



Practically Speaking

THE 5R FRAMEWORK: BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS AND MANAGING BEHAVIOUR

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The 5R Framework provides a way for clear understandings and agreed positions concerning behaviour and relationships to be established within the school community. The framework is built through facilitated conversations involving teachers, parents and students. Through these conversations, legitimate benchmarks are established that assist in defining community agreed values, principles and expectations concerning behaviour and relationships within the school.

The ground has been shifting for sometime in schools as to how the behaviour of students is to be managed. As Bill Rogers has pointed out in his book *Behaviour management: A whole school approach*, the language of punishment has been replaced by the language of consequence. The language of consequence itself has been broadened to include such notions as choice being linked to responsible action, relationships as being central to the core teaching and learning functions of a school, and restitution and inclusion as being essential to the support and well-being of all members of the school community. Although the ground may have shifted, what people who work within schools have always known is that in order to grow and sustain a healthy social environment, members of the school community need to be in agreement with how they interact with each other.

This paper reports on a professional development activity that assists a school community to build agreement concerning the expectations and management of behaviour and social interactions. The professional development has been conducted in a number of schools of the Catholic Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle.

The 5Rs

There is nothing especially new about the 5Rs. The basis of the concept lies with Bill

Rogers through his articulation of the first three Rs, *Rights*, *Responsibilities* and *Rules*, in his book *Making a discipline plan*. Some years later, Rogers broadened these to include the fourth R, *Routines* (in his book *Behaviour management: A whole school approach*). How consequences are formed, selected and applied to both appropriate and inappropriate behaviours has also been given lengthy consideration by Rogers. Importantly, Rogers has placed continuing emphasis on the need for repairing and rebuilding when responding to inappropriate and disruptive behaviours.

It is within this context that I have added a fifth R, *Response*, to round out the 5R Framework. I have hoped that this has not been too presumptuous because I am certain that Rogers would have considered such a scenario. In adding the fifth R to the initial set of four, I have, however, been further influenced by my experiences with Restorative Justice. Restorative Justice provides a set of strategies grounded in the use of respectful communication for building healthy relationships within communities. At the heart of this is a consistent emphasis on reparation of the harm caused to relationships by inappropriate behaviour. Over the past five years or so, the Restorative Justice movement has given rise to the use of restorative practices in schools through such organisations as RealJustice Australia and Marist Youth Care. I shall return to the idea of Restorative Justice a little later in this paper, however, I hope for the time being that you will find its connection with the language of consequence and, in particular, the ideas of repair and rebuild to be self-evident.

The first two Rs: Rights and Responsibilities

Rights and responsibilities are considered as being inseparable and are therefore dealt with as “two sides of the one coin”. An example of this is that where we have a right to be heard, we have a corresponding responsibility to listen. Responsibilities can be defined as the obligations that a person holds to oneself, to others and to the community. I have found the following observations concerning rights made by Rogers (1989) to be helpful:

- A right is an expression of what we value. Values are essential to describing who we are, both individually and collectively.
- A right is an expression of how things ought to be.
- Rights gain meaning in the context of responsible behaviour and respectful relationships.
- Rights exist within a context of respect and fair process.
- Respect is at the heart of rights. Respect is made manifest by action. Teachers, for example, are in an ideal position to both model respectful behaviour and to promote and protect the rights and responsibilities of others.

The third R: Routines

Routines are those activities that members of the school community engage in on a regular, ongoing basis. These activities define the school day, week and term. They ensure the smooth running of the whole school, the classroom and the playground. They often need to be modelled and practised until they become a part of the fabric of the school community. Routines often express, for example, well-mannered behaviour, time markers in the day, dealing with litter, ways of moving around the playground, ways of entering and leaving the classroom and waiting at the bus stop, as well as ways of engaging with the broader community. Similar to rules, I have found that the trick is not to express in policy too many routines but enough to promote and ensure good organisation and responsible behaviour.

The fourth R: Rules

Much has been written about rules, their formation and their place within the school community. Very few classrooms or schools do not have sets of rules to be followed. In my experience, however, it is not the lack of rules that presents as a difficulty, rather it is how these rules are interpreted and applied across the school community. During the professional development activity I request participants to consider the following propositions concerning rules:

- Rules, like routines, provide the framework for desirable social behaviour.
- Rules need to be established on an agreed basis and applied within a context of consistency and fairness.
- Rules protect rights and invoke responsibilities (Rogers, 1989).
- Rules make expectations concerning behaviour explicit and set reasonable limits to that behaviour.
- Students will challenge rules, therefore, expectations concerning accountability need to be directly connected to rules, and consequences for breaking rules need to be both obvious and understood.

I also consider the following two comments to be worthwhile:

Rules are very helpful and important since they help everyone to know what behaviour is acceptable within the school community. A problem arises, however, when the primary focus of a school discipline program is placed upon the rule violation, and because of that, the human violation is ignored or minimised. Since the purpose of establishing rules is to provide for a safe, fair, just and orderly community, it is important that the underlying human dimension is not lost in our effort to be sure to follow the rules. (Classen, 2001, available at www.fesno.edu/dept/pacs)

All rules occur within relationships. Behaviour is relational. While rules can provide acceptable limits to unacceptable behaviour, as well as focussing on the behaviour, they cannot create the behaviour. Rules can give some protection for rights, but they cannot guarantee rights. Human fallibility, human ignorance and wilful wrongdoing will always compete with what the school community says is right. At the very least, rules give a yardstick within which 'the right' can be explained and enforced, but responsibility will always need to be taught, supported and encouraged. (Rogers, 1995)

The fifth R: Response

Managing inappropriate and disruptive behaviours is consistently reported by teachers as an area of high concern. One consequence of this is that a school community's focus can be distracted from all of the good things that students do. With this acknowledged, I have found it helpful during the professional development activity to discuss the following:

- Consider the concept of a "response continuum triangle". The base level of the triangle identifies what students in the school community do well and the ways in which they are and can be affirmed for this. The remaining levels of the triangle deal with inappropriate behaviours organised according to degree of seriousness and identification of the types of responses that are acceptable to all members of the school community.
- Disruptive behaviour can be measured by its effect on mutual rights, safety, fair treatment of others and learning (Rogers, 1995).
- Consequences should be developed for inappropriate and disruptive behaviours that are reasonable, relate to the behaviour concerned, respect the dignity of involved persons and have degrees of seriousness built in.
- Response and the application of consequences need to be guided by the principles of procedural fairness.
- Response to inappropriate behaviour can be thought of as occurring in a continuum of retributive (punitive) to restorative (relational) action.
- Repair of inappropriate behaviour should focus on the harm caused rather than the rule broken. Rebuilding of relationships should be viewed as being more important than applying a consequence.

The overarching purpose of responding to inappropriate behaviour is for learning to occur. If a positive change in behaviour does not result from a particular response, then the response needs to be rethought. Relevant questions to consider are: *Has punishment stopped a student from breaking the rules or engaging in disruptive behaviour? What can we do as*

teachers that will actively teach appropriate behaviour? How can we better interact with students in order to ensure that learning and change in behaviour will occur?

Establishing the 5R Framework

The framework is established within the school community through a series of steps, most often initiated by the school contacting the St Laurence Centre. Usually, this contact involves a direct request for professional development in the 5R Framework or a request for assistance in reviewing the school's discipline and welfare policies. Schools are motivated to make this contact for a range of reasons. Three that are commonly stated by school personnel are (1) school policies and practices have grown stale and are not achieving desired outcomes in student behaviour; (2) a lack of understanding across the school community of behavioural expectations and procedures for dealing with both appropriate and inappropriate behaviours; and (3) a recognition that ad hoc and isolated management of student behaviour by individual teachers does not readily translate into a culture of consistency in managing behaviours. Table 1 provides a brief summary of the six steps taken in establishing the framework within a school.

At the end of this article there is an example of a 5R Framework for a diocesan primary school (see Appendix 1). Please note, however, that the preamble, stated links to the Diocesan Pastoral Care Policy and relevant support documents have not been included in this example.

The professional development 5R workshop

This workshop is attended by all teaching and administrative staff, as well as representatives from the parent body. In my experience, schools invite anywhere from one to five parents to attend the day. The attendance of parents has usually proved to be invaluable. The day is grounded in facilitated conversations and exchanges of views between staff and parents; this is seen as being essential to building community understandings concerning the management of behaviour and relationships within the school.

One week prior to the workshop, I request the principal to send to all participants a pre-workshop thinking sheet. This thinking sheet briefly introduces the 5Rs and poses a number of thinking points concerning how members of the school community might like the 5Rs to look within their school. The following statement is highlighted:

The 5Rs need to be built and agreed to by all community members within a context of clearly articulated values and beliefs.

Table1: Establishing the 5R Framework within the school community

Step 1	Contact between the school and St Laurence Centre Date for Professional Development 5R Workshop set (whole staff and parent representatives attend)
Step 2	Pre-workshop Thinking Sheet distributed by principal to all workshop participants one week prior to the workshop
Step 3	Professional Development 5R Workshop held (9.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m.) Working party established to manage the follow-up process
Step 4	Draft of new policy, inclusive of processes and procedures and any related support documents, distributed to staff for comment Draft policy and support documents tabled at the school's Parents and Friends Association for comment Purpose and contents of draft policy discussed and/or presented to Student Representative Council for comment
Step 5	Amendments, where identified, made to draft policy Completed document entered into school policy
Step 6	Family 5R Workshop offered to all parents in the school community (2 hour workshop, 7.00 p.m. to 9.00 p.m.)

The thinking sheet also introduces the following six key principles of the 5R Framework:

Consistent emphasis on:

1. *Togetherness*
2. *Clear expectations*
3. *Trust*
4. *Celebration of right action*
5. *Positive communication*
6. *Restitution and reintegration*

The workshop itself is presented across three sessions, a brief summary of which follows:

Session 1: Rights, Responsibilities, Routines and Rules

The first session deals with the Rights, Responsibilities, Routines and Rules of the school community. The early part of this session spends some time in discussion concerning the nature of the behavioural landscape current within the school. Conversations are facilitated around the topics of strengths, weaknesses, and what needs fixing and what doesn't. Following this, time is spent in conversation concerning the values and beliefs present within the school community. It is prompted by the question, *What connects and binds us together?* This conversation provides a point of entry into discussion directed at establishing agreement on the rights, responsibilities, rules and routines for the school. I have found that as long as the conversation concerning values and beliefs has focused on the principle of connection, and participants have sought to be accommodating of each other's views, the first four Rs are usually established quite quickly and with little difficulty.

Session 2: Managing student behaviour

The second session departs from the framework to some extent. It asks participants to consider the nature of behaviour and to focus on particular strategies for managing student behaviour. In regard to the nature of behaviour, I request participants to consider the following two propositions:

- Behaviour is essentially an act of communication—when we behave in a certain way, we communicate something.
- Behaviour is an act of choice—it results from the choices we make.

In considering these propositions, I refer to Dreikurs' argument (in his book *Maintaining sanity in the classroom: Classroom management techniques*) that behaviour can be described by looking to the particular goal that it is attempting to achieve—is it attention, power, revenge or dependency and escape? I also refer to Glasser's argument that behaviour is motivated by needs satisfaction—survival, belonging, power, freedom and fun (from his book *Control theory in the classroom*). Participants are often quick to identify these motivations in the behaviour of their students (and in more reflective moments, themselves!).

This session is really more one of show and tell than facilitated discussion, the content of which is directed by the presenting needs of the school. I rely on the executive of the school to inform me of these prior to the workshop. As might be expected, these tend to fall broadly into classroom and/or playground management issues. At times broader community

issues are also of a concern (examples of which include student behaviour on buses and in shopping malls). Over the past few years, strategies presented have included:

- an introduction to Lindy Peterson's *Stop Think Do* program;
- Christine Richmond's *Ten Micro-Skills for Managing Behaviour in the Classroom*;
- various behaviour modification and reinforcement techniques, such as response-cost scheduling;
- the St Laurence Centre's Behaviour Support Instrument;
- the language of choice;
- responsible thinking space and reflection sheets;
- peer mediation;
- and various ways of negotiating with adolescents, including Glasser's *Seven Step Problem-Solving Method* and adaptations of Fisher, Ury and Paton's method of *Principled Negotiation* (in their book *Getting to yes: Negotiating agreements without giving in*).

More recently, I have included Restorative Justice strategies, such as circles and affective questioning.

Session 3: Response

The third session returns to the framework and deals solely with the fifth R, Response. Care is taken to point out that, in keeping with the principle of celebration of right action, as much, if not more, thought and effort needs to be given within the school community to responding to appropriate behaviours as it is to those that are considered to be inappropriate. Time is spent on identifying how appropriate student behaviours can be consistently noticed and affirmed. The use of consequences and strategies for responding to inappropriate student behaviour is discussed within an authoritative (relational, "control with support") rather than authoritarian (coercive, "command and control") context and specifically through the paradigm of social control windows, as adapted from Glasser by McCold and Wachtel (in *The new real justice training manual*). This paradigm seeks to describe the interaction between adults and students as occurring within four modalities or windows: punitive (doing *to* students), neglectful (*not* doing for students), permissive (doing *for* students) and restorative (doing *with* students).

Discussion within the third session is linked back to the various strategies covered in the second session, with emphasis given to the building of a consistent culture that is characterised by respectful communication and positive relationships. Time is also given within the session to discuss how the school community might respond to highly challenging student behaviour. The more traditionally used strategies of cool-off time,

time-out, in-school and out-of-school suspension, behaviour contracts and expulsion are discussed within a proposed continuum of response (the continuum triangle) and alongside the Restorative Justice processes of restorative meetings and conferencing.

Restorative practices within schools

A Restorative Justice approach to inappropriate behaviour differs from more traditional approaches in the following ways:

- Inappropriate behaviour is defined as the harm that is done to a person or the community rather than a violation of a rule or the system.
- The focus is placed on solving problems and repairing harm rather than establishing blame or guilt; the consequences of an offender's behaviour takes precedence over the behaviour itself.
- Accountability is described as taking responsibility, apologising and helping to repair the harm rather than defined as punishment.

Restorative practices in schools emphasise the accountability that students have for their behaviour, and provide ways for a student who has behaved inappropriately to actively participate in meeting the obligation that he or she holds for repairing the harm caused. Central to restorative practices is the idea that students need to be provided with opportunities for learning how to behave appropriately and in accordance with the expectations of the school community. The obligation held by the school community is to provide these opportunities and to actively embrace the principles of reintegration and inclusion.

Wachtel (in a conference paper in 1999) described the fundamental elements of restorative practice as:

- Fostering awareness of how others have been affected by wrongdoing.
- Avoiding scolding and lecturing. This prompts the student to react defensively and distracts the student from understanding the impact of inappropriate behaviour on others.
- Involving students actively. Students are challenged to face and listen to the people that they have harmed, they are asked to participate in making decisions about how to make reparation, and they are held accountable to their commitments.
- Accepting ambiguity. Sometimes fault is difficult to establish; placing a focus on the consequences of behaviour and remaining solution focused helps those involved to move forward.
- Separating the deed from the doer helps all involved to recognise the worth of each other whilst at the same time emphasising disapproval of the wrongdoing.

- Seeing every instance of wrongdoing and conflict as an opportunity for learning. The use of restorative practices can turn negative events into constructive events, building empathy and a sense of community.

Restorative practices in schools are evidenced across a range of strategies and processes. The most widely recognised Restorative Justice process is family group or youth conferencing, used extensively in the juvenile justice system. In schools this type of process is referred to as restorative conferencing, and there are a number of adapted versions of the process. Whilst restorative conferencing is a somewhat specialised process, there are a number of restorative strategies based on positive communication and conflict resolution techniques that can be used across the school community in both a preventative and corrective way. These include the use of the language of choice (drawn from the work of Glasser), the use of affective statements and questioning (drawn from *Shame and pride: Affect, sex, and the birth of the self* by Nathanson and the *Conferencing handbook* produced by RealJustice) and the implementation of brief, structured meetings between persons involved in an incident of inappropriate behaviour or conflict. In the 5R professional development day, I illustrate the broad use of the strategies through a “pyramid of restorative practices”, where the more frequently used strategies comprise the base of the pyramid, the less frequently used the remainder, and where restorative conferencing is located at the apex.

Students with special needs

The use of restorative practices in schools is increasingly being reported on both here within Australia and overseas. Many of these reports speak positively of the impact restorative practices have across a school community, however, there appears to be little specific reporting of the use of restorative practices with students with special needs. One potential difficulty that might arise with students with special needs extends from the emphasis that restorative practices place upon language competence. The potential risks that this poses for students with language and intellectual disabilities would be immediately obvious to special education teachers and school counsellors who work with these students. It could be that restorative practices with particular students with special needs may need to be considered in conjunction with other strategies that have historically been proven to work. It would, for instance, be interesting to evaluate the success of social stories constructed on restorative justice principles and also its use with augmented systems of communication.

Specific questions concerning the management of the behaviour of students with special needs occasionally arise during the 5R professional development day. At times, these questions relate to particular disabilities, and at other times are more general in their nature.

In response, I emphasise the relevance that the 5R Framework has for building positive relationships and managing the behaviour of all students, inclusive of those who experience special needs. Similar to the issue noted above concerning the use of restorative practices with students with special needs, I emphasise the use of additional behaviour strategies that have been proven in both research and practice to be effective for managing the behaviour of students with disabilities and special needs. Usually, this leads to discussion concerning a case management approach and, in particular, the place of Individual Education/Behaviour Plans within the broader 5R Framework. I have found it helpful on these occasions to refer to a number of the strategies presented within the second session of the day, in particular those which more carefully describe the antecedents and purpose of a student's behaviour, and those that consider the impact of the curriculum and specific teaching and classroom management strategies on behaviour. Infrequently, strategies that carefully describe actions to be taken in instances where a student's behaviour is becoming potentially harmful have also been discussed.

Managing the behaviour of students who experience special needs is an area that often, but not always, requires specialist support. Whether or not specialist support is called upon, the likelihood of achieving success with a student is greatly enhanced by the presence of a well articulated and well accepted whole school community approach to behaviour management.

The Family 5R Workshop

The Family 5R Workshop is offered as the final step in establishing the 5R Framework within the school community. It is presented as a two hour evening session after the draft 5R school document has been consulted on, agreed to and published within the school community. The workshop provides an opportunity for teachers and parents to strengthen their partnership in education and to build understandings and affirm agreements as to how relationships are built and behaviour is best managed within the school. Additionally, the workshop provides an opportunity for parents to begin developing a 5R Framework within their own family.

The workshop begins by reviewing the 5R Framework for the school with emphasis given to its six key principles (togetherness, clear expectations, trust, celebration of right action, positive communication, restitution and reintegration). Conversation is built around the following six questions:

- What *values* and *beliefs* connect and bind us together as a family?
- What *rights* do we have as a member of the family?
- What *responsibilities* do we have as a member of the family?

- What *routines* do we engage in that help to organise our day/week as a family?
- What are the *rules* that we, as a family, accept and live by?
- What *response* do we, as a family, make to both appropriate and inappropriate actions and behaviours?

The social control window of McCold and Wachtel (1995) that is referenced in the third session of the school's 5R professional development day is used here to describe four different parenting styles (*to, not, for, with* children). Limit setting, use of consequences and ways of achieving negotiated outcomes are also discussed. I also spend some time discussing restorative practices and how these, in particular the use of affective questioning, might be used in the home. On occasions, I have found that some parents come to the workshop with a view that restorative practices provide a child with a "soft option" and that punishment is the most appropriate way of dealing with a child's misbehaviour. I attempt to disarm this view by emphasising the high levels of accountability that restorative practices place upon a child for his or her inappropriate behaviour. I also try to make it clear how consequences can be more effective in changing behaviour when they are directly linked to the wrongdoing and when the ongoing focus within the family is on reparation of harm caused to relationships rather than on the act of wrongdoing itself or the breaking of a rule.

The workshop ends with an activity that asks parents to form small groups to develop a brief 5R family plan that reflects the 5R Framework of the school. Parents are usually quick to identify the similarities inherent between the school and family settings. Parents also readily agree that positive outcomes have a better chance of being achieved for their children when the school and home reflect a consistent approach and are supportive of each other in managing behaviour and building relationships.

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Resources

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Appendix 1. A typical primary school's 5r Framework

Rights

- To learn, grow and develop in faith
- To be able to have a fair go
- To feel safe and happy
- To teach and learn in a peaceful school
- To be valued and respected

Responsibilities

- To be a kind, caring and sharing person
- To be peaceful, faithful and respectful
- To learn and allow others to learn
- To be honest
- To celebrate efforts and achievements
- To let others have a fair go

Routines

- We say "Good Morning" or "Good Afternoon" to teachers and adults
- We always say morning and afternoon prayer
- We attend weekly Mass
- We always pick up litter when we see it
- We enter classrooms only with permission
- We move to class when we hear the second bell after play
- We wait quietly in class for our teacher
- We stay in our own playing area

Rules

- CARE (Care Always and Respect Everyone)
- Safe Hands, Safe Feet
- Stop, Think, Do
- Sunsmart

Response

Beliefs

- We will celebrate right choices and behaviours
- We will be accountable for the choices we make
- We will be accountable for the behaviours we engage in
- We will be supported to do the right thing
- There will always be fair consequences for what we do and how we do it
- We will seek to repair any harm done if we make choices and engage in behaviours that do not help us to meet our responsibilities and support the rights of others

Strategies

- Celebration activities (e.g., school assemblies, award systems and ceremonies, special privileges)
- Language of choice
- Affective questioning
- Planned consequences (e.g., time-out, loss of privileges, suspension, community restitution activities)
- Responsible thinking (reflections room/affective questions sheet)
- Circles
- Restorative meetings
- Restorative conferences