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A Guide to Behaviour Management

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Behaviour Management Considerations for CRT

Challenges & Benefits



Being a new or infrequent member of a school community presents different considerations around understanding and implementing classroom management strategies with the students and other staff that you support. When looking forward to your placements in schools, or when first arriving at the school itself, it can be helpful to consider...

Knowing the school;

What programs and structures make this school different to others that I've worked with? How do I need to adjust my teaching approaches and classroom management techniques to integrate into the community? Are there any events or programs taking place while I'm here that might affect the general environment and behaviors, the availability of resources, or the ability of other staff to offer me support?

Knowing the students;

What does 'normal' behaviour look like in this classroom; silent, lively, or something in between? How does their teacher usually run lessons? Which students need additional support? How can I quickly get to know students, especially if I'm only with them for a day, or even just part of a day?

Understanding expectations;

How can I best go about asking questions to help prepare for my day? What is the best way to ask for assistance if behaviours escalate? How do I need to document or follow up with any interventions that occur during my time at the school?

Opportunity for a different take;

How can I give students the chance to start fresh? How can I use my individual personality and approaches to bring out different things in this classroom, to support learning and engagement? How can I inject new energy and patience into a classroom where I'm only spending a short amount of time?

Preventative Strategies

Before Students Arrive:

- Arrive at the school before classes start to get a sense of the school's layout, to meet staff in the teaching team/neighbouring rooms, and to read through plans and policies. This is especially important for any new schools you're going to for the first time.
- Review the school behaviour management policies to understand escalation processes, names and roles of staff in positions of support (such as a year level coordinator, wellbeing counsellor, or school leadership) and ascertain how they're best contacted in the event you need help; do you send a student out of the classroom, call the office, call the staff member on their mobile etc...?
- Investigate students with additional needs in the classroom, and those that may be on behaviour plans, have individual learning plans, or that may participate in alternative programs that may affect the structure of the day; 'Who do I need to keep an eye on today?'

Start of Day:

- Set expectations or give initial instructions to students before they enter the classroom space. This helps to create the sense that the classroom is a privileged space, where positive behaviors are expected from the get-go.
- Learning names as soon as possible will help you to give clear instruction, recognize individuals for positive behaviors, and to create a sense of familiarity quickly. A great ice-breaker involves students standing in a circle, then one at a time they say their name and an adjective they'd use to describe themselves that begins with the first letter of their first name. They can even assign a sound or an action to their name and adjective. The rest of the class repeats this back to the student before moving on to the next person. This is something fun and light hearted that you can refer to throughout the day.
- Speak to the class about their existing class rules or expectations. Write some of these on the board as a reminder, if they're not already visible in the classroom. If there aren't already rules or expectations, discuss with the class what will be implemented during the time that you're working with them. Rather than describing them as 'rules', ask the class, 'what are some of the things we care about in this classroom?'. Taking their suggestions will allow you to use their vocabulary for reminders if you start to notice individuals steering off course. E.g. 'We care about respect'...'Kate, are you showing that you care about respect by interrupting Jim while he gives his answer?'
- Share some things about you to help build rapport and respect, and to allow the students to see that you're human so that they can empathize with you. You can even try to connect personal examples to the content to reinforce its 'real world' relevance to students.

Preventative Strategies

Throughout the Day:

- Try to incorporate dynamic/physical activities or brain breaks throughout the day to help re-energize the class and gauge their moods to best decide subsequent plans and activities. A calm and engaged class is more important than completing 100% of the planned work left.



Give brain breaks!

Be in tune with your class and aware of when they need a short break. Set a clear expectation for how long the break will be and what they are to do with the time.

Ideas

- Mandala colouring
- Brain teaser or puzzle (i.e. Sudoku)
- Walk & Talk
- Friend connect
- Movement breaks
- Mindfulness moments

- Remember to smile, check in with individuals, and to circulate the classroom to build rapport with students and to catch minor misbehaviors early. Use proximity to make yourself accessible and approachable; disengagement is often caused by students not understanding instructions or content, and placing yourself in different areas of the classroom throughout lessons helps you to connect with individuals that may be reluctant to ask for help.
- Make learning objectives and goals visible throughout the day and break tasks into smaller chunks to support students with different levels of capability. This helps to keep students accountable and also helps to outline to the class your thought processes; how you imagine the work being completed, what end result they're aiming for, and to show that you're as on top of things just as their regular teacher would be.

Intervention Advice – Minor Incidents

Subtle Cues:

- Stand within close proximity to students that are starting to present undesirable behaviours as a way of indicating that you're monitoring their behaviour. This gives them the opportunity to address the behaviour themselves before you need to intervene further. Proximity also helps you to make yourself more accessible and available to students who may be disruptive or disengaged due to them being unsure of instructions or content. For younger students, consider spending a small amount of time sitting with each table group and working alongside them – this enables collaboration and can be a great equalizing gesture!
- Use non-verbal cues to redirect behaviour without drawing attention to it, such as a hand raised in the air, or a signal for a student to stop or move elsewhere.

When speaking to the student about the behaviour...

- Lead with questions, not accusations. Try to engage the conversation by giving the student the opportunity to express their side of the story and how they were feeling in a situation. Telling the student what you thought they did right off the bat can lead to hostility and can cause the student to feel like assumptions are always being made about them – which can sometimes only encourage repeated behaviours! Instead of 'you don't seem interested in the work', try 'Why haven't you started your worksheet yet?'
- Focus on action and situation, rather than the person, i.e. rather than, 'you're very rude', try, 'yelling while someone else is trying to speak is rude'. Try to isolate the particular undesired behaviours with the student and reflect on the cause and impact of the behaviours – the student might not even be aware that they're demonstrating the behaviour in the first place, let alone the affect it's having on the feelings or learning of others.



Intervention Advice – Minor Incidents



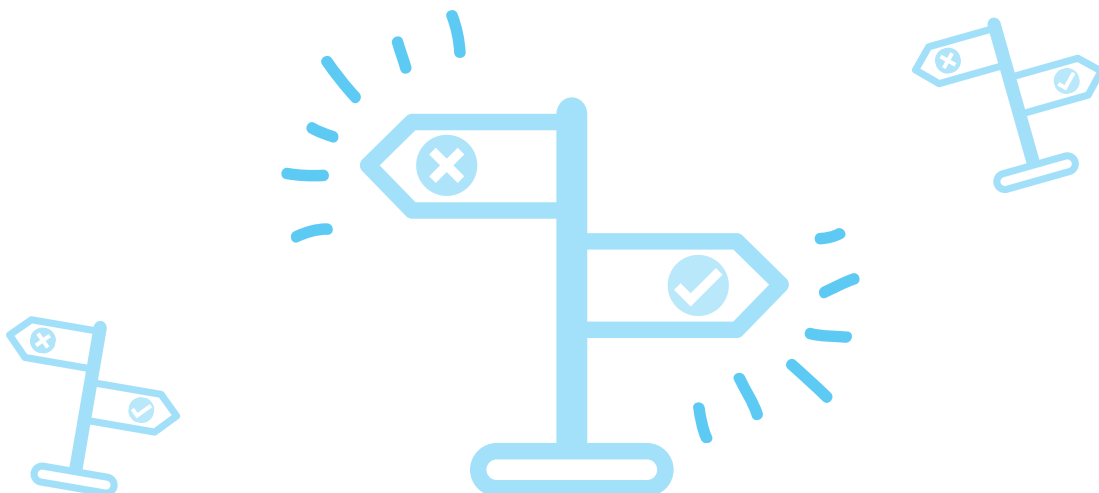
When speaking to the student about the behaviour...

- Try to keep your cool and avoid raising your voice. This can only serve to encourage continued misbehaviors and simultaneously disrupt the larger group, causing more widespread disengagement. Speaking more loudly than the class can sometimes only cause them to try and speak more loudly again! Remember that you can highlight a behavior in the moment and then let the student know that you'll be speaking about it at another time, giving you the opportunity to refocus if you've found that the situation has caused you to feel agitated
- Use inclusive language to help reinforce that the expectations you're enforcing are expected of all members of the class community; 'you need to be more respectful' becomes, 'we all need to be more respectful'.
- Use the students' vocabulary; this can come from comments the students make in the classroom, rules or guides displayed in the classroom, or school-wide programs and policies. This will help students to better understand your instructions and can act as a good prompt for students that may struggle to articulate their feelings or explain their actions. This will also help reinforce that your expectations are consistent with their usual classroom teachers. Incorporating names of other staff members that oversee the students' behavior, such as the year level leader, welfare coordinator, or leadership team, can also help to demonstrate to students your knowledge of the school's processes for managing behaviors.
- Be prepared for changing 'truths', and bargaining. Be patient and give the student the opportunity to explain their perspective without judgement, but also be consistent and follow through with the necessary consequences, so that you are reinforcing process for all students in the class.

Intervention Advice – Minor Incidents

Redirect to the positive:

- When intervening behaviors, try to be as direct and as efficient as possible. Try to avoid drawing out conversations, as a prompt and deliberate conversation is going to minimize entertaining attention-seeking behaviors, avoid hostility and arguments, decrease the chances of any misinterpretation, and ultimately help to preserve your relationship with the student
- Individually acknowledge when students are presenting positive behavior – remember that this can look different for each student depending on their capability and level of engagement. Try to highlight when you see students doing their 'best', especially when it's following an intervention you've had to put in place. Directly remove consequences once you see the new desired behavior to help students develop an association.
- Pick your battles; classes can't be perfect 100% of the time, or sometimes be able to deliver on your expectations because of larger incidents, moods, energy levels etc...take a moment to consider what you need to prioritize to have the most benefit to student learning, e.g. how much does it matter for this activity that the class works silently? A calm and safe classroom is more important than progressing with every learning objective.



Intervention Advice – Major Incidents

Safety first:

- Never put yourself in any situation where you feel unsafe. Vocalize to the student when their behavior is putting you and others into an unsafe position; physically, mentally, emotionally.
- Seek help as soon as possible. Even if you're unsure how much the situation will escalate, or how quickly, seek assistance from other staff at the school. If you're not able to leave the room yourself, send another student from the class. The student involved in the incident may demonstrate this behavior occasionally, and so there may be a behavior plan already put in place for them specifically, where particular staff members are involved in de-escalating incidents, so it's best to reach out for their help to resolve things as effectively as possible. Involving other staff is also vital to ensure effective documentation, follow up, and resolution of incidents. It's best to speak with school leadership following the incident, even if you do resolve it independently.
- If the student won't comply with your instructions, or if the incident intensifies, consider removing the rest of the students out of that space, rather than trying to remove or calm the individual student. Depending on their state at the time, they might not be able to manage your instructions.



Intervention Advice – Major Incidents

Crisis Intervention:

When a person is distressed, they reach a **peak level of emotional response (crisis)** that can make it challenging, and sometimes even impossible to process a situation and their own actions. This is an important factor to consider when intervening in a major incident, especially when working to deescalate a situation with a young person, who is still developing their cognitive faculties for processing their emotions. Some important things to keep in mind when engaging with the student:

- Keep explanations or **instructions to a minimum**, but repeat if you the student doesn't acknowledge them, e.g. 'please step away from the chair'
- Keep your **voice calm and steady**. Let the student know that you want to help them and won't leave their side.
- Give the student time to think and to answer. The priority needs to be to deescalate or resolve the incident in the best way, not the quickest way. **Don't rush the student** to react, answer, or apologize, when they're in crisis. Even once the student has calmed down, they will still need time to recover, decompress, and reflect, so propose with them when, where, and how you'll follow up with them.
- Avoid being judgmental, and **do not discuss consequences at this stage**. This will only serve to heighten the student further, create distance between you, and it's also likely that the student cannot take in what you're saying.
- Try to focus on **one step at a time**, e.g. 'I can hear that you're angry, but I want to keep the both of us safe, and so need you to step away from the chair'. The student may be feeling overwhelmed and might be moving through a lot of internal and external dialogue and getting ahead of themselves, which may cause them to feel even worse.
- Don't battle with the student. **The student may behave in an antagonistic way** in order to try to regain a sense of power or control in the situation. Don't entertain any comments that intend to insult or provoke you, as this will only damage your relationship and serve as negative modelling to any other students that are observing the situation. Let the student know, 'I'm not interested in speaking about that' and direct the conversation back to your instruction or speaking about the student's feelings or headspace.
- **Create space**. Due to their overwhelming emotional state, some students may feel claustrophobic in the physical space. Avoid approaching the student too quickly if you sense that they don't want you too close. This may cause them to feel attacked, which could then cause an intense reaction or put you in an unsafe situation.
- If the student flees, or if you have had to distance yourself in the event that you feel unsafe, **make sure that you can still see the student**.

Restraint:

Physically restraining a student in response to an incident **should be avoided**, unless other avenues to prevent imminent threat of physical harm or danger to self or others have been exhausted. For more information about restraint, see [guidelines](#) from the Victorian Government Department of Education and Training.

Behavioural Theories to Consider

Restorative Practice/Justice

Focuses on a structured conversation that supports students to reflect upon their feelings and actions and guides a solution that is collaboratively build, and constructive. This allows you to approach an intervention with an empathetic and open mind, while helping to build the emotional intelligence of the student through their ability to recognize the cause and effect of their behaviour.



An example 'script' for a teacher & student restorative conversation, lead by the teacher:

- 1** What happened?
- 2** What were you thinking/feeling at the time?
- 3** What have you thought about/felt since then?
- 4** What impact has your behaviour had; on yourself, on other people, on the environment, property etc...?
- 5** What can you do to make things right?

Empathy: The Heart of Difficult Conversations - Michelle Stowe - TED x Tallaght



Michelle Stowe is a restorative practitioner, trainer and consultant. She is passionate about creating well-being and happiness in the workplace; and particularly interested in re-culturing schools and cultivating a restorative paradigm shift that honours community and connection.

Behavioural Theories to Consider

Choice Theory

The practice of recognizing that every behaviour occurs as the result of the unmet needs theorized by psychologist William Glasser; survival, love/belonging, freedom, fun, and power/empowerment. Interventions involve supporting the student to recognize their ability to control their behaviour and to choose the appropriate actions to help meet their needs.



1 Observe

Identify which of the five needs the student is trying to meet with the inappropriate behaviour.

2 Explain

Explain to the student that their current behaviour will not achieve the desired outcome and suggest an alternative. Ask the student if they have a different method they would like to try.

3 Implement

Have the student try the new appropriate behaviour in order for the need to be met.

4 Choice [if required]

If the student refuses to try a positive behaviour offer a clear choice. You can do option A or you can do option B.

5 No excuses [when required]

Do not accept excuses for irresponsible behaviour. Point out that they had a choice and made the wrong one.

Some attributes of a 'Choice Theory' classroom

Teacher as 'manager' - rather than using a punishment or reward system to get the desired results the teacher needs to develop a positive relationship with the students so they can manage them without a sense of coercion.

The focus is quality - the students are expected to demonstrate deep learning through application of what they have learnt.

Self-evaluation - by regularly self-evaluating the students take more ownership over their learning. The goal is for them to be skilled decision makers who are invested and actively involved in their education.

Behavioural Theories to Consider

Social Stories

The creation of a visual tool that depicts a student demonstrating a desired behavior. Mapping this out with the student helps to break certain tasks down into smaller parts and allows for tracking of thought and emotional processes through unfamiliar or troublesome scenarios.



Using social stories

Social stories are a helpful tool, the creation and use of them can be very versatile.



Preventative

Use a previously created story about a particular situation to conference with a student prior to that situation which may have previously triggered certain reactions.



Remedial

Use a social story as a reminder about the desired behaviours in that given situation and to assist the student in reflecting on any repeated behaviours and considering the effect it can have on others.

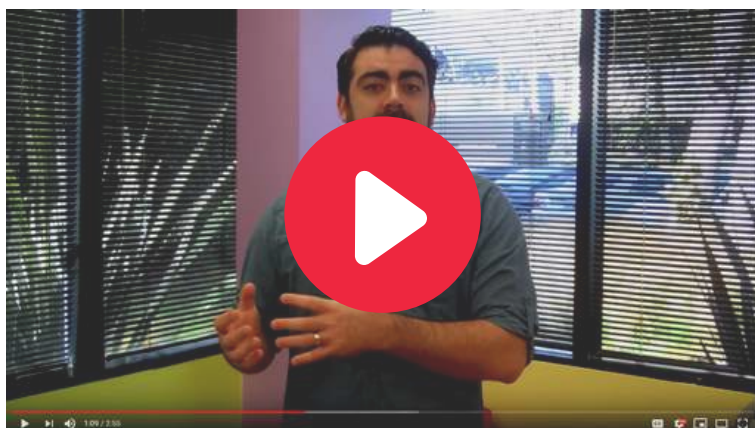


Collaborative

Create a story with a student to help debrief following an incident.

Create a story with a student to help them learn about a new situation and the expected behaviour.

What Are Social Stories?



In this video Rob explains what Social Stories are and how to best use them to support your child with autism.

Behavioural Theories to Consider

RULER Approach

An integrated approach to academic learning and the building of social and emotional intelligence. The approach works as a reflective tool for students post-incident, and also positions the teacher to recognize the mood of their classroom and to adjust learning plans accordingly.



These steps can be used both as a framework for self-exploration and as a tool for reflecting on a situation and identifying sources of conflict and misunderstanding. Whatever the application the aim is to develop the students' emotional intelligence and self-awareness.

- R** **Recognise** the emotion being presented by self or other
- U** **Understand** what is causing the emotion and possible consequences
- L** **Label** emotions accurately using well-developed emotional vocabulary
- E** **Express** emotions appropriately
- R** **Regulate** or manage emotions effectively

The RULER approach is supported by various tools which includes using a mood meter (see below).



A META moment is another tool the students can use under the RULER approach. This is when the student takes time to stop and think before acting when they are experiencing a strong emotion.



Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence:
Mood Meter Overview

Post-Intervention Advice

Documentation

At the end of the lesson, or at end of day, take the time to document detailed notes to allow for the best hand over for the teacher upon their return to school. This may be via email, using Compass or the school intranet, or using one of our templates:

anzuk.education

Feedback Form

School Name..... Date.....
 Teacher Name.....
 Primary or Secondary Grade / Area Covered.....

General comments (lessons implemented etc / progress of students)

Exemplary students

Behavioural concerns

Actions taken to deal with behavioural issues / comments

Modifications made to the lesson (if any)

Did you relieve any other areas? Any notes

- Best practice involves mentioning involved students by name and detailing the specific behaviour and course of action taken, including names of other staff members involved in any interventions. It's also important to highlight if the student responded positively or made progress when you intervened with the behaviour, to ensure that unnecessary consequences can be avoided. It can also be helpful to recommend a subsequent course of action for the teacher to follow up with, especially if you implemented part of a strategy that you were unable to see through due to your limited time with them.
- Make sure that any incidents related to suspected or witnessed child safety issues are reported to your school contact or to leadership. You may be required to complete additional documentation processes, such as an Incident Report or Mandatory Report. Ensure you follow the school's recommended course of action to ensure an effective resolution and to also uphold your duty of care and legal responsibilities.

Post-Intervention Advice

School Debrief

- As you're approaching the end of the lesson, or end of the day, take the opportunity with the students to reflect. It's not only important to discuss the learning objectives or the progress of the planning left by their teacher, but also to chat about successes, concerns, or take-aways with regards to the behaviours observed in the classroom. If it has been a challenging experience behaviour-wise, try to end the day on a positive note. It can also be a great exercise to ask the students for their feedback about the day that you can then use for subsequent time you have with that group or to apply to your practice more generally.
- Take some time at the end of your day to debrief with your contact person at the school about your experiences during your time with them. Depending on the school's processes, structures, and even how often they utilize CRTs, they may have differing understandings of how to work most effectively with you as a CRT. It's important to approach these conversations calmly, positively, and constructively, especially if your day didn't go 100% as you expected. Bring solutions to the conversation with the intention that the feedback will positively impact yourself, other CRTs, and ultimately the experiences of the students. If you experienced challenges during the day and then take a subsequent placement at the same school, take the opportunity to put some of your reflections into place and have a fresh start when next in the classroom.
- When reflecting on your day with the school, it's also good to ask additional questions and acknowledge any mistakes that you may have made throughout the day. The school will likely be understanding of your situation as a CRT and, as your contact is likely a teacher themselves, will be able to relate to and even offer you advice to assist your experiences. Working to discuss these, rather than ignoring them, will leave a positive impression with schools and will help you to uphold your professional integrity and reputation.

Personal Debrief

- Following your other debriefing strategies, it can be great to bring everything together and consolidate your ideas through personal reflection. Consider creating voice recordings, mind maps, drawings, or dot-point or stream of consciousness writing to note successes, challenges, and questions that arose during your day around your classroom management.
- Speak with a fellow teacher, mentor, consultant, friend, or family member about your experiences. It can help to put things into perspective to process your ideas aloud and explore different forms of advice, even if the person you're speaking to doesn't have an education background

Self-Care & Wellbeing

- When a staff member is away, a school is in a state of instability one way or another, which can add additional pressures to our teaching and classroom management.
- If you experience challenging behaviours in the classroom, it's important not to take any of the behaviours personally; there are so many things inside and outside of school that may affect a student's mood, feelings, and actions. Even a simple change in routine can cause shifts in a person's behaviour.
- Remember, the most important thing is to create a classroom that is as calm, safe, and engaged as possible – which can look different from one class to the next. If you enter a classroom that's a bit harder to manage, work through your strategies, seek support, and document the result. You can't change the world in a day.
- It's OK to not get everything right – embrace the opportunity to learn from the experience. Take the opportunity as a CRT to experiment with different strategies to help you to hone in on what works well with your personality and teaching approaches, as well as the students that you work with.
- Take time for yourself each day to reflect on, and then separate yourself from, your 'teacher mindset'. Consider transition activities after your teaching day to help you to maintain a positive mindset, such as having a mindful moment, or going to the gym on the way home from school.
- The Department offers additional support to help ensure the wellbeing of educators in Victoria:

Employee Assistance Program (EAP)



Enhancing your wellbeing

<p>What does the EAP mean for you?</p> <p>Your Employee Assistance Program allows you to feel comfortable knowing that you can confidentially discuss any work or personal issues that are an inevitable part of life.</p> <p>What the EAP assists you with?</p> <p>Optum™ will help you to identify, explore and manage any issues impacting your life, which can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conflict and communication • Maximising performance • Depression, anxiety and stress • Relationship and marital problems • Children or family member concerns • Grief and bereavement • Elder care issues • Addictions • Career path issues • Retirement • Work life balance • Work stress 	<p>What you need to know...</p> <p>Where does counselling take place?</p> <p>It's up to you! We can provide counselling services over the phone or off-site face to face at one of our national locations.</p> <p>Who are the counsellors?</p> <p>All Optum counsellors are highly professional qualified psychologists and social workers, with peak industry body accreditation and vast experience.</p>	<p>Manager Assist Service</p> <p>A dedicated Manager Assist telephone advisory service which provides management advice and support to principals and managers.</p> <p>Make an appointment Australia (24/7)</p> <p style="font-size: 1.2em; font-weight: bold;">1300 361 008</p> 
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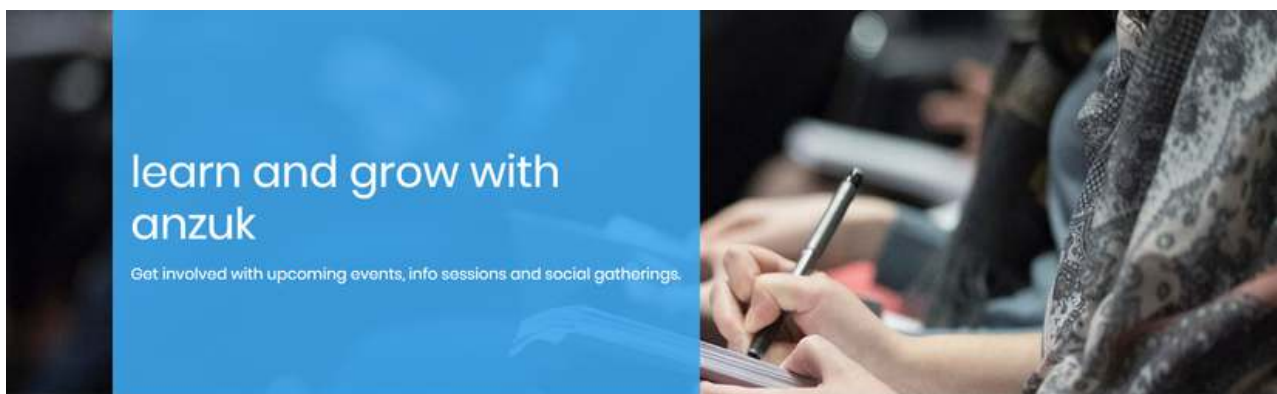

Education and Training

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Further Professional Development

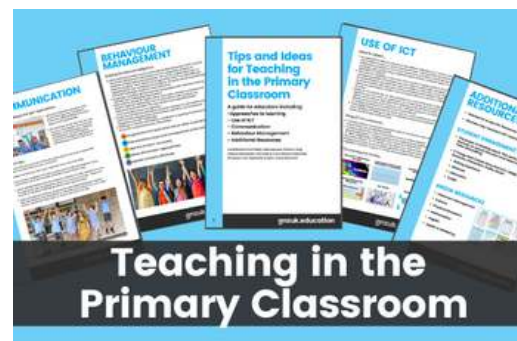
Check out additional professional development opportunities:

<https://anzuk.education/au/events>



Did you have something else in mind? The professional development that we source and create is in response to requests from anzuk educators, so we're always interested in hearing your suggestions so that we can best support you throughout your teaching journey. Let us know about the kinds of professional development you'd like to participate in: au@anzuk.education

Other anzuk resources:



Keep in touch with us....

anzuk.education

