

PREFACE

A LETTER OF HOPE

Dear teacher,

I write this letter to you as a message of hope. I hope that you find value in what I have written and enact the strategies herein. I hope that you read these pages and feel confident in your practice as an educator to work in any school, be that primary, secondary, rural, urban, low SES, high SES, Catholic, government or independent. Wherever you land, my hope is that you find this book supportive – like a mentoring voice in your ear to let you know that the profession values you and your impact on students.

One of the reasons I wrote this book is that, when I first started out as a teacher, I received absolutely no behaviour education training. It was, essentially, a case of ‘Don’t smile before Easter and you’ll be right.’ I’m not joking. That advice was given to me on several occasions. I like smiling, and I like to do it a lot before Easter, so I am telling you to not listen to this ghastly guidance! Smile large and smile often. Teaching is a wonderful profession, and you have the ability to make an impact on the lives of the young people who cross your path.

The other reason I wrote this book is that, when I began writing it, my partner and I were in the process of choosing a school for our son, Billy. While going on school tours and thinking about what I would hope for in a school, and, indeed, in a teacher for him, three things came to mind: respect, kindness and unconditional positive regard.

INTRODUCTION

A CASE FOR CHANGE

'I can't change the direction of the wind, but I can adjust my sails to always reach my destination.' – James Dean

Behaviour management is an essential skill for teachers. Student misbehaviour in the classroom is progressively interfering with teaching and learning. Over the last decade, student misbehaviour has been a core driver of teacher attrition (Paramita et al., 2020). It is concerning, especially given the current educational climate in which some schools are unable to fully staff themselves.

In April 2023, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) released its *Education Policy Outlook in Australia* report. While Australia's school system is generally considered to be high-performing in relation to other OECD countries, one of the most salient findings in this report was that Australia's classrooms are among the least favourable in terms of disciplinary climate, measured by students' perceptions of how often noise and disorder occur in the classroom. The report refers to data generated from the OECD's 2018 *Teaching and Learning International Survey* (TALIS), explaining that 37 per cent of secondary school principals in Australia reported that intimidation or bullying among students occurred at least weekly. The report also stated that Australian teachers feel less prepared than their peers across OECD countries to manage disruptive classroom behaviour.

**'I commend this book for both beginning teachers
and those well into their teaching journey.'**

— Dr Bill Rogers

In a time where Australian classrooms are grappling with a rising tide of student misbehaviour exacerbated by a looming teacher shortage, this book emerges as a beacon of change. Christopher Hudson challenges the archaic disciplinarian approach, urging educators to evolve with the times and view behaviour as a skill to be taught, modelled and practised.

LEADING POSITIVE CLASSROOMS makes a compelling case for adopting an educative approach to behaviour management with a focus on relationships. It offers practical insights and tools for change including exemplar conversational scripts, real-world strategies and reflection activities. This powerful resource offers a roadmap to shift the focus from managing behaviour to leading behaviour, ultimately creating a positive and transformative learning environment.

CHRISTOPHER HUDSON is an experienced educator, school leader and researcher who is passionate about transforming education through evidence-based practices and professional learning. Through his consultancy and lecturing work, Christopher aims to empower both teachers and students to maximise their potential for high-quality teaching and learning in schools.

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