

# “Oh behave”... Reflecting teachers’ behaviour management practices to teachers

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## **Abstract**

TNQTAFE is conducting an action research project aimed at improving pedagogical practice, using an approach known as ‘classroom profiling’. This approach has been widely used and well documented in primary and secondary schools in Queensland during the past six years.

Classroom profiling is a process whereby a trained observer makes detailed observations of teacher-student interactions and provides constructive feedback to the teacher. This is done in a confidential, supportive and non-judgmental manner, on invitation by the teacher. A coaching methodology is employed based on principles of behaviour management and effective communication.

Data on observable behaviours has been collated during the time the program has been in place in Queensland schools, and although in the very early stages, data is now being collated in TAFE. While this data is very preliminary, it and anecdotal observations make for some very interesting comparisons with the school-based information.

The classroom profiling program will undergo some significant changes in the TAFE system, but promises to be a powerful tool for improving the professionalism of teachers, especially with forthcoming changes as a result of the Queensland government policy initiative ‘Education and Training Reforms for the Future’, which is likely to greatly increase the number of younger people attending TAFE.

This paper firstly outlines the classroom profiling program as it has developed in the schools sector during the past six years and presents a brief summary of the relevant quantitative and qualitative data. We then discuss how the program is being adapted for the TAFE context and the rationale for its implementation. Next we present the preliminary findings from the data and outcomes to date from the action research. Finally we discuss the implications for future practice and relevance for other VET organisations and practitioners.

## **Introduction**

Behaviour management is not commonly associated with VET teaching, which takes place in a post-compulsory education environment. However, one factor is bringing the issue more towards the foreground, in Queensland at least. Legislation has recently been passed in State Parliament, making it compulsory for young people to “learn or earn” to the age of 17. This is part of the Queensland Government policy known as ‘Education and Training Reforms for the Future’ (see <http://education.qld.gov.au/etrf/whitepaper/>), which is likely to greatly increase the number of young people enrolling at TAFE colleges from the date of full implementation in 2006. It is also raising the need for greater collaboration and

partnerships between the VET sector and the Education sector (managed under two separate departments in Queensland). The pilot program described in this paper is a local, grassroots example of such a partnership.

A tool to assist in the development of a supportive school environment has been in widespread use in primary and secondary schools in north Queensland for the past six years. The tool, known as ‘classroom profiling’, was first developed by Mark Davidson, Education Queensland’s Senior Project Officer for the Cairns and Cape District, in 1996. The process involves a trained ‘profiler’ observing a teacher and providing feedback. This is done in a confidential, non-judgmental manner, on invitation by the teacher. Well-researched theory and practice of behaviour management are the foundations of the process.

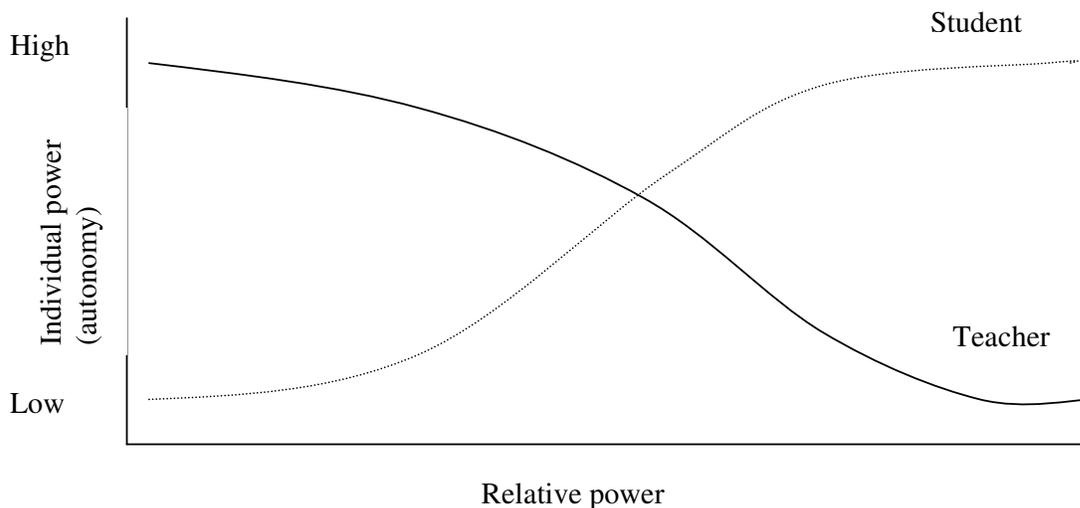
Recently Tropical North Queensland TAFE has begun to implement the process of ‘classroom profiling’. Naturally it has undergone (and will continue to undergo) some changes due to the very different context in which it is taking place. This paper firstly describes the ‘classroom profiling’ process and its rationale, then discusses the implementation and findings to date in the TAFE context.

### The ‘classroom profiling’ program

#### *Behaviour management theories*

Porter (2000) outlines a range of approaches to behaviour management and school discipline and notes that these all differ in their philosophical assumptions regarding the nature of childhood, the conditions necessary for learning to occur, the purpose of discipline, the reasons for disruptive behaviour, and the roles and status accorded to teachers and to students. According to Porter, different approaches to school discipline have different goals, including *order, compliance, self-discipline, emotional regulation, cooperation* and *integrity*. There is not space here to outline the theories but we can summarise them as ranging on a continuum from autocratic to ‘laissez-faire’ as shown in the following figure:

Figure 1 Adapted from Porter 2000:11



<b>Autocratic</b>	<b>Authoritarian</b>	<b>Authoritative/ Democratic</b>	<b>Liberal</b>	<b>Laissez-faire</b>
*Dobson	* Limit-setting * Applied behaviour analysis * Cognitive behaviourism * Neo-Adlerian theory	* Humanism * Choice theory * Systems theory		* Neill

Porter (2000:14) suggests that there is little empirical evidence for the superiority of any of the theories and indeed “no consensus on how to define effectiveness”. However there are other criteria teachers can use to evaluate the theories and make an informed choice. Porter argues that when considering the effectiveness of each theory one should question “effective at what?” Teachers should examine the goals of each approach and also consider comprehensiveness, practical requirements, educational value and ethics when evaluating theories.

#### *The classroom profiling system*

The classroom profiling system as developed by Mark Davidson takes as its basic premise the principle that teachers need to focus on changing their own behaviour, not the behaviour of the students. The foundation of the program is the “ten micro-skills” for managing behaviour, which are teacher strategies adapted from Glasser (1990), Richmond (1995), Rogers (1995), Mark’s own experience as an educator, and further developed and refined through discussions with trained profilers at annual ‘refresher’ courses. The ten micro-skills and their primary purposes are:

1. **Establishing expectations** – to clearly articulate and demonstrate the boundaries of pro-social behaviour
2. **Giving instructions** – to give a clear direction about what to do
- 2b) **Verbal and non-verbal redirections** – to redirect student behaviour using positive non-confrontational methods
3. **Waiting and scanning** – to wait 5-10 seconds after giving an instruction, giving students time to process the direction
4. **Cuing with acknowledgment** – to acknowledge students’ on-task behaviour with the intention of prompting another to follow suit
5. **Body language encouraging** – to intentionally use your body language to encourage students to remain on task
6. **Descriptive encouraging** – to encourage students to become more aware of their competence by commenting on their behaviour
7. **Selective attending** – to intentionally give minimal attention to off-task behaviour
8. **Giving choices** – to respectfully confront the student who is disrupting others with the available choices and their natural consequences
9. **Following through** – resolute, planned action in the face of on-going disruptive behaviour that is seriously disturbing the learning environment

10. **Defusing** – to provide an opportunity for people who have participated in, or witnessed, a potentially traumatic classroom or playground event to talk it through

### *The profiling system in schools*

Classroom profiling has been in use in northern Queensland education districts since 1996. Currently there are over 156 trained profilers using their skills across 21 school districts. Profilers undertake an intensive course of training with Mark Davidson. The program is based around observations of a teacher interacting with students. After each observation, the teacher is able to read through the data collected and discuss the results with the profiler. The emphasis is on self-reflection, the job of the profiler being to lead the teacher to recognise positive aspects and to reflect on areas of concern. Ideally the program is implemented as a whole of school approach. Data are collated, enabling the school to evaluate the overall strategies of the school while maintaining total confidentiality. The school is given a written report and through discussions, workshops and reflection sessions with teachers and administration, the school is able to effectively review its behaviour management policy and implement initiatives as necessary.

Generally the procedure is the school invites the profiler to workshop the staff in the micro-skills as described above. The profiler discusses the concept of profiling with the staff and offers the opportunity for them to review their current practice without being judged and knowing that the results remain totally confidential. A teacher volunteers a period of time (usually about 40 minutes) for the profiler to observe. The profiler places himself or herself out of the way in the room (or other setting) but in a position to observe the teacher and students all the time. The profiler uses formatted observation sheets (see Appendices A and B) to record the frequency of use of a list of teacher behaviour management strategies, student behaviours, student entry and exit routines, any behavioural communication strategies employed, and the sequencing techniques used in the lesson. At the end of the agreed time span the profiler leaves with as little disruption as possible and makes a copy of the collected data. The original recording sheets are sealed in an envelope and made available for the teacher as soon as possible. The profiler and teacher meet at a prearranged time, preferably not immediately after, but no more than a day later than, the lesson. This gives the teacher time to read the observation sheets and to reflect on the lesson.

On average the profiler spends about 20 minutes with the teacher discussing the data recorded. The profiler may also wish to discuss how the teacher's results compare to those in 'like schools' on an individual basis. If the whole school is being profiled, this will be fed back to the whole school in the collated results. The profiler leads the discussion and would usually begin by asking, "How were the students in that lesson compared to other times?" The aim is to find out if the profiler's presence had a perceived impact upon behaviour. The profiler then attempts to get the teacher to explore the information gathered using questioning techniques such as "Is there anything that caught your eye?", "Would you like explanation on anything?" The aim is to explain the sheets and highlight any data that is important for the teacher but the profiler must remain objective. Maintaining this perspective allows the profiler to support the teacher by stating that "this is a snapshot and may not be what normally happens" or "it must be remembered that you (the teacher) are the expert in relation to

the students in the class and what will and will not work” etc. The profiler must remain data driven. The underlying principle is that if a teacher is going to change something they currently do they must first recognise what they are currently doing.

### *Collation of data*

At the completion of the observation the profiler collates the data, which allows comparison across a school and between schools. Information recorded on the observation sheets is tallied using an Excel spreadsheet. Lessons are given a code so any individual lesson can be tracked back, without identifying the teacher. Formulas are written into the spreadsheet providing automatic calculation of averages for instances of positive feedback (instance per number of minutes), frequency of instances of particular teacher strategies, use of body language, verbal redirections, student disruptive behaviour and so on. This information can then be fed back to the school to compare with like schools and to track changes over time. The information has been collated by profiling developer/trainer Mark Davidson during the time the system has been in operation in schools, through profilers sending back information from their schools as it is collated. The information is broken down to show averages for different categories of schools, eg high schools, primary schools, predominantly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander schools and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander schools. The collated data shows that verbal redirections are given far more frequently than any other form of behaviour management strategy.

## **Implementation in TAFE**

### *Background*

In August 2003 Mark Davidson was invited to run a behaviour management skills workshop at Tropical North Queensland TAFE. Staff attended the in-service and 30 feedback sheets were returned. Participants were asked to rate the session from 1 (very poor) to 5 (excellent).

The overall results were as follows:

Presentation:	Overall rate 4.9
Usefulness:	Overall rate 4.8

Senior management at TNQT felt that in order for the session to have maximum benefit, it would need to be followed up with an implementation program. Martha Goldman was selected to undertake training as a profiler. A space was found in a training session being run at the Cairns Catholic Education Diocese. Training ran for two weeks, with a break between the two weeks during which time trainees were required to undertake a minimum of five profiling sessions, one in conjunction with Mark for quality control purposes.

Training during the first week involved intensive workshopping in the ten micro-skills, familiarisation with the observation sheets, and intensive practice in recording observations using videotapes of actual classroom lessons. The second week (held three weeks after the end of the first) involved discussion and reflections on the experiences of the trainee profilers, further practice in recording observations,

instruction and practice in communication skills and techniques for reflection sessions, and training in the techniques used for collating data.

*Behaviour management issues in TAFE*

An informal survey conducted by email showed that staff members are concerned with the following types of student behaviour issues:

- lateness
- losing class materials
- coming to class with a hangover
- not engaging in lessons
- temper tantrums
- various disabilities – learning, physical, psychiatric
- interpersonal conflicts between class members
- particular students dominating class discussions
- disrupting class by interrupting with questions not related to the topic
- students not “carrying their weight” in group assessments

Behaviour issues are by no means confined to younger students. One teacher complained that a student “went off her brain” on a field trip “with the justification that ‘she is an adult’ and ‘she has rights’, along the lines that as an adult her knowledge and abilities are equal to / better than [the teacher’s]”. Another teacher described a mature age student in a literacy classroom who “literally would curl up in a ball and would say ‘confidential’ to any questions asked”. Concerns with student behaviour are not restricted to teaching staff. The facilities department responded with the statement “We have too many to tell [...] from paint sniffer to flasher in the library”.

*Observations in TAFE*

Six profiling sessions have been conducted at Tropical North Queensland TAFE to date. Subject areas were:

- Tourism and Hospitality – communication skills and Food & Beverage service
- Trades – plumbing, second year and fourth year apprentice training
- Information Technology – web design

Settings included standard classroom, training restaurant, computer laboratory and workshop.

The information recorded on the **lesson flow sheet** (Appendix A) and the **frequency sheet** (Appendix B) is collated into spreadsheets which tally all occurrences and work out averages. Here is a summary of that information:

	Total	Average
Number of students	58	10
Length of observation	281 minutes	47 minutes
Instances of positive feedback by teacher – individual	19	
Instance of positive feedback by teacher – whole class	15	
Average instances of positive feedback		1 instance

		every 8 minutes
<b>Positive supportive strategies:</b>		
Cuing with parallel acknowledgment	2	
Description of reality	0	
Descriptive encouragement	2	
(the above 3 are tallied together)		1 instance every 70 minutes
Peripheral vision while working	3	1 instance every 94 minutes
Other eg. move student in room, indicate post-lesson discussion etc (as per frequency sheet)	0	
<b>Body language</b> eg. non-verbal redirection, pause in talk etc (as per frequency sheet)	0	
<b>Verbal redirections</b>	6	1 instance every 47 minutes
<b>Give choice; follow-through; time-out</b>	0	
<b>Inappropriate teacher strategies</b>	0	
<b>Student behaviours:</b>		
<b>Verbal aggression</b>	0	
<b>Disruptive behaviours:</b>		In total 1 instance every 28 minutes
Calling out to teacher	1	
Gesturing inappropriately	5	
Talking while teacher is talking	4	

The collated data for the lesson flow sheet shows that in 33% of instances students enter the learning space under teacher direction, with 67% entering in their own time. All instances were observed to be routine, ie non-disruptive. 15 of the total of 58 students arrived late. Some form of teacher greeting of students occurred in 67% of cases. In 69% of cases students were on task within 1-3 minutes; 23% within 3-5 minutes and 8% in 10 or more minutes. The average time for a change from first to second activity was 24.3 minutes. In all instances students appeared to be “working from routine”, ie the change from one activity to another was smooth. In all instances teachers used a calm, firm, friendly, measured tone of voice. 50% of lessons were mainly teacher-directed, which usually means there is little teacher movement about the room. In all other instances, teacher movement was high. Teacher initiated movement to students constituted 73% of movements, with 27% student initiated. Rules governing behaviour appeared to be clear in all lessons observed.

### Summary and conclusions

Obviously the sample to date is far too small to draw any wide-ranging conclusions. There were no serious examples of disruptive student behaviour observed, although some of the anecdotal evidence mentioned earlier indicates that it does occur. Teachers displayed competence and a positive approach to managing student

behaviour, but a fairly limited range of strategies. It is hoped that further workshops in use of the micro-skills might extend the range of strategies teachers employ. It is also hoped that further observations will provide a much richer source of data, and that implementation of the classroom profiling system in TAFE will build a culture that actively encourages development of teaching skills.

Plans for TAFE in 2004 are to:

- Change the name in TAFE from “profiling” to TROPIC (Teachers Reflecting On Practices In Classrooms)
- Conduct at least one observation and reflection session per week
- Continue to refine the observation sheets to capture information relevant to the VET context
- Continue collecting and collating data
- Develop a community of practice within the Institute that will take an action research approach to the data to effect positive change in teaching practices
- Conduct regular workshops within faculties on using the micro-skills
- Train two more profilers (or TROPIC leaders)
- Develop resources for TAFE training (eg videos of TAFE lessons for observation practice)
- Train a trainer

It is hoped that a TAFE employee can be trained as a trainer in the profiling system, to enable it to spread beyond Tropical North Queensland TAFE, to other TAFE institutes and VET providers.

## References

Education and Training Reforms for the Future, Queensland Government policy website, <http://education.qld.gov.au/etr/f/whitepaper>

Glasser, W. 1990, *The Quality School: Managing Students without Coercion*, Harper Collins, New York

Porter, L. 2000, *Student Behaviour Theory and Practice for Teachers*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Allen & Unwin Pty Ltd, Australia

Richmond, C. 1996, *Behaviour Management Skill Training Handbook*, Queensland Department of Education, Australia

Rogers, B. 1995, *Behaviour Management: A whole-school approach*, Ashton Scholastic, Australia

<b>Appendix A: Lesson Flow sheet</b>	
Lesson : _____ M No. students: F _____ Total _____	Teacher : _____ Subject : _____ Date : _____ Time : _____
student entry	teacher instruction in own time routine Y / N
late students Y / N	Response : Positive student outcome / Negative student outcome No Response : Positive student outcome / Negative student outcome
greeting	yes / no friendly / relaxed whole group / individual
Instruction Time	<b>concepts/instructions clear</b>
begin _____ on task _____	1-3 min 3-5 min 5-10 min 10+ min Y / N
begin _____ on task _____	1-3 min 3-5 min 5-10 min 10+ min Y / N
begin _____ on task _____	1-3 min 3-5 min 5-10 min 10+ min Y / N
	comment :
when change during session occurred	0 5 10 15 20 25 30 35 40 45 50 55 60 65 70 75 80
strategies used for change	previous lesson reviewed Y / N Y / N Y / N
	students working from routine Y / N Y / N Y / N
	use of time encouragers Y / N Y / N Y / N
	use of other encourager Y / N Y / N Y / N
behavioural communication techniques	instructions followed questioning for understanding reflection active listening
use of voice / tone	calm firm friendly measured
enter secondary behaviour	yes / no comments
class discussion	at end of lesson / period
post lesson discussions for behaviour	re : curriculum / behaviour / neither yes / no / unnecessary
move about to students working individually or in groups	<b>Teacher Initiated</b>
	<b>Student Initiated</b>
<b>MALE</b>	
<b>FEMALE</b>	
<b>GROUP</b>	
teacher movement about the room	low _____ medium _____ high _____
use of assistants	engaged purposefully low _____ medium _____ high
assistants move about to students	frequency :
rules clear	yes / no
rules referred to	yes / no / unnecessary
student exit during lesson	teacher instruction in own time routine Y / N
student exit end of lesson	teacher instruction in own time routine Y / N
parting formalities	yes / no friendly / relaxed whole group / individual

created by Mark Davidson 1996 updated April 2003 [TAFE version Oct 03]

## Appendix B: Frequency sheet

	No. Students : __M = male F = female Lesson : _____ Date : _____	subject: _____ M = male F = female NAME : _____ TIME : _____
	<b>TEACHER STRATEGIES</b>	<b>FREQUENCY</b>
POSITIVE FEEDBACK	individually (verbal & whole class non-verbal) group	
POSITIVE SUPPORTIVE STRATEGIES	cueing with parallel acknowledgment description of reality descriptive encouraging distraction / diversion indicate post lesson discussion move student in room peripheral vision while working and time occurred tactical ignoring / selective attending varying voice volume / intonation waiting and scanning / take up time when / then or yes, if... statements	
BODY LANGUAGE	non-verbal redirection proximity pause in talk smile to control behaviour non-verbal directional action eg. turn off light	
ORAL REDIRECTION	individual close talk curriculum redirection eg. "Number 1 is.... Mark?" questioning to redirect "what are you doing?" humour to control behaviour call student's name redirection given across room to individual I & we statements oral direction phrase eg "Stop look listen"	
	give choice follow through / consequences applied TIME-OUT in / out / other / room	
	follow through in aroused state give choices but not follow through give choice with negative/threatening tone overlook very inappropriate behaviour put downs raise voice respond with negative/threatening tone sarcasm send to time out without choice you / why statements	
	<b>STUDENT BEHAVIOURS</b>	
verbal aggression	cursing/swearing talking back to teacher teasing threatening	
disruptive	calling out - other calling out-teacher gesturing inappropriately (incl. non verbal teasing)	

<b>behaviour</b>	making noises	
	moving about / getting out of seat	
	talking while the teacher is talking	
<b>positive student behaviours</b>	raise hand to talk or non-verbal action <i>addressed by teacher/tutor</i>	
	non-disruptive questioning	
	move about room without disruption	

**COMMENTS** created by Mark Davidson 1996 updated January 2003 [TAFE version Oct 03]