



Exploring the relation between school factors and student exclusions

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Overview

- Background / Context /Data Sources
- What Works
- Conclusions



Background

- **Personal Experience**
- **NSW Government Schools Study 2002**
- **NSW Non Govs Study 2003**
- **Recent Literature, Reports and Data**
 - Suspension Data in NSW – Trends
 - *NSW Review of Aboriginal Education (2004)*
 - The Steer Report (2009) – Learning Behaviour: Lessons Learnt
 - Centre for Evaluation and Education Policy (Indiana, USA)
 - Keep Them Safe (NSW, 2009) (Wood Royal Commission)



What Works

- Leadership
- Partnership
- Pedagogy
- Research
- Professional and Community Development

Leadership: Relation between principal attitudes and student exclusion

- Centre for Evaluation and Education Policy, Indiana University -- Survey of 325 principals, 60 items -- 3 Categories
 - Prevention orientation (lowest rates of exclusion, highest incidence of preventative programs, high efficacy)
 - Support for suspension and exclusion (highest rates of exclusion, lowest incidence of preventative programs, low efficacy)
 - Pragmatic orientation
- “(The) data suggest that school suspension and expulsion are not an invariant response determined only changes in student behaviour, but are to some extent, a *choice* made by individual educators, based on their own attitudes concerning the purpose and function of disciplinary processes” (p.5)
- Skiba, R., & Edl, H. (2004). The disciplinary practices survey: How do Indiana’s principals feel about discipline. Children Left Behind Policy Briefs. Supplementary Analysis 2-C, *Center for Evaluation and Education Policy, Indiana University*.
- <http://www.indiana.edu/~ceep/>



Leadership: Steer Report

- 12 outstanding secondary schools
- 10 characteristics, including
 - outstanding and well distributed leadership
 - High degree of consistency - expectations
 - Carefully planned, reflective and constantly looking for improvement
 - Encouragement and support for each student – quality teaching



Leadership: NSW Studies

- Rate of suspensions and effectiveness of discipline approaches related to the principals' attitudes
- Fundamental interest in the welfare of the child
- Parents as partners
- Interpret system wide policies according to local contextual factors
- Creative and resourceful
- Work with teachers
- Educative approach, not a punitive approach
- High sense of efficacy
- Teaching practices and school polices are made "visible" – do not adopt a deficit approach



Resources

- Curriculum
- Professional Development
- Counsellors and special educators
- Supervision and staff time
- Early intervention strategies
- Expert staff – peer learning
- Partnerships with other schools and with local human service providers, community organisations, e.g., AECG



Pedagogy

- This is the fundamental role of the school
- Student behaviour should be seen as a product of pedagogy – pedagogy not punishment
- Schools should have an explicit teaching and learning policy (Steer, 2009) – clarify expectations and provide frameworks for teachers and students (See Appendix B, Steer, 2009), a component of which should be a student behaviour policy that references learning and engagement and focuses on positive behaviours
- Explicit T and L programs to address behaviour – bullying, anger, conflict resolution,



Research

- Develop a behaviour and learning theory (to inform policy) and a professional development theory and policy
- Experiment
- Evaluate
- Modify
- ISO 9001
 - Plan Do Review Improve



Concluding Thoughts

- Principal and teacher education, development, recruitment, evaluation
- Inter – agency collaboration
- Partnerships with parents and community
- Resources for behaviour management, quality teaching and early intervention programs
- See behaviour as a product of pedagogy, not a deficit in the child

References

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- Steer, A. (2009). *Learning Behaviour: Lessons Learned. A review of behaviour standards and practices in schools*. Department of Children, Schools and Families. UK.