



Contents

About the author	1
Intellectual property	1
Introduction	2
What is cognitive behavioural training?	2
Who is this book for?	2
How to use this book	2
Why develop this book?	3
A note for parents	3
A note for educators	4
To everyone	4
<i>The North Wind and the Sun</i>	5
Chapter 1 Cognitive behavioural training	6
Cognitive behavioural training explained	7
Constructing success pathways	10
Chapter 2 Promoting self-awareness	12
Developing relationships	14
Getting the balance right	17
Dispelling mythology	21
Is your brain working for you?	23
The recipe for success	25
Blackline masters	26
Chapter 3 Creating vision, setting goals and monitoring progress	64
Creating vision	66
Setting goals	70
A 'way-to-change' plan	72
Blackline masters	82

Chapter 4 Fostering emotional resilience	120
Setting the emotional tone for students	122
Setting the emotional tone for parents	126
Emotionally supporting strategies	127
Disappointment and overwhelmed feelings	130
Friendship and social development	132
Relaxation and visual imagery	134
Blackline masters	140
Chapter 5 Underpinning proactive attitudes	156
Teaching proactivity	158
Proactive schools	159
Making a proactive start	166
Teaching and learning	168
Preparing for transitions	172
Proactive classroom structures and attitudes	174
Self-monitoring techniques	176
Techniques to improve schoolyard success	182
Blackline masters	185
Chapter 6 Developing organisation	208
Can organisational ability be made?	210
Student organisation begins with ours	211
Auditory cueing systems	218
Visual cueing systems	221
Establishing routines and habits	224
Managing time	227
Consequences for forgetfulness and disorganisation	230
Blackline masters	231
Chapter 7 Optimising perseverance and motivation	274
Perseverance and motivation: Fickle companions	276
Sparking motivation	277
Building perseverance and motivation	280
Lifting the mood	287
Cueing systems and reminders	290
Blackline masters	293
The last word	305
Appendix 1 Common clinical diagnoses and their implications	307
References	314
Further reading and useful websites	320

About the author

Mark Le Messurier is a teacher and mentor to children, adolescents and their families. He works in private practice providing educational advice, counselling, literacy and numeracy remediation programs, independent assessments, and social skills training. His background spans twenty years in the classroom which includes special education, adult education, child-centred education and community education projects. He is a recipient of the prestigious National Excellence in Teaching Award.

His expertise is developing cognitive behavioural training (CBT) programs to underpin the success of students diagnosed with attentional disorders, learning disabilities, personality syndromes, processing deficits and behavioural difficulties. Cognitive behavioural training strengthens self-awareness, self-regulation, goal-setting, motivation, confidence and relationships, the very elements proving elusive in the everyday life of many students. The cognitive behavioural training strategies contained within this book are derived from Mark's work. They are tried and proven techniques and continue to be used with remarkable success.

Mark regularly presents at workshops and conferences for public and independent schools, parents and interested groups. These relate to optimism, cognitive behavioural training, ADHD, Asperger Syndrome, Dyslexia and teaching children with challenging behaviours. He recently co-authored a book and video entitled STOP & THINK Friendship. This is a social skills program for primary-aged students and young adolescents. The Australian Council for Educational Research now distributes the package to schools, educators and clinicians throughout Australia.

Recently, Mark has completed a training and development film about Dyslexia, designed for teachers, parents and students. *Reflections on Dyslexia* is available for sale to individuals, schools, colleges and tertiary institutions.

Mark can be contacted as follows:

Email: <lemess@ozemail.com.au>

Phone: (08) 8271 2899

Fax: (08) 8373 7018

Intellectual property

Establishing the intellectual property with absolute clarity is difficult for some cognitive behavioural training strategies. Many of these ideas have been born from generations of modifications, adjustments and change. Through necessity they are fluid and dynamic. It is common to see the wing of one idea evolve into a new concept, depending on the need presenting itself at the time. This is the way it is with CBT. Wherever possible, the obvious and traceable sources have been acknowledged. If, by chance, an original source has been omitted, I apologise. The overriding motivation has been to add to the easily accessible repertoire of 'thinking strategies' that benefit the young people entrusted to our care: our children and students.



Introduction

What is cognitive behavioural training?


Cognitive behavioural training (CBT) is at the heart of good management. It is a safe, win-win system to get children to do what we need them to do, even though it may not be what they naturally choose to do. As the name implies, the approach links behaviour to thinking. It supports all individuals in the move from habitually doing and reacting in the same old ways to thinking about what they are doing and incorporating new behaviours. For some, performance at home or at school may be delayed by impulsive, anxious, lazy, thoughtless or resistant behaviours. CBT sustains the adoption of new habits, new routines and new ways of thinking. It immerses students in practices that encourage goal-setting, emotional resilience, perseverance and motivation: practices that develop 'can do' attitudes. This mind-set is the stuff from which successful lives are made. For a number of children and teenagers, the link between choice and outcome must be taught explicitly, and may prove to be the greatest gift we can hand to them.

Who is this book for?

This book is for educators, counsellors, health professionals and parents. It is for those who already embrace, or wish to explore, the notion that our children always do better when placed in situations that stretch their self-awareness, self-regulation and independence. The foundations of this success-based pathway are the strategies embodied in cognitive behavioural training. Cognitive behavioural training encourages improvement, as students are explicitly taught to acquire new skills and learn new ways to think their way around naturalistic difficulties. It addresses problems concerning organisation and planning, remembering, perseverance, self-awareness, task completion, motivation and confidence encountered by children and adolescents with or without clinical diagnoses such as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, Auditory Processing Disorder, Cerebral Palsy and so on.

How to use this book

This book is designed acknowledging that it is always the practical, easy-to-use ideas which become our most effective tools. The ideas and engaging exercises offer a reliable way to underpin the wavering behaviours and transient skills displayed by many students. These proactive approaches, enriched by case studies, illustrate how to implement attitudinal and behavioural changes, without needing to waste time reinventing the wheel.

As case studies often fire our enthusiasm for making a difference for a student we may be working alongside, I have included case studies throughout the book. For easy recognition, case studies are identified by this icon: .

Small versions of the worksheets are embedded in the text to help connect the reader with the ways in which these visual ideas can be used. For photocopyable sizes, black-line masters are located at the end of each chapter.

Why develop this book?

In recent years my work has taken me into many classrooms to visit teachers and students. The truth is, I'm astonished by the ingenuity of my talented colleagues. They grapple with so much, ranging from meeting the exacting daily classroom and system challenges – organising curriculum, presenting lessons, responding to the concerns of parents, providing extracurricular activities – to individually mentoring students to ensure their dignity remains intact. I'm also indebted to the children and families I've worked alongside. While I may have played a part in steering them towards a solution to their difficulties, they are also responsible for many of the ideas contained within. Consequently, this book is an amalgamation of effective cognitive behavioural practices engaged by clever educators and parents. It is not intended to be an exhaustive problem-solver, but rather a sensible start for parents, educators and health professionals to align their thinking, language and approach to create opportunities for all children. Managing these niggling, sometimes debilitating, problems more effectively requires strategic, teamed input.

The book is presented to sustain the children who 'do it tough': for those who forget, fail to get around to tasks, think they can't, lose interest or display reactive, unpredictable behaviours. These strategies, presented in a win-win spirit, are geared to ease natural difficulties and promote opportunities for practice and skill-strengthening. Used well, the result will be children and young adolescents who interact and operate more effectively at home and within the classroom.

A note for parents

There appears to be a widely held belief that good intervention results in cure, or something very similar. So, when interventions do not translate to cure or rapid change, the assumption is that the intervention is flawed. In this sense, the 'cure it now' model has the potential to heighten anxiety, defeat optimism and allow negative management cycles to perpetuate. It is more effective to come to grips with the truth; that is, progress is slower for children with difficulties and developmental delay. It is the simple, practical things we do that will make the greatest difference to children's development and happiness.

Without this awareness, parents are far more likely to jump on board the professional merry-go-round. First, a diagnosis is sought for their child. This sensible beginning sharpens understandings about the difficulty and the available interventions, and can provide refinement of management techniques. Then, seemingly innocuous visits to a plethora of counsellors, occupational therapists, sound therapists, speech pathologists, educational tutors, physiotherapists, chiropractors, naturopaths, dietitians, acupuncturists and others intensifies the quest to unlock the cure. In these situations it is usually the child who loses out. Being carted from one professional to another for years is emotionally demoralising. After all, if we treat children as ill, disordered and dysfunctional, it's easy to guess who will lose. Of course there is a place for skilled, well-targetted intervention, but too much

intervention, too intensively, for too long delivers a message to children that something is seriously wrong. It reinforces to children that someone else must take responsibility for their difficulties.

The ideal model focuses on the emotional stability of children. Adopting thoughtful interventions – friendship-building, academic remediation, negotiating clear expectations, curriculum adjustments and appreciating the unique attributes of children – is most effective. The alternative is clinging to the belief that someone else will fix the problem.

Take a moment. Reflect on what you see and think when you look at your child. Do you carry too many magnifying glasses? Do you look too intensely, too critically, and feel entangled in your own emotion? Do you see too many problems which overshadow your child's strengths, interests, resources and potential? Sometimes, when a parent has long been immersed in a child's difficulties, their poise, priorities and sense of humour become casualties. Make a resolution to see your child more favourably, to prioritise what should be tackled and inspire your child to participate in their life.

A note for educators

Education in Australia is now fixed on inclusivity. Teachers have become increasingly responsive to incorporating children with diverse abilities into their classrooms. Contemporary teachers realise that the effective management of students, especially those with delayed self-regulatory and learning capacities, depends on the knowledge, artfulness and persistence of themselves. Progressive practitioners now find themselves in a position of re-examining their teaching approach, re-evaluating what they deliver and how they execute it.

The development of social justice understandings and legislations, in particular the Commonwealth *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*, has seen the spotlight turn towards educators. Rather than seeing the problem as being solely with the student, educators now have to be thinking about what they can do to assist when the child's self-regulatory and learning systems have not developed naturally. This requires a strengthening of the 'islands of competence' in children and appreciation of the praise deficit these children so commonly suffer – focusing on what children *can* do, rather than criticising them for what they can't do (Giorcelli 2000). With the imminent introduction of the education standards of the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*, more than ever, there is an onus on every school, college, university and teacher to manage students with differences far more vigorously (the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission website displays a draft of the proposed Disability Standards for Education: <http://www.hreoc.gov.au/disability_rights/standards/standards.html>). As the education standards are implemented, educational providers and teachers will be expected to welcome, guide and accommodate the needs of students with differences and ensure they are included, as opposed to simply presenting curriculum material and hoping the rest might follow. This further strengthening of inclusivity, by law, is the new order.

To everyone

This book aims to reignite creative cognitive behavioural interventions, which encourage the acceleration of awareness and skills in individuals. These interventions are at the heart of good management and are concerned with energising everyone to work towards successful outcomes. Cognitive behavioural training assumes that the vast majority of children and young adolescents are healthy. They may experience developmental delay, attention, social, learning or behavioural problems, but they are all capable of learning and changing.

Over the past several decades, it seems we have become overly focused on 'medicalising' various behavioural conditions. Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder presents a prime example of the struggle to rationalise the gap between an individual's behaviour and what is happening in the brain. In other words, what lies behind how these individuals behave? We have witnessed a proliferation of new authorities, new understandings, new theories, new medications and new literature: an enormous industry has blossomed around ADHD. Very recently, highly sophisticated brain imaging has permitted us to see precisely what is happening in the brain. This continues to intrigue, educate, confuse and mesmerise. New methodologies and understandings may allow more accurate diagnosis and legitimise the diagnosis by providing physical evidence.

Yet a fixation with 'medicalising' can detract from the wonderful possibilities of change. A medical overemphasis runs the risk of convincing some that these neurological problems are so fixed, so ingrained that little hope for change to behaviour exists outside the medical domain. The fact is that the influences within a child's environment are fantastic: how they are loved, taught, parented, accepted and guided. Some children just take longer to meet the demands of school and day-to-day expectations.

With the benefit of hindsight, we know these difficulties tend to right themselves with maturity and well-targetted intervention. However, until this occurs these children can attract their unfair share of criticism and failure. They hear too many negative messages too often, and, in some cases, begin to believe this is what they must be. They develop reputations. Surely if we treat children as though they are wilfully noncompliant, disobedient and naughty, this is what they are likely to become.

After years of this, even the most agreeable of children accept their role: the clown, the victim, the runaway, the disrupter, the aggressor or the outcast. By the time some begin secondary school they think and act in negative ways, and efforts to help are met with belligerence. When children are hounded by a constant barrage of criticism it is impossible for them to remain in a position which invites transition and change. They are forced to react aggressively or despairingly, or to give up, uttering, 'I don't care!'. When students reach this position it is very difficult to influence them to change.

If we wish to guide, change and redirect the attitudes of our children we must start by examining and changing our own attitudes and practices. We need to examine what we are doing and appreciate that our children will change and modify their habits, routines and attitudes according to the levels of management we choose to put in place. With this in mind, the design of this book has as much to do with redesigning the thinking of adults as it has with redesigning the thinking of children. Improving our management will make the greatest difference for our children.

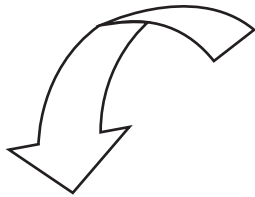
The North Wind and the Sun

A dispute arose between the North Wind and the Sun, each claiming that he was stronger than the other. At last they agreed to try their powers on a traveller to see which could soonest strip him of his cloak. The North Wind had the first try; and, gathering up all the force for the attack, he came whirling furiously down upon the man, and caught up his cloak as though he would wrest it from him by one single effort: but the harder he blew, the more closely the man wrapped it around himself. Then came the turn of the Sun. At first he beamed gently upon the traveller, who soon unclasped his cloak and walked on with it hanging loosely about his shoulders: then he shone forth in his full strength, and the man, before he had got many steps, was glad to throw his cloak right off and complete his journey more lightly clad.

(Aesop)

Identifying the ABC's of behaviour

Behaviour
WHAT is the behaviour?



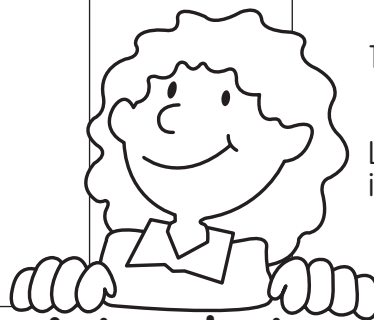
Antecedent
WHY does it occur?
What seems to set it off?

Consequence
HOW intense is the behaviour?

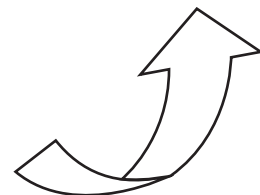
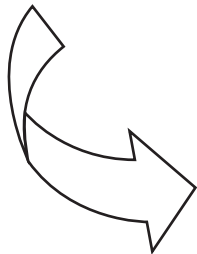
Circle the number that represents the intensity of the behaviour

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Low intensity → High intensity



Antecedent
WHEN does it occur?

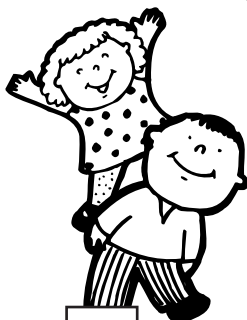


Classroom rewards catalogue

Name _____



ice-cream



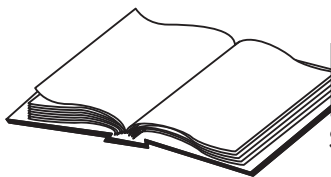
playing with friends



computer time



P.E. time

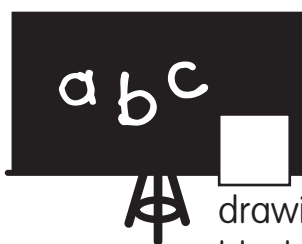


storytime

Number the rewards you would most like to earn. Begin with number 1 as your favourite.



lollies

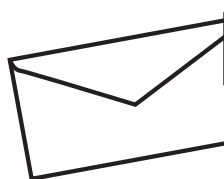


drawing on blackboard



free time

other



carrying messages



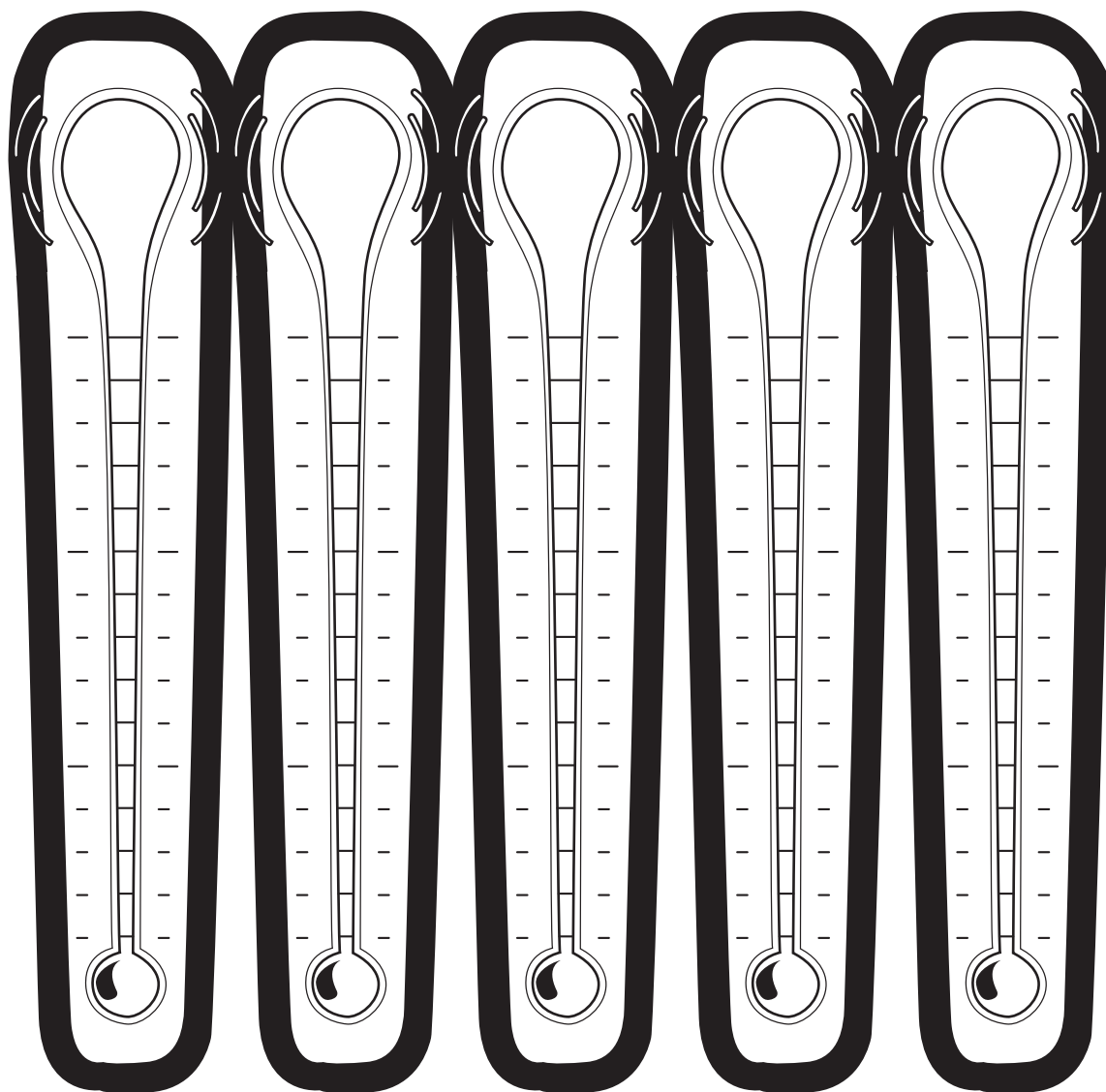
extra recess

How hot can I get?

Name _____

Goal _____

Keep track of your progress. Colour a square or cover it with a sticker each time you achieve your short term goal. Decide on what awaits you once reach the top.



Mon

Tue

Wed

Thur

Fri

Checkpoints for a successful start



How well are you doing? Rate yourself by circling a number between 1 and 10: 1 = not at all, 10 = 100% of the time.

1. Making **friends** and fitting in to a group.

Wednesday

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Friday

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

2. Making friends with your teacher. **Think**, what is it you are doing?

Wednesday

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Friday

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

3. When it's time to **listen** in class, are you listening? Remember to fold your arms and keep eye contact.

Wednesday

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Friday

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

4. Finishing your **homework**. It doesn't need to be perfect, it just needs to be done!

Wednesday

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Friday

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

5. Are you keeping a **balance** between how much you speak and listen?

Wednesday

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Friday

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

6. Is your teacher speaking to you about your **behaviour** no more than he/she does to most others?

Wednesday

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Friday

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Perseverance and motivation: Fickle companions

Motivation and persistence are usually interpreted as 'stickability', willpower and tenacity. They are revered personal ingredients which are thought to fire individuals with resilience to pursue their goals despite personal difficulties, unfortunate circumstances or unfair setbacks. These highly sought qualities are believed to underwrite sustainability, the capacity to bear up, tolerate and endure. They radiate an attitude which says, 'I'm not giving up', 'I can fail, but I'm not a failure', 'I learn from my mistakes', 'I like to prove I can' and 'Let me try again.'

Yet motivation and perseverance are not constant qualities. Little wonder, as these processes are highly complex involving physiological, cognitive and cultural factors. Frequently they are decidedly fickle companions, waxing and waning from one setting to the next. Circumstances that galvanise the motivational forces in one individual can just as easily deter another. A student may not be eager when it comes to mathematics, but is responsive, committed and absorbed during art or design lessons. Similarly, how many adults demonstrate disinterest when it comes to persevering with something mechanical? However, their stickability in another circumstance or their ability to excel at another task may be exemplary. Some of the classic barriers to perseverance and motivation are:

- perfectionism
- fear of failure
- negative responses to pressure
- inability to relate to the task because of its lack of meaning
- sensitivity to past failures
- peer influence
- home influence
- anxiousness
- sadness
- depression
- learning difficulties
- relationship issues
- learned helplessness.

The truth is that most students, most individuals, at some point are bound to feel unmotivated. The key for educators is to unravel what motivates and demotivates students. They can then progressively engage their students in discovering when this is likely to occur, why it happens and how to make adjustments to move past it.

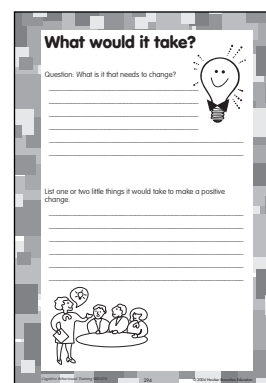
In a perfect world we would wish for individuals to have a well-tuned internal set of perseverance and motivational assets. After all, successful individuals look as though they possess these attributes. Is it possible for a young, developing student who does not possess adequate internal levels of perseverance and motivation to be positively influenced by external forces? In reality, if a student is not internally motivated, then beyond magic cures, all we are left with are strategies that optimise determination and motivation. There is no other way. Progressive exposure to these external forces buoys the immediate success of students, and supports the gradual emergence of their internal perseverance and motivation attributes.

Sparking motivation

Where does the lack of motivation occur?

Assess whether a student's motivational difficulties are global, or relate more specifically to school or to a particular subject. Commonly, perseverance difficulties are confined mainly to school. 'I'm not motivated by schoolwork', 'It doesn't do anything for me', 'I want to be successful, but can't see the point in what I'm doing.' Reassure them that they are not disordered, peculiar or sick. Many fine human beings have had low motivation about school, schoolwork and homework. They may, at the moment, find it difficult to embrace its relevancy, and while this is not helpful, it is quite normal. A critical step is to normalise their attitude. Tease out what they enjoy and what they are good at. Work to create balance and rekindle interests, talents and areas that arouse success feelings.

Together, determine an initial, easy-to-implement idea that might gain them a foothold to success in an area they are struggling with. Ask, *What could we do that would take the smallest amount of effort to make a change?* As the relationship and small successes build, gradually insert more supports. Once a little momentum is built the rippling of change can be startling.



What might help?

On an individual basis and at class meetings, ask students for suggestions: *What do you think will help your motivation?* Be daring; offer engaging and attractive ideas for discussion. Sometimes it is not the idea that tips the balance. It's the act of asking, suggesting and participating with students which makes the greatest difference (Dempster & Raff 1992). Would they like the class to be run differently? Would they like to take a more active role in planning and delivering lessons? Could we cut homework back to three afternoons per week? What could we do to reinvigorate ourselves when we hit the occasional flat spot in class? Do we need a project of some sort to strive for? Would each student like to deliver a lesson based on an interest they have? Would students like to choose afternoon activities one day a week?

Use visual triggers for motivation

Ask students to collect pictures that will remind them why it is worth persisting over the term or year. An older student in his last year of school was eager to become a nurse, an ambulance officer or a paramedic. When he spoke about these occupations his eyes lit up, yet he knew his school performance, which often suffered from poor motivation, would be critical in determining this choice. His selection did not depict a student solemnly studying, but rather dynamic pictures of what he wanted to be involved in next year. He placed one picture in his wallet, another in his school diary, contacted one to his desk at home, and found several for his pin-up board. He knew they would not make him work, but they reminded him that persevering with the tediousness of study was central to achieving his goal.

Share inspirational stories

Tell stories, have students find stories, read biographies and autobiographies, and watch movies about people who have persevered in the face of adversity. Develop lists of people, pictures, magazine articles, novels and movies that show this. Maintain the momentum and adapt it as a unit of study.

Sayings of the week

Underpin the desire of students to do well by introducing an inspirational saying each week and briefly discussing it. There are a multitude of these, like:

- *Don't wait for your ship to come in, row out and meet it.*
- *A diamond is a piece of coal that has stuck to the job.*
- *If you can't have what you like, like what you have!*

It's surprising how some students seize hold of a saying and use it as an aid. These sayings can be influential, and the best sources for these are inexpensive, inspiring books often found at the local newsagency.

A perseverance study

Encourage students to write scripts, create plays or make a video. Use the theme 'Perseverance'. Select cartoon characters and sitcom characters, and discuss:

- *Who demonstrates perseverance?*
- *Who demonstrates perseverance in the face of difficulty?*
- *Select events which demonstrate perseverance.*
- *Identify characters from these programs who do not demonstrate perseverance.*
- *How can you tell whether they do or do not? What are the qualities?*
- *How do you think they see themselves?*
- *How do you think others see them?*

A reflective study

Have students share their own stories about times when they have or have not persevered, and what the outcomes have been. Arrange for students to keep journals focusing on tasks or activities they know require their perseverance. Set up mechanisms for students to self-monitor their behaviour and attitudes when enjoying an activity compared to their behaviours and attitudes when being challenged by an activity. Occasionally, seize the moment when students reach an impasse. Guide them to reach into their developing 'tool box' of perseverance strategies, and find a way to deal with the problem at hand (Raskind et al. 2002).

The inner critic and perfectionism

A surprising number of students need permission to worry less about how their work looks. Start by giving them permission to do the task just well enough to get by. Many students have a persuasive perfectionist inner critic and need to be taught the art of self-bargaining and compromise. Explain that most people have inner critics, which are really the worrying, unconfident part of themselves. Your inner critic suggests almost irresistible negative thoughts simply because you feel uncertain. Our inner critics taunt each of us ... *Don't ask that question – the others will laugh. It's not worth starting. It's too*