

2006

# Children & behaviour: a strengths-based approach to education: conference report

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Centre for Children  
and Young People



# Conference Report

## CHILDREN AND BEHAVIOUR: A STRENGTHS-BASED APPROACH TO EDUCATION

23<sup>rd</sup> June 2006

Lismore





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## CONFERENCE OVERVIEW

### Director's Welcome & Introduction

It is my pleasure to extend to you a very warm welcome to this important conference, Children and Behaviour: A Strengths-Based Approach to Education.

I am particularly pleased that today's event is being co-hosted by the NSW DET North Coast and supported by the Catholic Education Office, Lismore. We value the opportunity for such positive collaboration between the University and school systems. We hope this conference will be of considerable benefit to teachers and other educators working in both primary and high school contexts.

Difficult and/or challenging student behaviour continues to rank high in terms of the most frequently cited 'problems' confronting schools and teachers. Research suggests that positive and proactive behaviour management is one of the most constructive building blocks for effective classrooms. Teachers recognise that behaviour is closely linked with learning outcomes as well as to issues of care, respect and safety that contribute to positive classroom environments. This conference, we believe, provides an important forum in which to explore the possibilities for implementing a strengths based, capacity building approach to behaviour support in schools.

The conference theme reflects a key aim of Southern Cross University's *Centre for Children and Young People (CCYP)*. The Centre aims to improve child and youth focused practice, particularly in rural and regional areas, through interdisciplinary research, education and advocacy. The Centre undertakes its work in close collaboration with relevant agencies and organisations to help ensure its activities are underpinned by a capacity-building approach that results in improved knowledge and skills for those working with children, young people and families.

Importantly, the Centre promotes the active participation of children and young people, recognising they have views and perspectives on key issues that affect their lives – and these are worthy of our respectful listening and response. The inclusion of young people in our conference today will, no doubt, provide us with insights that both challenge and inspire us. We are very appreciative of the willingness of these students, all from regional high schools, to be involved today as we seek to improve our understanding and skills in this important area.

The conference program has been structured to provide you with opportunities throughout the day to engage in discussion with the speakers and with other delegates. The Centre values dialogue as a key means for promoting improved understanding within and across the agencies, organisations and services that support children and families. We hope today's program will foster such dialogue.

Particular thanks go to our keynote speakers and workshop facilitators, Helen Cahill, Fiona Bryer, Bob Conway, Paul Gannon, Clancy Benson, Fiona Hyland, and Lyn Gardon. You will undoubtedly find their knowledge and expertise professionally rewarding. Lyn Gardon has also played a key role in the organisation of this conference and has worked tirelessly with staff in our Centre to ensure its success. We are also very appreciative of the involvement of the Catholic Schools Parent Assembly, Diocese of Lismore whose support enabled us to host a successful seminar for parents yesterday.

Finally, my thanks to you, the delegate, for your interest in this important area of children's lives. I hope you find the day informative, challenging and professionally rewarding.



**Associate Professor Anne Graham**  
**Director, Centre for Children & Young People**

## Conference Program

### *Opening*

9.00 – 9.15	<b>Welcome &amp; Introduction</b>	<b>Associate Professor Anne Graham</b> , Director, Centre for Children and Young People <b>Aunty Irene Harrington</b> , Bundjalung Elder <b>Ms Anne Riddell, Chair</b> , School Education Director, Department of Education and Training, Richmond Valley Network, North Coast Region
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### *Key Note Addresses*

9.15 – 10.45	<b>What Works for Us: Youth Perspectives on Relationships and Learning</b>	<b>Ms Helen Cahill</b> , Australian Youth Research Centre, University of Melbourne <b>Students</b> , Murwillumbah and Alstonville High Schools
11.15 – 12.15	<b>Positive Behavioural Support for Australian Schools: Resources and Challenges for Building School Capacity</b>	<b>Dr Fiona Bryer</b> , Griffith University, Queensland

### *Workshop Sessions*

12.15 – 1.15 and 2.00 – 3.00  (Delegates attended two separate workshops)	<b>A: Using Interactive Pedagogies to Promote Social Competencies and Enhance Engagement in Learning</b>	<b>Ms Helen Cahill</b> , Australian Youth Research Centre, University of Melbourne
	<b>B: Providing Support for Teachers Starting School-wide Positive Behaviour Support</b>	<b>Dr Fiona Bryer</b> , Centre for Learning Research, Griffith University
	<b>C: Catering for Diversity and Behaviour in the Classroom and School</b>	<b>Professor Bob Conway</b> , Special Education Centre, University of Newcastle
	<b>D: The Rating of Contextual Factors that Support Positive Student Behaviour</b>	<b>Dr Paul Gannon</b> , School of Education, Southern Cross University
	<b>E: How Do We Know Where to Start?</b>	<b>Ms Lyn Gardon</b> , NSW Department of Education and Training
	<b>F: Positive Behaviour Support and Indigenous Students</b>	<b>Mr Clancy Benson</b> , NSW Department of Education and Training <b>Ms Fiona Hyland</b> , Albert Park Public School, Lismore

### *Panel Discussion: Challenges and Possibilities for Implementing a Strengths-based Approach to Behaviour*

3.00 – 4.00	<b>Panel Chair</b>	<b>Helen Cahill</b>		
	<b>Presenters</b>	<b>Fiona Bryer</b>	<b>Lyn Gardon</b>	<b>Clancy Benson</b>
		<b>Bob Conway</b>	<b>Paul Gannon</b>	<b>Fiona Hyland</b>

### *Closing*

3.30 – 4.00	<b>Where to from here?</b>	<b>Ms Anne Riddell</b>
	<b>Thank you and farewell</b>	<b>Assoc Prof Anne Graham</b>

## **Overview of Keynote Addresses**

### **What Works for Us: Youth Perspectives on Relationships and Learning**

A range of evidence is available to inform teachers about the difference that positive relationships make to engagement in learning, the most compelling of which comes from the mouths of young people themselves. In this session, Helen Cahill will speak about the links between pedagogy and relationships. She will be joined by a group of students from local high schools in an interactive forum that addresses the 'how' of enhancing relationships in schools and identifies the key levers that influence student engagement in learning.

### **Positive Behavioural Support for Australian Schools: Resources and Challenges for Building School Capacity**

Positive Behavioural Support (PBS) is a systematic, educative process for managing problem behaviour in individuals and communities. This proactive approach to school-wide behaviour offers a simple, practical and comprehensive curriculum that strengthens pro-social skills of students by teaching behavioural expectations, enhances communication across the school, increases consistency and efficiency of behaviour management systems and engages the school community in an ongoing self-improvement program. Fiona Bryer's presentation will explore how the implementation of PBS will potentially increase capacity to not only prevent problem behaviour but also promote pro-social behaviour across all students, all school settings, and all staff members.

## **Overview of Workshops**

### **Using Interactive Pedagogies to Promote Social Competencies and Enhance Engagement in Learning**

Participants will sample teaching strategies designed to enhance engagement, participation and positive relationships in the classroom. The workshop will focus on how to design and manage cooperative and interactive learning structures in order to build positive class climate and enhance four key attributes of resilience: social competence, problem-solving, optimism and agency.

### **Providing Support for Teachers Starting School-wide Positive Behavioural Support**

Participants will sample activities designed to help school community work through preliminary planning for SWPBS acceptance, implementation, and evaluation. This workshop will examine ways to audit and build on existing assets in the school community and to promote community strengths through good relationships and clear communication. We will focus on a few simple behavioural routines and rewards to set up a basis for organisational change.

### **Catering for Diversity and Behaviour in the Classroom and School**

Classrooms and schools are home to a wide diversity of students including differing racial, religious, gender and special needs. The workshop explores the way in which we cater for diversity within classrooms and schools, yet still ensuring that there is a consistency in the school's approach to management. Participants will focus on specific needs and strategies that bridge classroom, school and community.

### **The Rating of Contextual Factors that Support Positive Student Behaviour**

Positive Behavioural Support (PBS) aims to develop schools and classrooms that can be a more enriching than negative experience, for all students. This workshop will engage participants in exploring the school and class level contextual factors (rules, policies, support for staff and policies, allowances for individual differences among students) that provide the background necessary for PBS to become a reality. A rating scale, to be used by teachers to identify the existence of contextual factors necessary for PBS, will be a practical workshop outcome.

### **How Do We Know Where to Start?**

What information do we need about students in our class in order to know where to start? Participants will examine the type of data we currently collect in schools on behaviour and assess how well it informs our decisions and support programs for individual students. We will look at how we can get smarter about collecting meaningful information with practical examples and interactive discussion.

### **Positive Behaviour Support and Indigenous Students**

This workshop explores the principles and foundations which underpin the practical implementation of strategies to support a positive learning environment for Indigenous students.



## **Invited Speakers**

### ***Ms Helen Cahill***

Helen Cahill is Deputy-Director of the Youth Research Centre, University of Melbourne and a former teacher, with interests in youth, education and health promotion research. She has developed a number of national drug education, resilience, anti-bullying and mental health school resources including *MindMatters*, *Rethinking Drinking*, the *School Health and Alcohol Harm Reduction Project (SHAHRP)* and *Get WISE: Working on Illicits in School Education*. She lectures in school leadership and student welfare and provides training for schools in the use of interactive pedagogy and in social health promotion. She works with adolescents and uses role-play techniques to train doctors and teachers how to communicate with young people about health and social issues which impact on learning and well being.

### ***Dr Fiona Bryer***

Fiona Bryer is a psychologist, senior lecturer in the School of Cognition, Language and Special Education at Griffith University, where she also coordinates the Research Higher Degree training environment in the Centre for Learning Research, and convenes the new Behaviour Support course and practicum in the primary education program. For the last seven years, she has also worked in action research partnerships in schools (primary, secondary, and special) on aspects of positive behaviour support. She is also the former editor of the *Australian Educational and Developmental Psychologist* (1992-2004).

### ***Professor Bob Conway***

Bob Conway is the Director of the Special Education Centre at the Centre for Special Education and Disability Studies, at the University of Newcastle. His background is as a regular and special education teacher. He coordinates the Graduate Certificate in Educational Studies, which has been used as the specialist behaviour training program by many educational jurisdictions across Australia. He has also conducted reviews of special education and specialist behaviour services across Australia and internationally. He has a particular interest in how schools and systems respond to students' behaviour needs.

### ***Ms Lyn Gardon***

Lyn Gardon is employed as a Student Welfare Consultant for the NSW Department of Education. She is a registered psychologist and has a long history of working with schools to support children and adolescents with challenging behaviours. She has worked as an executive behaviour support teacher, and a school counsellor and has provided extensive training for schools in positive whole school management practices. She is currently completing a PhD in the area of assessing school-based behaviour problems.

### ***Dr Paul Gannon***

Paul Gannon assists in the education of undergraduate students at Southern Cross University by teaching their compulsory unit in Behaviour Management. He has extensive teaching and research experience at University level in both Psychology and Special Education. He has taught students at both primary and secondary level.

### ***Ms Fiona Hyland***

Fiona Hyland is an Aboriginal teacher with over ten years' teaching experience. She is currently teaching at Albert Park Public School in Lismore. She developed and led the highly successful *Student Leadership is for Koori Kids (SLIKK)* program in the Clarence and Coffs Harbour areas and has previously been the Aboriginal Education Consultant for the North Coast Region.

### ***Mr Clancy Benson***

Clancy Benson currently coordinates behaviour and other student welfare programs in his role as Student Services Officer at the Lismore office of the NSW Department of Education and Training (DET). As a high school teacher he has worked extensively with Indigenous students and communities. Prior to his current position, he was DET's Aboriginal Education Consultant in the North Coast Region.

## Conference Working Party

This conference would not have been possible without the considerable efforts and enthusiasm of the Conference Working Party, which comprised:

- **Ms Lyn Gardon**, Student Welfare Consultant, New South Wales Department of Education and Training
- **Ms Anne Riddell**, School Education Director, New South Wales Department of Education and Training, Richmond Valley Network, North Coast Region
- **Assoc Prof Anne Graham**, Director, CCYP
- **Ms Robyn Fitzgerald**, PhD student & Research Officer, CCYP
- **Ms Wendy Britt**, Administrative Assistant, CCYP
- **Ms Shelley Thornton**, PhD student, CCYP
- **Mr Adam Biggs**, volunteer, CCYP
- **Dr Sallie Newell**, Senior Research Officer, CCYP

## Media Coverage

The conference received a wide range of media coverage – including interviews with the CCYP Director and a number of the invited speakers. These interviews were featured on NBN television; on ABC North Coast, ABC Mid-North Coast, 2LM Lismore and Triple Z Lismore radio stations; and in the Northern Star, the Echo, Life Weekly and SCU E-news publications.

## CONFERENCE ATTENDANCE

### Participant Numbers

Overall, 153 people attended the conference – comprising 21 invited speakers, including 13 local High School students, and 132 delegates, including 8 CCYP staff or associates. As summarised in the tables below, participants came from a wide range of educational organisations from across New South Wales.

### Organisations Represented

**Speakers** - Of the 21 speakers:

- 4 represented the Department of Education and Training
- 4 represented Universities
- 13 students represented 2 High Schools

**Delegates** – Of the 132 delegates:

- 14 individuals represented the Department of Education and Training (including 2 delegates from the Clarence/Coffs Harbour/Mid North Coast Behaviour Management Team)
- 8 individuals represented the Catholic Education Office
- 15 individuals represented Southern Cross University (including 8 CCYP staff and associates)
- 46 individuals represented 30 Primary Schools
- 38 individuals represented 18 High Schools
- 9 individuals represented 6 composite or special schools
- 1 individual represented a Preschool
- 1 whose affiliation was unclear – possibly a community member

### Regions Represented

**Speakers** - Of the 21 speakers:

- 19 came from New South Wales
- 1 came from Victoria
- 1 came from Queensland

**Delegates** – Of the 132 delegates:

- 132 (100%) came from New South Wales
- 107 (81%) came from the Northern Rivers – 56 (43%) from Lismore Shire; 19 (14%) from Tweed Shire; 11 (8%) from Ballina Shire; 9 (7%) from Byron Shire; 9 (7%) from Richmond Valley Shire; and 3 (2%) from Kyogle Shire
- 25 (19%) came from the mid-North Coast

## CONFERENCE FEEDBACK – DELEGATES & SPEAKERS

### Response Rate

A total of 84 workshop feedback forms were completed, representing 63% of delegates or 60% of delegates and speakers (excluding the students, whose feedback was collected separately – see next section).

### Overall Satisfaction

The table below summarises respondents' ratings on the two overall questions – showing high levels of overall satisfaction and perceived usefulness of the conference.

Question	Number of Respondents Selecting Each Rating						Mean Rating	
	Not at all					Extremely		Missing
	1	2	3	4	5	--		
Overall, to what extent were you satisfied with the conference?	0.5	3.5	17.5	37	20.5	5	<b>3.93</b>	
And, overall, how useful did you find the conference?	1.5	4	21	32.5	20	5	<b>3.83</b>	

**Note:** Participants rating between two levels were scored as half in each level.

### Usefulness of the Conference

The table below summarises respondents' ratings and comments (negative on the left and positive on the right) regarding the usefulness of the conference at improving their understanding of the key issues it aimed to address – showing that it was most useful at demonstrating the impact of the teacher–student relationship on behaviour and engagement in learning – and least useful at improving ways of monitoring progress at addressing relevant teaching, school and classroom factors.

How useful did you find the conference in terms of improving your understanding of .... ?	Number of Respondents Selecting Each Rating						Mean Rating
	Not at all	A little	Quite	Very	Extremely	Missing	
	1	2	3	4	5	--	
a) How teacher-student relationships impact on student's behaviour and engagement in learning	0	6	12	30.5	32.5	3	<b>4.10</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I'm now more aware of the impact of teachers' actions on students. The statistics (provided by Helen Cahill) were very interesting. Excellent student involvement!</li> <li>• I particularly enjoyed the viewpoint of the high school drama students.</li> <li>• Great for high school – would have liked a bit more relevance for primary school students. Great to use some of this as professional development for staff.</li> <li>• Helen was great, as was the student perspective.</li> <li>• Great feedback from young people with a focus on teacher behaviour.</li> <li>• This reinforced previously held understandings.</li> <li>• This makes you more aware if thinking about situations from the student's point of view. Putting this in relation to primary children. Buying chocolate!</li> <li>• Helen Cahill's session was excellent (both her keynote presentation &amp; workshop).</li> <li>• Listening to each other affirms self-value &amp; trust, with students &amp; teachers.</li> <li>• I loved the modelling of how to interact.</li> <li>• A great example of the student's voice being heard through skilled placement in research &amp; philosophy (comment on Helen Cahill's presentation).</li> <li>• Many points reinforced my thoughts, but we need to look at ways to get other teachers to change their thinking, &amp; ways of relating to students, to achieve success.</li> <li>• Great to see "Quality Teaching" in practice, &amp; wonderful to have included the students.</li> <li>• It is important for teachers/educators to hear the emphasis students place on the importance of relationship.</li> <li>• It was great to hear the youth opinions.</li> <li>• Wonderful – it's vital to hear the students' voice!</li> <li>• It's so important for teachers to give students "time" to engage on a personal level – it works towards improving behaviour.</li> <li>• The use of student input strengthened the message.</li> <li>• This reinforced the value of students having a voice.</li> <li>• The word 'relationship' underpins how effective we are as classroom teachers.</li> <li>• The kids' insights were invaluable.</li> <li>• The students were clear about how they see teacher behaviour impacting on them.</li> </ul>						

**Note:** Participants rating between two levels were scored as half in each level.

How useful did you find the conference in terms of improving your understanding of .... ?	Number of Respondents Selecting Each Rating						Mean Rating
	Not at all	A little	Quite	Very	Extremely	Missing	
	1	2	3	4	5	--	
b) How positive behaviour support benefits schools	0	7.5	17	38	18.5	3	3.83
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maybe more information about practical application?</li> <li>• But it should be organised &amp; supported – not ad hoc.</li> <li>• Woolly – there was a need for hard core data.</li> <li>• Workshop D was disappointing &amp; achieved little.</li> <li>• More information was needed in this area.</li> <li>• Lecture poorly structured.</li> <li>• How do you convince an "ageing" staff?</li> <li>• The session on positive behaviour supports could have been clearer.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The raising of the whole school climate is beneficial for the whole community.</li> <li>• Good to see the relevance of commitment from 80% of staff.</li> <li>• A great change to see the focus on positives over negatives.</li> <li>• I'm now more aware of the role of others in learning progress.</li> <li>• Workshop A was excellent.</li> <li>• Particularly if there is positive collegial support for the initiatives (&amp; they are owned by the whole staff).</li> <li>• This improved my understanding – I would have liked to see more systematic approaches to address this issue.</li> <li>• I've been reading/researching PBS &amp; sharing with school staff. They're interested!</li> <li>• Pertinent in relation to values being taught in public school.</li> <li>• The workshop was excellent I need more information to see how the PB program is different to what is being done in schools now.</li> <li>• Schools will obviously be happier places to be if their approach is positive.</li> <li>• Reinforcing what you want gives opportunities for students to match expectations.</li> <li>• Focus on positive &amp; strengths based reinforcement, not negative!</li> </ul>						
c) How positive behaviour support benefits the students	0	6	12.5	35.5	26	4	4.02
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I know this – but it could have been clearer and more explicitly stated.</li> <li>• I needed more detail, but the concept is good.</li> <li>• Woolly – there was a need for hard core data.</li> <li>• No surprises.</li> <li>• More information was needed in this area.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased learning, self esteem &amp; overall improvement.</li> <li>• The student's perspective was relevant. This raised an awareness of the need to promote different viewpoints.</li> <li>• It's great to see a push for the positive.</li> <li>• Anything that makes the students improve their behaviour &amp; results is great.</li> <li>• Through relationship building students' needs are more likely to be achieved. Teaching styles should be matched with student learning styles.</li> <li>• Change is slow but I'll keep chipping away. Today has been very reaffirming.</li> <li>• It is important to change/reaffirm pedagogies to positive &amp; student centred, and keep this in the teacher's minds.</li> <li>• Students respond to positive support. To hear first hand from students reinforced this.</li> <li>• Reinforcement produces positive outcomes.</li> <li>• Focus on positive &amp; strengths based reinforcement, not negative!</li> </ul>						
d) Teaching strategies that enhance student engagement and participation	2	13	25.5	17.5	20	6	3.52
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This did not increase my knowledge, but the workshops I attended did not have this focus.</li> <li>• There was no comment on the relationship between literacy &amp; behaviour, and the need for specific teaching of literacy including phonics for challenged students.</li> <li>• I didn't look much at this.</li> <li>• This did not increase my knowledge at all.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifying individual needs &amp; consolidating positive behaviour.</li> <li>• Helen's workshop was very interesting.</li> <li>• Helen's session was particularly good.</li> <li>• A great session on co-operative/interactive activities.</li> <li>• Curriculum or relationships – which of these drive the day?</li> <li>• Resilience will make better and safer students.</li> <li>• Workshop A very extremely useful.</li> <li>• We (teachers &amp; students) are people working together. Through working together we are learning and living together, and the curriculum will follow.</li> <li>• Helen Cahill's workshop was excellent.</li> <li>• Great examples.</li> <li>• Essential to behavioural expectations.</li> <li>• Get up from behind the desk!</li> </ul>						
e) School and classroom factors that limit student engagement and participation	1.5	11.5	35	23	9	4	3.33
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More information required.</li> <li>• I did not really get into this.</li> <li>• We are all painfully aware of the negatives – let's keep moving toward strengthening the positives.</li> <li>• Student-based presentation was a change but no surprises.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disruptive students affect classroom climate, negative experience hinder performance.</li> <li>• Teacher expectation is most important.</li> <li>• The student examples were excellent.</li> <li>• Very good ideas.</li> <li>• Practical ideas presented, especially in the workshop sessions (with the opportunity to share ideas &amp; experiences).</li> <li>• We know this all too well.</li> <li>• Get up from behind the desk!</li> <li>• Helen's session was excellent on this point.</li> </ul>						
f) Ways of monitoring progress in these teaching, school and classroom factors	1.5	13.5	32	16	12	8	3.31
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Possibly I did not attend the related workshop.</li> <li>• Presentation rather shaky in session 2.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data collection appears a lot more useful and practical when used properly.</li> <li>• The data gathering workshop was excellent – explaining the need to use data.</li> <li>• Very useful.</li> <li>• Data session most useful.</li> <li>• Survey each year? Estimate?</li> <li>• Helpful.</li> <li>• The difficult part is getting "schools" to value data etc.</li> <li>• Data is essential, but it needs to be meaningful &amp; descriptive, &amp; in context.</li> </ul>						

### **What People Found the Most Helpful**

73 participants made comments in response to the question – ***The most helpful part was ...*** The most common response topics were:

- The keynote addresses. (29 comments – all about particular speakers)
- The workshops. (28 comments – 22 about particular workshops and 6 general comments)
- The student involvement, role-playing and feedback. (25 comments)
- Practical ideas, tools & activities for improving classroom practice & student engagement. (15 comments)
- Reinforcing importance of teacher-student relationships for student behaviour and learning. (9 comments)
- The focus on strengths and positive approaches. (6 comments)
- Networking and audience participation. (4 comments)

### **What People Felt Could Have Been Improved**

50 participants made comments in response to the question – ***You could have improved ...*** The most common response topics were:

- The workshops. (13 comments – 7 regarding organisation and 6 regarding content)
- Make the conference longer. (9 comments)
- The second keynote address. (9 comments – addressing clarity of content and delivery)
- Provide more specific practical strategies and activities. (9 comments)

### **What People Found the Best Tip for Practice**

64 participants made comments in response to the question – ***The best tip for practice was ...*** The most common response topics were:

- Building on the teacher-student relationship. (23 comments)
- Focusing on positive behaviours and positive reinforcement. (20 comments)
- Socialisation – the use of group activities and practices in the classroom. (9 comments)
- Suggestions for best practice teaching – student-centred pedagogy, relationships, role play. (8 comments)
- Communicating with students and developing active listening skills. (8 comments)
- The child-centred, child-inclusive focus. (7 comments)
- Developing cooperative practices. (5 comments)

### **Suggestions for Future Conferences**

47 participants made comments in response to the question – ***If there's another conference, make it on ...*** The most common response topics were:

- Behaviour management strategies (eg: PBS) and practical examples or case studies. (18 comments)
- Schedule it to allow more classroom teachers to attend & allow more time for workshops. (10 comments)
- Expand on the concepts introduced in Helen Cahill's presentation and workshop. (6 comments)
- Addressing diversity of needs in classrooms –ADHD, mental, social & Indigenous issues. (6 comments)
- Motivating and engaging school staff. (4 comments)

### **Other Comments People Made**

52 participants made comments in response to the question – ***Any other comments?*** The most common response topics were:

- Regarding the quality and usefulness of the content. (18 comments – 9 positive and 9 negative)
- Concerning the structure, time management and organisation of the conference. (17 comments – 9 positive and 8 negative)
- Generally appreciative comments thanking the organisers &/or speakers. (15 comments – 3 specifically regarding the student involvement)
- Regarding various presenters. (12 comments – 11 positive and 1 negative)

## CONFERENCE FEEDBACK – STUDENTS

Students' feedback about the conference was collected simultaneously with their feedback about a parent seminar delivered the previous evening. Therefore, some questions asked the students about the two events separately while others asked them about them overall. Hence, some of the results presented below relate to only the conference, while others relate to the seminar / conference combined.

### Response Rate

A total of 10 student feedback forms were completed, representing 77% of the 13 students participating in the conference.

### Overall Satisfaction

The table below summarises the students' ratings on the two overall questions – showing that students thought the teachers enjoyed their involvement in the conference more than the students enjoyed it themselves.

Question	Number of Respondents Selecting Each Rating								Mean Rating
	Not at all					Extremely		Missing	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	--	
Overall, how much did you enjoy being involved in the teacher conference?	0	0	0	2	3	3	1	1	5.33
And, how much do you think the teachers enjoyed you being involved in the conference?	0	0	0	2	3	3	2	0	5.5

Nine of the ten students were happy with the nature and amount of their involvement in the seminar and conference. The other student expressed concern that their involvement was too staged and did not necessarily express their own views.

### What Students Found the Best Part of Being Involved

10 students made comments in response to the question – *What was the best part about being involved?* The most common response topics were:

- The opportunity to communicate openly and share ideas with teachers and peers. (7 comments)
- Socialising with other students, meeting new people. (5 comments)

### What Students Found the Most Challenging Part of Being Involved

10 students made comments in response to the question – *What was the most challenging part about being involved?* The most common response topics were:

- Expressing opinions clearly on the subjects presented. (6 comments)
- Aspects of performing the role-plays, including improvising and projecting your voice. (4 comments)

### What Students Learned from Being Involved

10 students made comments in response to the question – *What was the main thing you learned from being involved?* The most common response topics were:

- How often parents, teachers and young people misunderstand each other. (4 comments)
- The need to understand and appreciate different perspectives. (4 comments)
- The benefits of working cooperatively. (3 comments)

### **How Students Benefited from Being Involved**

10 students made comments in response to the question – *What are the benefits of involving young people in events like the seminar and conference for young people?* The most common response topics were:

- It provides a forum for expressing the perspectives and concerns of young people. (8 comments)
- Gaining an understanding of the pressures and perspectives of teachers and parents. (7 comments)
- Feeling included and respected by their community. (3 comments)

### **What Students Thought Teachers Learned from the Students' Involvement**

9 students made comments in response to the question – *What do you think teachers learned from the students at the conference?* The most common response topics were:

- How to improve the way they communicate with and relate to students. (6 comments)
- The need to appreciate the students' perspective. (5 comments)

### **How Students Thought Teachers Benefited from the Students' Involvement**

10 students made comments in response to the question – *What are the benefits of involving young people in events like the seminar and conference for parents and teachers?* The most common response topics were:

- They will have a better understanding of young peoples' issues and attitudes. (6 comments)
- It provides a forum for respectful and honest interaction between adults and young people. (6 comments)

### **What Students Thought About Young People Being Involved in these Events**

10 students made comments in response to the question – *Do you think young people should be involved in events like the parent seminar and the teacher conference? Why?* All students agreed that students should be involved and the most common reasons suggested were:

- Allows for students to have their opinions heard and questions answered ( 7 comments)
- To improve understanding between parents, teachers and young people ( 4 comments)
- Involving students is beneficial for both adults and young people. ( 3 comments)
- Adults get an honest insight into the opinions, perspectives and issues affecting young people. (5 comments)

### **How Students Thought We Could Better Involve Young People in these Events**

10 students made comments in response to the question – *How can the Centre for Children and Young People improve the ways we involve young people in seminars and conferences?* The most common response topics were:

- Provide more opportunity for open discussion. (2 comments)
- Involve students more directly in the planning (3 comments)
- Target issues that more directly concern young people (2 comments)
- Publicise the conferences better to get young people more excited and interested in being involved. (4 comments)

### **What Students Thought About the Student Feedback Form**

9 students made comments in response to the question – *Is this form a good way to follow up feedback?*

**Any other suggestions?** The most common response topics were:

- Yes this is a good way to follow up. (4 comments)
- Group discussions would be more effective. (2 comments)
- Ask students themselves for feedback. (2 comments)
- It is long – maybe use more multiple choice. (2 comments)

### **Suggestions for Future Conferences**

8 students made comments in response to the question – *If the Centre for Children and Young People hosts another conference what should it be on?* The most common response topics were:

- The pressures faced by young people. (5 comments – including peer pressure, communication problems with adults and relationship issues)
- How to inspire and encourage young people. (2 comments)

### **Other Comments Students Made**

6 students made comments in response to the question – *Any other comments or questions?* The most common response topics were:

- Generally appreciative comments thanking the organisers. (3 comments)
- Students were happy to provide teachers and parents with a better understanding of their opinions. (2 comments)