurrences of engaged and unengaged behaviour during the 30 minute period was calculated as a percentage; an integrity checklist (Dunlap, et al., 2010); and anecdotal notes. The integrity checklist had selected strategies from the PBS plan listed and each strategy was rated by the AVT in terms of adherence and quality of implementation demonstrated by the teacher. In addition, inter-observer agreement was calculated, where possible, on a minimum of 25% of the total observations for each case (Umbreit, et al., 2007).

As previously noted, the process for intervention followed by the AVT aligns closely with the problem-solving consultation model (Frank & Kratochwill, 2008). Intervention findings for each case study are reported under the headings of the five stages of the problem-solving consultation model: relationship building, problem identification, problem analysis, intervention implementation and program evaluation. These stages provide a clear sequence of the intervention process detailing actions and both the positive and negative results that transpired. From the commencement to the conclusion of the intervention process an average of 25 weeks

was spent by the AVT on each case. Intervention for all cases included the core elements of social validity, treatment integrity, and generalisation and maintenance necessary to draw accurate conclusions about outcomes (Lane & Beebe-Frankenberger, 2004). Social validity and treatment integrity were paid the closest attention with generalisation and maintenance data focussed upon to a lesser extent.

Success of each case study was measured according to the positive changes made to the task engagement of each individual student from beginning to the end of intervention. Considered and compared only to it, each case brought its own level of complexity and challenges that informed intervention goals and procedures and the nature of the resultant changes.

The stories of five disengaged and disruptive boys, the systems that constitute their lives and the results of their intervention, are now presented.

5.1   OWEN

5.1.1   Introduction

Nine-year-old Owen has had a history of serious, disruptive behaviour evidenced from his toddler years. He has experienced difficulties at school since his first year in preparatory (five years of age) in 2007. Owen's behaviour referral detailed extreme non-compliance including physical and verbal abuse of staff and peers and not following adult instructions. Intervention for Owen has been ongoing since his commencement at school. Comprehensive wraparound support systems to date have included: 18 months enrolled in a long-term alternative education program for students with very challenging behaviours, counselling, art therapy, speech therapy, occupational therapy, paediatric assessments, two weeks in the psychiatric ward of a children's hospital and five weeks individualised classroom support centred on skill development. In 2011 Owen began the school year in a short-term behaviour intervention program for seven weeks due to serious, unsafe behaviours demonstrated during his first two days of the new school year.

5.1.2   Personal system

Diagnosed in 2008 with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and Oppositional Defiance Disorder (ODD), Owen was medicated to help manage his attention and concentration issues. During 2010 the decision was made by Owen's parents to cease administering medication.

Assessment has revealed that Owen has average overall intellectual functioning; however, he experiences difficulty expressing his ideas and holding spoken ideas in his memory (working memory). It is highly likely that his inability to express his thoughts and feelings verbally contributes to the expression of these thoughts and feelings through inappropriate behaviours.

5.1.3   Family system

Owen lives with his mother and father and younger sister. Comprehensive information reports indicate that physical abuse, inconsistent parenting approaches and absence of routines are characteristic of the home environment. In an interview with the AVT it was reported by Owen's mother that Owen does not "get on very well with his father". In the latter part of 2011, after ongoing involvement from relevant departmental agencies, Owen's father agreed to play an active role in Owen's life.

When Owen was a toddler both parents participated in a parenting program aimed at managing young children to assist them in coping with his behaviour. More recently, a local government agency has begun to provide in-house support, including assistance with establishing routines and general organisation of the household.

5.1.4   School system

Owen attends a large primary school catering for approximately 750 students from preparatory to year 7 in a lower socioeconomic suburb. This is Owen's second school in which he was enrolled in year 3. The student population is derived from diverse backgrounds with a language other than English spoken in 30% of homes. Transience is a common feature of the school community due to the large numbers of rental homes. The school has the capacity to support 16 students with disabilities who are integrated into the regular classroom settings. The school prides itself on its low suspension rate and effective catering for students with emotional and behavioural difficulties. In facilitating positive student behaviour, four behavioural expectations are common throughout the school system. These are care, respect, co-operation and safety.

5.1.5 Teacher system

Owen's teacher has been teaching for five years and was specifically asked by the Deputy Principal to teach the class due to her skill in behaviour management. The Deputy Principal's perception is that the class has a reputation for being a 'tough class' with many 'behaviour problems'. As evidenced from numerous observations the teaching style can be described as direct teaching method/combined with group work. There is a climate of trust and respect evidenced by the vast majority of students being well-mannered and following directions throughout the day. The teacher is establishing a well-organised and effective classroom system, yet Owen's teacher voiced her fear and trepidation about his return to the classroom environment. In discussions with the AVT concerning Owen's transition plan back to the classroom, Owen's teacher stated that apart from being "extremely anxious" she believed the other students in her class were concerned because "they were scared of him". Students' concerns were centred on the possibility of being physically harmed by Owen.

5.1.6 Classroom system

Owen's year 4 classroom (students aged 9 years) is a double teaching space with two classes sharing the one open space (no dividing wall). Students are seated in groups and rows with the desks at both ends of the room and a carpet space in between. The classroom teacher teaches all key learning areas with the exception of Music and Physical Education. Classroom rules are posted clearly at the front of the teaching space.

Procedures and routines are embedded in the daily running of the classroom supported by visual reminders. These visuals portray specific behavioural expectations through photography and words (lining up, sitting on the carpet, working at computers). The overall behaviour of the students could be described as orderly and compliant. Low-level disruptive behaviours observed were calling out, chatting to a peer during instruction, wandering and occasional refusal to comply immediately with teacher direction.

Owen's teacher used multiple approaches ranging from the least-intrusive to most-intrusive approach when responding to inappropriate behaviours. She redirects the student to the task at hand and restates the class expectation. This is followed by

immediate praise for the desired behaviour. If disruptive behaviour becomes serious and unsafe she explained her strategy as, "Calmly talking to them, removing them from the classroom and just listening to what they have to say". Owen's teacher demonstrates a preventative approach to managing classroom behaviour.

5.2   OWEN'S INTERVENTION

5.2.1   AVT profile

Owen's AVT is an experienced classroom teacher who at the time of the research was beginning her second year in behaviour. Her support of Owen had commenced in the previous year, therefore she was very familiar with Owen's personal and family systems as well as the school system. Ensuring the teacher has a good understanding of the PBS plan and it is "workable for the teacher" (Interview 1, p. 2) are in her opinion important factors in increasing plan effectiveness. She believes good relationships and communication to be the foundation for achieving increased success.

During the implementation phase there were two separate periods of some weeks where support ceased while the AVT was on long service leave. With no behaviour staff available to lend assistance, these two periods of time were viewed unfavourably by the teacher and the school administration. Their perception of support seemed to be directly related to the AVT being physically present in the school.

5.2.2   Relationship building

Six months prior to commencing his school year, Owen attended an Intervention Centre while on suspension from his school for destructive, unsafe behaviour. The relationship building process between the Intervention Centre staff, the AVT and the classroom teacher throughout this time was fractured. Different approaches to and conflicts about expectations in communication appear to have contributed to this. A key factor in relationship building is communication. The main form of communication utilised by both the Intervention Centre staff and the AVT was via email which was contrary to the teacher's preference for face-to-face contact, "They have to come into the everyday life of school, um, not just emails more communication with the teacher face-to-face" (Interview 3, p. 3).

Discontent expressed by the classroom teacher with regard to intervention strategy suggestions reflected a feeling of heightened frustration at the poor contextual fit of the proposed intervention, "I can't cook all day! All they did there was cook. Why doesn't she get it?" (Conversation 31/5/11). Without developing a thorough understanding of the teacher and classroom systems, the intervention strategies reflected information relevant to the alternative program in the Intervention Centre from which Owen had come. The importance of the AVT making decisions regarding the intervention based on familiarity with the classroom system was noted by Owen's teacher when she said, "Seeing the classroom teacher in her day-to-day world to see what can be made and what can be recommended to her" (Interview 3, p. 2).

5.2.3   Problem identification (data collection)

5.2.3.1   Defining the behaviour

Following initial discussions with the teacher, administration and the parent, the target behaviour identified for Owen was serious, disruptive behaviour because it encompassed the behaviours of greatest concern to all school staff. Serious, disruptive behaviour referred to physical aggression such as hitting with and without an object, kicking, pushing, threatening to harm others, destroying and/or throwing equipment and verbal aggression such as swearing directly at staff and students. In contrast, task engagement was defined as the time when Owen was purposefully engaged in a teacher-directed activity. This looked like working at his desk, raising his hand to speak, asking for help and following teacher instructions. After consideration of interview and observational data, the function of Owen's target behaviour was determined as to escape activities. Classroom observations showed that Owen would throw his materials to the floor and yell, "I won't do it!" when presented with tasks requiring writing. As a result he escaped the task and obtained teacher attention.

5.2.4   Problem analysis (PBS plan development)

Due to the strained relationship between the AVT, Intervention staff and the class teacher, conflicting viewpoints were characteristic of this stage of consultation. Two meetings were held for all stakeholders to collaboratively develop the PBS plan (Appendix K). An initial meeting regarding possible procedures resulted in very low

social acceptability from the teacher. The majority of suggestions were in complete contrast to teacher belief. My memo statement details this mismatch recalling:

> teacher says she won't use individual visual timetables so AVT suggests a class visual timetable, teacher says Owen doesn't want to be different so Intervention staff suggest he be collected and taken to do cooking with the special education group, teacher says there is no supervision at lunchtime under the covered area the AVT suggests Owen play handball under the covered area (Researcher's memo, August 23, 2011).

This disparity between Owen's teacher's beliefs and behaviour staff suggestions hindered acceptability of the goals and procedures. The lack of alignment between the teacher and the behaviour staff perspectives was addressed through discussions between the behaviour staff and their team leader. Subsequent meetings incorporated the teacher's concerns and suggestions and as a result Owen's teacher expressed her satisfaction thus, "Now I've added some more of um what happens in our classroom into the behaviour plan, I'm happy with it because there were a few things I didn't agree with" (Interview 2, p. 1). By achieving greater alignment between the plan, the teacher and classroom systems, a higher level of agreement was achieved.

5.2.5   Plan implementation

Intervention for Owen spanned 21 weeks during which time a total of 17 observations were completed by the AVT and me—13 of these being partial interval observations. Owen's behavioural goal as stated on his PBS plan was that during instructional time Owen would be engaged in tasks for 70% of observed intervals for six observations. It was proposed that Owen's behaviour was being maintained by teacher attention. The replacement behaviour which allowed Owen to access teacher attention appropriately was: Owen would raise his hand, sit quietly and wait for teacher assistance. This strategy was the focus for the first few weeks of implementation. In addition, Owen's teacher agreed to greet him on a daily basis and regularly check his knowledge and understanding of routines and set tasks. These were the strategies she had deemed most important from the PBS plan.

5.2.5.1   Baseline

Collection of baseline data were confined to similar times of the day due to Owen's school attendance plan stipulating attendance of only two and a half hours per day. A momentary time-sampling procedure was used and task engagement was defined as Owen sitting at his desk, keeping hands, feet and objects to self, eyes on the teacher, most of the task completed and the use of respectful language. The average time on-task across the six baseline observations was 72%. Such high levels of engagement were completely unexpected given Owen's history of chronic non-compliance and prolonged absence (i.e. more than six months) from a classroom setting. Inter-observer agreement (IOA) was calculated using the interval-to-interval method where the number of agreed intervals was divided by the total number of intervals and the result multiplied by 100 (Umbreit, et al., 2007). Owen's IOA average was 85.8%.

5.2.5.2   Intervention

With the proposed function of Owen's behaviour to obtain attention from his teacher and peers, providing Owen with immediate praise and attention for demonstrating appropriate behaviours to access attention was an important teacher strategy. Inter-observer agreement was conducted across seven observations averaging 87%. Success of the PBS plan was aided by the procedures detailed in the plan being implemented as intended. In her second interview, Owen's teacher stated, "I check on his support plan, make sure that I am following through with the activities and tasks he needs to achieve" (Interview 2, p. 4). Accepting responsibility for plan implementation was not only verbalised, it was demonstrated by Owen's teacher with consistently high rates of integrity. Integrity of implementation across all measures averaged 93%. Integrity was measured by the AVT directly observing how well the teacher implemented selected strategies from the PBS plan. This was measured in terms of adherence and quality. Self-reports supported this result with integrity rated as high. Owen's task engagement improved to 86% averaged across six observations during the intervention period.

5.2.6   Program evaluation (intervention outcomes)

Figure 5.2 shows Owen's intervention data for his on-task behaviour. This graph shows the percentage of on-task behaviour that Owen exhibited during baseline (observations 1 to 6), intervention (observations 7 to 12) and follow up

(observation 13). Note the vertical lines dividing the graph into the three sections—baseline, intervention and follow up, from left to right. Each observation was of 30 minutes duration.

During baseline, Owen's on-task behaviour for five of the six observations was between 72% and 82% with one observation seeing a slight decrease to 54%. During intervention Owen's off-task behaviour decreased overall and a follow-up observation conducted after four weeks without AVT support, indicated 91% task engagement. The ongoing maintenance of low levels of disruption resulted in Owen's attendance time at school being increased to full day attendance.
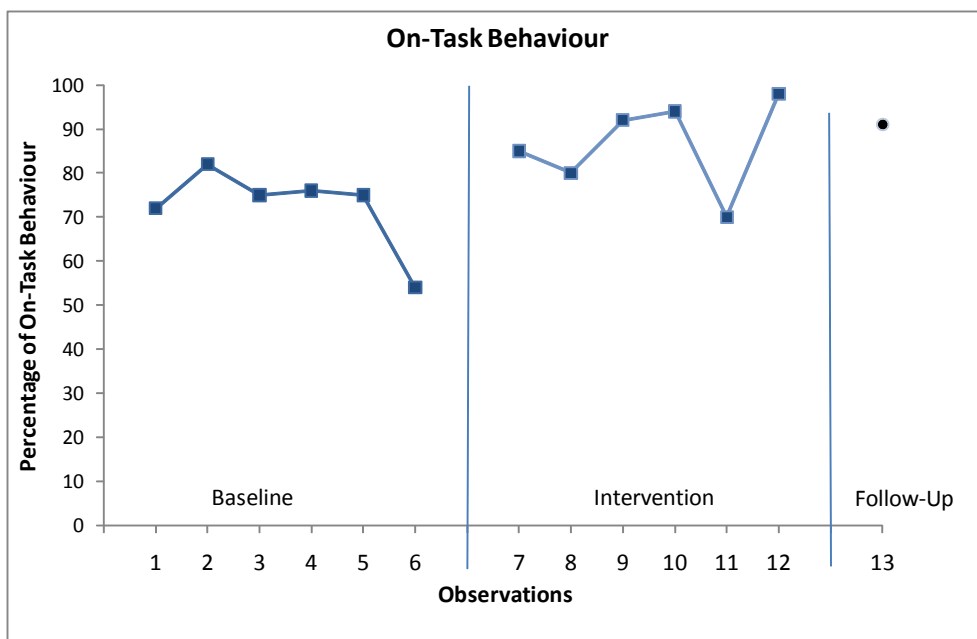
Figure 5.2. Owen's intervention results.

The small incremental increase in Owen's task engagement data from baseline to intervention does not reflect the magnitude of success (Figure 5.2). From a student being considered for exclusion due to the severity of his disruptive behaviour, to a student demonstrating consistently high levels of task engagement, is a positive outcome. All parties agreed that Owen's transition back into school full-time was highly successful and deemed the intervention very effective with all goals listed on the PBS plan achieved.

Owen's teacher spoke with confidence about her role in the plan's success saying, "This plan has worked for him, but I don't know if it is me ... or me being

supportive with this program or me being determined to say I'm not willing to do that!" (Interview 3, p. 4). She has, in her own words identified the critical contribution of strong social validity and high levels of integrity of implementation in achieving positive intervention outcomes (Dunlap, et al., 2010; Lane & Beebe-Frankenberger, 2004). With the news that Owen's teacher had been granted her request to teach Owen again the following year, his short-term classroom future looks promising. Promising because Owen will be in a safe, supportive learning environment with a teacher who cares about him and with whom he has a trusting, strong relationship.

From a history of highly challenging, unsafe behaviour to markedly increased instances of time on-task and regular attendance at school, the positive changes for Owen are highly significant. Of equal significance was the shift in the teacher's view of Owen—from one of reservation at the outset of the behaviour support to becoming an advocate for Owen requesting she teach him the following year. Attending school fulltime, the opportunity to maximise learning and the promise of a caring, consistent teacher, are three very purposeful outcomes of Owen's intervention.

5.3   CHRIS

5.3.1   Personal system

Chris has been without a consistent primary carer for most of his young life. This, combined with traumatic events, has undoubtedly impacted upon Chris's abilities and behaviour. Chris's extensive mental health diagnoses are listed as: Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD), Reactive Attachment Disorder (RAD) and Foetal Alcohol Syndrome. Chris is 10 years old.

Chris was first referred for behaviour support in 2006 when he was in pre-school (now called preparatory), aged 5 years old. The behaviours of concern listed were physical and verbal aggression, persistent disruptive behaviour and damage to property. Previous to attending school, Chris had been excluded from four day care centres because of physical aggression towards other children and animals.

By 2010, the referred behaviours were listed as persistent disruptive behaviour, oppositional and unsafe behaviour. Chris was placed in a short-term alternative site—an Intervention Centre where the average program of intervention lasts from 4 to 10 weeks. Due to the severity and unsafe behaviour exhibited by Chris, he remained in the program for a year while a suitable school was found. He returned to Special School at the commencement of 2011 after special consideration was given due to the complexity of his behaviour.

5.3.2   Family system

By 2007 Chris was in his eighth foster care situation. First placed in foster care in 2002 at one year of age Chris was involved in a car accident, returned to the care of his mother for about 12 months and then was placed with his father. He remained with his father for a couple of years, was returned again to his mother in 2006 and then placed with his grandparents in 2007. With little success achieved, he was placed in a departmental shared arrangement in 2007. In this care situation Chris lives in a suburban home where two carers (on a rostered basis) provide twenty-four hour care for himself and another child. This arrangement has been most successful for Chris and has continued throughout 2011 (four years to date). Having the same address and the same two carers for a sustained period of time has brought an element of stability to what had been to that point, a tumultuous life for Chris. From

the commencement of 2011 the relevant government authorities deemed Chris would remain permanently in care with no possibility of being returned to his mother. Supervised one hour access visits with his mother began (as a trial) half way through 2011.

5.3.3 School system

Designated a special school catering for students with disabilities, Chris's school has a principal and a deputy principal. Every classroom has a teacher aide, often two, to assist the teacher with students, both academically and socially. Situated in a very low socioeconomic area the school had an enrolment of 130 students in 2011. Bordered by high fencing with access to all areas via electronic tag, school expectations for behaviour are centred around safety, respect and following directions. Response to inappropriate behaviour is 'student specific' taking the individual needs and circumstances of the individual into consideration at all times.

With a high emphasis on routines and teaching social and life skills, this school was deemed the most appropriate place for Chris to prepare him for transition to mainstream schooling. Chris's enrolment in the school at the beginning of 2011 was originally for the first three terms (January until October) with transition into mainstream schooling planned to occur in term four (October to December). However, all stakeholders involved in supporting Chris decided that Chris's transition to mainstream schooling would be delayed until 2012 with the view of him regularly attending full time schooling by mid-2012.

5.3.4 Teacher system

For the first six months of 2011 Chris was in a class of same-aged peers. His teacher was a mature-aged woman in her second year of teaching with a kind, encouraging manner. Chris's challenging behaviour became increasingly problematic for the teacher whose routines and organisation lacked consistency and an explicit teaching component. The AVT had completed initial observations when the Principal made the decision in collaboration with teaching staff and Chris's carers, to move Chris to a class with older students.

Chris's new teacher, similar to his first, is a mature-aged female teacher with two years teaching experience. Highly organised, with predictable routines and clear expectations, student behaviour is being effectively managed and individual

programming caters for the unique needs of the students. This teacher works four days per week and another female teacher takes the class each Wednesday.

5.3.5 Classroom system

The class consists of 10 special needs students, one girl and nine boys ranging in age from 12 to 14 years. All have diagnoses for differing degrees of intellectual impairment or autism. The classroom has desks arranged in a semi-circular pattern facing the front of the room. A separate teacher's office is at the back of the classroom and along the back wall are four computers. Ample shelving is clearly labelled for the housing of all resources.

Literacy is the focus curriculum area taught by the classroom teacher. The students attend different classrooms for Maths, depending on their ability while Music, Home Economics (cooking) and Physical Education are taught by specialist teachers. The curriculum emphasis throughout the school is to prepare the students for their future lives as citizens of the community.

A visual reward system is operating very effectively in the classroom with each student having an individual chart on their desks. This chart lists the personal goal or goals each student is striving for in an effort to receive a 'smiley' sticker for their chart. A designated number of smiley stickers lead to particular rewards or privileges. Major problem behaviours are addressed following a three-step system beginning with time out, removal and loss of privilege, followed by parent contact and finally suspension/exclusion.

5.4 CHRIS'S INTERVENTION

5.4.1 AVT profile

Chris's AVT believes that building teacher capacity to sustain long-term interventions and establishing strong relationships are the two main purposes of her role. This is her fourth year in the behaviour team and in addition to many years teaching experience, she has been an advisor in the Early Years (preparatory to 3) sector. In assisting teachers with plan implementation she ascribes to "the most effect with the least amount of drama" (Interview 1, p. 5) and focuses on classroom systems simultaneously with the individual systems. Given the complexity of Chris's case and the many stakeholders involved, her focus was on regular, effective communication as the fundamental strategy to establishing productive partnerships.

5.4.2 Relationship building

Chris's behaviour referral for intervention was lodged when he was in the first classroom. It had not been discussed with the current teacher (second classroom) who was unaware of the reasons for the referral. Lack of teacher knowledge with regards to a student in their class with highly complex needs often presents as a difficult situation for the AVT. The teacher can feel disempowered because they can perceive the AVT as the keeper of the knowledge about 'their' student—knowledge to which they do not have easy access. Relationship building between the teacher and the AVT is most important if this potentially negative situation is to be turned into a positive one.

In this case, immediate contact was made by the AVT and a meeting held to discuss the reasons for the referral, together with the roles and responsibilities of the teacher and the AVT. Regular AVT class presence and verbal acknowledgement of supportive teacher behaviour followed. Chris's teacher was very willing to give her time for meetings and discussions with communication mostly conducted in face-to-face situations. Emails were used to document Chris's behaviour, clarify understanding and coordinate meeting times.

5.4.3 Problem identification (data collection)

5.4.3.1 *Defining the Behaviour*

Chris has a history of non-compliant behaviour which is defined as refusal to follow teacher instructions. Refusal is particularly evident when Chris is given an instruction to engage in a non-preferred academic task. In response, Chris will move away, make constant noises and on some occasions leave the room without permission. As a result he escapes/avoids the task at hand. On one occasion after leaving the classroom his defacing of two staff cars led to the Principal suspending Chris for five days. In addition to serving the function of escape/avoid, Chris's behaviour is maintained by access to sensory stimulation. This is demonstrated by the constant movement of his legs, tapping on the desk and making audible, continuous noises. With dual functions of behaviour validated by observation and interview data, the teacher deemed refusal to do his work as the behaviour of greatest concern. Increasing task engagement was the behaviour to be targeted for intervention.

Chris's PBS plan hypothesis states when Chris is given a direction to engage in an academic task he will move away, walk around, make noises, say "No!" and go to the computers, the quiet room or leave the classroom. As a result he escapes/avoids the task at hand.

5.4.4   Problem analysis (PBS plan development)

Developing the PBS plan (Appendix L) collaboratively with all stakeholders was facilitated by established open communication systems between carers, school staff and the relevant government departments. Genuine care and concern for Chris's wellbeing was repeatedly demonstrated by his class teacher who willingly gave up her own time before and after school, as well as her non-contact time (two hours per week during the school day for teacher planning and preparation) to attend case meetings to develop the plan. Further, in her conversations she would comment, "He is a lovely little boy you know" and "He's a nice kid" (Conversation, July 14, 2011).

Effective strategies that were currently in place were incorporated into the plan to ensure the best contextual fit for both the classroom and teacher system. Social significance of the goals of the intervention was agreed upon with Chris's teacher who expressed the benefits of reducing Chris's disruptive behaviour in terms of his participation in learning, "He's got a lot of knowledge inside that brain of his. You know he does take an interest. Um, so if he would just participate more in the school, classroom and with work" (Interview 1, p. 6).

5.4.5   Plan implementation

The period of intervention for Chris totalled 12 weeks during which time a total of 13 observations were completed by the AVT and me. Chris's behavioural target on his PBS plan stated: During class time Chris will be in the correct place at the correct time and will engage in on-task behaviour during 50% of observed intervals for six sessions. Engaged in a task looked like sitting at his desk, keeping hands, feet and objects to self, eyes on the teacher or on the task and having some of the task completed. The direct observations were completed over the implementation period with a follow-up observation conducted three weeks from when regular contact and support from the AVT had ceased.

Prior to the commencement of plan implementation a case meeting was held with the class teacher and specialist teachers who also taught Chris. This was to

familiarise staff with the goals and procedures of the intervention. While Chris's teacher was very accepting of the plan procedures and felt comfortable with them, she did convey some hesitancy saying:

> I have reservations in terms of whether Chris will be able to adhere to them [procedures] and stick to them but um I think in terms of small steps and we focus on one or two things, I think that's heading in the right direction so I'm very comfortable about the procedures (Interview 2, p. 1).

5.4.5.1 Baseline

Task engagement was collected using a 10 second partial interval recording procedure. Task engagement was defined as Chris sitting at his desk, keeping his hands, feet and objects to self, eyes on the teacher or on the task and some of the task being completed. Three baseline observations each of 30 minutes duration were conducted. IOA was calculated using the interval-to-interval method as described previously where the number of agreed intervals was divided by the total number of intervals and the result multiplied by 100 (Umbreit, et al., 2007). Chris's baseline data showed task engagement averaging 50%. IOA data were collected during 33% of the sessions and averaged 80.5%. There were no alterations to the classroom environment, activities were conducted as normal. Due to Chris's attendance plan stating he attended school from 8:30 to 12 noon each day, observations were only collected in this time period.

5.4.5.2 Intervention

It appeared that Chris's behaviour served the purpose of him escaping academic tasks. His PBS plan focussed on teaching him replacement behaviours of asking for help (escape the task by requesting assistance) and providing choices for the sequence in which non-preferred tasks would be completed. Interspersed throughout this sequence were timed breaks (rewards) and teacher aide assistance. Immediate teacher attention was encouraged when Chris demonstrated appropriate behaviour and this comprised verbal praise, a smiley sticker on his individual reward chart and contribution to the class reward system. The teacher explained to Chris the process for his choice card and the expectations around the timed break rewards. Chris's teacher took the initiative to explain this strategy to the other teachers (Home Economics, Music, Physical Education and Maths) responsible for teaching Chris.

Intervention data were collected as for the baseline data with one variation. Chris's intervention data showed task engagement averaging 84%. Integrity of implementation was consistently above 90%. His teacher's self-report was in agreement, rating integrity as high. Inter-observer agreement across four observations averaged 94% (inter-observer agreement (IOA) was calculated using the interval-to-interval method where the number of agreed intervals was divided by the total number of intervals and the result multiplied by 100).

5.4.6 Program evaluation (intervention outcomes)

Figure 5.3 shows an overall steady improvement in Chris's task engagement during the intervention period. The off-task behaviour while not showing improvement to the same extent was at a manageable level of around 30%. He displayed greater degrees of on-task behaviour, remaining in his seat and attempting to complete tasks. Planned attention and one-on-one assistance from the teacher aide contributed to sustaining desired behaviours. Two observations and the follow-up observation revealed 100% on-task behaviour. Past behaviour trends would realistically predict that 100% on-task behaviour would be unsustainable for Chris. Therefore, it is important that the AVT continues to monitor and support realistic behavioural goals.

From baseline to intervention Chris's task engagement improved and his behavioural goal was achieved. The results indicate that the intervention was effective. Yet, the perception of Chris's teacher was that overall the intervention was unsuccessful. Teacher social validity assessed at the conclusion of the intervention using interview (Gresham & Lopez, 1996) and survey (Lane & Beebe-Frankenberger, 2004) also reflected an unsatisfactory outcome from the teacher's perspective.
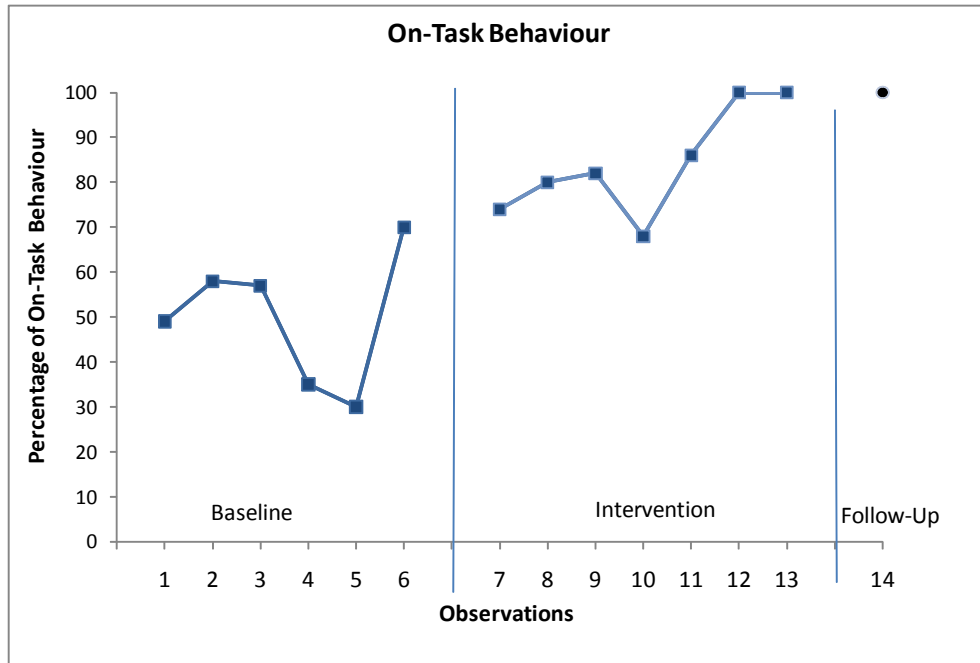
Figure 5.3. Chris's intervention results.

When Chris's teacher was asked how well she thought the intervention had worked, her response was, "It didn't. It just didn't" (Interview 3, p. 1). She acknowledged some initial success saying, "He did for a very short period cooperate, was willing to do what I asked with all the strategies in place" (Interview 3, p. 1). She attributed this success to the one-on-one teacher aide assistance Chris had received but felt this was unsustainable long-term, especially with the reduced human resources available in the mainstream school setting. So while there were many positive changes in Chris's behaviour evident to the AVT, improved outcomes reflected by the data seemed, in this case, to be little comfort to the classroom teacher who reflected, "I kind of became a bit despondent with Chris because I've come away thinking can anybody help him? That's what I've thought which makes me feel sad" (Interview 3, p. 4).

Chris's teacher was committed to trying to make a difference for Chris and when the extent of that difference did not match expectations, she felt disappointment. Within the context of Chris's complex life, the AVT and I believe Chris's intervention is a snapshot of positive progress and the promise of things to come.

5.5 DANIEL

Daniel is in a year 3/4 composite class. He is nine years old and has an extensive history of behaviour intervention that commenced in his first year at school (preparatory). Daily behaviour issues arise for Daniel in both the classroom and playground environments with regards to work refusal, defiance and peer relationships. Despite having a current individual PBS plan, Daniel's challenging behaviour has resulted in reduced school attendance and regular detentions over the past couple of years. The Principal reported that placement in an alternative centre for at-risk students achieved little behaviour change for Daniel, if any at all. Daniel demonstrates rapid escalation of behaviour to unsafe and dangerous levels without any clear indication or triggers.

5.5.1 Personal system

In 2009 Daniel was assessed by a psychologist and diagnosed according to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders 4th Edition Text Revision as having an average intellectual ability. The following diagnoses were advanced:

- Adjustment Disorder with Disturbance of Conduct
- Learning Disorder – Not Otherwise Specified
- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (Mild) – Combined Type (provisional)

In 2010 intervention for serious, disruptive behaviour continued consisting of a PBS plan, a risk management plan and time in an Intervention Centre. At the time of the study (the following year) Daniel was attending weekly psychologist visits as well as speech therapy.

5.5.2 Family system

Daniel's parents separated in his infancy and he lives with his father. Daniel's father has a partner and Daniel's mother has remarried and has two stepchildren. Daniel's biological older sister and brother live with his mother. His step-siblings live with their own mother and they visit Daniel's mother's house once a fortnight to see their father. Daniel visits his mother once a week and from all reports he gets along well with all siblings. Daniel's mother or partner often takes Daniel to school and there appears to be a sense of equal responsibility for Daniel amongst all adults in his life.

Daniel's parents were very supportive of the intervention process attending all required meetings and ensuring specialist appointments were kept. Daniel's dad consistently implemented suggested strategies at home and maintained daily communication with the class teacher.

5.5.3 School system

The school has an approximate student population of 550 from preparatory to year 7 and is situated in a low to middle socioeconomic area. With the implementation of SWPBS two years ago came the CStar Positive Behaviour Program. The CStar acronym stands for **C**onsideration, **S**afe and smart, **T**ry your best, **A**ppreciation and **R**espect. A renewed look at SWPBS was begun in 2011 which specifically focussed on refining many of the practices and procedures in place to ensure the process was being implemented with integrity. School expectations were revisited and the school environment enhanced with logos and pictorial reminders of the CStars and appropriate behaviours.

Assisting the Principal are a Deputy Principal and a Head of Special Education Services (HOSES). Until the year of this study, the school had had access to a different region's behaviour team who had supported Daniel for some time. Having become accustomed to one model of behaviour support over many years, working under a different model of behaviour service was new for the school.

5.5.4 Teacher system

Daniel's teacher is a male (28 years) in his third year of teaching. He is on a teaching contract until the end of the year. Direct observations indicate he is a calm and quietly spoken teacher who delivers the curriculum in a lecture-style manner predominantly from a seated position at the front of the room. Fully supporting the request for behaviour intervention for Daniel, Daniel's teacher seemed willing to embrace new strategies but struggled with the actual implementation. In this case it was particularly important to ensure that there was a contextual match because in many instances Daniel's teacher was philosophically opposed to many of the AVT's suggestions. For example, knowing that the school behaviour expectations were centred on the CStars, the AVT suggested that as part of a whole class rewarding strategy, the paper tokens to be used could be titled Star Bucks. The teacher was

strongly opposed to this title due to the suggested link the name implied to a multinational corporation.

5.5.5 Classroom system

Daniel's classroom is a single classroom with 28 students seated in a combination of groups of six and pairs. The desks are toward the front of the room and a carpet space toward the back. The room is sparsely decorated with few examples of student work displayed. The overall tone of the room is quiet and subdued.

Untidy and disorganised, teaching resources and equipment have accumulated in piles randomly around the classroom making it difficult for teacher and student alike to readily access needed materials. There is a concertina door dividing the classroom from the year 4 class next door. The rules and expectations are not displayed in the room and there is no evidence of a reward system. Overall, the behaviour of the students is excellent. They follow teacher instructions and complete set tasks consistently throughout the day. When disruptive behaviour occurs Daniel's teacher redirects the student displaying the unacceptable behaviours to the task at hand and if the behaviour continues he/she is sent to the classroom downstairs—the 'buddy class'.

Daniel has timetabled class sessions as part of the Special Education Program (SEP class) to which he is withdrawn from his regular class environment and works in a small group of six students with the assistance of the SEP teacher and two teacher aides.

5.6   DANIEL'S INTERVENTION

5.6.1   AVT profile

Having taught in high schools for many years as a classroom teacher, and with 20 years experience as a high school deputy principal, Daniel's AVT began working in behaviour on a part-time basis five and a half years ago. Achieving for the students "the best possible outcomes out of schooling" (Interview 1, p.1) by supporting them and their teachers, is in her opinion, the primary purpose of her role. A strong advocate for the student, Daniel's AVT places particular emphasis on working with families to build strong partnerships. Indeed, this was successfully

achieved with Daniel's father who was an active participant in the intervention process in both the school and family systems.

5.6.2 Relationship building

The current behaviour team follows a different service delivery model to the previous behaviour team who supported Daniel's school. Consequently, providing information about the procedures and processes and what that meant for teachers and the administration was the first step in building relationships. The AVT held a meeting with the necessary staff members within the first week of the referral being activated, outlining the steps of intervention and roles and responsibilities.

During the initial teacher interview Daniel's teacher made it clear that the behaviour referral was based on incidences from the past and he in fact had no knowledge of the referred behaviours commenting, "I don't know. No, I didn't have anything to do with that ... I presume it happened in the past before my time, before my teaching him" (Interview 1, p. 5).

5.6.3 Problem identification (data collection)

5.6.3.1 *Defining the behaviour*

Characteristic of Daniel's long history of non-compliance has been his refusal to follow adult directions and physical aggression toward peers. He escapes situations by leaving and running away which increases the seriousness of the behaviour because he becomes unsafe and unsupervised. Frequently associated with adult requests to complete an academic task, this behaviour serves the purpose of Daniel being able to escape the task and access adult attention. Daniel's lack of engagement in academic tasks was the behaviour of greatest concern to the teacher, particularly during literacy activities.

It was hypothesised that Daniel's behaviour served the dual functions of obtaining attention and escaping the task, so his PBS plan focused on teaching replacement behaviours for addressing both functions. In order to access attention Daniel was taught to raise his hand and wait quietly for teacher response. He could also use this skill to ask for a break in conjunction with his break card.

The hypothesis statement on Daniel's PBS plan reads: When Daniel is faced with a task that he does not feel able or wish to complete, he will throw materials on the floor, tear them up, declare his intention to refuse the task, leave the room thus

Daniel escapes the task and is also usually able to access teacher/adult and peer attention (Appendix M).

5.6.4 Problem analysis (PBS plan development)

Unwelcomed, uninvited disruptions to the classroom environment can be described as ecologically intrusive, often generating teacher resistance to embracing aspects of an intervention. Given that "ecological intrusiveness" was a barrier to Daniel's teacher accepting the PBS plan, accommodations and changes to the plan were ongoing (Rathvon, 2008, p. 25). Trying to find a contextual fit between the plan and the classroom and teacher systems proved very difficult for the AVT. Consequently, this stage of consultation took a greater length of time than the usual two to three weeks, taking three months.

Daniel's teacher specified non-compliance as the most problematic behaviour and following directions as the behaviour targeted for change. The behavioural goal on Daniel's PBS plan stated that Daniel will increase his task engagement during academic activities during 40% of observed intervals over six observations. The AVT worked closely with the SEP teachers who were very willing to incorporate all suggestions into Daniel's special education program. It was hoped that their implementation of the strategies would stand as a role model for the classroom teacher.

5.6.5 Plan implementation

A pattern of quiet resistance from Daniel's teacher toward many aspects of the intervention emerged prior to, and during, the early stages of implementation. Teacher behaviours such as not making changes to the physical environment and the curricula, rarely using praise and a lack of consistency applying consequences, were probably the result of his lack of acceptance of plan procedures and lack of skill. Concern was articulated by Daniel's teacher during his second interview in terms of the time needed for implementation when he said, "Um, it seems like it's going to be very time intensive" (Interview 2, p. 1).

The importance for teacher clarity in understanding the role of the AVT was made evident when Daniel's teacher expressed his expectations of the intervention saying,

It's more a misunderstanding on my part but I expected that the intervention would be, I suppose interventionist that um when things go haywire, when the behaviour goes wrong, that the person present in my room [the AVT] would be responsible for the child and would intervene in that situation rather than it being additional work on my behalf (Interview 2, p. 2).

With this awareness and knowledge the AVT scheduled a meeting involving all stakeholders including Daniel's parents to clarify expectations and adjust the plan accordingly. The social validity survey completed by Daniel's teacher prior to plan implementation rated agreement of all procedures with some doubt noted as to whether the proposed rewards system would result in long-term intrinsic change.

5.6.5.1 *Baseline*

Task engagement for Daniel was defined as Daniel would have his eyes on the teacher or the work; his body would be still; he would be trying to complete some of the task by writing some words/numerals on the page; and he would be engaging in the lesson by putting up his hand and answering questions. As with the other case studies, task engagement was measured by direct observation using partial interval recording. Baseline data were collected in two settings—the classroom and the special education program classroom (SEP). Three baseline classroom observations were completed and two baseline SEP observations. The intention was to collect three SEP baseline observations, however with the combination of Daniel's specialist appointments and timetabling issues, this was not possible.

Classroom data revealed Daniel's task engagement on average at 15%. This was considerably higher at 55% in the SEP classroom where Daniel is in a small group situation with a ratio of one adult providing assistance and attention to two students.

5.6.5.2 *Intervention*

From the direct observations conducted during baseline it was apparent that coaching Daniel's teacher was an essential component of this stage of consultation. Timetabled sessions were planned for a three week period during which time the AVT would provide technical assistance to Daniel's teacher to increase the likelihood the plan strategies would be implemented with accuracy (Dunlap, et al., 2010). Unfortunately this did not go according to plan with many of the timetabled

sessions not enacted due to other school issues. The AVT did on several occasions assist the teacher in the classroom and in doing so model interactions with students. However, this modelling was spontaneous and without a specific objective known to the teacher. The inter-observer agreement across six observations averaged 71%. A strong link seemed evident between task engagement and integrity of implementation in both settings. For example, classroom on-task engagement averaged 33% with integrity measured at 25%, while Daniel's task engagement in the SEP classroom averaged 91% with integrity on average at 89%. His teacher's self-report agreed with the low integrity rate, with implementation integrity rated as low.

5.6.6 Program evaluation (intervention outcomes)

Figure 5.4 shows Daniel's on-task engagement was at approximately 50% during baseline in the SEP. This data is denoted by the letters SEP and a red triangle symbol. Achieving a similar effect in his regular classroom situation proved to be much more difficult. Daniel's off-task behaviour was at consistently higher rates in the classroom setting as opposed to the SEP setting. However, his on-task behaviour in the classroom did show an upward trend from baseline plateauing during intervention. Results indicate that Daniel's intervention was most successful in improving his task engagement within the context of the special education program classroom. In this situation Daniel received increased amounts of teacher attention, activities that catered for his learning needs and integrity of implementation was high.
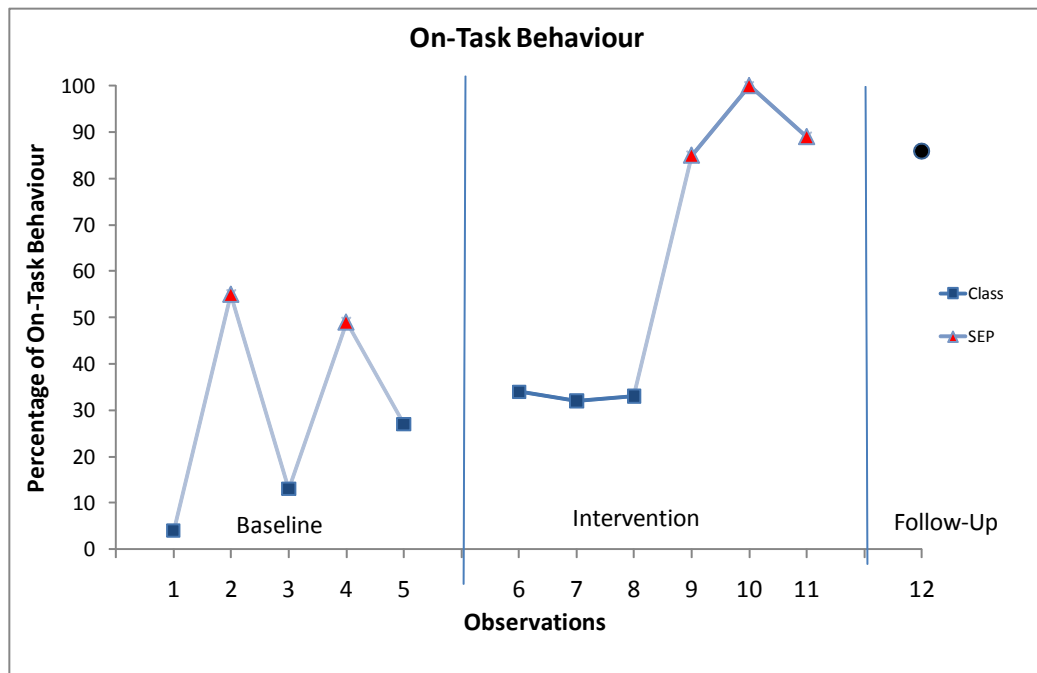
Figure 5.4. Daniel's intervention results.

Overall the intervention was rated by the AVT, the administration, SEP staff and Daniel's father as successful because Daniel was attending school for the entire day and the 22 reportable incidences in the first half of the year was halved in the second half of the year. It is worth noting that of these 11 latest incidences, nine took place in Daniel's regular classroom, one in the SEP and one in the playground. Daniel's classroom teacher felt the intervention was "working in the sense that his behaviour is improving" (Interview 3, p. 3). However, he went on to point out that with regard to learning and completing academic work, it had been unsuccessful. In this case, there was definitely a mismatch of the goals of intervention. The AVT promoted behavioural goals while Daniel's teacher saw academic goals as the most important. The difference of focus manifested itself in Daniel's teacher pointing out that he took particular offence to being told not to worry about Daniel's learning, "I find that demeaning to me as a teacher and to him as a student" (Interview 3, p. 4).

Changes in Daniel's behaviour were viewed favourably by many of the stakeholders involved in the intervention. From February to November the AVT assisted the classroom teacher and SEP staff to improve outcomes for Daniel. While positive changes were clearly forthcoming in the SEP environment, they were also evident, albeit minimal, in the classroom. Unfortunately, the wide divide between class teacher and the AVT in terms of perceptions of roles, responsibilities and

outcomes throughout Daniel's intervention, proved sometimes to be insurmountable. Adjusting Daniel's timetable to increase his time in the SEP and therefore increasing the opportunity for task engagement was a recommendation put forth by the AVT for the remainder of the year.

Daniel is a boy with highly complex needs who will probably always require intensive levels of support to give him the best chance at achieving to the best of his ability.

5.7   SAM

5.7.1   Personal system

Sam has a diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Visual Impairment (VI) and is currently in year 7. He is 12 years old. Sam was first referred to the behaviour support team in 2007 when he was eight years old and in Year 3. He has been referred each subsequent year up to and including 2011. Behaviours listed include: extreme physical and verbal aggression, repeated non-compliance, unsafe behaviours and leaving class without permission.

As part of his individualised PBS plan, Sam was placed on a negotiated attendance plan due to the severity of his aggressive behaviour. At the time of the research Sam attended school for two hours each day from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m. Increasing his time at school was contingent upon his demonstration of appropriate behaviour.

5.7.2   Family system

Sam lives with his mother, father, an older brother and four sisters. Sam's dad has Tourette's syndrome and his mother is unwell. Sam's dad receives unemployment benefits and his mother is on a disability pension. The family presents with a high level of dysfunction and very complex, high needs as evidenced by the following list of Sam's siblings and their disabilities: brother (15 years) is intellectually impaired; sister (14 years) has suffered sexual abuse; sister (13 years) is intellectually impaired; sister (7 years) is intellectually and hearing impaired and sister (2 years) had, at the time of the research, no speech and very little mobility. Sadly, toward the end of the intervention period Sam's father was diagnosed with terminal cancer.

5.7.3   School system

The school Sam attends is situated in a low socioeconomic suburb and is part of the Australian Government initiative—Smarter Schools National Partnership for Low Socio-Economic Status School Communities—which is focussed on improvements in student engagement and educational outcomes in schools of significant disadvantage.

A primary school catering for 560 students from preparatory to year 7, the last two years has seen a slow, disjointed introduction of SWPBS into the school. There

appears to be no common language, no common processes or vision across the school. The administration team consists of a principal and a deputy principal. There is a Head of Curriculum and a Head of Special Education Services (HOSES). A guidance officer is attached to the school three days per week and is primarily responsible for student assessment and assisting teaching staff with individualised programming. The Guidance Officer has provided very limited support for Sam since 2007.

5.7.4   Teacher system

Sam's teacher is in his second year of teaching and has taught at the same school for both of those years. He is young, enthusiastic and passionate about the students he teaches. Sam has posed very challenging issues on a daily basis which the teacher has dealt with positively and to the best of his ability. It is a year 7 class (12 year olds) of 28 students.

As part of Sam's support a teacher aide is present to assist him with academic tasks for a couple of hours per day for a limited number of weeks. The teacher uses an interactive whiteboard to support the teaching and learning. Group work and individual assignments are the predominate mode of learning. There is a minimum of direct instruction and a focus upon facilitation and guidance of learning.

5.7.5   Classroom system

The classroom is a small room, brightly lit with windows on both sides. Organisation and neatness of materials is difficult as there are few shelves or storage spaces. Desks are arranged in groups of eight and there is a narrow wet area along one side. A separate room within the classroom is a designated computer lab with glass panels for ease of supervision. The classroom has rules clearly displayed and appropriate behaviours are explicitly taught. There is a chart for acknowledgement of individual appropriate behaviour that is referenced frequently.

Fast Cash is the class reward system and this requires each student to keep a bank account of earnings and deductions in an individual cash book. Certain behaviours attract cash deposits and collaboratively agreed upon activities require a withdrawal. For example, a visit to the toilet costs $20; a new pencil to replace a lost one costs $10. At the end of the school term a class auction is held for the purchase of prize items by the students.

5.8 SAM'S INTERVENTION

5.8.1 AVT profile

Much like Chris, Sam has been receiving behaviour support for many years. The AVT at the time of the study has been working with Sam for two years. With many years experience as a classroom teacher and principal of a small school, she joined the behaviour team three and a half years ago. She believes that enabling the teacher to help the student reach desired outcomes is her core business as an AVT. When assisting teachers with PBS plan implementation, her focus is on modelling and teaching the components of the plan "to help positively change the behaviour of the teacher and the student" (Interview 1, p.2).

5.8.2 Relationship building

The provision of behaviour support for Sam from various behaviour staff is in its fifth year. Providing the intensive level of support Sam needs in a mainstream setting that does not have access to the necessary additional resources is challenging. Ensuring staff feel supported who deal with such highly challenging and stressful situations on a daily basis is crucial. Establishing and maintaining respectful relationships with all concerned is paramount to improving outcomes for Sam.

With a passionate and enthusiastic teacher committed to helping Sam achieve progress, the way was paved for the development of strong partnerships of support. From the outset, Sam's teacher demonstrated a willingness to listen, learn and embrace suggestions from the AVT. The friendly, task-oriented approach of the AVT was well-suited to the teacher system and a trusting relationship developed early in the intervention process (Kampwirth & Powers, 2012).

5.8.3 Problem identification (data collection)

5.8.3.1 Defining the behaviour

Sam's non-compliant behaviour is dangerous by nature and includes throwing furniture and computer equipment, kicking and banging surfaces accompanied by verbal abuse which includes using obscene language. Being much taller than his peers and of much larger stature, his behaviour is very threatening and frightening to staff and students alike. Reducing the physical aggression was the behaviour of greatest importance to Sam's teacher.

From a review of all the data—interview, observation and Individual Education Plan (IEP)—it was hypothesised that Sam's serious, disruptive behaviours served the function of him being able to escape from situations he found uncomfortable. So the PBS plan focussed on teaching Sam replacement behaviours to serve this escape function, beginning with appropriately asking for help by raising his hand and using a quiet voice.

The behavioural goal on Sam's PBS plan stated that during class time Sam will remain in his seat during instruction time and engage in on-task behaviour 50% of the observed intervals over six observations.

5.8.4   Problem analysis (PBS plan development)

During plan development the following strategies were instigated immediately to help lessen aggressive outbursts and to provide some relief to a very unsettled, unsafe classroom system (Appendix N). These were providing Sam with a choice of activities, listing them on his own personal whiteboard in large print and ensuring all written text presented to him was in a minimum size 14 font. In addition, the teacher was instructed to provide immediate praise and reinforcement through the class Fast Cash reward system. This strategy proved very successful with the whole class and particularly with Sam. The teacher reporting, "Yeah, I mean he absolutely loved that [Fast Cash]" (Interview 1, p. 6).

A rolling series of meetings working in close collaboration with the class teacher and the school's HOSES were conducted by the AVT to ensure alignment of the PBS plan goals and procedures with those on Sam's IEP. The IEP is developed collaboratively with parents/carers and updated every six months. It details the schools goals, strategies and assessment for any student with a verified disability.

The severity of Sam's physical and verbal aggression toward others was of greatest concern to all parties. It appeared that as Sam's eyesight progressively worsened, his levels of aggression heightened. Of most benefit to staff and Sam was to concentrate efforts to reduce the occurrence of these violent outbursts. Because of his unsafe behaviour, school attendance time was deemed to be 8:30 to 10:30 a.m.

5.8.5   Plan implementation

A close contextual fit of the strategies to be implemented was reflected in Sam's teacher's use of positive language such as, "the plan's great!" (Interview 2, p.

4) and "I think it's going to be really easy" (Interview 2, p. 2) in describing the suggested strategies.

An integral component of this stage of consultation was the provision of in-class technical assistance to Sam's teacher from the AVT, to increase the likelihood the PBS plan would be implemented with accuracy (Dunlap, et al., 2010; Noell, 2008; Rathvon, 2008). With the use of regular instruction followed by performance feedback, Sam's teacher expressed his gratitude for the opportunity to have in-class support concluding that this contributed to the ease of implementation, "There's been some great face time as well which I think that's half of why I found it [the plan] so easy to implement" (Interview 3, p.3). In an effort to ensure consistency between settings, Sam's teacher visited the Intervention Centre as often as was practical.

5.8.5.1 *Baseline*

Baseline data for on-task behaviour, as with the other case studies, was collected using a 10 second momentary time-sampling procedure. Task engagement for Sam was defined as sitting at his desk, keeping hands, feet, and objects to self, eyes on the teacher or on the task, no swearing or threatening gestures and no throwing of furniture or destruction of property.

A total of 18 observations were completed, 13 were 10 second partial interval observations which included the follow-up observation conducted four weeks from when AVT support had ceased. Inter-observer agreement was collected on 50% of all observations and averaged 83.7%. Baseline classroom data show an average of 36% on-task intervals across three observations of 30 minutes each. It was only possible to collect data from the Intervention Centre twice and it revealed a very high task engagement baseline of 97%. Intervention staff attributed this high rate of on-task behaviour to one-on-one attention, assistance with academic tasks and high rates of praise and reward. Integrity of implementation was 100 % in the classroom and 88% in the Intervention Centre context.

5.8.5.2 *Intervention*

It was following three suspensions for physical and verbal aggression and destruction of property that the decision was made that a part placement between school and the Intervention Centre (alternative placement for students who have been suspended or are at risk of suspension) would be the next strategy to help Sam. The

data for intervention in the classroom setting showed on-task behaviour averaged 81%. During these observations Sam had constant teacher aide support and his attendance at school was extended until 12 noon. Supportive of the 12 o'clock finish, Sam's teacher noted, "I love Sam, I want him here but I feel as though morning is kind of all he is capable of" (Interview 3, p. 3). Across three observations the inter-observer agreement averaged 92%. A goal of the Intervention Centre placement was for Sam to learn and practice the necessary skills to cope with difficult situations.

Sam's part-time placement at the Intervention Centre afforded the AVT regular opportunities to teach Sam's teacher the PBS plan strategies and procedures with which he required assistance. Providing opportunities to practice and give performance feedback were also included. These factors coupled with the teacher's acceptance and confidence in the plan, possibly contributed to his active participation and perfect rates of implementation integrity. His teacher's self-report was in agreement, rating integrity of implementation as very high.

Intervention data in the alternative setting of the Intervention Centre saw a slight downward trend of integrity of implementation to an average of 93% but still remained very high given the high volatility of the context. Staff reported two major incidences in the three months Sam attended the Intervention Centre. No inter-observer agreement was possible due to the composition of the students in the centre. Staff did not permit more than one observer at any given time and designated observation times were very restricted.

5.8.6 Program evaluation (intervention outcomes)

Figure 5.5 shows Sam's task engagement increased significantly from baseline to intervention and maintained a high rate throughout his Intervention Centre placement. Intervention Centre data is denoted with the letters IC and a red triangle symbol. Sam's baseline increased to a level just above intervention prior to plan implementation which suggests the PBS plan played a limited role in his improvement. Throughout the intervention period Sam's on-task behaviour was at or above 70% which was a marked improvement from the initial baseline data and importantly, the outcome was sustainable. By all accounts, Sam's intervention was extremely successful.
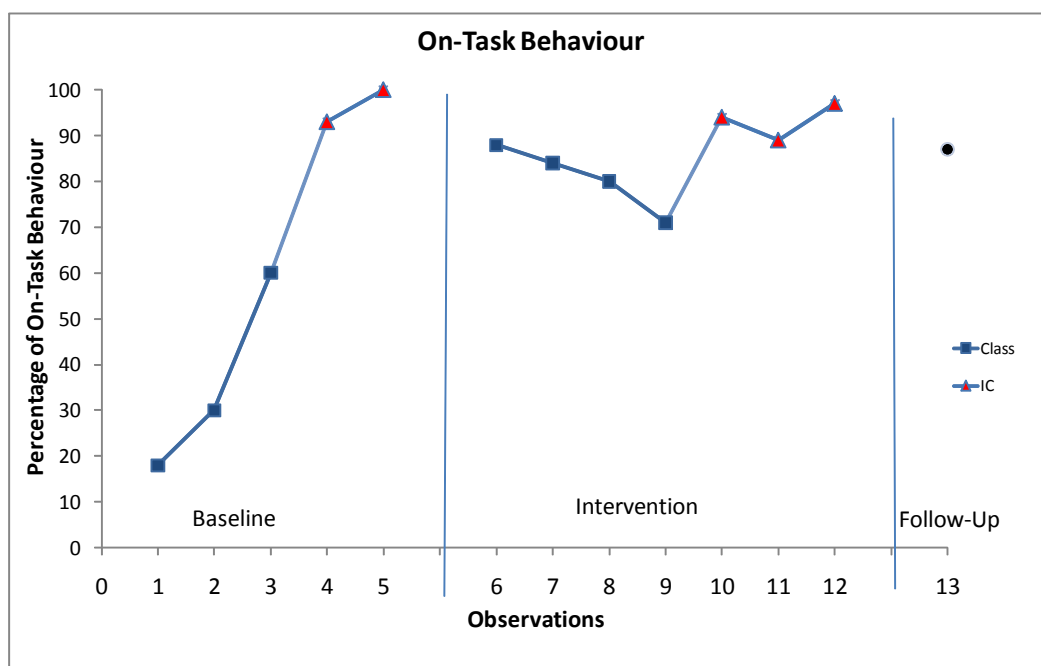
Figure 5.5. Sam's intervention results.

A follow-up observation revealed 87% task engagement in the classroom setting indicating Sam's teacher was continuing to implement the PBS plan as intended. By all accounts Sam's intervention was extremely successful. Sam's teacher summarised the success of the plan as follows, "He has responded to it, um which is awesome, like that is huge for Sam so um I think it is I think successful" (Interview 3, p.3). Further, Sam's family were very pleased with the positive change in Sam's behaviour and his renewed interest in academic tasks.

Physical aggression in the school setting was significantly reduced, particularly throughout the shared placement arrangement with the Intervention Centre. Nonetheless, the concern held by school and the AVT was the sustainability of the intervention given that it relied heavily on one-on-one adult support for maximum effectiveness. Planning for generalisation and maintenance will be even more critical when Sam begins high school next year. Sam's transition to high school will initially include a continuation of the shared placement with the Intervention Centre to promote stability, familiarity and support for Sam and his family.

The changes in Sam's behaviour were noteworthy. From high frequency, serious, disruptive behaviours requiring years of intervention and support to acceptable behaviour that allows Sam to participate more fully in learning, the intervention produced successful outcomes for Sam.

5.9   ELLIOT

5.9.1   Personal system

Elliot is 11 years old and currently in year 6. He was first referred to the behaviour team in 2009 when he was in year 4. The behaviours listed comprised of serious physical and verbal aggression including fighting, pushing, shoving, swearing and derogatory language directed at peers. A WISC IV Intelligence Test conducted in 2007 revealed an average intelligence result for Elliot.

Elliot displays many characteristics of Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and in 2010 this was raised to be addressed by a paediatrician. In 2011 after paediatric consultation this was discounted as inaccurate and a diagnosis of ASD was rejected.

5.9.2   Family system

Elliot lives with his mother and father. He has two younger siblings, a brother three years old and a sister six months. Previous behaviour files have recorded staff perceptions of emotional bullying, including swearing and name calling, demonstrated by the father toward the mother during meetings. Elliot has demonstrated similar behaviours toward his mother, for example defiance, swearing at her and belittling her in front of school staff. School records reveal that Elliot has an established pattern of late arrivals. He regularly arrives at school 30 minutes late and in the first six months of this school year, in excess of 35 days were recorded as late arrivals. Elliot's mother reported that this was due to the bus service timetable and her struggle to have Elliot ready for school each morning.

Toward the end of the intervention period Elliot's parents separated and he went to live with his father. During this time no change in Elliot's behaviour was observed by the school staff. Elliot's father was considering changing Elliot's school because transport had become an issue.

5.9.3   School system

Elliot has attended two schools. At the time of the study he was in his second year of attending his current school. The school is situated in a low to middle socioeconomic area with some government housing. Considered a smaller school, at the time of the study it had an enrolment figure of 470 students with the trend for that figure predicted to steadily increase.

The school has a principal and a deputy principal. There is a guidance officer on site for one day a week who is responsible for assessments, counselling and consulting re referral to other agencies (e.g. medical, educational and behavioural). Behaviour is managed via a levels system where a designated number of infringements are considered a particular level of behaviour. A detention room is used for both classroom and playground misdemeanours, operating at lunchtimes and supervised by teaching staff on a roster basis.

5.9.4 Teacher system 1 (Elliot's teacher from April to August)

Elliot's teacher came to the school half way through term 2 (the school year had been in progress for 18 weeks). This is her first year of teaching. She had previously taught at a school in a suburb close by and has found the transition to a lower socioeconomic school challenging. She openly admits that she likes Elliot and through discussions seems self-reflective about her practice and classroom management in general. Finding herself in what can be the difficult position of inheriting procedures and routines established by another teacher, she is keen to teach clear expectations with her students and refine the class rules.

The class as a whole has, in her opinion, improved their overall behaviour from when she commenced as their teacher. She reflects that they were "terrible" in the early days but are "much better now" (Meeting July 14, 2011).

5.9.5 Classroom system 1 (Elliot's classroom from April to August)

The classroom is part of a two classroom building with a shared office area and a concertina dividing wall separating the two classrooms. There are 25 students in the class with an average age of 11 years. The desks are arranged in rows with a whiteboard and an interactive whiteboard at the front of the room. Minimal storage makes it difficult to organise materials so a large teacher's desk is used for this purpose.

With windows along both sides of the room, whiteboards at the front and a concertina-type dividing wall at the back, there is very little usable wall space for displays of student's work and posters. Suffice to say, the room is quite bland and uninspiring.

The first few weeks of support for Elliot saw the focus upon assisting the teacher to establish classroom routine and expectations. Reducing the number of

classroom rules from eight to four was the first step in this process. Practicing procedures such as lining up, getting ready for dismissal and group rotations were tackled immediately to help establish a semblance of order to the classroom system.

5.9.6 Teacher system 2 (Elliot's teacher from August to December)

During the research period Elliot is relocated into a new class. This was a joint decision between school staff and his parents. His second teacher is a middle-aged woman with 19 years teaching experience. She has a reputation in the school as a highly effective and experienced teacher. Throughout the provision of behaviour support for Elliot, she demonstrated a willingness and dedication to helping Elliot improve his behaviour by implementing all that was asked of her. Her teaching style is a combination of direct instruction with group work for aspects of literacy and numeracy.

To encourage a warm welcome for Elliot into his new classroom, the teacher involved the students in hypothetical situations which included conflict and inappropriate behaviours that mirrored Elliot's. The objective was that by analysing and providing solutions the students would have a greater understanding of what it meant for them and for Elliot to come into the new classroom system.

5.9.7 Classroom system 2 (Elliot's classroom from August to December)

The physical space of the second classroom is much smaller than Elliot's first classroom and is housed in the original school building. The class is a composite class of year 6 and year 7 students (11 and 12 years old). Desks are grouped in sets of six with six computers in a row at the back of the room. An interactive whiteboard is at the front of the room beside the chalkboard with some storage shelves under the windows on one side of the room. An adjoining door leads to another classroom occupied by a year 2 class who consistently generate high levels of noise.

Classroom rules are displayed at the front of the room and the class reward system—called Positive Pins—is charted beside these rules. Students are awarded a positive pin to place beside their name when they demonstrate appropriate behaviour. This culminates in individual certificates, positive notes home and ultimately a reward from the class prize box.

5.10 ELLIOT'S INTERVENTION

5.10.1 AVT profile

Elliot's AVT is the same AVT who assisted Sam. She has had previous short-term involvement with Elliot when he was referred for behaviour support in year 3 whilst attending another local school. As previously stated, she centres her intervention practices on teaching the teacher and seems to be acutely aware of the need to change the behaviour of the teacher as well as the student. In outlining her actions she said, "Teach collaboratively with the teacher the components of the plan that should help positively change the behaviour of the teacher and the student" (Interview 1, p. 2). This attention to technical assistance was particularly helpful for Elliot's first teacher who had had minimal teaching experience and little opportunity to develop and practice essential teaching skills.

5.10.2 Relationship building

Elliot's first teacher is eager to listen and learn. Developing teacher trust in the AVT's ability to 'help' with the challenging behaviours meant providing information about the principles that underpin the behaviour service and clearly outlining the roles and responsibilities of the teacher. This was particularly important in this case because Elliot's first teacher was of the opinion that it was Elliot's responsibility to 'fix the problem' of being disruptive. When discussing successful strategies she noted that when Elliot goes to the reflection table, "He can reflect on what he does which does help but then he's not really fixing the problem" (Interview 1, p. 2).

It was quickly apparent from direct observation that Elliot was one of many highly disruptive students in the class and the situation was becoming overwhelming for the teacher. Daily visits to the class were initially a feature of this stage of consultation to allow the AVT to offer one or two practical solutions that would be immediately beneficial to improving the classroom system. When the teacher saw the positive effect a small adjustment to her classroom system made, she was willing to accept further strategies.

Elliot's second teacher held a differing view of her role in Elliot's behaviour support that centred upon her responsibility to teach Elliot the skills he needed for "how to behave, how to be a social person" (Interview 1, p. 5). Her attitude focussed on a proactive approach to prevent problematic behaviour occurring. Within her

classroom system Elliot was the only student who displayed disruptive behaviours. It was equally important in this situation for the AVT to clearly outline the intervention process because this teacher had not been involved with the behaviour support service before. Direct observations showed many effective procedures and routines were common practice. A high level of teacher skill was evident from the strategies intuitively employed by the teacher to assist Elliot.

5.10.3 Problem identification (data collection)

5.10.3.1 Defining the behaviour

As previously noted, Elliot's intervention began in the first classroom from where the referral was originally lodged. Repeated verbal and physical aggression, together with 'out of seat' behaviour characterises Elliot's disruptive behaviour. Specifically described by Elliot's first teacher as "violence", "push people", "being out of his seat", "throwing things", "calling out" and "teasing other students" (Interview 1, p. 4), the purpose of these behaviours appears to be to access attention. It was hypothesised that in order to gain peer or teacher attention Elliot calls out, uses inappropriate language, wanders around the room 'talking at', pushing, grabbing or punching peers. As a result he obtains the attention of peers, the teacher and administration.

Elliot's on-task behaviour was operationally defined as sitting at desk, keeping hands, feet, and objects to self, eyes on the teacher or on the task, most of the task completed, using respectful language and no calling out during lessons.

5.10.4 Problem analysis (PBS plan development)

Through a review of direct observation and interview data, the behaviours of greatest concern to Elliot's first teacher was his calling out and out of seat behaviour. Because Elliot's behaviour was maintained by attention, his PBS plan's replacement behaviour required he be taught to raise his hand to speak while remaining seated and wait for teacher assistance without calling out. Elliot's behavioural goal states that during class time Elliot will remain in his seat for 50% of observed intervals and engage in on-task behaviour for 75% of observed intervals for six observations (Appendix O).

Targeted strategies to improve the classroom system were included in the PBS plan and simultaneously implemented. Establishing a structured and routine

environment to support implementation was an important first step to effective intervention in this classroom context. How best to orchestrate environmental changes was collaboratively decided over two meetings where the PBS plan goals and procedures were clarified between Elliot's teacher and the AVT. From these meetings a tentative timetable of lessons where the AVT would provide modelling and feedback was arranged.

5.10.5 Plan implementation

Taking into consideration the fact that Elliot's first teacher was just beginning her career and had only been teaching 11 weeks, the AVT's approach was one of regular in-class support. Implementing strategies into the classroom system that had proven very successful in similar classrooms with similar students was instrumental in producing immediate results. During the intervention period Elliot's teacher mentioned that the practical whole class strategies were most helpful stating, "Um the Fast Cash, I think is a good reward system, um that has helped, yeah as I said across the board because they are all liking that" (Interview 2, p. 1). Establishing class rules and routines and teaching expected student behaviours was the initial focus for intervention at a classroom systems level. Essential skills such as using praise, using proximity, parallel acknowledgment and selective ignoring were rehearsed and refined by the teacher on a daily basis.

5.10.5.1 Baseline

In total, 14 observations were conducted across both classroom settings from May to October 2011 with inter-observer agreement calculated on five of these and averaging 86%. In Elliot's first classroom (May to August) baseline task engagement averaged 45% for three observations of 30 minutes. As with the other case studies a 10 second partial interval recording tool was used. Task engagement was defined as eyes on the teacher, engaged in the activity by following instructions and performing the task as requested by the teacher. Following additional observations this definition was refined to sitting at his desk, keeping his hands feet and objects to self, eyes on the teacher or on the task, most of the task completed, use of respectful language and no calling out.

With the latter definition and behavioural goal, Elliot's baseline task engagement in his second classroom (August to December) averaged 90% for three

observations. The AVT commented to me that Elliot was like "a different child". Elliot's second teacher concurred saying, "At the moment he's a little lamb. Yeah he just wants to please and he's doing the right things and polite" (Interview 1, p. 6). She substantiated this with her own observations and school records noting during two weeks there had been no incidences of any physical or verbal aggression. In addition, the AVT reported Elliot remained in his seat and demonstrated task engagement approximately 90% of the time.

5.10.5.2 Intervention

As previously introduced, intervention in Elliot's first classroom began with the focus on the teacher and classroom systems. Because the function of Elliot's behaviour was to access attention, the teacher was instructed to increase her verbal praise and 'catch him being good'. In addition, she was to use peer activities incorporated into the new class reward system to motivate Elliot while fulfilling his need for peer attention. Prior to implementation, Elliot's teacher mentioned that while she felt most of the plan seemed difficult to implement she was "fairly confident" in her ability to do so (Interview 2, p. 3).

The agreed upon timetable of sessions for the AVT to provide modelling and technical assistance were adhered to, however teacher acquisition of skills was very slow. Integrity of implementation improved from an average of 29% to 43%. Performance feedback was predominantly verbal with written strategies compiled at junctures throughout the intervention period. Nonetheless, Elliot's task engagement did show improvement from the baseline data, averaging 67% across three observations. Inter-observer agreement across five observations was 90%.

Elliot's behavioural goals changed in his second classroom, explained by Elliot's second teacher thus, "Because there had been such a big improvement in class we've been able to um, put the expectations higher" (Interview 2, p. 2) and this meant the expectation was to reflect no calling out to be tolerated at all. Little technical assistance from the AVT was necessary due to Elliot's teacher's skill and confidence, "It's [the PBS plan] all basically stuff I do, so yeah it all looks pretty good" (Interview 2, p. 2). This was substantiated by 100% integrity of implementation through direct observations by both the AVT and me.

5.10.6 Program evaluation (intervention outcomes)

Figure 5.6 shows that Elliot was on-task about 50% of the time during baseline in his first classroom and with the exception of one observation remained at a similar level throughout the intervention period. During the observation where there was no evidence of off-task behaviour, a teacher aide provided immediate assistance and attention to Elliot throughout task completion. Significant positive change is evident in the second classroom situation; however there was a slight downward trend occurring in the last observation session. Unfortunately, follow-up was not observed due to Elliot's absence and his attendance time at school being reduced due to aggressive behaviour in the playground. The focus from the school Principal and the Deputy Principal shifted to Elliot's playground behaviour which then became the primary concern (Meeting, November 29, 2011).
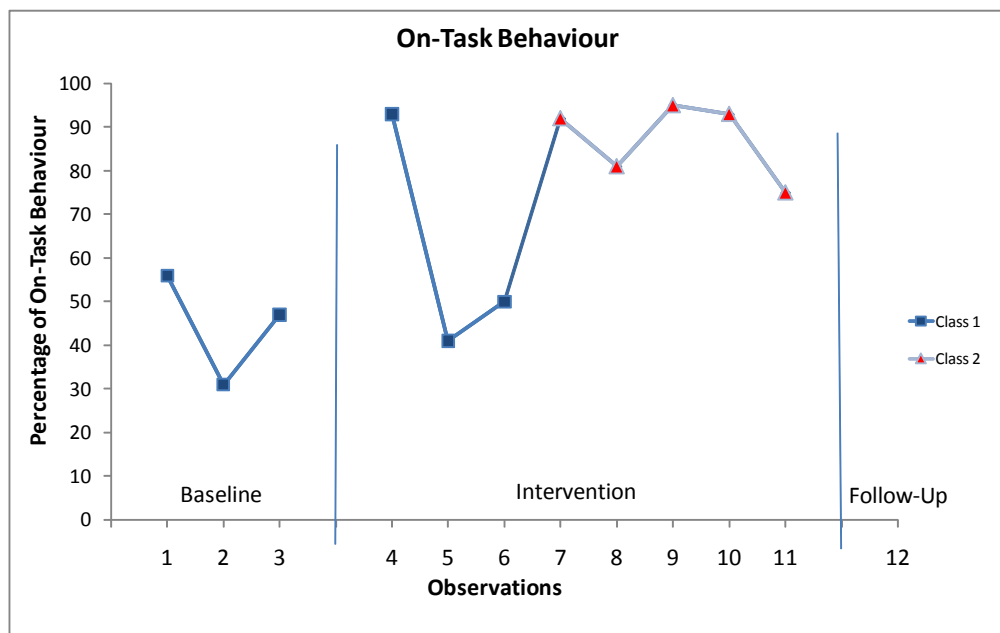
Figure 5.6. Elliot's intervention results.

From classroom one to classroom two, Elliot's task engagement significantly improved achieving his final behavioural goal. Two very different classroom systems guided by two very different teacher systems ultimately resulted in positive changes for Elliot. Multiple factors seemed to impact upon the plan effectiveness in Elliot's first classroom including teacher skill level, lower confidence levels and poor integrity of implementation. Greater opportunity for Elliot to achieve success in a different setting was suggested by Elliot's first teacher commenting, "He's not going

to have as much as an opportunity as he would if he was starting afresh with a new class or group of people, um implementing it" (Interview 2, p. 3). While it could be inferred that the hidden agenda beneath this comment was to 'pass the buck' by transferring the problem to another teacher, the change of classroom setting proved beneficial to Elliot.

Success was indeed forthcoming in Elliot's second classroom with office disciplinary referrals reducing by more than half from 30 in number (April to August) to 12 (August to December). Elliot's second teacher summed up the success of the intervention thus, "In my classroom it worked very well. He followed instructions, he remained in his seat, he was on-task most times ... basically that he fitted into the class" (Interview 3, p.1). Generalisation to other non-classroom settings such as the playground, bus duty and neighbourhood was raised as an issue by the same teacher who pointed out, "What we had in the classroom worked really, really well, it's just outside the classroom that we would have to add other parameters or other skills, strategies to use outside the classroom" (Interview 3, p. 2).

For Elliot, the implementation of the PBS plan produced positive changes to his task engagement. From the direct observations and interview data it seemed that a factor key to success was the teacher's skill and capacity to implement the PBS plan strategies as written. Elliot's disruptive behaviour was significantly reduced in the classroom setting and it can be concluded meaningful outcomes were achieved.

5.11 SUMMARY

Understanding serious, disruptive behaviour means being aware of the child's unique ecology, the relationships and happenings within it. This chapter introduced case descriptions of five disengaged and disruptive boys, the systems that comprise their lives and the interventions designed to help them. Drawing from Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory, each case study was organised under system headings to paint a clear picture of the influences directly impacting upon each child. Interactions between the AVT and other significant adults were woven throughout the mini systems with particular emphasis on the classroom and teacher systems. Helping the teacher align all systems to provide optimum conditions for behaviour interventions to be effective, is a key aspect of the support provided by the AVT.

It was pointed out that intervention in all case studies was located in the classroom system utilising the individually designed PBS plan as the primary tool for intervention. Each stage of the intervention process was described beneath the framework of the problem-solving model of consultation (Kratochwill, Elliott, et al., 1995). Teacher acceptability of the PBS plan goals and strategies appeared to be strongly linked to integrity of implementation and overall student outcomes. Decisions about the influence of the intervention were discussed and shown to be informed by behaviour data collected during baseline and intervention together with interview, direct observation notes and school documents.

The purpose of this chapter was to present the reality of serious, disruptive behaviour as it occurs in real school settings with real complications and challenges. The influences of each intervention were informed by the data not reliant upon it, accounting for impinging factors from overlapping systems. Five case studies detailed the exceptionality and complexities particular to five boys, five dysfunctional ecologies, and five resultant variations of positive changes to task engagement and successful student outcomes.

The following chapter details the cross-case analysis which presents the findings of the study and discusses these in light of the literature and the theoretical framework previously outlined in Chapters 2 and 3 respectively.

6 Cross-Case Analysis

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This study explored how individually designed PBS plans influenced change in the task engagement for boys displaying serious, disruptive behaviour. By acquiring deeper knowledge and understanding of behaviour intervention it was anticipated that what was learned would inform procedures and processes of best practice to ultimately deliver improved outcomes for students. Data were sourced from interviews with AVT staff and classroom teachers, classroom teacher surveys and systematic direct observations. Closely guided by the theoretical framework outlined in Chapter 3, five case studies investigated the influence of high quality PBS plans as tools of behaviour intervention. The study was based upon the following primary research question and three sub-questions:

> How do individually designed positive behaviour support plans (PBS plans) change influence change in task engagement of year four to year seven boys who display serious, disruptive behaviour?

1. How do participants perceive serious, disruptive behaviour?

2. What do participants perceive as possible enablers to effective teacher implementation of the PBS plan?

3. Which elements of the problem-solving consultation model might facilitate integrity of PBS plan implementation?

The findings from the five case studies reflect classroom teacher and AVT staff understandings of serious, disruptive behaviour and the changes fostered by the intervention implemented. In this chapter cross-case analysis is conducted to identify the commonalities and differences across cases while the uniqueness of what each case has to teach is retained. Broad explanations are proposed and inferences drawn that can be collectively described as "abstractions across cases" (Merriam, 2009, p. 204). These abstractions present to the reader a cohesive account of what is understood as behaviour intervention with respect to the findings of this study. In addition, supportive literature as outlined in Chapter 2 will be considered.

Understanding the subjective nature of multicase study, I acknowledge that there are multiple ways to analyse, interpret and report data. Presented here is my perspective, my recount detailing how I made meaning from the information.

Four findings emerged in response to the primary research question and three sub-questions:

> In all cases the individualised positive behaviour support (PBS) plan positively changed the task engagement of students.

Other findings were:

1. All teachers expressed very similar perceptions of serious, disruptive behaviour emphasising the collateral impact upon the teaching and learning.

2. Classroom teachers are, in the main, effectively managing the implementation of the plans, with an overwhelming majority of participants reporting social validity, AVT in-class support and performance feedback as three enablers to implementation.

3. The inclusion of a teaching component within the intervention implementation stage of consultation seemed to facilitate integrity of plan implementation. Relationship building was found, in all cases, to be an important facilitating feature.

These findings are discussed in relation to each research question. Detailed descriptions from interviews and direct observation data, together with supporting quotations from the transcripts, will provide justification for each question answered.

How teachers and AVT staff conceptualise disruptive behaviour, their attitudes and their beliefs, is an important consideration for the process of behaviour intervention. As the study progressed, research sub-questions two and three that were directly related to the effective implementation of the intervention, gained importance. Data from these sub-questions focussed upon the enablers to plan implementation, and the integrity of plan implementation and the combined findings contributed to answering the primary research question. The data emerged predominantly within the classroom systems as events unfolded. The classroom

system is a mini system contained within the mesosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1992) as described by the theoretical framework presented in Chapter 3.

In response to research sub-question 1 the very high level of consensus across all participant perceptions of serious, disruptive behaviour resulted in a comprehensive shared perception and an overall picture of what serious, disruptive behaviour means to participants. This finding provides a context in which to situate subsequent findings, hence it will be discussed first.

6.2   DEFINING SERIOUS, DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOUR

Serious, disruptive behaviour can mean different things to different people. Defined operationally it can be described anywhere from frequent pencil tapping to high level physical and verbal aggression. It is contextual. Establishing a common understanding within the systems surrounding the individual student of what constitutes serious, disruptive behaviour is imperative to ensuring the behaviour intervention accurately addresses the nature of the problematic behaviour. Investigating what serious, disruptive behaviour means to teachers and AVTs was sought through research sub-question 1: How do participants perceive serious, disruptive behaviour?

Teachers and AVTs were asked, "In your opinion what constitutes serious, disruptive behaviour?" Borrowing from Ravet (2007) the results revealed a "group field of perception" (p. 340), a common understanding and belief about what constitutes serious, disruptive behaviour. All participants, with one exception, expressed similar perceptions of serious, disruptive behaviour emphasising the collateral impact upon the teaching and learning. As introduced in Chapter 2, collateral impact is defined as "the effect of mental or behavioural disorders of children, such as externalizing behaviour, which may involve being disruptive or violent, on *other* children" (italics in original) (David 2010, p. 263). A majority of classroom teachers defined serious, disruptive behaviour in terms of the negative impact it had upon the learning and teaching environment (including the teacher and the other students). Classroom teacher responses focussed upon the disruption to the learning of the other students. Classroom teacher of year 4, Teacher H said, "When the behaviour stops other students from learning and stops me from teaching" (Interview 1, p. 1) and Teacher J of year 5 stated, "For me anything or any behaviour

that disrupts the learning or disturbs the learning of any child in the class is serious enough" (Interview 1, p. 1).

Types of behaviours cited as problematic were 'disengagement', 'disruptive', 'verbal abuse', 'totally disruptive', 'physically aggressive', 'the violence' and 'non-compliance'. The majority of teachers made reference to disruptive behaviours and aggression, including physical and verbal. AVT responses mirrored those of classroom teachers emphasising the degree of the collateral impact saying, "Non-compliant behaviours that stop or have a heavy impact upon other students' ability to learn and the teacher's ability to teach" (AVT 7, Interview 1, p. 1) and "Any behaviour that disrupts the learning of other students or poses danger to the child themselves or others" (AVT 10, Interview 1, p. 1). Physical aggression and harm were commonalities expressed by AVT staff when they spoke of the impact upon the individual. For example, "Behaviour that has a severe impact on the learning of the individual child who's performing the bad behaviour" (AVT 6, Interview 1, p. 1) and "Physical aggression, also verbal aggression with intent to harm" (AVT 5, Interview 1, p. 5). With close to complete agreement of terms used by all AVTs and teachers, the following shared perception of serious, disruptive behaviour was formulated from the interview data:

Serious, disruptive behaviour is repeated physical and verbal aggression that results in collateral impact interfering with the learning and teaching. It is often dangerous and harmful.

David (2010) proposed a strong link between problematic student behaviour and the negative impact caused (directly or indirectly) to the learning of other students usually in the same class. The occurrence of this collateral impact, he suggested, is more prevalent in schools located in low socioeconomic areas. While the extent and nature of impact upon others in the classrooms has not been measured, the findings for this study certainly support this link. Most case studies were located in schools of considerable disadvantage and almost without exception, teachers voiced their concern about the detrimental effect disruptive behaviour has on all the students in their class (Axup & Gersch, 2008). Nine out of eleven teachers described the negative effect as time taken away from learning, "It literally steals the learning time of other students" (Teacher J, Interview 1, p. 5) and "Just time is diverted from,

from the learning of others" (Teacher F, Interview 1, p. 3). With decreased learning time, comes decreased teaching time.

Exacerbating the situation is the repetitive occurrence of such behaviour. Teaching and learning is significantly disrupted on a daily basis making it increasingly difficult for the teacher to provide quality instruction in a safe and supportive environment. Securing back some of their teaching time was considered by many teachers as a benefit of reducing the problematic behaviour. Shifting the focus from managing the behaviour to teaching all students and providing quality instruction free from disruption was clearly reflected in the following statements, "Well I would be able to teach lessons without being disrupted" (Teacher H, Interview 1, p. 3) and "You could actually get on and teach content more" (Elliot's second teacher, Interview 1, p. 4).

Establishing clearly stated and easily understood behaviour expectations promotes an organised, safe and supportive classroom environment (Trussell, Lewis, & Stichter, 2008). Respect was the most common behavioural expectation expressed by classroom teachers. The data summary in Figure 6.1 shows the overwhelming response (9 of 11) of teacher behaviour expectations focussed upon demonstrating respect. Respect was conceptualised as respect for self and others. For most teachers respect was to be demonstrated by cooperative behaviours such as listening and participation. Elliot's second teacher explained it as, "Um, they allow me to teach, that they allow others to learn and that everyone participates" (Interview 1, p. 1). Two teachers included respect for self and others. For example Teacher I stated, "My expectation is respect for self because the child needs to feel good about themselves, respect others and [have] respect for other adults" (Interview 1, p. 1). Similarly, Sam's teacher noted, "The first one being respect um to yourself, others and the school" (Interview 1, p. 2). Teacher H focussed on respect to include differences, "To respect their differences, um cooperate with each other, um respect achievements that each one do" (Interview 1, p.1).
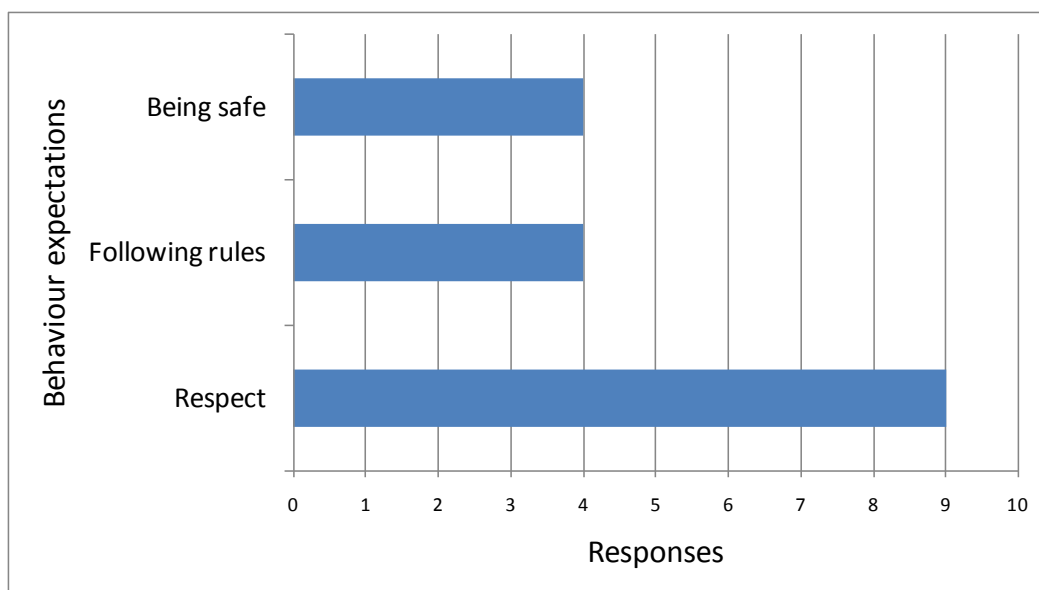
Figure 6.1. Teacher reported student behaviour expectations.

Demonstrating self-respect and being respectful at all times to others was often mentioned together with safety and following directions as the most expected student behaviour. Safety emerged from the data as a concern for many of the teachers. While research indicates that low-level persistent behaviours such as calling out, chatting and wandering are most problematic to teachers, these behaviours were not mentioned by the teachers in this study as of greatest concern (Beaman, et al., 2007; Ravet, 2007; Stephenson, Linfoot, & Martin, 2000). The teachers in this study experience persistent high-level behaviour such as physical assault and the throwing of classroom furniture and equipment, thus safety of themselves and that of their students is an issue of paramount importance.

Strategies employed by classroom teachers when managing a situation where a student is 'acting out' in a highly aggressive and unsafe manner could be broadly categorised under respect and de-escalation. Teachers emphasised the importance of being proactive and using strategies to quickly reduce the escalation and severity. These included consistency of approach, tactical ignoring, talking calmly with the student and time away. Teacher modelling of respectful behaviour when dealing with very challenging student behaviour teaches all students essential and explicit skills associated with appropriate behaviour (Jones & Jones, 2004). The importance of this teacher modelling is succinctly captured by Owen's teacher who noted,

What I try and teach the kids mainly in my class ... I show them how to do it
because I do it for them. I do it in front of them so they know I am not going to
scream at a hundred and get wired up too because that is exactly what I'm
teaching them not to do (Interview 1, p. 8).

This correlated with teacher tolerance of serious, disruptive behaviour being
expressed in terms of respect and protection. Strategies and responses are shown in
Figure 6.2.
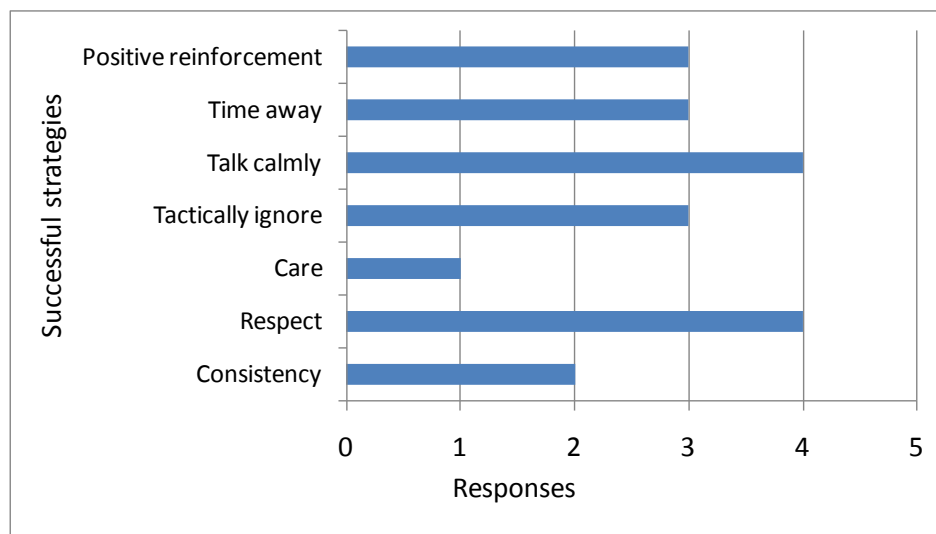
Figure 6.2. Teacher reported successful strategies for serious, disruptive behaviour.

In describing incidences of serious, disruptive behaviour, over half of teachers
reported the use of verbal abuse and throwing of objects as the explicit behaviours
demonstrated by students. Two teachers had been physically assaulted. Chris's
teacher recalled, "He hit me as well, he hit me a couple of times um he punched me
in the arm then he, he got right in my personal space and started poking me on the
forehead" (Interview 1, p. 2). Teacher F stated, "Ah, last year a child punched me in
the face and kicked me in the shins several times, um he swore at me" (Interview 1,
p. 1). The seriousness of this violent behaviour was conveyed by the fact that the
teacher sought legal action against the eleven-year-old perpetrator.

In spite of the severity of these incidences, both teachers demonstrated a
considerable level of caring and respect inherent in the attitude they displayed toward
the disruptive student. This positive attitude toward the student can be seen in the

statements, "I think you've got to take each day as it comes" (Teacher F, Interview 1, p. 2) and "Just moving on without the grudge holding of anything" (Chris's teacher, Interview 1, p. 3). It could be inferred that the positive nature of the statements made by each teacher despite their negative experiences is indicative of a genuine understanding and empathy of the troubled and complex nature of the student's life (Greene, 2008). Furthermore, the desire to help the student appears to outweigh the very real likelihood of the considerable personal cost of physical and emotional trauma, a cost eloquently captured by Danforth and Smith (2005),

> What I see, though, is allowing yourself to care, saying that it is worth the cost, shows the kids that you are right there beside them. It shows that you want them to succeed, and you will offer up yourself for that goal (p. 108).

Such a perspective of deep understanding and caring would most likely contribute to a greater level of teacher tolerance of the challenging behaviour. Teacher tolerance of disruptive behaviour, it could be suggested, is greatly influenced by teacher attitude. Whether the teacher holds a positive or negative attitude towards the student would generate differing degrees of tolerance and acceptance toward that student and their behaviour (Goldstein & Brooks, 2007). One teacher viewed tolerance in terms of possession of personal qualities stating, "I think I am extremely tolerant but having said that, synonymous with the word tolerant, I think I am very tenacious and very resilient. Tolerance is synonymous with those qualities" (Teacher J, Interview 1, p. 4).

AVTs spoke of teacher attitude posing a barrier to ownership and acceptance of interventions. Self-awareness of their mindset is a key factor in the teacher being able to modify their own behaviour and reduce the likelihood of it becoming a barrier to successful student outcomes. This was illustrated by the following statements, "I try everything not to be another antecedent. I don't want to be another trigger for him [the student]" (Sam's teacher, Interview 1, p. 4). A teacher who had acknowledged that their own lack of tolerance could manifest itself in anger noted, "I am definitely working on my tolerance and being calm and but when I'm in the moment I am not that tolerant" (Teacher G, Interview 1, p. 2). Most teachers described their level of tolerance of serious, disruptive behaviour with the word 'fairly'. Conversely, disaffectedness was expressed by Daniel's teacher who commented, "I'm tolerant in

the sense that it doesn't affect me. It doesn't affect me emotionally or I don't know, behaviourally" (Interview 1, p. 3).

Daniel's teacher appeared to compartmentalise his teaching from student learning. He seemed to segregate his own behaviour from student behaviour, viewing both in isolation from each other. There appeared to be no personal investment in helping change student behaviour. Direct observation in Daniel's classroom showed a teaching style almost exclusively based on delivery of content. Interactions with students were primarily to impart information; for example, instruction giving, posing questions and distributing materials. The classroom could be described as quiet and functional. Behaviour change was seen as the responsibility of the student because it was their job to learn; consequently they needed to change their behaviour so learning could occur. The teacher's job was to teach. Daniel's teacher viewed teacher behaviour changes as an interruption to the teaching process. This was evidenced by the following response in relation to introducing higher rates of verbal praise, "I think it will take away from my thinking about what I'm teaching. It will take up time" (Interview 2, p. 4).

Teachers who believe serious, disruptive behaviour is the result of factors outside of their control such as personal characteristics or the home environment, generally demonstrate resistance to intervention because 'there is nothing they can do' and they see the intervention as a 'waste of their time' (Goldstein & Brooks, 2007; Rathvon, 2008). One participant noted that while the disrespect from students was difficult to tolerate it was something she had no control over and was unable to change stating, "I have to put up with it" (Teacher F, Interview 1, p. 8). This was evidenced by the following teacher comment when describing a recent experience of serious, disruptive behaviour, "I'm being disrupted from my work that disrupts everyone. I think that can be quite serious if I'm having to waste my time on one child I think that's serious enough" (Daniel's teacher, Interview 1, p. 2). Beliefs about the origin of disruptive behaviour and who has the responsibility to effect change are contributing factors to teacher perceptions and attitudes toward consultation and intervention. AVT 4 observed of teachers' beliefs regarding student behaviour, "They don't see it as their job" (Interview 1, p. 7).

Ravet (2007) explained teacher perceptions of disengaged student behaviour tend to be focussed upon 'within' student traits associated with the student's attitude

and personality. Student attitude was a key contributor to the effectiveness of the PBS plan according to Sam's who stated, "Whether there is greater success from it [the plan] we'll see. I personally think it's up to Sam" (Interview 2, p. 4). Similarly, Daniel's teacher directly referred to the need for the student to make an "internal decision" to change their behaviour if long-term effects are to be achieved (Interview 2, p. 5). Teachers who view behaviour change as solely the responsibility of the student are often reticent to make any adjustments to the classroom system or a commitment to intervention implementation (Goldstein & Brooks, 2007). Providing support from an ecological perspective places the focus firmly upon making changes to the environments of the systems in which the student exists. It is about matching the environment with the child rather than removing the child from the environment to be 'fixed'. An increased understanding of behaviour and the purpose of intervention may shift teacher thinking toward a more proactive approach. Bambara et al. (2009) agreed suggesting that preventative practices include encouraging a whole school culture more accepting of the individualised supports necessary for those students with very challenging behaviours.

Collateral impact arising from repeated serious behaviour that includes physical and verbal aggression has a significant negative effect upon the teaching and learning environment. This finding presented a shared understanding of what constitutes serious, disruptive behaviour as well as common perceptions and experiences from classroom teachers and AVTs when dealing with such challenging behaviour. Expectations about behaviour have a significant impact upon how teachers view intervention, teacher acceptability of support and who is responsible for the implementation. Acceptability is enhanced through awareness and understanding of the enablers and barriers to effective implementation. The issue addressed by research sub-question two—possible enablers to effective PBS plan implementation—will now be discussed.

6.3   ENABLERS TO IMPLEMENTATION

Exploring the perspectives of the AVT who is responsible for the development of the PBS plan, as well as the classroom teacher primarily responsible for plan implementation, may provide valuable insight into factors that help and hinder PBS plan effectiveness (Bambara, et al., 2009). Research sub-question 2 asked: What are possible enablers to effective teacher implementation of the PBS plan? A focus upon

relationships and commonalities guided the recoding of the interview data. Three new codes were identified as possible enablers to plan implementation. These were social validity, AVT 'Live' in-class support and performance feedback. As suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994), a clear operational definition was assigned to each code. The definitions are as follows:

- Social validity refers to the social value and acceptance of the PBS plan with regard to the plan goals, procedures and effects (Lane & Beebe-Frankenberger, 2004).
- AVT 'Live' was the physical presence of the AVT in the classroom of the teacher and student they are helping.
- Performance feedback "refers to a process of providing objective, data-based feedback with the aim to improve transfer or maintenance of newly acquired skills" (Jeffrey, et al., 2009, p. 538).

The network of these three enablers relative to the PBS plan is illustrated in Figure 6.3. Effectiveness of plan implementation is enhanced by the reciprocal strength of all three enablers. Establishing acceptability of the purpose, the strategies and the outcomes of the intervention (social validity); improving the quality and accuracy of plan implementation through demonstration (AVT 'Live'); and increasing teacher skill through reflection and practice (performance feedback) significantly aid plan effectiveness. Each enabler will now be discussed in turn.
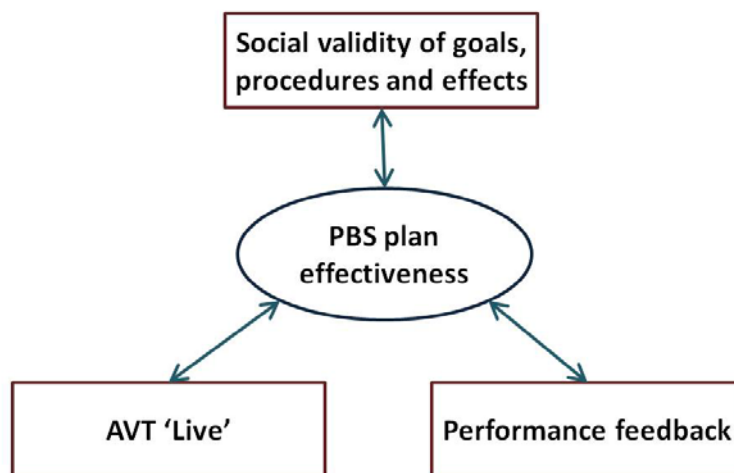
Figure 6.3. Network of enablers.

6.3.1 Social validity

Social validity addresses the degree of acceptance by the classroom teacher of the PBS plan in terms of the significance of the goals, the acceptability of the procedures and the importance of the outcomes (Schwartz & Baer, 1991; Wolf, 1978). Establishing the social validity of the plan is a crucial contributing factor and "paves the foundation for success" in plan implementation (Lane & Beebe-Frankenberger, 2004, p. 93).

Social significance of goals is focussed upon a common understanding of the negative ramifications generated by problematic behaviour. All participants listed both physical and verbal aggression as the problematic behaviours to be targeted for intervention. The explicit behaviours cited within these two categories across all five cases were hitting, kicking, punching and swearing. No friends and disengagement from learning were common negative effects from these behaviours expressed by teachers. The lack of acceptance from peers was explained as, "So it can become a problem in the classroom with the kids not wanting to work with him" (Owen's teacher, Interview 1, p. 4) and "They definitely won't choose to play with him" (Daniel's teacher, Interview 1, p. 7). In an effort to replace these negative behaviours with positives behaviours such as engagement in learning and establishing friendships, the procedures of the PBS plan must be acceptable to all stakeholders involved in the intervention.

Social acceptability of procedures means the stakeholders agree that the PBS plan is doable for the context in which it will be implemented (Wolf, 1978). Acceptability is an issue of social validity and was the overarching category for the combined responses listed under the three codes (see Table 6.1). Indicators such as time constraints and complex plans hinder acceptability (Gresham & Lopez, 1996), therefore the reverse is true if 'buy-in' by the stakeholders is to be achieved. Enabling indicators such as simple plans, building teacher capacity and matching goals were amongst those suggested by teachers and AVT staff as most likely to increase plan acceptability. Building relationships and establishing trust was common to each code and was the most prominent enabler suggested by the AVTs. Teachers, who are trying to manage challenging student behaviours with little success, can often feel vulnerable and ineffective and this is when establishing strong, trusting relationships are critical. Successful PBS plan implementation is

enhanced if a respectful, collaborative relationship exists between the AVT and the staff responsible for plan implementation. Such a relationship increases the likelihood of developing and producing a PBS plan that is a close contextual fit to teacher and classroom systems—more acceptable and more likely to be implemented with integrity.

Table 6.1

Enablers to PBS Plan Implementation

Code	Indicators
Social Validity	Build relationships/trust
	AVT relationship with administration
	Contextual fit/matching goals
	Knowledge of process
	Managing expectations
	Focus on teacher skill
	Positive teacher mindset
	Simple plans/small steps
AVT 'Live'	Build relationships/trust
	Maintain rapport
	Communicate face-to-face
	Regular communication
	Frequent catch-ups
	Capacity building
	Conversations with teachers
	Demonstration of strategies
	Understanding of classroom systems
Performance Feedback	Build relationships/trust
	Capacity building
	Shared role
	Build teacher confidence
	Small steps for implementation
	Modelling strategies

The extent to which the intervention achieved the socially important outcomes originally agreed upon, is the nature of social importance of effects (Gresham & Lopez, 1996; Lane & Beebe-Frankenberger, 2004). Teachers in three of the five case studies were completely satisfied with the intervention outcomes, with Sam's teacher commenting, "I think it is an effective plan um and he has responded to it, um which is awesome, like that is huge for him so um, it is I think, it is successful" (Interview 3, p. 3). Uncertainty with the outcomes was apparent from Daniel's teacher who used the words "suppose", "concerned" and "inconsistent" in his response; whereas Chris's teacher was very clear with her dissatisfaction answering a definitive "no" and using words such as "disappointing", "sad" and "despondent". This dissatisfaction seemed to be linked to her commitment to making sustainable difference for Chris. While positive results were forthcoming for Chris these did not match her view of purposeful progress. Despite this negativity, her answer was one of four positive responses to the question: Would you recommend this intervention to other teachers? She said, "Yeah absolutely. I believe give anything a go" (Interview 3, p. 4) and from Elliot's second teacher, "Yes because they work, it's consistent and it's commonsense and it does work" (Interview 3, p. 2). Only one participant, Daniel's teacher, indicated that colleagues viewed the intervention as additional work commenting, "They see it as burdensome, burdensome, um addition to their teaching" (Interview 3, p. 5).

Bambara et al., (2009) suggested that statements suggestive of an attitude indicative of those teachers who view interventions as time consuming and labour intensive are given because they hold the belief that problematic behaviour is quickly 'fixable'—preferably by an outsider. A case in point was Daniel's teacher who appeared to have continued reservations with the procedures in the PBS plan. His demonstrated low levels of implementation integrity, it could be suggested, may have been impacted upon by a lack of contextual fit and poor social validation of the PBS plan (Miramontes, et al., 2011). It is unlikely the class teacher will take ownership for the plan and implement it with a high degree of integrity if the social goals, procedures and outcomes are, in their opinion lacking social validity.

6.3.1.1 Acceptability

Teacher willingness to embrace the consultation process and the proposed intervention is a vital factor of social validity. Accepting the PBS plan as a tool that can be readily applied and incorporated with minimal disruption into the classroom, largely determines the future outcomes for the student (Martens & McIntyre, 2009). Teacher perspectives and management of disruptive behaviour and opinion of the challenging student and their relationship with the AVT form the mindset which governs the degree of acceptance of the intervention.

A mindset that reflects the belief that student behaviour change is someone else's responsibility has a significant influence on how a teacher manages behaviour and therefore the PBS plan implementation (C. R. Cook, et al., 2007; Ravet, 2007). Responses from AVTs in relation to the effectiveness of plan implementation focussed upon teacher willingness to accept ownership for the plan and implement it as intended. Reference was made by three AVTs to lack of teacher ownership as being a barrier because the teacher did not see implementation as his/her responsibility. This lack of ownership was described in terms of a 'magic quick fix' solution, "Sprinkle fairy dust, make them turn around three times, click our heels and here we are with a brand new child" (AVT 8, Interview 1, p. 5); "The magic wand syndrome drives me nuts" (AVT 9, Interview 1, p. 4); and finally, "Sometimes we get teachers who are blockers that want a quick fix but behaviour isn't a quick fix. There is no magic wand" (AVT 3, Interview 1, p. 6). The vast majority of AVT staff were in strong agreement that teacher mindset was a major barrier to effective implementation. Descriptors used included "blockers", "stuck in the mud", "quick fix", "feeling put upon" and "brick wall". Consistent with the findings of Bambara et al. (2009) acceptance of the PBS plan requires a "substantial shift in thinking about behavioural interventions" (p. 173).

Promoting the acceptability of the PBS plan can be enhanced by ensuring contextual fit of as many elements of the PBS plan as possible to the unique systems surrounding the student demonstrating the problematic behaviour (Scott, 2007). This was clearly evident when Owen's teacher worked collaboratively with behaviour staff to change plan procedures that were originally a poor match for her teaching and classroom systems. Her resulting acceptance she described thus, "Um now I've added some more of um what happens in our classroom into the behaviour plan I'm

happy with it now because there were a few things I didn't agree with" (Interview 2, p. 1). A systems mismatch was articulated by Daniel's teacher when he stated, "I found that that was a little difficult. I already had a system in my room and a new system was put on top of it or superseded it more or less without my involvement" (Interview 3, p. 5). Such a perception cannot be ignored. Teacher perceptions drive teacher practice. Successfully influencing these perceptions may require more time spent on establishing strong, relationships to encourage collaboration and greater attention to how elements of existing systems can be included into the PBS plan. It may be if due consideration is afforded to the different beliefs of teachers, opportunities to create new, highly relevant interventions may arise (Conoley, et al., 1991).

AVT responsibility in developing a PBS plan that is as close as possible to a match with the existing systems cannot be overlooked. If the PBS plan procedures do not match the school, classroom and teacher systems that continuously influence the student, the likelihood of social validity, and as a consequence successful outcomes, will be significantly decreased (Benazzi, et al., 2006; Carr, et al., 1999; Koegel, et al., 1996). PBS plan strategies should be formulated with consideration for school policy, procedures and available resources (Hieneman, et al., 2005). Poor alignment to school systems was proposed as a possible barrier to effective plan implementation,

> I think that teachers struggle with it [plan implementation] and I think they struggle with it um more so because there's not a really good alignment within their own environment to a multi-element PBS support plan ... I've had teachers say this to me that it doesn't align with what they're supposed to do in the school setting (AVT 7, Interview 1, p. 5).

There appear to be strong links between producing a 'workable' and 'doable' plan and teacher acceptance. Accepting the goals and procedures of the plan seems to be directly related to the contextual fit with existing classroom and teacher systems. Flexibility within the school system to accommodate intervention strategies should provide additional support to achieve greater teacher acceptance. AVT 10 summarised enhancing PBS plan effectiveness as, "Making sure that it is workable for the teacher, for their um method of teaching and also for their classroom and the clientele they have in the classroom" (Interview 1, p. 2). The relationship between

contextual fit and social validity with integrity of implementation is articulated in the following interview response statement,

> I've rewritten the plan time and time again just to try to ensure that the teacher is happy with it, the plan, because otherwise the plan won't be followed with any degree of integrity and it will be fairly destined to fail (AVT 3, Interview 1, p. 2&3).

Participation by the classroom teacher in all aspects of the intervention process is paramount because the control of plan implementation ultimately lies with them. Welcoming teacher input and incorporating suggestions into the PBS plan has a significant positive impact upon teacher buy-in (Miramontes, et al., 2011). Buy-in of all stakeholders was specifically mentioned by five of the eleven AVTs as a key factor in increasing plan effectiveness. Features of the plan that contribute to teacher buy-in are simplicity, time efficiency, ease of understanding and the inclusion of a praise component (Gresham & Lopez, 1996). Teachers have control over classroom systems, if and when the plan will be implemented, and control over their own attitude about the intervention. Ensuring a contextual fit by including teacher suggestions in PBS plan development and paying close attention to teacher beliefs and perceptions about behaviour, increases the likelihood of acceptability and the PBS plan actually being used. Noell and Witt (1999) highlighted the possibility that the inclusion of teachers, in training about student behaviour interventions will encourage a more proactive mindset that views the processes and tools of intervention as integral to their job as a teacher.
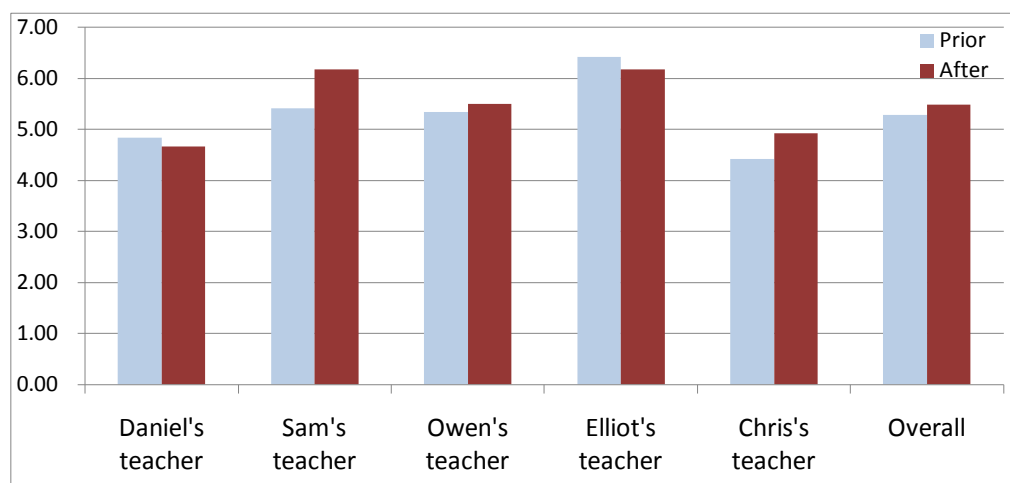
Figure 6.4. Teacher PBS plan social validity rating prior to and after implementation.

Self-survey results measuring acceptability prior to and following intervention are shown in Figure 6.4. Teachers rated their acceptability of PBS plan procedures prior to implementation and of the effects after implementation. The overall results support the teacher's initial impression that the plan would be successful. All teachers rated acceptability of procedures at average or above and in three of the five cases the social validity after implementation was slightly higher than the prior to implementation result. In Daniel's case and Elliot's case the social validity rating following implementation decreased minimally. Both teachers similarly reported dissatisfaction with intervention outcomes associated with the level of skill acquired by the student and likelihood of lasting effects. Strong acceptability regarding the effects or outcomes of the intervention following implementation was evident in the majority of cases. Supportive of the literature, strong rates of acceptability were associated with high degrees of implementation integrity. Substantiated by data from semi-structured interviews and direct observation, this finding strengthens the notion that socially valid interventions are more likely to be accurately implemented (Gresham, 1989; Gresham & Lopez, 1996; Lane & Beebe-Frankenberger, 2004).

Conoley et al. (1991) suggested that although it appears obvious, matching teacher beliefs to the goals of the intervention is paramount to increasing acceptability. This important consideration was also inferred by Bambara et al., (2009). In situations where the gap between these two factors exists, the effectiveness of the intervention is severely compromised "because an unused intervention strategy, no matter how elegant, is of no value to the client" (p. 546). In addition, the extent of the change in student behaviour that constitutes a successful outcome needs to be collaboratively decided upon. Even though teacher acceptability in Chris's case was average, the teacher described the outcome of the intervention as a failure. This could be due to the incompatibility between teacher perception of what is an acceptable degree of positive behaviour change and AVT opinion of the same. Contributing to this misalignment may also be the fact that the teacher did not possess the depth of knowledge pertaining to Chris's history of behaviour that the AVT possessed and so she had nothing against which to measure his progress.

In Daniel's case while there was an average rate of teacher acceptability of the plan, implementation was poor. Given that Daniel's teacher articulated his philosophical opposition to many of the strategies in the plan it could be expected

that willingness and accuracy of implementation would be markedly compromised. The data show the rates of integrity of implementation were very low. Similarly Noell et al. (2005) found that just because an intervention was rated as acceptable this did not guarantee quality implementation. Acceptability by Daniel's teacher may have been the result of "you don't know what you don't know". Daniel's teacher may not have had a clear understanding of what constituted his role and responsibility in the execution of the intervention. Or perhaps his acceptability rating was his way of coping with what was to him an uncomfortable situation and he may have felt that by providing favourable answers, the frequency of direct observations would be reduced. Further, his perception that teaching and behaviour intervention were two very separate entities was articulated in the following comment about attending meetings, saying that the meeting, "Gets in the way of knowing the children, actually teaching and being a teacher" (Interview 3, p. 6). The AVT cannot assume that the teacher is automatically an ally in the intervention process. When there is a lack of clarity and understanding with regard to expectations and responsibilities of those implementing an intervention, acceptance it seems is considerably minimised and positive student behaviour change is impeded.

With the classroom teacher primarily responsible for PBS plan implementation, the teacher's confidence in carrying out this task is an important consideration, and could be an important contributing element of plan acceptability. With the exception of Daniel's teacher, teachers felt confident in their ability to implement the PBS plan. When asked the question, "How confident do you feel implementing the behaviour support plan?" teachers described confidence levels from confident to very confident as evidenced by, "Very confident" (Owen's teacher, Interview 2, p. 3), "Yeah, look I'm feeling fine, fine about it" (Sam's teacher, Interview 2, p. 3), "Yep, I'm confident, fairly confident" (Elliot's first teacher, Interview 2, p. 3), "Very" (Elliot's second teacher, Interview 2, p. 3) and "Yeah, um I'm confident" (Chris' teacher, Interview 2, p. 5). In contrast, the response from Daniel's teacher focussed upon disruption when he said, "It will take up time and I'll need to change my direction to comment on behaviour when I would prefer to just continue commenting on teaching" (Interview 2, p. 4). This finding is consistent with that of Arbuckle and Little (2004) who pointed out most study respondents were confident with the management of student behaviour in the middle years (year five to year nine).

However, teacher confidence did fall as the disruptive behaviour in boys increased. Teacher confidence it seems is a contributing factor to a positive, willing mindset with regard to the serious, disruptive behaviour and plan implementation as well (Arbuckle & Little, 2004). Having a repertoire of effective skills to cope with high-level disruptive behaviours would help to build teacher self-esteem and confidence.

6.3.2 AVT 'Live' and performance feedback

In addition to social validity, the physical presence of the AVT in the classroom was perceived by most teachers as an enabler to plan implementation. The reasons given were twofold. Firstly, the physical presence of the AVT was considered a more effective way to communicate and also build teacher capacity. Two teachers specifically noted the importance of face-to-face contact with the AVT in assisting them to implement the PBS plan. Sam's teacher commented favourably, "There's been some great face time" (Interview 3, p. 3) and "More one-to-one, more face-to-face contact and communication with the teacher" was needed according to Owen's teacher (Interview 3, p. 4).

Daniel's teacher did not view AVT presence favourably, explaining that he felt negative student behaviour increased as a result. He explained, "So because of the presence, the behaviour is significantly increased, the negative behaviour um exacerbated and therefore my time given to teaching dramatically affected" (Interview 2, p. 3). This is known as reactivity. Reactivity is defined as when "the student reacts to the presence of the observer by behaving differently" (Umbreit, et al., 2007, p. 175). In some instances this can mean an increase in appropriate behaviours, in other instances, as in Daniel's case, student behaviour can worsen. Either way, the data collected can be compromised and the AVT needs to take steps to lessen the impact. Steps can include simply not wearing an identifying name badge, becoming actively involved in class activity as a co-teacher, observing from an adjacent room, teaching the teacher or teacher aide how to collect data, and having another AVT unknown to the student conduct observations.

With the AVT 'Live' in the classroom there is greater opportunity to observe how teacher behaviour is affected by student behaviour and vice versa, as well as the impact this has on the intervention (Sutherland & Oswald, 2005). Being present in the classroom to experience the activity first-hand was reported by teachers as most beneficial to them during the PBS plan implementation phase and was perceived as

supportive. Owen's teacher suggested, "Um, so I think more AVTs they need to come and see the classroom" (Interview 3, p. 4). Noell and Witt (1999) emphasised that verbal feedback alone was inadequate if teachers were to implement interventions effectively. Assistance to teachers that extends beyond just verbal feedback was echoed in the following statement made by Chris's teacher, "Um, even though um we've had positive verbal feedback which is always nice, again I think shadowing making sure we are doing the right thing so we know what it looks like" (Interview 3, p. 5). Quality support reflects an in-class approach focused on technical assistance, coaching, modelling and feedback (Rathvon, 2008) and is a key element of the fourth stage of the problem-solving model of consultation (Kratochwill, Elliott, et al., 1995).

Such opinions expressed by the classroom teacher participants are congruent with the findings of a recent investigation conducted by Easton and Erchul (2011) into teachers perceptions about what is acceptable practice in relation to the monitoring and provision of feedback. The teachers in that study similarly expressed the importance of face-to-face communication over email and other non-personable approaches as the preferred method of communication with the consultant. Further, they voiced the importance of the consultant assisting them with plan implementation, a sentiment also expressed through the responses of the teachers in the current study. Concentrating support in the classroom and teacher systems, the AVT is certainly in a strong position to offer such assistance to the classroom teacher.

Teaching can be quite an isolating profession and having another adult present with whom to share ideas was described by four of the five teachers as a helpful aspect of the support they received. Owen's teacher described feeling unsupported when she said, "They've watched me teach but I haven't had any feedback on what they think and of what they've seen. Supported? I don't think it was supported, no" (Interview 3, p. 3). Sometimes the teacher may not want answers as such, just a listening ear and some words of encouragement (Kampwirth & Powers, 2012). Such a sentiment was expressed by Sam's teacher, "Having her [AVT] in the class, having her to talk to me, um support, reflection um all those kinds of things were really helpful" (Interview 3, p. 4). Daniel's teacher agreed simply stating, "I think having feedback has been helpful" (Interview 3, pp. 5&6). The current service delivery

model has its focus firmly upon the individual student and the creation of a PBS plan to address that individual's challenging behaviours. Placing greater emphasis on helping the teacher create a classroom environment that encourages higher levels of engagement and less serious disruption would be a proactive step to improve the likelihood of successful student outcomes. Kern et al. (2009) reported that individualised PBS plans become ineffectual when implemented in a classroom system fraught with disruption and low levels of academic engagement. Collaboratively adjusting the environment and the systems operating within it *before* introducing the PBS plan would logically produce a greater contextual fit and subsequent chance for success (Hieneman, et al., 2005).

Other enablers to effective PBS plan implementation reported by the classroom teachers and the AVT staff were consistent with two findings demonstrated by Bambara (2009) and colleagues. In their investigation of the factors that facilitate and impede the implementation of individualised PBS by school-based teams, it was revealed that the overwhelming majority of participants rated a supportive, inclusive school culture as a crucial enabler to intervention. Similarly, a supportive school culture was mentioned by three of the five classroom teachers in terms of colleagues being accepting of the intervention and adhering to the strategies with fidelity. As articulated by one teacher, "It's having that total acceptance of staff and knowing what is expected" (Elliot's second teacher, Interview 3, p. 3).

Lack of administrative support was reported as a barrier by some of the AVT staff who specified administrators need to be active participants in the intervention process. This finding is also consistent with Bambara et al. (2009) where 52% of respondents identified the need for principals to demonstrate positivity "through both words and actions" (p. 169). Supporting teachers with a flexible school system that caters for alternative approaches demonstrates the value administrative staff place on the interventions and is likely to also encourage teacher acceptability of the plan. If the intervention is not a match with systemic priorities the teacher is unlikely to be motivated to maintain commitment to implementation in a contrary context (Noell & Witt, 1999).

Ensuring integrity of teacher implementation of the PBS plan is an ongoing challenge that requires AVT staff to be flexible and creative in finding solutions and alternatives. A key factor in helping a teacher to implement the PBS plan is the AVT

being in the classroom providing modelling, coaching and feedback to the teacher to enhance their skills and confidence. PBS plan implementation typically requires the adult responsible for the implementation, usually the classroom teacher, to make significant accommodations and changes to the routines and activities of the classroom. While the literature is in agreement that integrity of implementation is crucial (Gresham, 1989; Noell, et al., 2002; Wilkinson, 2006), fundamental to success would appear to be the teacher having the necessary skills to implement the PBS plan (Conoley, et al., 1991). It could be argued that the degree of acceptance of the PBS plan is immaterial if the teacher does not have the skills to execute the plan both comprehensively and accurately. Informing and identifying specific challenges associated with the implementation can be delivered to the teacher through performance feedback where the quality and accuracy of implementation is discussed (Kern, et al., 2009). Performance feedback was found by classroom teachers to be one of the enablers to PBS plan effectiveness.

Building teacher capacity through the practising of skills and strategies coupled with performance feedback and follow-up, is well-substantiated in the consultation literature as an enabler to integrity of implementation (Dunlap, et al., 2010; Noell, et al., 2000; Noell, et al., 2005; Rathvon, 2008). Jeffrey et al. (2009) noted, "Performance feedback refers to the process of providing objective, data-based feedback with the aim to improve transfer of newly acquired skills" (p. 538). Performance feedback appears to be guided by variables such as the content and complexities of the strategies associated with the plan, the current skill level of the teacher implementing the plan, and the nature of the relationship between the AVT and the teacher. The literature reports many different evidenced-based methods of providing performance feedback which include, but are not limited to, the importance of follow-up (Noell et al., 2002), rehearsal and practice (DiGennaro, et al., 2007) the importance of integrity checklists (Dunlap, et al., 2010) and providing teacher praise (Noell, et al., 1997).

Performance feedback is an important factor in the plan implementation phase of consultation because it has been shown to improve integrity of the plan implementation and subsequent student outcomes (Noell, 2008; Noell & Witt, 1999). In light of the widespread research supporting the positive effects performance feedback has upon the implementation of the PBS plan, it is encouraging that

teachers were willing to engage in the collaborative process of consultation that required demonstration of skills, evaluation and self-reflection (DiGennaro, et al., 2007; Noell, et al., 2000; Noell, et al., 2005; Witt, et al., 1996). Improving the teacher execution of the PBS plan strategies through a combination of feedback, practise and integrity checklists, eliminates the 'consult and hope' approach built upon assumptions (Kern, et al., 2009; Wilkinson, 2006). Direct observations conducted by the AVT 'Live' in the classroom, followed up with timely face-to-face discussions, should predict a more accurate evaluation of the effectiveness of the intervention. Consistent with the findings of Codding et al. (2005) same day feedback was proven to be successful. Teacher willingness to have the AVT 'Live' in the classroom providing regular performance feedback, will almost certainly assist the teacher to adjust their own behaviour and incorporate the PBS plan content into daily instruction (DiGennaro, et al., 2007).

While the overwhelming majority of AVT staff saw building teacher capacity as their primary role, only a few reported that they incorporated performance feedback as part of their daily consultation practice. Responsible for providing intervention for two of the five case studies, AVT 2 included a planned teaching component in the intervention implementation stage of the consultation model for both cases. High degrees of accuracy and quality of implementation were achieved and follow-up data suggests this was maintained (Noell, et al., 2002). This result mirrors that of DiGennaro et al. (2007) who concluded that the provision of individualised teacher performance feedback following regular opportunities to practice the required skills does encourage integrity of implementation. A fundamental aspect of consultation—the integrity of plan implementation—is discussed in greater detail in the following section.

6.4   ELEMENTS OF CONSULTATION

The third research sub-question sought to investigate which elements of the school-based problem-solving consultation model might facilitate integrity of PBS plan implementation. It asked: Which elements of the problem-solving consultation model might facilitate integrity of PBS plan implementation? Relationship building was found to be an important facilitating element across all stages of consultation while the inclusion of a teaching component in the intervention implementation stage appeared to enhance the integrity of plan implementation.

6.4.1 Problem-solving model of consultation

As previously introduced, the problem-solving model of consultation has its origin in behavioural theory and more specifically ABA. ABA was introduced in Chapter 3 as part of the theoretical foundation of the positive behaviour support model of service delivery. Bergan (1995) combined ABA psychology with consultation to develop the problem-solving model. Further adapted by Kratochwill, Elliot et al. (1995) to include an additional first phase of relationship building, it consists of five stages: relationship building, problem identification, problem analysis, intervention implementation and program evaluation. Figure 2.2 is reproduced here for convenience.
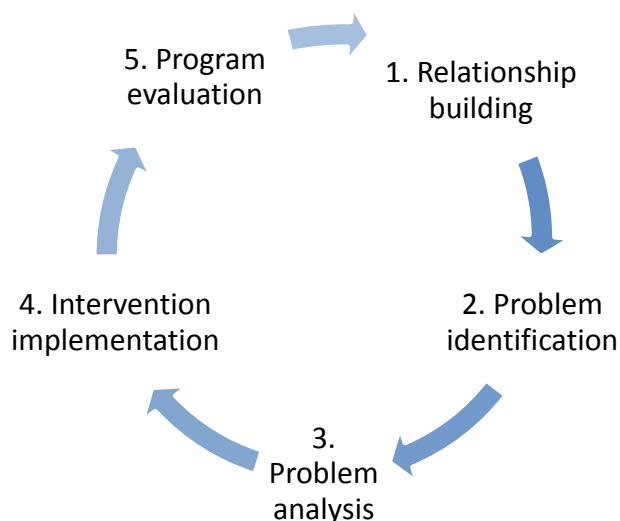
Figure 6.5. The school-based problem-solving model of consultation.

Direct observation data collected by the researcher showed that these five stages guided the AVT through the intervention process. Many studies outline the stages and recommended practices of models of consultation with the information and discussion presented from the platform of the school psychologist as consultant (Conoley, et al., 2009; Erchul & Schulte, 2009; Frank & Kratochwill, 2008; Kratochwill, Elliott, et al., 1995; Martens & DiGennaro, 2008; Noell, et al., 2002; Noell & Witt, 1999; Wilkinson, 2006).

In contrast to the school psychologist model promoted throughout the literature, the role of the AVT has always involved school-based collaborative approaches where the focus is on collegial support as opposed to the notion of an outside expert. AVT perception of the main purpose of their role was not as consultants or experts but as supporters. AVT 6 reflected this view when she said

that the main purpose of her role was, "To support students and the teachers who work with them so that the student can get the best possible outcomes out of schooling" (Interview 1, p. 1).

Gaining a clear picture of what the AVT actually does and the activities enacted in their daily practice was important in helping to identify which elements of the problem-solving consultation process may positively contribute to successful intervention outcomes. Conoley et al. (2009) suggested that consultation research "investigate the actual practice of consultation in the field" (p. 243). Heeding this suggestion, research sub-question 3 was formulated. The findings for this sub-question synthesise behaviour teachers' understandings of their roles as AVTs, what they actually do in their daily practice and how their work is positioned relative to the problem-solving consultation model (Kratochwill, Elliott, et al., 1995). In the context of this study, the process of consultation is the AVT working with the teacher in an effort to provide effective behaviour intervention for the referred student. Because the teacher is primarily responsible for implementing the intervention (PBS plan) the AVT must be able to encourage the teacher to act. If the teacher fails to act, the intervention is null and void (Noell, 2008; Rathvon, 2008), hence, building productive relationships is very important to success.

AVT understanding of their role as portrayed in the semi-structured interviews is now discussed under the headings of relationship building, capacity building and integrity of implementation. Following this, findings from observation and checklist data are presented. Finally, focussed upon what the AVT actually does, elements of the problem-solving model of consultation are identified and the relationship between these elements and successful intervention outcomes explored.

6.4.2 Relationship building

As previously introduced, relationship building is the first phase of the school-based problem-solving model of consultation and was overwhelmingly reported by AVT staff as a crucial element of consultation that might facilitate integrity of plan implementation. Teachers who have requested assistance for a student demonstrating ongoing, serious, disruptive behaviours are often feeling vulnerable and 'at the end of their rope'. Having the AVT in the classroom can add to what is often an already very stressful situation and therefore it is crucial a supportive, safe relationship is developed and maintained between the AVT and the classroom teacher.

As AVT 1 commented, "So having a relationship with me that's positive can make a big impact upon the plan" (Interview 1, p. 8). Direct observation data of AVT daily practice further confirmed building relationships as a decisive feature of the consultation process. In the five case studies, relationship building with the teacher was ongoing throughout the intervention process, primarily through informal chats, verbal feedback and provision of resources. The importance of relationships and working cooperatively as colleagues is captured in the statement,

> I think if a plan is ever going to work, a behaviour teacher needs to have a really good relationship with the teacher because otherwise you cannot come across an expert. It, you need to be a peer and you need to work through the steps together (AVT 3, Interview 1, p. 2).

This belief is consistent with what Zins and Erchul (1995) described as a trusting relationship between the consultant and consultee where responsibility is shared equally. Erchul, Hughes, Meyers, Hickman and Braden (1992) proposed that a collaborative, as opposed to an expert model of consultation, is preferred by consultees. Actions reported by AVTs to develop rapport and build respectful interactions include open communication, active listening, regular face-to-face contact, addressing concerns, conversations, availability, modelling, teaching collaboratively and "walking a mile in their shoes" (AVT 6, Interview 1, p. 5). The articulation of these positive actions provide insight into AVT staff preference to deliver consultation from a "soft power base" (Wilson, et al., 2008, p. 104) which is eloquently summarised by, "go gently, build relationships first ... slowly, gently with active support" (AVT 5, Interview 1, pp. 7&8).

The creation of a trusting relationship provides an environment more conducive to the AVT gaining a better understanding of teacher-held beliefs and attitudes regarding managing serious, disruptive behaviour. It is the teacher who has the most influence over the implementation of the intervention and their behaviour is guided by their beliefs and attitudes about student behaviour. Ultimately, it is teacher behaviour that significantly impacts upon PBS plan implementation (Forman & Zins, 2008). The student has the least control in a school and classroom system governed by adults. Shifting the focus of consultation to changing adult behaviour has been suggested as an alternative way to conceptualise consultation that may facilitate improved student outcomes (Erchul, Grissom, & Getty, 2008; Noell, 2008).

6.4.3   Building capacity

Changing teacher behaviour includes building capacity. Building teacher capacity was recognised by 10 of the 11 AVTs as a primary purpose of their role. This awareness of the importance of teacher capacity building appeared to be just that—awareness. In descriptions of procedures used, teacher behaviour change was given little if any emphasis as part of the intervention process. All AVTs provided detailed step-by-step planned approaches followed in developing a PBS plan. There are two possible explanations for this process-driven perspective. First, the procedures employed by the AVT are founded in applied behaviour analysis (ABA) which promotes a prescriptive approach to behavioural assessment. Centred on functional behaviour assessment the procedures are clear, the data collection tools specific and the focus squarely on the student (Noell & Gansle, 2009; Watson & Watson, 2009). The second possible explanation could be reticence to 'take the lead' in empowering teachers to change their behaviour. As Noell (2008) and Erchul et al. (2008) have suggested the emphasis in consultation on collaboration and helping has led to hesitancy in many consultants. Given that AVT perceptions of consultation are composed of soft power strategies and being a cooperative and supportive helper, it could be assumed they would tend toward a more passive, rather than coercive, approach to influencing teacher behaviour (Wilson, et al., 2008). The importance of changing teacher behaviour will be emphasised in future professional development for the AVTs in the region of this study, designed to increase their knowledge and skills of consultation.

Opportunity to influence teacher behaviour change primarily occurs in the stages of intervention implementation and program evaluation. It is here that specific technical assistance can be provided to the teacher. Technical assistance typically includes skilling the teacher in the strategies of the PBS plan (Dunlap, et al., 2010; Rathvon, 2008). Unfortunately, data from direct observations and a combination of anecdotal and checklist recording showed only one of the five AVTs systematically planned and included a teaching component in the implementation stage of consultation.

Beginning with particular emphasis upon the classroom and teacher systems, strategies employed to assist the teacher included: discussion of specific teaching

strategies, providing written performance feedback, demonstration lessons and working with other staff influential in the student's daily life (Table 6.2).

Table 6.2

Teaching Components of the Implementation Stage of PBS Plans for Sam and Elliot.

Stage of Consultation	AVT Action
Sam	
Intervention Implementation	Working with the teacher aide to demonstrate and practice the PBS plan strategies
Intervention Implementation	Class teacher taught how to collect frequency data
Intervention Implementation	Working with class teacher on strategies for Sam re testing situation
Intervention Implementation	Working with class teacher. Modelling and in-class support
Intervention Implementation	Modelling and teaching in the classroom
Elliot	
Problem Identification	Observation of classroom systems
Problem Identification	Observation of teacher strategies for general classroom management
Intervention Implementation	Written teacher performance feedback supplied
Intervention Implementation	Meeting to discuss strategies of the PBS plan
Intervention Implementation	Written timetable for teacher for the implementation of the plan strategies step-by-step. Discussion and clarification
Intervention Implementation	Demonstration lesson of introducing the class reward system 'Fast Cash'
Intervention Implementation	Integrity checklist
Intervention Implementation	Meeting with Deputy Principal to arrange school-based supervision and the reinforcing of skills and strategies taught by the AVT through modelling and feedback from the administration and/or senior staff mentor

This type of assistance provided to a teacher during the PBS plan implementation stage was described by AVT 2 thus,

I carefully go through the plan with the teacher and discuss what the plan entails. As the AVT I am prepared to listen to concerns and address them immediately. I've got to be prepared to collaboratively teach with the teacher if necessary (Interview 1, p. 3).

Only two AVTs mentioned teaching as a strategy for building teacher capacity to improve the integrity of plan implementation, "I teach collaboratively with the teacher the components of the plan" (AVT 2, Interview 1, p. 2) and "I model strategies and we practise strategies" (AVT 5, Interview 1, p. 6). Further, only five of the 11 AVTs interviewed mentioned teacher skill acquisition in relation to facilitating integrity of plan implementation. Assisting the teacher to implement the PBS plan through skilled execution of the proposed strategies is crucial to effective implementation and an important element of the AVT's role (Frank & Kratochwill, 2008; Rathvon, 2008; Zins & Erchul, 1995). Its omission is concerning.

The absence of a teaching element in the intervention implementation stage of consultation could possibly be due to the fact that assisting teachers to learn and include new skills in their teaching repertoire requires the AVT to influence a change in teacher behaviour. Influencing adult behaviour change is a difficult task and to be most effective may require the AVT to include more assertive strategies. The importance of establishing and maintaining cooperative relationships with teachers may promote AVT reluctance to use more assertive strategies. In addition, AVT lack of knowledge and understanding of social power bases and of how best to utilise factors applicable to the AVT role, would very likely contribute to the lack of attention paid to assisting teachers.

The absence of a teaching component and performance feedback during the implementation stage of consultation was an unexpected finding. Highly noteworthy in terms of influencing implementation integrity and effectiveness of interventions, this finding became very important to the study. Ensuring the teacher has the skills to implement the plan comprehensively and with accuracy is integral to building teacher capacity to cope with serious, disruptive behaviour (Conoley, et al., 1991; DiGennaro, et al., 2007). Not only does providing in-class active support build teacher skills, it fosters strong relationships and a greater level of AVT understanding of the classroom and teacher systems.

6.4.4   Implementation integrity

Accurately evaluating the effectiveness of the PBS plan is significantly blurred if integrity of implementation has not been measured. Program evaluation—the final stage in the problem-solving consultation model—becomes a barrier to successful student outcomes if inaccurately measured or omitted completely (Wilkinson, 2006).

If there is no measurement of the accuracy and quality of the implementation process it is very difficult to gauge the effectiveness of the PBS plan (Dunlap, et al., 2010). Overall, participants struggled with this program evaluation stage of service delivery in terms of knowledge, understanding and orchestration. Only three of the 11 AVTs indicated collection of integrity data with one of these stating, "I currently work on a teacher implementation checklist of all the strategies" (AVT 7, Interview1, p. 3) and another saying, "I look at the checklist of implementations so making sure the teacher is implementing the strategies, their willingness to implement them" (AVT 10, Interview 1, p. 2).

Integrity of implementation was not mentioned with regard to measuring the effectiveness of the PBS plan and was not viewed by AVTs as requiring the same planned, methodical approach toward data collection as they applied to the stage of problem identification. Common responses to the question, "How do you measure the effectiveness of the plan?" centred upon the collection of anecdotal information through informal discussions and conversation. For example, one AVT replied, "I usually rely upon anecdotal information, um, what's the teacher's perception" (AVT 6, Interview 1, p. 2). Reliance on verbal reports from teachers is consistent with concerns raised by Witt et al. (1996) that this reliance is a limitation of consultation. This is certainly the case when verbal reports are the sole method of evaluation (Kratochwill, Bergan, Sheridan, & Elliott, 1998). Only a small minority of AVTs expressed effectiveness of plan implementation in terms of teacher ability to execute strategies and their provision of in-class modelling and teaching when assisting teachers.

With only one AVT alluding to the connection between teacher skills and integrity of implementation of the PBS plan, it follows that providing performance feedback to teachers factored into only one response, "I obviously give them positive feedback on what I see them doing so if they're implementing strategies I make sure that I'm explicit about what I saw" (AVT 9, Interview 1, p. 3). The omission of performance feedback is alarming considering the wealth of evidence that highlights the important role feedback plays in increasing plan implementation effectiveness and sustainable outcomes for students (Gable, et al., 2001; Gresham, 1989; Hieneman, et al., 2005; Noell, et al., 2002). Based upon multiple data sources, there appeared to be a strong connection between teacher skill, integrity of implementation

and plan effectiveness. The inclusion of a teaching component and some type of performance feedback as part of the consultation process seems to foster increased rates of integrity of implementation and effectiveness of the plan overall.

While building relationships and teacher capacity were identified by the AVTs as two key elements of the problem-solving consultation model, investigating all the elements of consultation demonstrated during intervention was fundamental to understanding which elements may influence the integrity of PBS plan implementation. The findings are presented below and provide a snapshot of the elements enacted by the AVT during consultation.

6.4.5 Daily practice

The daily practices of the AVT staff when delivering intervention assistance followed the stages of the problem-solving model of consultation. Identifying what elements of this practice seemed to facilitate effective PBS plan implementation was conducted through direct observation and checklist recording. As mentioned earlier, elements of the problem-solving model of consultation were collated to form a checklist (Appendix F). These elements are commonly referred to in the literature when describing the stages of consultation and were used to map the actions of the AVT throughout the consultation process (Frank & Kratochwill, 2008; Rathvon, 2008; Zins & Erchul, 1995).

The five stages of the problem-solving model of consultation and the underlying elements are shown in Figure 6.6. In the more successful plans, the AVT used a group of behaviours more frequently than was evident in the less successful plans. The behaviours used by the AVT in a very successful plan are shown in Figure 6.6 in maroon and those behaviours for less successful plans are shown in blue. The two measures are a comparison between the average of all AVT behaviours observed across all five cases and the behaviours of one successful case. Across the five stages, most AVT activity was spent in Stage 1: Relationship Building, Stage 2: Problem Identification, and Stage 4: Intervention Implementation. More specifically, the elements demonstrated from these stages were:

- sharing of information

- collecting data

- determining goals

- monitoring the intervention

- providing assistance.

These elements when applied during consultation appear to support successful outcomes. The consolidation of the occurrences of the elements used shows high levels of performance feedback and mentoring activities in conjunction with direct observation. This is reflective of the literature that supports performance feedback, teaching and mentoring as key consultation practices that facilitate accurate plan implementation (DiGennaro, et al., 2007; Noell, 2008).

The three elements—establish communication, build rapport and trust and share information—were the more utilised elements of the first stage of consultation, relationship building. As shown in Figure 6.6 these elements appear to have been demonstrated to a much greater extent than the other elements of the stage. Furthermore, the successful plan data also indicates the high rates of these elements demonstrated during intervention. The frequency of these behaviours supports the AVT interview data reflecting the important of the relationship building stage to successful student outcomes (Conoley, et al., 2009). It appears that incorporating teacher ideas is also important and will likely increase teacher acceptability of the PBS plan.

A successful plan includes solid and extensive data collection, an identified function of behaviour and clearly stated goals (Bambara & Knoster, 2009; Umbreit, et al., 2007). Identifying the problem through collection of baseline data and the determining of the PBS plan goals were the key elements demonstrated in Stage 2: Problem Identification. Determining goals that are of social significance to the teacher appears to be a significant element of this stage. Social validity contributes to greater rates of PBS plan integrity and from its origins in applied behaviour analysis scrutinises the environment in which the student is operating (Bambara & Kern, 2005; Miramontes, et al., 2011).
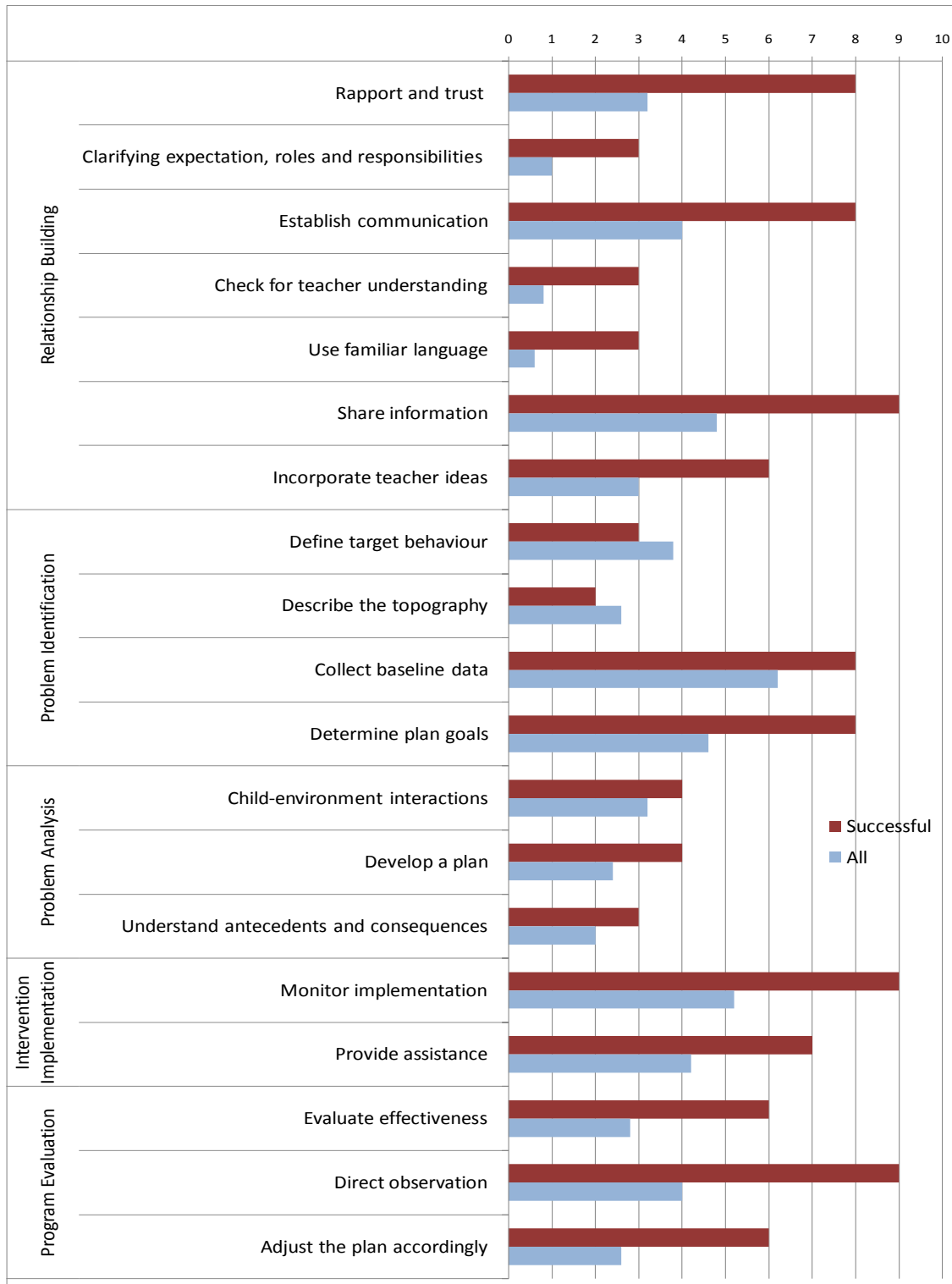
Figure 6.6. AVT most demonstrated elements of the problem-solving model of consultation.

My observation of the five AVTs in this study led me to conclude that they adhere to the problem-solving model of consultation. The emphasis is upon sharing information, communication and data collection procedures and monitoring. The

cracks in the process seem to begin to appear in stage four and five where the implementation and evaluation of the effectiveness of the PBS plan occur. Neglecting to include teaching elements, as well as methods to evaluate plan effectiveness, are critical oversights in the intervention process that form possible barriers to achieving integrity of PBS plan implementation and may subsequently reduce the opportunities for successful student behaviour change. On the surface it seems obvious that the AVT would understand the importance of mentoring the teacher throughout the implementation of the plan and ensure the teacher was capable of doing so. It is likely that with the high rate of referrals and extensive waiting lists of students requiring support, it is more expedient to view support as ending with the written plan. It is very important for the AVT to go 'beyond the plan' and to view their role of consultation as just beginning at the point of plan implementation. The development of a written plan is the commencement of possibly *the* most important aspect of consultation; that is, accurate and comprehensive implementation.

From the investigation of the actions associated with the most successful plan, it could be suggested that integrity of implementation could be assisted by an AVT whose actions focus upon sharing information, include teacher ideas and ensure the teacher has the necessary skill set through the provision of modelling and performance feedback. While the ultimate purpose of behavioural consultation is to produce improved outcomes for the student, teacher outcomes should possibly be the objective of the implementation stage of the problem-solving model of consultation. The teacher responsible for the implementation of the plan should be central to the intervention process. Providing assistance to the teacher can be achieved through the AVT being active in the classroom, modelling and teaching skills collaboratively and giving regular written performance feedback (Codding, et al., 2005; Noell, et al., 2005).

Helping the teacher cope with students who demonstrate ongoing problematic behaviour through the development and implementation of a PBS plans is detailed below. Five case studies explored the primary research question: How do individually designed positive behaviour support (PBS) plans influence change in task engagement of year four to year seven boys who display serious, disruptive behaviour?

6.5   CHANGING TASK ENGAGEMENT

Ongoing, dangerous student behaviour that has failed to respond to previous efforts of prevention and reduction frequently requires behaviour intervention. In schools and in classrooms, this type of behaviour causes significant and frequent disruption to the learning and teaching environment. The collateral impact is widespread affecting not only the student themselves but other students, teachers, administration, support staff and the student's family (David, 2010). When the classroom teacher in conjunction with the principal, consider the student's behaviour to be seriously detrimental to the teaching and learning environment, behaviour intervention is typically sought. Suspensions of the student are customary at this time and in severe cases exclusion is enacted. As was detailed in the introductory chapter, students displaying these challenging behaviours are those described as in the red zone—the tip of the PBS triangle—whose serious, disruptive behaviour requires tertiary prevention measures (Kern, et al., 2009).

The immediate purpose of the programming developed by the AVT for this repeated, high-level disruptive behaviour is to quickly reduce the occurrence and severity of the serious behaviour. The resultant tool of intervention is an individualised PBS plan which is based primarily upon direct observations and information from all stakeholders. The PBS plan details strategies linked to the function of the student's disruptive behaviour. Reducing the incidences of disruptive behaviour by altering the environment and teaching the student replacement skills is the overarching purpose of the PBS plan (Hieneman, et al., 2005).

Each case study focussed on the development and implementation of the PBS plan as well as noting the stages of the problem-solving consultation model adhered to by the AVT (Frank & Kratochwill, 2008). My primary intention as the researcher was to directly observe the intervention process from beginning to end and in doing so, find possible answers to the primary research question. Evidenced from within case and cross-case analysis (Merriam, 2009), it was found that in all five cases student task engagement was positively changed. Because PBS plan goals are a function-based intervention addressing the specific needs of the individual student, changes achieved are assessed in terms of each individual and not compared.

The literature is replete with examples of function-based interventions to reduce disruptive behaviours (Filter & Horner, 2009; Lane, Rogers, et al., 2007;

Liaupsin, et al., 2006; McComas, Goddard, & Hoch, 2002; Newcomer & Lewis, 2004; Shumate & Wills, 2010). These studies applied a function-based intervention in an effort to increase task engagement and decrease disruptive behaviour in students. Similarly, this study aimed to influence changes to the task engagement of five boys with complex behaviour that included high frequency, high levels of physical and verbal aggression. Unlike much of the available research conducted in a predetermined period of time, the interventions in the current study were conducted by the AVT with school personnel (Blood & Neel, 2007; Sasso, Conroy, Stichter, & Fox, 2001). Furthermore, all teacher participants, with the exception of Chris's teacher, worked in general education settings. This addresses the gap in the literature identified by Sasso et al. (2001) who found only one of 18 studies utilizing functional assessment involved general education teachers working in general education settings.

Operating within the school context and its associated complexities (new curriculum expectations, greater accountability, resourcing issues and time constraints) means the practicalities of following function-focussed processes can be regularly interrupted. Multiple factors had an impact upon the effectiveness of the PBS plan and the various changes achieved in student task engagement. Across the five case studies impacting factors included, the student changing classrooms, partial placement in an alternative program, inconsistent plan implementation, suspensions and family trauma. In response to the question, "What behaviour changes did you observe?" three teachers similarly described student behaviour changes as, "He's not yelling out in the classroom, he's not being abusive towards the other children" (Owen's teacher, Interview 3, p. 1). Sam's teacher noted changes in Sam's behaviour as, "Not as much tapping, fidgeting, less noises, less um calling out which has been good" (Interview 3, p. 1). Similarly, Elliot's second teacher said, "He was on-task that he wasn't calling out that he wasn't being negative and being verbal to the other students" (Interview 3, p. 1).

As expected, fewer positive responses were given from the two teachers who felt the intervention had produced no change in student task engagement or behaviour in general, and deemed the intervention as unsuccessful. According to Chris's teacher, Chris's behaviour changes were limited to the outset of implementation, "He did for a short very short period cooperate was willing to do

what I asked with all the strategies in place" (Interview 3, p. 1). For Daniel, his teacher's perception was of mainly negative changes such as, "He left my room, he fought within my class, he became more reluctant, resistant to doing some tasks" (Interview 3, p. 2). This continued disruptive behaviour may have been largely attributed to the poor rate of integrity of implementation. Poor integrity of implementation could be directly related to the lack of successful outcomes for Daniel within the classroom system. In Chris's case, while integrity was high, teacher perception reflected disappointment with the minimal impact of the intervention. Having a different expectation to that of the AVT with regards to the desired measure of student progress may have been a contributing factor to this outcome.

Integrity of implementation was measured in all cases throughout the intervention. Consistently, cases with high levels of implementation integrity seemed to be also those with high levels of teacher acceptability of the goals, procedures and effects (Lane & Beebe-Frankenberger, 2004; Wolf, 1978). Acceptability was indicated by comments such as, "I'm very comfortable with the procedures" (Chris's teacher, Interview 2, p. 1) and, "I like them [procedures], yep, very achievable. I think they fit right in" (Elliot's second teacher, Interview 2, p. 1). That is, the PBS plan was socially valid to the teacher responsible for its implementation. In four of the five cases where this occurred, integrity of implementation was recorded mostly at 100%.

Two cases averaged low levels of implementation integrity: Elliot's case (first teacher) 37% and Daniel's case 25%. Teacher responses in both situations echoed reservations held with the PBS plan. Elliot's first teacher used words and phrases such as, "I guess", "fairly" and "I'm not sure". Daniel's teacher when asked what would help him to implement the plan, suggested a better alignment of the plan with his methods of teaching and his classroom systems saying, "Flexibility within that plan so it fits within things I've already done and things that I would do more naturally" (Interview 2, p. 5). Altering a teacher's repertoire with the introduction of new teaching strategies is a very difficult task when the teacher's belief system is contrary to the purpose of the intervention, as was the case with Daniel's teacher.

While it is acknowledged that contextual fit of a PBS plan is paramount to successful implementation, (Benazzi, et al., 2006; Noell & Witt, 1999) both teachers

expressed uncertainty with the PBS plan content. This in turn seemed to influence the integrity of plan implementation. Possible contributing factors to the uncertainty were the lack of the necessary skills to implement the plan and the absence of any modelling and performance feedback from the AVT to provide opportunities to acquire these skills (DiGennaro, et al., 2007).

With the teacher as the instrument of plan implementation, every effort to resolve differences needs to be made. Paying close attention to matching the intervention strategies with teacher capability and available resources (including time restraints) is crucial to plan effectiveness (B. G. Cook, et al., 2003). In four of the five cases, the PBS plan was successfully adjusted to more closely match the environment. In Daniel's case, change in task engagement was slight and social validity across acceptability of goals, procedures and effects was minimal. The mismatch between the goals of the intervention and those of the teacher are evident in the following statement, "The intervention is not really geared enough towards, um doing tasks, whereas to me, the concern is learning cause that's what he's at school to do" (Daniel's teacher, Interview 3, pp. 3&4). Teacher perception in this case is that the PBS plan is not a contextual fit particularly in relation to the teacher system. Consequently, the AVT and the teacher were often at 'cross purposes'.

As was the case for Daniel's intervention, a lack of acceptability of the purpose of the PBS plan was likely to result in lower degrees of integrity of implementation (Gresham, 1989). If a negative teacher mindset is ongoing, possible solutions may include engaging a new AVT to provide support to see if a different manner of consulting may produce more favourable results. A fresh approach may pave the way to forming strong relationships which are a key factor of consultation that significantly influences plan implementation (Conoley, et al., 2009). Further, moving the disruptive student to another classroom with a teacher whose belief and class systems align more closely with the PBS framework of intervention can be another strategy to help promote effective implementation. This action was instigated and applied by the principal in two of the five case studies, Chris's case and Elliot's case, with pleasing results.

6.5.1   An unsuccessful outcome

As previously introduced, generalisation is when a student demonstrates newly acquired skills in a variety of settings. Together with social validity and treatment

integrity, generalisation is a key factor in intervention (Steege & Sullivan, 2009). Generalisation is important because it is an indicator that appropriate behaviours are becoming more automatic for the student and therefore more likely to become habitual in the long term (Bambara & Knoster, 2009; Umbreit, et al., 2007). The PBS plans were unsuccessful in influencing positive changes to settings other than the familiar classroom-type setting. Newly acquired skills did not transfer to other environments and settings such as the playground, bus line, eating time and specialist classes. This lack of generalisation to other settings is consistent with the suggestion that generalisation is often a neglected aspect of intervention planning (Lane & Beebe-Frankenberger, 2004).

In response to whether observed behaviour changes transferred to other settings Elliot's second teacher simply said, "When he was in another class for LOTE [Language Other Than English] or when we were at camp or whatever even though the plan had been gone through with the teacher, it didn't work" (Interview 3, p. 1). And from Chris's teacher, "No, only in this setting" (Interview 3, p. 2). Signs of limited progress were indicated by Owen's teacher thus, "The playground he is still making changes in that and they are ongoing" (Interview 3, p. 1) and similarly Sam's teacher mentioned, "Um, playground there's still issues" (Interview 3, p. 1). As evidenced by the above responses, all four teachers shared a similar view that behaviour improvement was still needed in non-classroom settings. Only Daniel seemed to gain some success in the playground setting with his teacher reporting, "He's having a lot better plays, that's a big thing, he's coming into the room in a better mood" (Interview 3, p. 3). Daniel's was the only situation where one-on-one adult supervision was provided for play times.

This finding illuminates the importance of the inclusion of planning for generalisation when developing individualised PBS plans to promote sustained behaviour changes (Bambara & Knoster, 2009; Knoster & Kincaid, 2005; Umbreit, et al., 2007). Programming for generalisation of behaviours needs to be an integral factor when developing the PBS plan. While the focus of the five case studies was on classroom behaviour, all students had problematic playground behaviours listed on their referrals as needing intervention. Serious, disruptive behaviour is rarely confined to one setting. Principals referring the student generally expect behaviour changes across settings as an outcome of the intervention. As a clear step in the

intervention process, the AVT should consider strategies to enhance the likelihood the appropriate behaviour will occur in multiple settings and will be sustained over time. The literature provides clear examples that can be readily applied to practice (Baer, et al., 1968; Bambara & Knoster, 2009; Steege & Sullivan, 2009; Umbreit, et al., 2007). Increasing knowledge and understanding of strategies to promote generalisation and maintenance can be achieved through the provision of regular professional development opportunities for behaviour staff. Drawing attention to the importance of planning and programming for generalisation and the inclusion of these strategies as an important element of the PBS plan document, can be actively encouraged.

6.5.2   Successful outcomes

Three of the five teachers were satisfied with the overall intervention outcomes highlighting the benefit to the student in terms of on-task behaviours and getting along with others. Consistently, cases with high levels of implementation integrity also seemed to be those with high levels of teacher acceptability of goals, procedure and effects (Lane & Beebe-Frankenberger, 2004; Wolf, 1978). Acceptability was indicated by comments such as, "I'm very comfortable with the procedures" (Chris's teacher, Interview 2, p. 1) that is, the PBS plan was socially valid to the teacher responsible for its implementation. In four of the five cases where this occurred, integrity of implementation was recorded mostly at 100% with few instances not below 80%.

In Daniel's case, acceptability was difficult to establish. This difficulty was reflected in the following comment made by Daniel's teacher with regard to implementing the PBS plan, "I'll need to change my direction to comment on behaviour when I would prefer to just continue commenting on teaching" (Interview 2, p. 4). Daniel's teacher appeared to have the perception that the intervention to be implemented was an additional task imposed upon him and to some extent this is true. Often when a teacher engages in the consultation process they are likely to be highly stressed, time poor and already feeling 'put upon' with the mandatory departmental curriculum requirements expected of them. As expressed by Conoley et al. (2009), "Teachers (and other consultees) can rightly expect that the outcome of the consultation will suggest additional effort on their parts" (p. 240). Traditionally, the onus has been on the teacher to bear total responsibility for the intervention;

however, to achieve optimal outcomes for students, this responsibility needs to be shared.

In the cases of Owen and Sam serious, disruptive behaviour markedly decreased with very few, if any, recorded instances of physical aggression during and following the intervention. This was noteworthy because in both cases prior to referral, the severity of each student's disruptive behaviour had resulted in multiple suspensions, placement into alternative education programs and school exclusion was under consideration. Both students attended off-site facilities (Intervention Centres) with programs guided by a PBS framework. Viewing student behaviour through an ecological lens and creating productive partnerships with inter-agency personnel, are characteristics of the Intervention Centre programs (de Jong & Griffiths, 2006).

In these two cases, the structure of the alternative placement environment may have allowed for greater opportunity to concentrate on specific individual student needs. In both cases the transition back to the school setting was gradual (over many weeks) providing many opportunities within the school context for Sam and Owen to demonstrate new skills taught at the Intervention Centre. Positive reinforcement schedules were duplicated in both settings to ensure consistency of application. In both cases there was ongoing collaboration between the Centre and the school staff. This suggests that collaboration might have been a contributing factor to successful full-time school attendance in these two cases. Investigating this collaboration needs to be the subject of subsequent research. While there are many negatives associated with alternative programs such as respite for schools, 'shifting the problem' and opposing the notion of inclusion, students demonstrating serious, disruptive behaviours are in the minority of the total school population. A minority that de Jong and Griffiths (2006) have suggested, given the high complexity of need, may never be able to be sufficiently catered for in mainstream schooling.

Meaningful changes were forthcoming in the cases of Chris and Elliot. Both students were moved into new classrooms at their respective schools at the principal's directive. After consideration of AVT and school data, the general reasons given for the moves were ongoing escalating incidences of serious, disruptive behaviour by both students, high level disruptive behaviour of the class in general, and concern of the capacity of the classroom teacher to implement the

curriculum and behavioural adjustments required. Positive change in Elliot's task engagement could be described as being instantaneous from his commencement in his second classroom environment. Within the first week in the new classroom Elliot's on-task behaviour had risen to 90%. As with the other three case studies this case was characterised by high levels of implementation integrity and social validation. Chris also demonstrated immediate improvement and while the data from his first classroom was not able to be included in this study (Chris was moved before the PBS plan was written), Chris's task engagement improved noticeably on commencement in his second classroom, prior to any intervention.

In addition to improved task engagement, Chris's attendance at school increased due to a decrease in suspensions which in turn afforded him more learning time. Contrary to the data and the opinion of the AVT, Chris's teacher believed the intervention was unsuccessful and expressed this in terms of her sadness and disappointment. Strong social validity, high implementation integrity and data reflecting a positive change to task engagement, Chris's case produced conflicting opinions held by the AVT and the teacher regarding the overall result. Chris's teacher listed inconsistency between home and school, medication and complexities of Chris's life as possible contributing factors to his lack of progress. She stated, "Beautiful, beautiful carers but if there is no consistency in the home then I think it has an impact in the classroom in terms of how he is managed" (Interview 3, p. 1). Brevity of improvement was acknowledged but the overall PBS plan failure was described by her as, "It didn't. It just didn't" (Interview 3, p. 1).

In two of the five cases (Owen's case and Elliot's second classroom), despite the absence of a teaching component and written performance feedback, both students achieved considerable positive changes to task engagement. The PBS plans were a close contextual fit to both teacher and classroom systems and in both cases the social validity was very high. Further, both teachers were very confident of their ability to implement the plan without technical assistance from the AVT and demonstrated their capability with 100% integrity of implementation. This finding positions teacher skill as a key facilitating element in accurate plan implementation. It seems the combination of highly skilled teachers with the ability to implement the plan with accuracy together with social acceptability of the PBS plan, was instrumental in producing very successful student outcomes in both cases. As noted

by Noell (2008), a teacher's acceptance of the plan is, on its own, not going to guarantee implementation or further, accurate implementation. Given that each teacher is an individual working in a unique context, it is important to identify what each individual teacher requires in terms of AVT support. Through the collaborative consultation process, the AVT should determine what new skills need to be learned if any, and if new skills are needed, how the teacher will be supported to develop these. Assisting the teacher to acquire the necessary skills to execute the plan should be central to the AVT process of consultation. Rathvon (2008) concurred that in-class support for classroom teachers that focuses on technical assistance "is an essential competency for today's consultants" (p. 26).

Minimal positive changes to task engagement in the classroom were evident in Daniel's case study, with greater changes observed in the special education classroom setting. As was mentioned earlier, Daniel's teacher struggled to accept the PBS plan and was philosophically opposed to the reward strategies it contained. In discussions with the AVT, Daniel's teacher said he was "opposed to rewarding children, they should be intrinsically motivated" (Anecdotal note 5/4/11). He further portrayed his belief commenting at the end of the intervention period, "I think long-term effects can't be solved by star charts and external rewards" (Interview 2, p. 5). Collaborative planning and negotiation, together with adjustments to the PBS plan became frequent essential elements in fostering successful intervention for Daniel. Progress for him was restricted to a notable improvement in his task engagement in the special education setting. As part of the PBS plan a teacher aide was assigned to provide supervision in the playground and to prompt Daniel in using appropriate social skills. Together, this behaviour improvement translated to fewer suspensions and extended time at school for Daniel.

Positive changes to task engagement were evident in all case studies—five individually designed PBS plans for five different boys who all experienced improved behavioural outcomes. Data revealed contributing factors to an effective PBS plan were establishing social validity, ensuring the teacher is skilled in executing plan strategies, and the inclusion of a teaching component that includes performance feedback and integrity of implementation as part of the consultation process. This was true in all cases. Fundamental to all these factors is the relationship established between the teacher implementing the PBS plan and the AVT facilitating

the intervention process. Changing student behaviour is about modifying teacher behaviour to ensure the best possible learning opportunities are afforded students with highly complex needs (Kampwirth & Powers, 2012; Noell, 2008). It is the teacher who must firstly welcome the AVT and the consultative process into their classroom. It is the teacher who needs to accept the plan, believe in the value of the plan, possess the skills to implement the plan and actually implement the plan comprehensively and accurately (Dunlap, et al., 2010). The findings reveal that when it comes to behaviour intervention for students, teachers have an integral part to play.

6.6   SUMMARY

The findings presented and discussed in this chapter represent the phenomenon of behaviour intervention as examined by this study. Based on data sourced from interviews, systematic direct observation, surveys, checklists and documents, four key findings emerged in response to the primary research question and the three sub-questions. True to case study research, comprehensive quotes from participants were included to portray to the reader the uniqueness of the context and the everyday happenings within it (Simons, 2009; Stake, 2005). It was concluded that behaviour changes were achieved for each of the five case study students. Positive improvement in task engagement was forthcoming for each student. Achieved in each case were important differences to individual outcomes that were judged successful according to the particularity of each case.

Reported for each case study was that as task engagement improved, serious, disruptive behaviour decreased, allowing increased time on-task and affording each student greater opportunity to learn. This finding addressed the primary research question: How do individually designed positive behaviour support (PBS) plans influence change in task engagement of year four to year seven boys who display serious, disruptive behaviour? The nature of the improved outcomes detailed in this chapter for each student reflected the characteristics of the individual and the systems surrounding them.

Effective behaviour change was seen to be supported by comprehensive, operational definitions of the behaviour under scrutiny. Having a common understanding of what the behaviour looks like and sounds like is crucial to guiding accurate data collection which in turn informs the development of the intervention

plan. It was noted that in response to research sub-question 1: How did participants perceive serious, disruptive behaviour? overwhelming agreement was reached on what teachers and AVTs understood as serious, disruptive behaviour. From the interview data a comprehensive definition was formulated that reflected the meaning of serious, disruptive behaviour for the particular ecology in which the study was conducted.

Three possible enablers to effective plan implementation were presented, namely social validity, AVT 'Live' and performance feedback. These comprised another key finding addressing research sub-question 2: What do participants perceive as possible enablers to effective teacher implementation of the PBS plan? Teacher acceptability of the plan goals, procedures and effects were also discussed as vital factors to effective plan implementation. It was found that beneficial AVT assistance was described by the majority of teachers as having the AVT 'Live' in the classroom to provide technical assistance through modelling, coaching and feedback (Dunlap, et al., 2010; Rathvon, 2008). This result highlighted the deficit that existed in the AVT support of the classroom teacher—three of the four AVTs failed to include any form of teaching component or teacher performance feedback as part of the process associated with plan implementation. This surprising oversight was the subject of the fourth finding which focussed on facilitating elements of consultation that assist accurate plan implementation.

Relationship building, ensuring teachers have the necessary skills to execute the plan accurately and performance feedback, were highlighted as important elements of the consultation process that facilitated PBS plan implementation. Relationship building was shown to be important throughout *all* stages of consultation and noted by the majority of AVTs as vital to successful plan implementation. A link between teacher competency of the essential skills required to implement the PBS plan and successful outcomes was offered. Integrity of PBS plan implementation appeared to be strongly tied to the skills of the teacher and his/her capacity to deliver the plan as intended. This in turn seemed to influence change achieved to student task engagement. These findings answered the third research sub-question: Which elements of the problem-solving consultation model might facilitate integrity of PBS plan implementation?

What appears paramount from the findings is that when it comes to behaviour intervention the role of the teacher cannot be underestimated. A high quality PBS plan with social validity and teacher acceptability is of little use if it cannot and is not implemented accurately and comprehensively. AVT in-class support, modelling and teaching of skills, together with performance feedback were proven to be three elements that influence teacher outcomes in terms of integrity of implementation. Establishing the degree of integrity with which the teacher implements the PBS plan is central to evaluating the effectiveness of the plan. An effective plan is the result of effective implementation executed by an effective teacher. It is the AVT who through consultation facilitates this effectiveness—firmly founded on a relationship of trust and rapport.

7 Conclusion

7.1 INTRODUCTION

Disruptive student behaviour has been an ongoing and far reaching concern for teachers, and has generated a plethora of research from individual and whole school perspectives. This study added to the behaviour intervention literature by examining the influence individually designed PBS plans had on changing the task engagement of boys from year four to year seven who display serious, disruptive behaviour. By acquiring deeper knowledge and understanding of behaviour intervention, it was hoped that what was learned would inform procedures and processes of best practice to ultimately deliver improved outcomes for students with challenging behaviours. Closely guided by the theoretical framework outlined in Chapter 3, five case studies investigated the effectiveness of high quality PBS plans as tools of behaviour intervention.

Results supported the necessity for the AVT to include a teaching component together with performance feedback throughout the implementation stage of consultation. Furthermore, multiple factors have been identified as probable enablers to effective teacher implementation of the PBS plan. Teacher competence in the PBS plan strategies was a key factor if integrity of implementation was to be viewed as the vital link between the plan and meaningful student outcomes.

The findings presented in Chapter 6 provided substantial responses to the primary research question and three sub-questions:

> How do individually designed positive behaviour support (PBS) plans influence change in task engagement of year four to seven boys who display serious, disruptive behaviour?

1. How do participants perceive serious, disruptive behaviour?

2. What are possible enablers to effective teacher implementation of the PBS plan?

3. Which elements of the problem-solving consultation model might facilitate integrity of PBS plan implementation?

In this chapter a summary of the research and findings is discussed in relation to each research question. In order to avoid unnecessary repetition, research sub-questions two and three will be discussed together with regards to plan implementation. Contributions and considerations, recommendations for the future of the behaviour service delivery model and further research are also presented in this chapter.

7.2   SUMMARY OF RESEARCH AND FINDINGS

Finding effective intervention solutions for students displaying intensive, challenging behaviours has been the objective of extensive behaviour research for decades. Coming to the fore in the 1980s, PBS has now established itself as an alternative proactive approach for disciplining students in schools. Student-centred, inclusive and proactive, PBS is focussed on preventing misbehaviour at three levels of support—universal (green zone), secondary (yellow zone) and tertiary (red zone) (Carr, et al., 2002). Additional support is often needed for the tertiary student whose persistent, high level disruptive behaviours require an individually designed PBS plan. Unfortunately, success in achieving meaningful outcomes for these students has been less than favourable (Bradley, et al., 2008; Kern, et al., 2009).

Working under a PBS framework, the AVT in south-east Queensland is assigned to provide intervention assistance to students and teachers trying to cope with highly challenging behaviour. With one out of five children and adolescents reported to have seriously disruptive, emotional and behavioural disorders, and the increasing numbers of students requiring support, catering effectively for these students and their teachers is of paramount importance (Lechtenberger, et al., 2008). The literature is conclusive—it is boys who are most problematic, and more specifically, the disengaged and disruptive early adolescent boy, who is struggling to have his needs met at school (Broidy, et al., 2003). Identifying what works, in what circumstances and for whom, when it comes to behaviour intervention has potentially actionable implications for policy and practice.

The springboard for this study arose when, as an AVT in 2008, I became increasingly concerned with the number of early adolescent boys repeatedly being referred for behaviour support. This concern became widespread within both the regional behaviour team and the local school community as budget cuts dictated a

significant reduction in behaviour staff and referral numbers continued to increase. Determining better ways of working that would lead to better student outcomes was much needed. The findings from this study have advanced the current service delivery model with the provision of 'best practice' guidelines for individually designed behaviour intervention and consultation. While the results presented in Chapter 6 demonstrated this outcome, my workplace supervisor confirmed the major impact of this research when he said, "This research has changed the way we do things. Every finding is contributing to the transformation of our processes and procedures. It is filling gaps in our practice and giving us new directions" (Workplace supervisor, personal communication, October 14, 2011).

Viewing serious, disruptive behaviour from an ecological systems perspective is strongly reported in the literature as 'best practice' (Conroy, et al., 2009; Cooper & Upton, 2004; de Jong, 2005a; Fine, 1985; Tolan, Guerra, & Kendall, 1995). Behaviour interventions delivered in schools under a PBS framework are founded upon ABA (Baer, et al., 1968) and ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1992). As outlined in Chapter 3, both theories have provided the theoretical framework for this study. It is from this combined perspective that the AVT develops an individually designed PBS plan detailing strategies to influence student behaviour change. The need to broaden the emphasis on student behaviour change to include a similar focus on teacher behaviour change was a notable finding. This finding has had an immediate and positive impact upon AVT training and professional development and is explained thus,

> The research has changed not only the daily practices of the AVTs but it has forced the creation of training modules detailing consultation. The findings are directing the content which will target AVT knowledge and understanding of the consultation process (Workplace supervisor, personal communication, May, 2, 2012).

Positively influencing changes in behaviour through the implementation of the PBS plan was of prime importance to this study. Defined in Chapter 1, serious, disruptive behaviour is characterised by its dangerous and unsafe nature. It interferes with the teaching and learning time not only for the student themselves, but also for classmates and peers. An overall objective of this study was to find factors that may contribute to improving student outcomes and this was achieved.

7.2.1 Serious, disruptive behaviour

Serious, disruptive behaviour is complex—there are multiple systems impacting upon an individual and their behaviour. For the student, the predominant systems of influence are the family, the classroom and the teacher systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1992). The teacher system, as outlined in Chapter 5, comprises beliefs and attitudes particularly about behaviour and style of instruction, and directly informs the functioning of the classroom system. Understanding the beliefs and perceptions present in the teacher system of both the classroom teachers and AVTs was the purpose of research sub-question 1.

The finding for this question is that all participants expressed very similar perceptions of serious, disruptive behaviour emphasising the collateral impact upon the teaching and learning. Formulated from this agreement was the following shared perception: *Serious, disruptive behaviour is repeated physical and verbal aggression that results in collateral impact interfering with learning and teaching. It is often dangerous and harmful.* Collateral impact as introduced in Chapter 2 is behaviour that negatively impacts upon others as well as the student displaying the problematic behaviour (David, 2010). The vast majority of teachers and AVT staff referred to the disruption caused *beyond* the student and teachers expressed their wish to have fewer interruptions to their teaching time. Such concern has implications for the practice of the AVT and warrants consideration in the development of the PBS plan.

A conclusion to be drawn from this finding is that similar conceptions of what constitutes serious, disruptive behaviour provides a solid foundation on which to build an intervention that accurately addresses the nature of the disruptive behaviour. This assists the teacher and the AVT in structuring a more effective plan that has considered teacher perceptions and beliefs. It would be more likely that a plan reflective of teacher beliefs would be accepted and implemented by the teacher concerned. Acceptability is a significant factor with regard to plan implementation (Conoley, et al., 1991; Wolf, 1978).

7.2.2 Effective PBS plan implementation

Ensuring the plan is implemented—and implemented accurately and comprehensively—is possibly *the* most important role of the AVT. The effective implementation of the PBS plan that brings about positive change for the student is a

highly desired outcome of intervention. In response to research sub-question 2, findings revealed three possible enablers to teacher plan implementation, previously identified in Chapter 6. These were acceptability of goals, procedures and outcomes of the plan called social validity, AVT 'Live' and teacher performance feedback. Displayed in Figure 6.3 these enablers arose from the combined teacher and AVT data. It was evident that teachers perceived in-class support as an important enabler to plan implementation.

An implication of these three enablers would seem to be that planned time for teaching and modelling strategies associated with the PBS plan should be designated by the AVT as a matter of consultation practice. Providing in-class technical assistance ensures that if needed the teacher has every opportunity to acquire the necessary skills to implement the plan. Teachers in this study were clear—they felt more supported during the plan implementation stage when there was face-to-face contact (Easton & Erchul, 2011) including in-class support. A further implication for the daily practice of AVTs is that as the time allocated to each referral is increased, so does the list of students and teachers waiting to access support. Paying particular attention to the enablers and the consultation stages identified most likely to facilitate implementation, may contribute to 'smarter ways of working' for AVT staff.

Pivotal to achieving acceptance of the intervention is the relationship between the AVT and the teacher. Building trusting relationships emerged as a facilitator toward more accurate plan implementation. Based upon cooperation and equal responsibility, these relationships create a safe, supportive foundation from which the teacher may feel more confident to take risks and change their behaviour. A willing attitude and a skilled teacher are fundamental to how well the plan is translated into action in terms of accuracy and a comprehensive approach.

It is the role of the AVT to build teacher capacity to ensure effective implementation. Overwhelmingly identified by the majority of AVTs as the primary purpose of their role, building teacher capacity needs to consider the skills of the teacher as an important facilitator to integrity of implementation. Encouraging the acquisition of the skills necessary to implement the plan requires the AVT to work collaboratively with the teacher through modelling, teacher practice and performance feedback. Performance feedback is the third enabler identified by teachers to assist in effective implementation and is an essential aspect of the teaching component

influencing teacher behaviour change (Noell, et al., 2002). While the PBS plan is individually designed to change student behaviour, influencing the behaviour of the adult responsible for plan implementation should be considered as an "alternative conceptualization of consultation" and a measure of the plan's success (Forman & Zins, 2008, p. 363).

The absence of a teaching component throughout the intervention implementation and program evaluation stages of the consultation model was not only a surprising, but a very concerning finding. Providing a high quality plan that is a contextual fit with teacher and classroom systems is insufficient to guarantee successful implementation. Of prime importance and an indication of successful consultation, is for the AVT to ensure the teacher has the skills to sustain PBS plan implementation effectively and independently of AVT support. This is why I recommend AVTs incorporate cooperative teaching, modelling of teaching and plan strategies and timely performance feedback, as regular aspects of the assistance they provide to teachers. Teachers must be given opportunities to observe, practise and consolidate the skills necessary to effectively implement the intervention strategies.

7.2.3   Changing task engagement

From the adoption of the behaviour service delivery model pertaining to this study, it has been assumed that what is being delivered in terms of behaviour intervention for individual students, works. Determining the validity of this assumption meant focussing upon the primary tool of behaviour intervention—the PBS plan. Investigating the influence the plan had on changing the task engagement of boys from year four to year seven displaying serious, disruptive behaviour, was the overarching question to be answered by this study. Using multicase study methodology as outlined in Chapter 4, five case studies investigated how PBS plans influenced student behaviour change. True to multicase study, each case was considered as an individual entity with its own complexities of unique characteristics, systems and influences. (Stake, 2006). The differences in the changes achieved were specific to each student and their particular situation at the time of the study.

The findings revealed in all cases that the influence of the PBS plan on student task engagement resulted in positive changes. Especially important to these changes

were the following contributing factors identified as facilitators to successful plan implementation:

- understanding perceptions and beliefs of serious, disruptive behaviour

- establishing strong relationships of rapport and trust

- ensuring social validity of PBS plan goals, procedures and outcomes

- providing AVT in-class support including explicit teaching of PBS plan strategies, opportunities for teacher practice of skills, and reflection through performance feedback.

Threaded throughout the problem-solving model of consultation, these contributing factors were integral to the intervention process and should be systematically addressed by AVT staff as a matter of best practice. Providing modelling, teaching and performance feedback shifts the focus of intervention from altering student behaviour to altering teacher behaviour (Noell, 2008). It is important to acknowledge that changing teacher behaviour requires a reciprocal relationship between the AVT and the teacher. As with student behaviour change, teacher behaviour change needs to be individualised, identifying and building upon existing strengths and aiming to improve weaknesses.

While ultimately the purpose of the PBS plan is to influence student behaviour change, it is teacher behaviour that provides the catalyst to achieving student outcomes. For the PBS plan to be most effective there needs to be a focus upon changing teacher behaviour in conjunction with changing student behaviour. Purposeful change to those teacher behaviours that can directly impact the success of the plan should be considered an important objective of intervention. The findings point to the need for the implementation stage to be more thoroughly explored and given equal or greater attention than the construction of the actual plan. Time and effort needs to be dedicated to considering: What is the nature of the school system influencing the teacher and classroom systems? What is the current skill set of the teacher? What technical assistance does the teacher require? What time and resources are available? (Forman & Zins, 2008). An implication of this substantial shift in thinking is that professional development for AVT staff should focus upon social power and influence within consultation. Greater knowledge and awareness of ways to influence teacher behaviour using interpersonal factors and social power, will in

turn contribute to increased teacher success with the student, who is the target of the intervention (Erchul, et al., 2008; Martin, 1978).

Previous research into the effectiveness of interventions has established that function-based interventions are more likely to achieve a reduction in disruptive behaviours than non-functioned based interventions. However, studies conducted in general classroom settings for students without a diagnosed disability, together with the intervention delivered by the classroom teacher during typical instruction, are minimal. The efficacy of the PBS plans in this study—as function-based interventions for increasing task engagement and reducing disruptive behaviour— was established and is in agreement with extensive research detailed in Chapter 2 (Blood & Neel, 2007; Filter & Horner, 2009; Ingram, et al., 2005; Lane, et al., 2006; Newcomer & Lewis, 2004; Shumate & Wills, 2010).

On the basis of the available evidence gathered from this study, individually designed PBS plans positively influenced changes to the task engagement of boys from year four to year seven displaying serious, disruptive behaviour. Establishing strong relationships of respect and collaboration between the AVT and the teacher responsible for plan implementation provides an optimum platform for success. Paying particular attention to teacher behaviour during the implementation stage is crucial to influencing a change in student behaviour. Providing technical in-class assistance that includes explicit teaching where needed and performance feedback, will afford the teacher every opportunity to acquire the necessary skills to implement the PBS plan comprehensively and with accuracy.

7.3   CONTRIBUTIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS

This study has further confirmed that function-based interventions do produce meaningful changes for students with problematic behaviour. In this multicase study, the function-based intervention was the PBS plan. The sample was small—five PBS plans, for five students—with the focus upon serious, disruptive behaviour. It is acknowledged that while students displaying problematic behaviour are representative of only a small percentage of the school population (approximately one to five percent) they can generate the majority of school office referrals—often over 50% (Sugai, Sprague, Horner, & Walker, 2000; Taylor-Greene et al., 1997).

Therefore, it is imperative to a safe, supportive learning environment that effective interventions for this minority are found.

Of the three core components used for validating intervention outcomes: social validity, treatment integrity, generalisation and maintenance, social validity and treatment integrity were the two components actively measured and planned (Lane & Beebe-Frankenberger, 2004). Maintenance was restricted to predominantly one follow-up observation for each case due to the controlled timeframe for data collection and naturally occurring events in the school and family systems. Generalisation was limited also. Even though the five PBS plans were assessed as high quality, the need for greater attention to be paid to planning for generalisation was made clear. Through the assessment of PBS plan quality, the importance of developing technically adequate plans has been reinforced as an important factor of intervention (C. R. Cook, et al., 2007). It is acknowledged that technical quality does not directly impact the integrity of implementation (Medley, et al., 2008); however, if a PBS plan is known to be of high quality then plan quality ceases to be a variable that could affect success.

The partial interval recording method was the primary tool used by the AVT staff during systematic direct observation. Partial interval is an appropriate choice for recording high rates of behaviour, which was evident in all cases (Miltenberger, 2005). I am aware that a more balanced approach that included ABC analysis (antecedent-behaviour-consequence) and event recording methods would have been ideal, but it was important that the intervention procedures demonstrated by the AVTs were those that were integral to their regular, daily practice. Unaltered, this portrayed an accurate picture of the current service delivery model when providing behaviour intervention for students.

Central to successful intervention is the nature of the plan implementation. Ensuring the teacher has the necessary competencies to enact the PBS plan is the role of the AVT. Each stage of the problem-solving model of consultation is equally important, overlapping and working together. This study sought further clarification of facilitating elements of these stages influencing plan implementation and student outcomes. The findings of this study identified possible elements of the model that may have greater influence than others upon integrity of PBS plan implementation in

this specific context. In particular, the stages of relationship building and intervention implementation have been illuminated.

While many commonalities exist with previous studies of disruptive behaviour, some important differences will inform our understandings of behaviour intervention. It seems the perspective taken by the majority of studies to date has been from the position of the psychologist as consultant. In this study the unique perspective of the AVT was examined. Through the investigation of the consultation processes and procedures employed to deliver behaviour intervention to schools, the knowledge base concerning individualised behaviour intervention has been extended.

7.4   BEYOND THE STUDY

The recommendations offered are derived from the findings, analysis and conclusions of the study. They are for those in charge of behaviour teams, current and future behaviour staff and for further research.

Even though considerable evidence has been presented through this study to show how AVT practices have changed, those practices still need to be formalised for wider impact. Recommendation One: *The present outcomes should be developed into a document of practice guidelines for behaviour staff detailing how to provide behaviour intervention services in schools.*

The current study focused upon the service delivery model of a regional behaviour team in south-east Queensland. The findings of this study should be used by those in charge of the behaviour staff, both at a regional and hub level, and the AVTs, to develop a handbook for the AVT practitioner outlining prescriptive guidelines of good practices of behaviour intervention. This handbook would be distributed across the hubs and refined and reviewed to reflect guidelines of practice detailing 'the what' and 'the how' of behaviour intervention. An important inclusion would be the school-based problem-solving model of consultation. The application of new terms for each stage of the model would be reflective of the unique characteristics associated with the behaviour support service in this study. Figure 7.1 depicts a possible example called 'The Art of Helping' which embraces the AVT perception that views their consultation procedures as 'helping' behaviours. The handbook document would serve as a "practical guideline: an organized, sequential set of recommended practices, considerations, and activities that ultimately culminate

in the delivery of effective interventions to children in schools" (Frank & Kratochwill, 2008, p. 27).
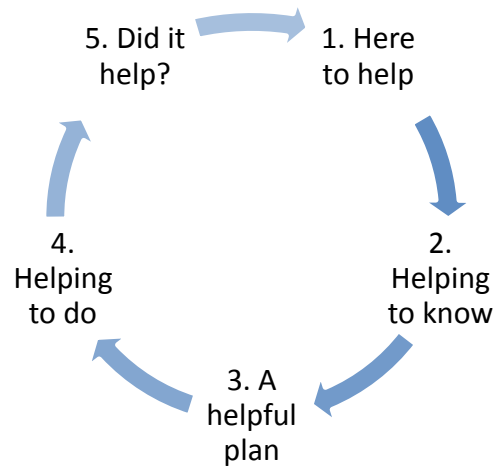
Figure 7.1. The Art of Helping.

As shown in the case descriptions of Chapter 5, PBS plans focus on the behaviour change of the individual student whereas the findings of the study have shown the important role teacher behaviour change plays in effective intervention. Recommendation Two: *AVT staff should focus equally upon changing teacher behaviour change as well as student behaviour during the intervention implementation stage of consultation.*

Operating under the assumption that a child's behaviour is influenced by connections and relationships between people in and across systems (Lopez & Nastasi, 2008, p. 261-262; Sheridan & Kratochwill, 1992), the AVT should consider changing the current focus on student behaviour to include teacher behaviour change. Establishing teacher and classroom systems more conducive to supporting PBS plan implementation should increase the likelihood of achieving desirable outcomes for students. The data from this study indicates that incorporating a teaching component that includes opportunity for the teacher to practice necessary skills and receive timely performance feedback is essential to the intervention process. Professional development to increase AVT understanding and knowledge of collaborative, consultation processes should help support the inclusion of such necessary procedures. Moreover, the proposed document of practice guidelines from

recommendation one, would contain a strong emphasis on teacher behaviour change throughout.

Additional AVT staff members are paramount if quality behaviour support services, including individualised intervention, are to be provided and sustained. More personnel would assist in reducing the caseloads of the AVTs to more manageable levels, thus helping to address the growing demand for assistance and ensuring quality time was afforded to each case.

Recommendation Three: *The present research should guide similar research in the early childhood sector—preparatory to year three (five to eight years old).*

The current study focussed upon boys from years four to year seven displaying serious, disruptive behaviour in general education settings. Students in the years prior to year 4 also demonstrate serious, disruptive behaviour. On the basis of the success of the current study, it would be helpful to address such concerns as early as possible. A further extension of this research would be to conduct a multicase study to investigate the ways in which individually designed PBS plans changed the task engagement of boys in the early years of schooling (preparatory to year three). In addition, research could also be conducted to include different types of behaviour (less serious, disruptive behaviours) and settings (special education, kindergarten). Focusing on early intervention may be a more proactive, preventative approach to finding solutions for serious, disruptive behaviours.

Recommendation Four: *Expand the current research to investigate sustainability of changes to task engagement over an extended time period such as the entire school year.*

This study investigated changes in task engagement across a standard number of weeks of behaviour intervention. Of the five case studies portrayed, recent verbal reports (2012) made to me have indicated that four of the boys have experienced continued success six months from the cessation of AVT support. It would be of particular interest to me, and of value to behaviour staff and students, to be able to identify the enablers most influential to sustained implementation of effective intervention strategies.

7.5   RESEARCHER REFLECTIONS

This study has changed the way AVT staff work. They have become part of a learning community that has contributed to improved practice when delivering behaviour intervention for students with very challenging behaviour. The AVTs involved in the five case studies were engaged in the research for 12 months and substantial changes to their practice were the result. These changes have been articulated in statements such as, "I have more awareness of the importance of the fit between teacher and plan, plus our role in the education of teachers" (AVT 6, personal communication, April 1, 2012) and

> What I have gained from the research has enabled me to look at my cases with a different focus. Working with the teacher has enabled sustained effective change rather than just focusing on the child's ability to learn new behavioural expectations (AVT 2, personal communication, November, 8, 2011).

AVTs not directly involved in the case studies have also expressed professional growth as a result of this research commenting, "I now place greater emphasis on teaching the teacher" (AVT 12, personal communication, March 14, 2012) and "I feel that the work I am doing on my cases is now more thorough and accurate as a direct result of the research" (AVT 5, personal communication, March, 12, 2012).

Paying attention to the details associated with the work I do as an AVT and a Team Leader has proven to be an invaluable experience. By becoming immersed in the content and the actions of behaviour intervention, I have come to understand the strengths and weaknesses inherent in the role of an AVT. With my staff I have learned the importance of collaborative scrutiny that has led to higher quality PBS plans. Together, through dialogue and self-reflection, we have increased our skills and knowledge with a depth not achievable alone. We have been partners in practice.

7.6   IN CLOSING

Success for students displaying serious, disruptive behaviour at school has been slow in coming. The complexities impacting the challenging student are unlikely to be resolved because their lives *are* the complexities. Reducing the complications and easing the impact may be the most purposeful contribution we, as professional helpers, can make. From the extensive research base of behaviour intervention, what has been learned to date may not have provided all the solutions as

yet, but it may help to add small pieces of hope to the lives of students so accustomed to failure. Borrowing from Howard (1991), stated by Danforth and Smith (2005), our job is clear:

> Life stories often go awry, take a bad turn, spin into a ditch, or break into pieces; our task is one of story repair, of helping someone put things back together in a liveable way so that the story can go on (p. 102).

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Appendices

Appendix A
Interview Questions AVT Behaviour

QUT	QUT RESEARCH PROJECT

Interview Questions for Advisory Visiting Teacher in Behaviour (AVT Behaviour)
The interview began with an explanation of the research, purpose of the interview, mention of confidentiality and anonymity, equipment check, procedure of the interview.

1.   How long you have been a Behaviour Support Teacher/AVT?

2.   What do you see as the main purpose of your role?

3.   In your opinion what constitutes serious, disruptive behaviour?

4.   Describe for me the general steps you follow after receiving a behaviour referral for serious, disruptive behaviour.

5.   Focussing on the development of the PBS plan, can you describe in detail how you develop and write the plan?

6.   How do you measure the effectiveness of a plan?

7.   What factors do you see as important to increasing the effectiveness of the plan?

8.   Describe what you do to assist teachers with implementation.

9.   What possible barriers do you see to teacher implementation of the plan?

10.   How effective do you think teachers are in implementing the plan as it was intended?

11.   Do you think the current service delivery model could be improved? In what way?

Appendix B
Teacher Interview 1

QUT **QUT RESEARCH PROJECT -TEACHER INTERVIEW 1**

General Behaviour

1. How long you have been a teacher, length of service at this school and current year level taught.

2. What are your expectations for behaviour of children in your class?

3. In your opinion what constitutes serious, disruptive behaviour?

4. Describe for me a recent experience you have had with a child demonstrating serious, disruptive behaviour.

5. How tolerant do you believe you are of children displaying serious, disruptive behaviour?

6. What strategies have you found to be successful with these children?

Social Validation - **Social Significance of Goals (in terms of the student referred for support)**

1. What behaviours led to request consultation?

2. Which behaviours are the most problematic for you in your classroom?

3. Describe how these behaviours cause classroom problems.

4. If these problematic behaviours were decreased or eliminated, how would this affect _____ (child)?

5. If these problematic behaviours were decreased or eliminated, how would this affect other students in your classroom?

6. If these problematic behaviours were decreased or eliminated, how would this affect your teaching in your classroom?

7. Do you see these behaviours as skill deficits? Performance deficits? What do you base this on?

8. Define each behavior as specifically as possible? (Those listed for Question 2)

9. How do these behaviours affect other students in your classroom? Students in other classrooms?

10. How do these behaviours affect other school personnel (e.g. principal, other teachers, staff etc.)?

11. Which behaviour/s do you think would be the most beneficial to change now? Why? Which behaviour/s would have the greatest long-term benefits? Why?

Adapted from Gresham and Lopez (1996) in Lane, Kalberg & Menzies (2009).

Student: _____**Year:** _____ **Observation #:** _____ **Date:**_____

Start _____ **Finish** _____   **Teacher Aide Present:**   ____☐_____

Recorder: _____ **Activity:** _____

Each box represents a 10 second interval. At every interval, the recorder marks a box. Insert a ✓ for on-task behaviour. Insert the relevant letter/symbol for off-task behaviour.

Off- task examples: **-** generally off task   **T** – talking   **C** – calling out   **M** – making noises
t – throwing objects   **P** – physical abuse   **V** – verbal abuse   **R** – refusal **O** – out of seat
N – not following instructions **tch** – touching others   **L** – inappropriate language

Definition of on-task behaviour:

teacher assistance	teacher acknowledgement	teacher correction

10	20	30	40	50	60		10	20	30	40	50	60
					▢							▢
					▢							▢
					▢							▢

Notes:

QUT	**QUT RESEARCH PROJECT -TEACHER INTERVIEW 2** **(PRIOR TO PLAN IMPLEMENTATION)**

Social Acceptability of Procedures

1. How do you feel about the procedures to change behaviour you discussed with the behaviour support teacher?

2. Which aspects of the intervention (PBS plan/behaviour support plan) do you like the most? Why? Which do you like the least? Why?

3. Which aspects of this intervention would be most difficult to implement? Why? Which aspects would be least difficult to implement? Why?

4. Were any changes made to the intervention? Do you think these changes will make the intervention more acceptable and easier to implement? Why? What would you recommend for further changes?

5. What if any, potential negative effects might this intervention have on _____ (child)? On other students in your classroom?

6. How confident do you feel implementing the PBS plan/behaviour support plan?

7. What would/does help you to implement the plan effectively?

8. Do you think this intervention is likely to be effective in solving _____ (child's) problem? Why? Why not? What are some ways we could determine whether or not the intervention had solved _____ (child's) problem?

Adapted from Gresham and Lopez (1996) in Lane, Kalberg & Menzies (2009).

Appendix E
Teacher Pre-Intervention Acceptability Rating Survey

QUT	QUT RESEARCH PROJECT -TEACHER SURVEY (PRIOR TO PLAN IMPLEMENTATION)

Teacher Pre-Intervention Acceptability Rating Survey

Date:_____

Student:_____ Teacher:_____

Target Behaviour:_____

For each item, please circle the number that most clearly represents your opinion about the

proposed intervention.

	Strongly Disagree		Neutral 50/50		Strongly Agree	

The proposed intervention will:

1	fit into my regular schedule	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2	not take too much time	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3	teach important skills	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4	be a fair way to handle the problem	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5	be appropriate given the problem	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6	be suitable given the classroom culture	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7	be easy to implement and maintain	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	be within my skill level to implement	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9	quickly improve the student's skill	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10	be acceptable to other students	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11	have lasting positive effects	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12	improve student's overall engagement	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Comments/Opinions_____

From: Lane, K.L. and Beebe-Frankenberger, M (2004) "School-Based Interventions. The Tools You Need To Succeed."
Boston, MA: Pearson Education, Inc.

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Appendix F
Problem-Solving Consultation Checklist

</div>

QUT QUT RESEARCH PROJECT – DATA COLLECTION

Date_____

AVT Behaviour _____

Student_____

PROBLEM-SOLVING CONSULTATION STAGES
   1. **Relationship Building**

- Rapport and trust

- Clarifying expectations, roles and responsibilities

- Establishing communication lines

- Checking for teacher understanding of the behaviour support process

- Using language that is familiar (no jargon)

- Sharing information

- Incorporating teacher/others ideas and opinions

   2. **Problem Identification (Social significance of goals)**

- Define target behaviour (observable terms)

- Describe the topography (duration, frequency, intensity)

- Collect baseline data

- Determine goals

   3. **Problem Analysis (Social acceptance of procedures)**

- Child-environment interactions

- Develop a plan

- Understand antecedents and consequences (collaboratively with teacher)

   4. **Intervention Implementation (Social acceptance of procedures)**

- Monitors

- Provides assistance (integrity maintained)

- Evidence-based intervention

   5. **Program Evaluation (Social importance of effects/outcomes)**

- Effective? (evaluate effectiveness of the plan)

- Direct observations

- Adjust the plan accordingly

	QUT RESEARCH PROJECT -TEACHER INTERVIEW 3 (AFTER PLAN IMPLEMENTATION)

Social Importance of Effects

 1. Describe how well you think the PBS plan/intervention worked.

 2. What behavior changes did you observe? Did these changes make a difference in

    _____ (child's) behavior in your classroom? In other school settings (e.g. other

    classrooms, playground, tuckshop etc.)?

 3. Is _____ (child's) behaviour now similar to that of the average student in your

    classroom? If not, do you think that continued use of the intervention would accomplish

    this goal? Why or why not? How long do you think this might take if we continued this

    intervention?

 4. Are you satisfied with the outcomes of this intervention? How satisfied are you? Why?

 5. Do you think this intervention would work with similar problems in the future? Why?

    Why not?

 6. Would you recommend this intervention to other teachers? Why or why not? What

    aspects of this intervention would you change before recommending this intervention to

    other teachers?

 7. What aspects of the support provided by the AVT Behaviour have you found to be

    helpful?

 8. What are possible barriers to effective implementation?

Adapted from Gresham and Lopez (1996) in Lane, Kalberg & Menzies (2009).

Appendix H

<table>
<tr><td>**QUT**</td><td>**QUT RESEARCH PROJECT -TEACHER SURVEY**
(PRIOR TO PLAN IMPLEMENTATION)</td></tr>
</table>

Integrity of Implementation Checklist

Observer:_____ **Date:** _____ **Time:** _____

<u>Interventions</u>	Was the intervention implemented? *(Adherence)*	Was the intervention done accurately? *(Quality)*	Fidelity Score **Y/Y = 2** **Y/N = 1** **N/N = 0.0** **NA/NA = NA**
	Y / N / NA	Y / N / NA	
	Y / N / NA	Y / N / NA	
	Y / N / NA	Y/ N / NA	
	Y / N / NA	Y / N / NA	
	Y / N / NA	Y / N / NA	
Implementation Scores **(Total Y's/Total Y's + N's in column)**			
Total Implementation/Fidelity Score **(Total Y's/Total Y's + N's across 2 domains)**			

Implementation scoring key:

Comments:

Prevent-Teach-Reinforce: The School-Based Model of Individualized Positive Behavior Support by G. Dunlap, R. Iovannone, D. Kincaid, K. Wilson, K. Christiansen, P. Strain, and C. English. (2010).

Appendix I
Teacher Post-Intervention Acceptability and Importance of Effects Survey

QUT	**QUT RESEARCH PROJECT -TEACHER SURVEY** **(AFTER PLAN IMPLEMENTATION)**	

Teacher Post-Intervention Acceptability and Importance of Effects Survey

Date:_____ Teacher:_____

Intervention Goals reached:_____

For each item, please circle the number that most clearly represents your opinion about the intervention.

	Strongly Disagree			Neutral 50/50			Strongly Agree	
The intervention:								
1 fit into my regular schedule	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2 did not take too much time	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3 taught important skills	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4 was a fair way to handle the behaviour	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5 was appropriate given the behaviour	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6 was suitable given the classroom culture	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7 was easy to implement and maintain	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8 was within my skill level to implement	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9 quickly improved the student's skill	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10 was acceptable to other students	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11 will have lasting positive effects	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12 improved student's overall engagement	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13 is one I will use again when needed	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14 is one I will recommend to others	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Comments/Opinions_____

From: Lane, K.L. and Beebe-Frankenberger, M (2004) "School-Based Interventions. The Tools You Need To Succeed."
Boston, MA: Pearson Education, Inc.

QUT	**QUT RESEARCH PROJECT -TEACHER SELF-REPORT** **(AFTER PLAN IMPLEMENTATION)**

Treatment Integrity Rating Scale (Teacher Self-Report)

Teacher_____ **Date**_____

Student_____

Behaviour Support Plan Target Behaviour:

_____

Strategy	Low Integrity			High Integrity
1.	1	2	3	4
2.	1	2	3	4
3.	1	2	3	4
4.	1	2	3	4
5.	1	2	3	4
6.	1	2	3	4
7.	1	2	3	4
Total (sum of all points) Average (average of all items)				

From: Lane, K.L. and Beebe-Frankenberger, M (2004) "School-Based Interventions. The Tools You Need To Succeed." Boston, MA: Pearson Education, Inc.

Appendix K
Owen's Positive Behaviour Support Plan (PBS plan)

Hypothesis:
In an attempt to gain peer attention Owen uses inappropriate language e.g swearing and threatening actions such as clenched fists, pencils as a dagger and encroaching in personal space, standing approx. 20 cm from the other person. As a result he obtains attention from teachers, peers and administration.

School's Goal:
1. To extend Owen's time at school each day from 40% of the school week to 65% of the school week

Behaviour Concerns	Triggers/Antecedents	Goal
• Physical and verbal aggression toward peers. This is swearing at others, hitting and grabbing others and throwing rocks at others. • Frequency ranging from 1 time per week up to daily aggressive behaviours • Intensity from momentary swearing at others to causing serious injury from being hit with rocks and large sticks. • Inappropriate social skills when interacting with peers. • Low levels of task engagement time (less than 50%)	• Lack of praise and acknowledgement from teacher, Owen will call out, begin talking at other children, stop working, and begin making faces and remarks at peers. • Unstructured activities mean Owen will say inappropriate sexual comments to girls, use swear words, move away from the space without permission, and not take turns in small groups. • Inadequate supervision • Lack of clear understanding of task expectations • If an adult who does not use a calm, even and firm tone of voice confronts Owen he will	• **Behavioural Goal (broad):** Owen will reduce the frequency of his physical and verbal aggression toward others. He will increase positive peer interactions (pro-social behaviours in the classroom and playground) • **Behavioural Goal (specific)** during instructional time Owen will be engaged in tasks 70% of observed intervals for 6 sessions. • **Academic Target:** During class time Owen will remain in his seat and complete at least 50% of the set task. • **Social Goal:** A reduction in the number of Student reports made to the Class Teacher in reference to Owen's inappropriate interactions

	swear, pick up objects and throw them and use threatening actions.	

Operational Definitions:

- **Off task behaviour looks like** physical and verbal aggression toward others such as throwing, threatening gestures, inappropriate language including sexual references.
- **Task engagement looks like** sitting at desk, keeping hands, feet, and objects to self, eyes on the teacher or on the task, most of the task completed and the use of respectful language.

Frequency/Intensity/Duration: Owen attends school for two hours only each day. He has been in an alternative placement for 6 months (school considering exclusion) where daily outbursts of refusal to participate with some physical and verbal aggression. Suspensions for physical violence, dangerous and unsafe behaviour.

PROACTIVE STRATEGIES			RESPONSIVE STRATEGIES
Ecological Changes	Positive Programming	Focussed Support	Situational Management
Physical Environment: **Classroom (Teacher)** • Seat Owen at the back of the room at the end of the row. • Seat next to a good role model and or appropriate Peer tutor • Provide access to verandah if required for Break Space • Teacher to organise and labels books and equipment as required. • Minimise distractions in the room such as posters. • Ensure noise level is maintained at a low level.	**Coping and tolerance skills (teacher)** • Teach conflict resolution skills • Discuss with Owen his preferred way(s) to cope with feelings of anxiety, confusion, annoyance (See Resources to teach him/provide) • Teach Owen and other students ways to control oneself when feeling angry.	**Differential reinforcement schedules:** • When Owen completes tasks, responds to instructions immediately and follows directions he will receive a tick. If he achieves 6 ticks in a week he will get a choice of a prize from the prize box or computer time.	**During Owen's problematic behaviour episodes the teacher will:** • Make an empathic statement followed by describing the possible cause of the anxiety. E.g. 'you are looking upset is it because you need some help? Or how about I help you with that Owen? • Redirect Owen to a preferred activity

Playtime (Duty Teacher/Admin)	**Ready for Work (teacher/teacher aide)**	**Group Contingency** (to fit the need for peer attention)	**Managing Safely:** **All teaching staff, administrators, ancillary staff:**

• Another Student's carer to monitor Owen on the oval at Play time and or Class Teacher to arrange organised football game with the year 4 boys including Owen.
• Learning guitar with Instrumental teacher
 	
Program environment: (Admin/teacher)
A Transition Plan is in place to assist in successfully increasing Owen's day.
• On arrival Owen is to be escorted to the classroom by 2 Students.
• On departure Owen is to remain in the classroom until Office notifies that Mum has arrived and Owen will then be sent to the Office. If Mum is late to arrive Owen will be allowed to use the Computers in the classroom until it is time for him to leave.
• Provide adequate warning to pack up and transition.
• All written tasks will need to be modified and assistive technologies utilised.
Daily Instruction (Teacher)
Increase Predictability
   • **Give firm direct instructions** in a calm voice and maintain a structured environment with extremely consistent rules.
   • **Use consistent change signals --** "10 minutes before we change activities then 5 mins, 2 mins …"
	So Owen knows exactly what he needs to do upon entering the room he goes to the teacher and asks "What do I do/need now?"
	• Visually display class rules and expectations.
	
	• Display Daily Visual Timetable
	
	Replacement Skills (teacher/teacher aide):
	(skills that serve the same access/attention function as the problem behaviour)
	
	•Acknowledgement of and rewarding of peers who are modelling correct behaviour for Owen
	
	•To access teacher attention Owen will raise his hand, sit quietly and wait for teacher
		Focus is on positive completion of desired behaviour:
		Reward is based on Owen demonstrating desired behaviours = whole class points/free time
		
		Praise comments or statements about what he is doing well "Great job you are in your seat." "Well done your hand is up without calling out"
		
		Ensure Owen gets peer attention for the right behaviour:
		Class mates are rewarded verbally by the teacher for acknowledging Owen's efforts/good behaviour.
		
		Antecedent control:
		Classroom (teacher)
		• Teacher to greet Owen each day on arrival and inform him of the activities he will be required to complete
		• Frequent check ins. Owen will not ask for assistance if it is required yet so teacher needs to check in. Verbally praise Owen
			• Allow Owen to sit on the verandah step
			• Stay close by just inside the classroom door to monitor him
			
			Stimulus change:
			• Administration to take Owen for a walk to allow him to calm down before being returned to class.
			
			Geographical containment:
			• If Owen's behaviour escalates to physical aggression remove students in the immediate area and call Office for support.
			• Do not attempt to remove Owen.
			
			Applying Consequences:
			
			If a penalty or consequence must be administered, name it and then leave it. There is no need to give Owen the opportunity to debate or argue.
			
			Emergency Procedures:
			
			• Follow Risk Assessment Plan.

• As much as practicable keep timetable for group rotations the same.
 	
• Differentiation of Curriculum as needed
  Tasks need to be broken into smaller achievable parts. Ask how many or how much he thinks he can do (teacher)
• Social Skills need to be explicitly taught (teacher)
• Group work to be included in the program to assist in improving Social Skills.
• Owen to be offered the choice of cooking in the SEU Friday middle session. He should be given the opportunity to choose a friend to take with him (Teacher/teacher aide/SEU teacher)
 	
Interpersonal Environment (All staff)
• Owen would benefit from sitting beside a friend who he can assist academically and/or whom he can assist
• Owen requires warmth and a kind and caring manner from adults
	assistance.
	
	Social /general skills (teacher/AVT)
	(skills to help prevent the problem behaviour)
	•Social skills of getting along, using kind words, friendships and appropriate display of emotions.
	•Provide all students with a common experience and enable Owen to practice social skills with peers.
	
	Instruction:
	Have 1 focus skill for the week
	On whiteboard have "Focus skills this week:
	  • Using friendly words
	  • Personal space
	Introduce each Monday – looks like/sounds like. Others could include – turn taking, listening, playing fair and showing consideration.
		immediately he asks for assistance himself (teacher aide/teacher)
		• All teachers providing instruction to Owen will prompt Owen to raise his hand:
		- Tell Owen "I am going to ask a question remember to put your hand up so I can ask you"
		- As soon as Owen raises his hand say "Thank you for your hand up" and ask him the answer
		- Encourage him to wait by asking him second. Acknowledge the hand raised immediately by saying: "I can see your hand up Owen. I will ask Tom first and then you next" Ensure you do ask Owen next!!
		- Reward Owen for raising his hand during a lesson with a tick on the chart
		•Maintain physical proximity
		•Check for understanding of instructions
		•Structured activities
		•Provide a time frame to complete activity
		•May require a scribe & use of	

		appropriate Assistive Technology • Ensure Owen is rewarded for completing tasks successfully. **Instructional control:** • .Give short simple instructions and walk away. Allow for processing time. • Owen is able to self regulate and can be asked to come back when he is ready to talk.	

Proposed quality of life programs:
- Continue with CYMHS (Child Youth Mental Health Services)
- Communication with mother is to be verbal and 3 times in the week by the class teacher
- Administration to make weekly phone contact with mother
- AVT Behaviour to contact CYMHS personnel fortnightly via email/phone call

Signatures of Stakeholders

_____ _____
        Principal   Teacher

_____ _____
                                           AVT Behaviour
        Parent/Guardian

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Appendix L
Chris's Positive Behaviour Support Plan (PBS plan)

</div>

Hypothesis: When Chris is given a direction to engage in an academic task, he will move away, walk around the classroom, make constant loud noises, say "No!" and go to computer/quiet room and/or leave the classroom. As a result he escapes/avoids the task at hand.

Behaviour Concerns	Triggers/Antecedents	Goal
• Non - compliance of teacher directions or instructions can result in physical aggression such as hitting adults and peers, leaving the room and climbing up on high walls, roofs. • Attention difficulties during lesson time • Disruptive behaviours e.g. making constant noises, wandering around the room, hiding under the table, sitting on and rolling around the floor.	• Teacher or adult direction. If Chris is directed to complete an activity without immediate assistance he will refuse by getting up and going to somewhere else in the room e.g to the computer desk or the Quiet Room to read. • Academic task instruction • If Chris perceives an academic activity is too difficult he will not be in the right place, he will wander around the classroom making noises.	• **Behavioural Target:** During class time Chris will be in the correct place at the correct time and will engage in on-task behaviour during 50% of observed intervals over 6 observations. • **Academic Goal:** Chris will attempt an academic task at his level without the need for redirection. This will be evidenced by increased levels of task engagement 50%

Behavioural Definition:
Off task behaviour :walking around the classroom speaking at other students or in silence, moving away from the task, making noises, saying "No !" going to the computer or quiet room without permission/requesting as per replacement behaviour strategies.

On-task behaviour includes sitting at desk, keeping hands, feet, and objects to self. Eyes on the teacher or on the task, some of the task completed, occasional noise making but not continuous, movement of legs.
Frequency/Intensity/Duration: Chris attends school for two hours a day timetabled around preferred activities.

<u>**What this looks like for Chris:**</u>
- Provide a teacher aide to sit with Chris to assist immediately with academic tasks
- Allow Chris to use any of the replacement behaviour strategies to escape the situation using appropriate behaviour

To be monitored on a daily basis and recorded for frequency, activity and time of day. Class teachers/teacher aide assigned to Chris.

PROACTIVE STRATEGIES			REACTIVE STRATEGIES
ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGIES	**PROGRAM/SKILL DEVELOPMENT**	**FOCUSSED SUPPORT/REINFORCEMENT**	**SITUATIONAL RESPONSES**

<u>**Physical (Teacher/AVT)**</u>
 	
Fiddle Box – have a fiddle box where Chris can choose one item out of it to "fiddle" with when he is learning. This item is for one session. He can change the item at the beginning of the next session. These items can include squishy balls, koosh balls, pompoms, fluffy hairbands, etc
  • **Flexible footrest on front legs of chair** – tie leg of pantyhose around front legs of chair for a footrest. This allows Chris to move and bounce his feet around without getting out of the chair
  • **Lock quiet room and cover computers** – especially in maths groups as he tends to overuse these items/facilities. Maths teacher to provide extension activities to cater for Chris's abilities
<u>**Daily Instruction: (Teacher)**</u>
 	
Increase Predictability
  • **Clearly outlined schedule** so Chris knows
	<u>**ALTERNATIVE SKILL INSTRUCTION**</u>
	<u>**Coping and tolerance skills**</u>
	(skills to help cope with difficult situations)
	
	Controlling Anger (Teacher/Teacher Aide)
	Teacher to teach Chris to:
	1. Identify triggers
	2. Identify physical cues e.g hot face, clenched teeth, fists
	3. Use self-talk reminders e.g. Stay calm, ignore, walk away
	4. Use anger reducers e.g walk away, say "Stop it I don't like it", count to 10, go to quiet room
	5. Self-evaluate e.g. "I stayed calm, even though
		Class Individual Stickers (teacher/teacher aide)– Chris to have individual rewards system linked to whole class system – smile face on individualised reward card on his desk
		
		Separate reward system (teacher/teacher aide) linked to being in the right place at the right time. Chris to receive chain links each time he is recognized for staying in his seat, starting work on time. The reward is aimed at whole class rather than individual so class sees Chris as a positive member of their class
			<u>**Preventative Strategies**</u>
			
			Focus on his behaviour (Teacher/teacher aide)
			When I am At School I need to…
			I did not follow the rules….To make things better I need to….Now I need to…..
			These are to be used with Chris as reminders of what is expected and debriefing tools to help Chris understand the how to make a better choice next time around.
			
			Give Choice (teacher)
			Chris needs a sense of control so provide him with more than one choice, provided by you.
			For example: "You can work in the office at lunchtime, or we can talk about why what you did is wrong. Which would you like to do?" Chris must

what is required of him. **Minimize surprises.** If you know there is to be a change in routine then prepare Chris for it. Do not enter into a power struggle over work requirements. **Give firm direct instructions** in a calm voice and maintain a structured environment with extremely consistent rules. **Visual schedules** are useful so Chris can refer to them at all times during the day. **Use consistent transition signals --** "10 minutes before we change activities then 5 mins, 2 mins …" **Play 60 beat/minute music after high energy times** (after breaks, music, PE, etc). Dim the lights and play this music for approx. 3 – 5 mins after high energy times. This can include calming pictures on the whiteboard, or a thought provoking question on the board for discussion after. **Book –** allow book for quiet music only if wanted initially. Do this for a week, then shorter and shorter time **First/Then/Next card** – have a card with 2 tasks on it, followed by choice of rewards (computer?). Reward is to be on a timer. This card is to be used for all classes and all adults that work with Chris	I was upset" - Where do I go when I am feeling anxious, fearful or angry? **Social /general skills (Teacher/Teacher aide)** (skills to help prevent the problem behaviour) - What does being cooperative look like? - What does appropriate and inappropriate behaviour look like? E.g. swearing, spitting, physical aggression. - Practice cause and effect thinking skills. If I hurt this person what could happen to me? - Teach social rules – turn taking, social distance, starting and ending conversations successfully. **Replacement Skills:** (skills that serve the same escape/avoid function as the problem behaviour) **Teacher/Teacher aide/AVT to provide opportunity for Chris**	If Chris uses any of the strategies associated with controlling his anger he is to be given a chain link immediately. Each time Chris remains at his activity and completes some of what has been required, he is to be given a smiley for his chart, immediately.	know that you are in charge at school. **Individual Consequence Chart (teacher)** Clearly labeled steps for Chris so he has consistent consequences for inappropriate behaviour. This should not include going to office unless it is absolutely necessary **Applying Consequences (teacher)** Consequences should include Chris completing work that he missed by inappropriate behaviour **Least intrusive to most intrusive: All teaching staff, ancillary staff, teacher aides, administration.** - <u>Direction</u> – "Take out your writing book. Thank you" Allow take up time. Praise or move to next level. - <u>Redirection</u> – Repeat the direction. "Chris take out your writing book now, thank you." Allow take up time. Praise or move to next level. - <u>Warning</u> - Show visually with hands. Give choices for him to make. Chris you need to make a good choice – restate direction.

Curricula Adjustments (Teacher)	to practice behaviours, routines.		Allow take up time. Praise or move to next level.

• **Look for particular areas of interest** – his work can be tailored to incorporate his interest areas.
• **Small amounts of work with rewards for on-task behaviour**
• **Work to begin to resemble "regular" school** but at his academic level.
• **Fine motor activities** – to increase ability to write on the lines.
	Provide Choice (sense of control and escape some tasks) in:
	Teacher to teach Chris about choices
	Teacher to provide **3** MUST do tasks each day (using visuals as well as labels)
	Chris gets to choose the order and the materials to be used:
	    • Type of materials used – coloured paper, textas, markers.
	
	Increase predictability
	Use a visual timetable:
	Teacher to show Chris the class visual timetable so he knows the schedule of daily events. Have Chris read the pictures and tell what is happening next, what happened before etc.
	
	Asking for Help
	Escape by requesting assistance
	Teacher will teach Chris to raise his hand and wait for assistance from the teacher or teacher aide.
	    1. Hand up
	    2. "I need help,
		Each time Chris asks for help, he is to be given a smiley for his chart, immediately.	• <u>Office</u> – time out in office area or call carer
			• <u>Suspension</u> – possibility of in school/out of school
			• <u>Exclusion</u> – possibility decided at the discretion of admin.
			
			Emergency Procedures
			All teaching staff, ancillary staff, administration)
			
			See Chris's Risk Management Plan
			(Separate document)

	please" 3. Wait quietly **I Want to Switch** Escape from an activity that started out ok and became less tolerable (temporarily terminated) Switching to a preferred task AFTER negotiating when the first task will be completed.	Each time Chris asks to switch, he is to be given a smiley for his chart, immediately.	

Communication:

- Daily contact with carers face to face by teacher (daily verbal reports) at collection time.
- Emails to carer if the verbal report is unable to be given (same day).
- If Chris displays behaviours that have resulted in suspension the administration will contact carers by phone for him to be collected immediately
- Carers will be expected to attend re-entry meeting following suspension.
- Case conferences to review plan every 3 to 4 weeks to be attended by classroom teacher, teacher aide, administration, carer, senior guidance officer and AVT Behaviour.
- AVT Behaviour will contact carers via phone each week to discuss Chris's progress.
- Carers will alert teacher to upcoming specialist appointments and any relevant information arising.

Signatures of Stakeholders

_____   _____

       Principal   Teacher

_____   _____

     Parent/Carer   AVT Behaviour

Appendix M
Daniel's Positive Behaviour Support Plan (PBS plan)

Hypothesis: When Daniel is faced with a task that he does not feel able or wish to complete, he will throw materials on the floor, tear them up, declare his intention to refuse the task, leave the room *thus* Daniel escapes the task & is also usually able to access teacher/adult & peer attention.

Behaviour Concerns	Triggers/Antecedents	Goal
1. Physical & verbal aggression toward others When Daniel is in an angry or extremely anxious mood, he will set out to provoke another student or an adult: He will swear and hit at others and run away. 2. Refusal to follow adult instructions- Daniel ignores the teacher request, tears his worksheet, throws, books on the floor, yells "I am going" and leaves the room. 3. Escaping uncomfortable situations	• Work tasks that Daniel finds difficult or uninteresting in the classroom when he is with or without a teacher aide • Unpredictable routines eg late arrival at school after commencement of activities without being given any information or assistance about what is happening or what he is required to do. • Arriving at school in a bad humour when there have been altercations at home. Refusing to get out of the car and walk in the school gate	**Behavioural Goal:** Daniel will increase his task engagement during academic activities during 40% of observed intervals over 6 observations. **Social Goal:** Daniel will use socially acceptable ways of managing his emotions. He will learn how to appropriately express his feelings verbally. **Academic goal**: Instead of refusal to attempt tasks, Daniel will begin & complete a limited amount of academic tasks. Instead of using aggressive behaviours,

Task engagement looks like: Daniel would have his eyes on the teacher or the work; his body would be still, he would be trying to complete some of the task by writing some words/numerals on the page and engaging in the lesson by putting up his hand and answering questions.

Frequency/Intensity/Duration: Daniel attends school until the second play break. Refusal to follow instructions occurs multiple times per session. 15 major incidences reported to the office for swearing, kicking, property damage and leaving without permission and 5 minor incidences, in a two month period.

PROACTIVE STRATEGIES			REACTIVE STRATEGIES
ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGIES (Physical, interpersonal, programmatic)	**PROGRAM/SKILL DEVELOPMENT** (General, functional equivalent,	**FOCUSSED SUPPORT/REINFORCEMENT** (reinforcement, stimulus control,	**SITUATIONAL RESPONSES** (interrupting the behaviour chain, counter-intuitive, emergency procedures)

	coping/tolerance skills)	neurophysical, medication adjustment).	

Physical Environment:
• Establish a predictable schedule with clear routines for Daniel's school day: regular arrival times, eating times & places, departure routines. See Appendix 1
• Seat Daniel away from students with whom he can easily conflict
• Seat Daniel with easy access to his teacher
• Seat Daniel next to a 'peer tutor' (& rotate the person performing this role regularly).
• Seat Daniel with easy access to his 'Quiet Place' & the door.
• Establish a 'Quiet Time' and 'Time Away' routines in the classroom & teach Daniel & the class how these will be used. See Appendix 2
• Remove from easy access items that Daniel can use to waste time, hurt others & items he can steal.
• Provide Daniel with a box (decorated to his design) in which he can place 'treasures' which would otherwise be distracters in class.
	Replacement Skills: (Teacher)
	• Instead of running from the room, Daniel will use his quiet place
	• Daniel will be taught acceptable ways of asking for a break. He will use his break card by putting it on the desk and quietly moving to the Break Space.
	• Daniel will be taught acceptable ways of gaining adult attention. He will raise his hand and wait.
	
	General skills: (Teacher/SEP staff)
	• Daniel will be taught to recognize & express his emotions verbally
	• Daniel will be taught & use strategies to manage his emotions & anger without aggression.
	• Daniel will be taught organizational skills to lessen frustration.
	See Appendix 6
	Coping Skills:
	• Daniel will be taught ways to
		Antecedent Control: (SEP staff)
		• Daniel is on a program of gradual re-entry after his latest suspension.
		• Daniel will arrive at SEP each morning & have his readiness for class ascertained. Staff will engage in conversation and provide preferred activities for Daniel.
		• Daniel will spend play breaks at the SEP until his behavior becomes more reliable. Staff will engage Daniel in small group activities focused upon turn taking, using polite language and problem solving strategies.
		• Teacher-aides will assist in conducting Daniel from place to place in the school to reduce potential problems when he is moving freely. Positive, encouraging language will be used describing the correct behaviour they see "Well done Daniel you are walking slowly and keeping to the path."
		
		Differential Reinforcement: (Teacher)
			General Management Strategies/Steps:
			(Teacher/SEP staff/teacher aide)
			Use the same reactive strategies for Daniel as for others in his class.
			  1. Warning
			  2. Warning 2
			  3. Time out
			  4. Buddy Class
			  5. Office/Home
			
			Behaviour Interruption & Counter Intuitive Strategies:
			• When Daniel shows signs of task fatigue he should be given a movement break & change of activity
			
			Consequences: (Administration)
			• As above
			• Plus consequences as provided by Education Queensland i.e. Suspension 1-5 days, suspension 6-20 days, exclusion.
			
			Emergency Procedures
			All teaching staff, ancillary staff,

• Display visual reminders of school & class rules & processes; timetable; reward system for Daniel & all students. See Appendix 3	control his angry outbursts • To wait patiently • To relax • To persist with difficult tasks A gradual process of exposing Daniel to 'undesireable' situations will be commenced. Success at this to be supported with strong encouragement, praise, reward	• Daniel has rejected being part of any obvious 'special' program of reinforcement as well as participating in the class reinforcement program. • AVTs have been assisting in establishing an intense reinforcement schedule for Daniel's class. See Appendix 7 • The teacher aide used will be one Daniel already enjoys a good relationship with as he will likely reject strangers.	administration) **See Daniel's Risk Management Plan** (Separate document)
Curriculum, Teaching & Learning: • Daniel will need curriculum activities at his achievement level & also that allow him to learn using his preferred styles. • Daniel will need regular breaks from academic work as his attention span is short & academic work is very effortful for Daniel with his poor fine motor skills. • Daniel will continue to access developmental programs in Art, Social Skills with SEP staff • Daniel will continue to receive support to achieve curriculum goals from teacher aides & SEP teachers.See Appendix 4 Interpersonal/Social Environment (Teacher) • Find as many opportunities as possible to acknowledge Daniel's positive behaviours.	Academic Skills (Teacher/SEPstaff) • Daniel will continue to receive in-class & small group support via the SEP program Intrapersonal Skills: Teacher/SEP staff) • Specific teaching & reinforcement for Daniel as part of his class group in all the elements of the C-Star matrix. • SEP program Quality of Life Strategies: • Regular communication with home will be continued on a teacher to parent basis in person to begin & then moving to electronic communication	Medical/Psychological/Therapeutic Supports: **Daniel is receiving on-going support both within & beyond the school** • Art Therapy (school based) • School Guidance Officer: • KIMs consellor: • Speech assessment & therapy: • Paediatrician: • Daniel is no longer taking medication & dietary strategies are being employed to assist in managing his emotions & behavior. His diet is free of lactose & gluten. • The option of assessment by an OT remains to be explored at a	

• Find as many opportunities as possible to give Daniel a legitimate voice in class • Greet Daniel on his arrival if late & update him on what has been said & what is happening to lessen his anxiety • Daniel's play & movement round the school will be strictly monitored to start & gradually relaxed as he shows he is able to cope with more freedom. See Appendix 5 Extra Teacher aide time will be used to facilitate Daniel's safe transitions round the school as he returns to full time (teacher aide) • Daniel will continue to receive a social skills program from SEP staff (SEP staff)	(teacher/admin/SEP staff) Parents will endeavour to continue: • Allow Daniel to be able to earn 'rewards' at home for good school performance. Daniel is motivated by money & play. See Appendix 7 • Daniel joined a soccer team in 2010 (different group from school students) • Daniel has recently started attending Tae Kwan Do (with his dad). • Opportunities beyond school to play successfully with other children • Daniel's parents read to him at home daily.	later date to investigate & assist re Daniel's problematical fine motor skills	

Communication:
- Daily communication with father by the classroom teacher at collection time to provide verbal summary of the day
- Weekly check-in with the administration (Principal) by the father to see how the week has been.
- Case Conferences for PBS plan review to be attended by teacher, SEU staff, administrator, AVT Behaviour, available Specialist staff, both parents.
- Parents will report to the school on any homework task completion
- Father will check in with class teacher daily when collecting Daniel
- Father will revise behaviour expectations with Daniel daily through the social story provided by AVT Behaviour

Stakeholder Signatures:

Principal/Deputy	Class Teacher	AVT: Behaviour	Parent	Guidance Officer	Learning Support Teacher

Appendix N
Sam's Positive Behaviour Support Plan (PBS plan)

Hypothesis: During classroom instruction and playground time, when Sam is confronted with a situation he perceives as too difficult to manage he uses high levels of physical and verbal aggression towards others. As a result he escapes/avoids the difficult situation he is in often culminating in him being completely removed from the situation by being sent home.

Behaviour Concerns	Triggers/Antecedents	Goal
- Physical and verbal aggression toward teachers and peers. This is swearing and threatening words, repeatedly bashing, banging on doors, windows. Picking up furniture and throwing it and damaging property. - Unable to communicate appropriately with teachers and peers when behaviour escalates. Using swear words and phrases. - Unable to accept responsibility for actions - Non - compliance of teacher directions or instructions. Sam swears, leaves the room. - Inappropriate social skills (grandstanding) when interacting with peers. Standing in personal space, using threatening gestures and words.	- Perceived threat from his peers. - Justice issues – getting into trouble or being suspended he will react with verbal aggression – swearing, yelling. - If Sam perceives that the academic tasks are too difficult he will find ways to avoid it. - Language activities are perceived as very challenging. - Unstructured activities in lunch breaks. - Peer comments (teasing) about his size and stature. Sam will retaliate with verbal taunts and physical aggression – chasing, hitting.	**Broad Behavioural Goal:** Sam will reduce the frequency of his physical and verbal aggression toward others. He will increase the use of socially acceptable responses in difficult situations. **Specific Behavioural Target:** During class time Sam will remain in his seat during instruction time and engage in on-task behaviour 40% of the observed intervals over 6 observations.

- **Off task behaviour includes** physical and verbal aggression toward others such as bashing, kicking, punching, threatening gestures, swearing, tearing/destruction of property, leaving the room.

- **On-task behaviour includes** sitting at desk, keeping hands, feet, and objects to self. Eyes on the teacher or on the task. No swearing or threatening gestures, no throwing of furniture or destruction of property.

Frequency/Intensity/Duration: Sam attends school for two hours only each day. Sam has had three suspensions in 2 months.

What this looks like for Sam:
- Increased supervision during playtime, small group structured play to encourage social skill development and keeping hands and feet to self at all times.
- Increasing teacher aide time to provide individualised help for language activities.
- Allowing Sam to choose to go to a safe space when he is feeling unhappy until he is calm. E.G. Office area/HOSES's office
- Sam remaining calm and choosing appropriate activities to do when socialising with peers.
- Sam using respectful language to all people at school.

To be monitored on a daily basis and recorded for frequency, activity and time of day (class teacher/duty staff)

PROACTIVE STRATEGIES			REACTIVE STRATEGIES
ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGIES	**PROGRAM/SKILL DEVELOPMENT**	**FOCUSSED SUPPORT/REINFORCEMENT**	**SITUATIONAL RESPONSES**
Physical (Teacher/teacher aide/SEU teacher) • **Space provided** for individual work where Sam can access information visually. (VI student) • **Boundaries of** all areas are clear. • **Identify a space** where Sam can go when he is angry, anxious or fearful. This can be in the office, break space area (supervised classroom) or a designated area in the playground. All staff needs to be aware of these areas. Once Sam has completed his time out, he must not revisit the incident – move on. Revisiting is	**ALTERNATIVE SKILL INSTRUCTION** **Coping and tolerance skills** (skills to help cope with difficult situations) **(teacher /AVT Behaviour)** **Anxiety/fear** – home/school Currently Sam is able to work on educational computer programs in the HOSES's office when deemed necessary by relevant staff. Use a visual schedule	Sam wants to earn Fast Cash to 'buy' the oversized calculator, car and fishing related items. Sam loves cars and fishing. **Fast Cash (teacher/AVT Behaviour)** • Fast cash reward system is attached to the list. Sam receives a cash amount to bank in his bank	**Preventative Strategies** **For all teaching staff, office staff and administration.** **Proactive calm down strategy:** Sam is to use walking as a calming strategy. Sam will take a predetermined route around the school. This route will be on a school map. (Netball Courts) Sam will only be allowed to walk this route during school lesson time. Sam will wear a lanyard that states that

likely to trigger further outbursts/inappropriate behaviour.

- **Predetermined walking trail** around the school grounds for when Sam is displaying escalated behaviour. Lanyard to be provided so staff is aware of Sam's movements.

Daily Instruction (teacher/ teacher aide/SEU staff)
Increase Predictability
- Address Sam individually at all times
- **Clearly outlined schedule** so Sam knows what is required of him.
- **Minimize surprises.** If you know there is to be a change in routine then prepare Sam for it. Do not enter into a power struggle over work requirements.
- **Give firm direct instructions** in a calm voice and maintain a structured environment with extremely consistent rules.
- **Visual schedules** are useful so Sam can refer to them at all times during the day.
- **Use consistent change signals --** "10 minutes before we change activities then 5 mins, 2 mins …"

Use clear, specific directions step by step. Sam can misinterpret a nonverbal signal or facial expression that would seem obvious to his peers.

Curricula Adjustments (teacher)

Controlling Anger
- Where do I go when I am feeling anxious, fearful or angry?

Organise a time that Sam can tell you about what is going on in his life, rather than disrupting the lesson time.

Poor organizational skills.
C/T has implemented a "To do list" This is revisited several times during the day.

Social /general skills
(teacher/AVT Behaviour)
(skills to help prevent the problem behaviour)
- What does a victim look like? How not to be a victim? I didn't swear or spit, they did it.
- What does a persecutor look like? I can make other students do things so they get in trouble not me. How not to be a persecutor?
- What does being aggressive look like?

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book immediately after he has finished a task on his list.
- He receives $10 for requesting a break, switching activity, going on his Cool Down Walk

Print to be Times New Roman Font size 14 minimum and printed on A3 paper. Verbally praise Sam for reading his work and attempting to complete any written task. Encourage a peer buddy to sit with him and help when teacher aide is unavailable.
Peer buddy to alert teacher to 'great behaviour" and suggest Fast Cash reward. Fast Cash to be given immediately.

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he is walking to calm down. On the lanyard is a map of the walking area.

Don't take apparently rude or aggressive behaviour personally; When Sam exhibits escalated behaviour recognize that the target for Sam's anger may be unrelated to the source of the anger.

MANAGING ESCALATING BEHAVIOUR
Least intrusive to most intrusive:
All teaching staff, teacher aides, special education staff, office staff and administration.
- Direction – "Take out and your writing book" thank you" Allow take up time. Praise or move to next level.
- Redirection – Repeat the direction. "Sam take out your writing book now, thank you." Allow take up time. Praise or move to next level.
- Warning - Show visually with hands. Give choices for him to make relate to traffic lights. Sam you need to make a good choice – restate direction. Allow take up time. Praise or move to next level.

• Alter task length Shorten the activity Provide frequent breaks • **Adjust demand difficulty** Provide easier work • **Look for particular areas of interest** – his work can be tailored to incorporate his interest areas – motor bikes and cars. • **Modify size of print** where required. Set a task, break it into sections and place a time limit for completion. Consistently follow up his progress – he must understand that the task will be completed in school time or his time.	What strategies can I use to calm myself? • What does being cooperative look like? • What does appropriate and inappropriate behaviour look like? E.g. swearing, spitting, physical aggression. • Practice cause and effect thinking skills. If I hurt this person what could happen to me? • Teach social rules – turn taking, social distance, starting and ending conversations successfully. **Replacement Skills:** (skills that serve the same escape/avoid function as the problem behaviour) **(teacher/AVT Behaviour/teacher aide)** **Asking for Help** Escape by requesting assistance from teacher or teacher aide **I Want to Switch** Escape from an activity that		• Timeout – in class away from the other students but in your view – this can be timed or teacher directed. • Timeout – use of buddy class • Office – time out in office area or call parents • Suspension – possibility of in school/out of school • Exclusion – possibility decided at the discretion of admin. **Applying Consequences (Teacher and Administration)** If a penalty or consequence must be administered, name it and don't say another word about what happened. Lecturing is not only a waste of time, it empowers Sam by giving him the opportunity to debate or argue. Sam has difficulty understanding abstract concepts. He sees things as black or white. Sam will argue that he is the only one to face consequences for his inappropriate actions and that others get away with their behaviour without consequence. **focus on his behaviour**

	started out ok and became less tolerable (temporarily terminated) Switching to a preferred task AFTER negotiating when the first task will be completed. **Cool down strategy** Teach Sam to use walking as a cool down strategy Walk the predetermined route with him and provide a map as a visual reminder. (Netball Courts) **Provide Choice (sense of control and escape some tasks) in:** • Sequence of tasks for MUST do tasks • Type of materials used – coloured paper, textas, markers. **Break space time when necessary** Consistently follow up his progress – he must understand that the task will be completed in school time or his time.	The teacher will teach Sam to raise his hand and say "This is too hard, can you help me please?" This earns $10 Fast Cash each time. The teacher will teach Sam to switch by; Raising his hand and waiting for teacher attention Saying: May I switch to another activity please? Doing this earns $10 Fast Cash each time. Lanyard to be used for **Cool Down Walks.** The teacher /teacher aide will teach, model and practice with Sam his cool down strategy. By: Walking the route with him two times Telling him the teacher aide will be close by to make sure	**Give Choice** Sam needs a sense of control so provide him with more than one choice, provided by you. For example: "I can give you a detention or time out or we can talk about why what you did is wrong. Which would you like to do?" Sam must know that you are in charge at school. **All staff is to follow the Risk Assessment for unsafe and dangerous behaviours.**

		he is safe 'Straight there, straight back' will earn Fast Cash dollars $20 for returning calmly, sitting at desk. Choice activity completion earns $10 Fast Cash	

Communication:

- Daily contact with parent via phone from teacher
- Twice weekly communication via a phone call to parent mobile phone from SEU staff
- Contact by AVT Behaviour to specialist prior to vision assessments then subsequent contact with parents to arrange transport and attendance.
- If Sam displays behaviours that have resulted in suspension the administration will contact parents via mobile phone.
- Parent will be expected to attend re-entry meeting following suspension
- Case conferences to review plan every 3 to 4 weeks to be attended by classroom teacher, SEU teacher, administration, parent, AVT Behaviour.

Signatures of Stakeholders

_____   _____
          Principal   Teacher

_____   _____
      Guidance Officer   AVT Behaviour

_____
      Parent/Guardian

Appendix O
Elliot's Positive Behaviour Support Plan (PBS plan)

Hypothesis:

In an attempt to gain peer or teacher attention Elliot calls out, uses inappropriate language such as swearing and 'put downs', interrupts the teaching and learning by wandering around the room 'talking at' others, pushes, grabs peers. As a result he obtains attention from teachers, peers and administration.

Behaviour Concerns	Triggers/Antecedents	Goal
• Physical and verbal aggression toward peers. Swearing, making derogatory remarks, hitting others- daily • High frequency out of seat behaviour (over 75%) wandering around the room speaking to other peers using derogatory remarks and 'put downs'. • Inappropriate social skills when interacting with peers – rude comments about others appearances, inability to take turns, join in • Low levels of task engagement time (less than 50%)	• Lack of praise and acknowledgement from teacher and peers. Elliot will wander around the room talking to peers and call out to the teacher and peers • Derogatory comments/actions directed at Elliot by peers • Unstructured activities in lunch breaks . Elliot will be in out of bounds areas, he will take equipment from others, hit and tease others. • No designated play area, free to move anywhere in the school • Minimal supervision at playtime	• **Behavioural Goal (broad):** Elliot will reduce the frequency of his physical and verbal aggression toward others. He will increase positive peer interactions (prosocial behaviours in the classroom and playground) • **Behavioural Target:** During class time Elliot will remain in his seat for 50 % of observed intervals during instruction time and engage in on-task behaviour 75% of observed intervals for 6 observations. No calling out. • **Social Goal:** Elliot will reduce the number of times he hits, pushes and uses intimidatory words towards other students. - No tolerance to "Put Down" language used by Elliot. (Expectation to be explicitly taught by AVT and Class Teacher) Review Week 10 (2nd classroom)

Operational Definitions:
- **Off task behaviour includes** physical and verbal aggression toward others such as kicking, threatening gestures, swearing. Out of seat without permission means wandering in and out of desks, talking to peers, touching their equipment, refusing to sit down when asked.
- **On-task behaviour includes** sitting at desk, keeping hands, feet, and objects to self. Eyes on the teacher or on the task, most of the task completed. Using respectful language. No calling out during the lesson.

Frequency/Intensity/Duration: Elliot has had 24 minor incident reports, 6 majors – Office referrals and two suspensions within 5 months

What this looks like for Elliot:
Specific designated play area assigned to Elliot. This can change each day but boundaries are made
Attention provided immediately Elliot has his hand up.
Teach class buddies to sit with Elliot to work and acknowledge him for appropriate verbal interactions
Elliot to attend organized, lunchtime, activites.

PROACTIVE STRATEGIES			REACTIVE STRATEGIES
ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGIES	**PROGRAM/SKILL DEVELOPMENT**	**FOCUSSED SUPPORT/REINFORCEMENT**	**SITUATIONAL RESPONSES**
Physical:(teacher/AVT Behaviour) • Elliot seated at the back to minimize the turning around to disrupt others. Have calm attentive students between him and the other 'end' child. • Position him at the end of the row close to the reflection desk to minimize the movement and disruption if he accesses it. • Consider arranging desks in a U shape to allow for the class carpet area to be in the centre towards the front. Additional single desks in rows behind. **Daily Instruction:(teacher)** **Increase Predictability** • **Give firm direct instructions** in a calm voice and maintain a structured environment with extremely consistent rules.	**ALTERNATIVE SKILL INSTRUCTION** **Coping and tolerance skills** (skills to help cope with difficult situations **Poor organizational skills (teacher)** • Tidy desk • Knowing exactly what he needs to do • Remain in the same desk/position in the room. This provides predictability and reduces compounding factors of distractibility • Provide daily reminders to Elliot. Remind him	**Organisational Skills (teacher)** **Fast Cash Reward System:** **For implementation of Fast Cash see Appendix attached.** Reward Elliot with Fast Cash for: • having equipment ready when asked • Having equipment ready without prompting • Helping peers to be organized	**Preventative Strategies** All teachers, administration, ancillary staff will follow the following steps: Use a calm, firm tone Re state what Elliot should be doing by saying "Elliot, your job is to…" Offer assistance **Least intrusive to most intrusive:** • Direction – "Back to your seat" thank you" Allow take up time. Praise or move to next level. • Redirection – Repeat the direction. "Elliot back to your seat and hand up and wait."

• **Use consistent change signals --** "10 minutes before we change activities then 5 mins, 2 mins …" **Curricula Adjustments (teacher/teacher aide/specialist staff)** • Alter task length – write on the whiteboard in different colours • Timetable for the day on the board and read through • Reduce the amount Elliot has to complete • Focus upon You Can Do It curricula for the whole class as well as Elliot – Getting Along, Organisation and Persistence. • Mark Elliot's work to ensure progress and challenges are closely monitored **Fast Cash Class Reward System (1st classroom)** • 3 goals displayed visually and clearly on the whiteboard at the front of the room • Referred to and explicitly explained at the beginning of each day • Provide each student in the class including Elliot with a FAST CASH passbook	each morning that he needs: sharp pencil, ruler, rubber and sharpener • Communicate to parents Elliot's equipment needs via phone, note, email, face to face • Provide Elliot with the opportunity to clean out his tidy tray at the end of each day. **Social /general skills** (skills to help prevent the problem behaviour) **For implementation of Social Skills see appendix attached.** **Attendance at Friends Club (Learning Support Teacher)** Elliot will attend Friends Club program 4 days a week to focus on negotiation and turn taking. Social skills of getting along, using kind words, friendships and appropriate display of emotions. Taught to the whole class context through 2 You Can Do It lessons per week. (see timetable at the end of plan – Note 1)	**Playground Passport (Duty teacher/Admin/teacher aide)** **Playground Passport** Elliot is to receive Bonus dollars for the week if all his ratings are 4 and 5 with the occasional 3. **Rewards directly linked to You Can Do It Lessons in Getting Along (teacher) e.g.** $5 Fast Cash for having rubber, pencil ready. $5 Fast Cash for hand up and wait. (see details in Note 2 at the end of the plan) **Praise comments** (teacher/teacher aide) statements about what he is doing well "Great job you are in your seat." "Well done your hand is up without calling out" "You remembered your passport – Fast Cash for you, well done." 8 positives in a 20 minute	Allow take up time. Praise or move to next level. • Level 1 – "You are now on level one" • Reflection– state time at reflection "Go to reflection, now– this can be timed or teacher directed. • Buddy class – escorted by responsible peer to buddy class • Office – time out in office area or call parents • Suspension – possibility of in school/out of school **Applying Consequences** If a penalty or consequence must be administered, name it in terms of 'good choice' 'bad choice' Do not engage in a lengthy discussion. **Emergency Procedures:** • Follow Risk Assessment Plan.

	Replacement Skills: (skills that serve the same access/attention function as the problem behaviour) (teacher/AVT Behaviour) The teacher will teach Elliot To access teacher attention Elliot will raise his hand, sit quietly and wait for teacher assistance. To access peer attention Elliot will ask his teacher if he may work beside a buddy and quietly talk and work. **Reflection time when necessary** Consistently follow up his progress – he must understand that the task will be completed in school time or his time.	period (8 counters in teacher pocket) (1st teacher) **Positive Pins – reward system** (2nd classroom(teacher) 10 pins = lucky dip 10 pins = 1 sticker 5 stickers = big prize - Used when work is completed. - Used when Elliot arrives at school on time. Used to reinforce expected behaviours E.g. hand up, wait to be asked and use of supportive language in the class environment. Teach Elliot (teacher) to raise hand and wait: Say "Thank you for your hand up" Ask him immediately. Reward with Fast Cash Teacher will prompt Elliot to request permission to sit with peer to work independently. Practise times will be arranged. Reward Elliot with a positive pin for each session where he

		puts up his hand and waits quietly 5 times	

Communication:

Weekly phone call to parents – progress report (class teacher)

Playground passport sent home each Friday for parents to see (class teacher)

Weekly verbal report to parents from AVT Behaviour via phone/email

Case conference – all stakeholders for review of PBS plan – 3 weeks at school in Principal's office 3:10pm

Signatures of Stakeholders

_____ _____

Principal Teacher

_____ _____

AVT Behaviour Parent/Guardian