

Response

ABILITY

Students' Resources for Teacher Education

Student Material for the Case Study of Brianna

- Aim** To explore the needs of young people in the middle years, with a particular focus on social and emotional wellbeing and its interaction with educational practice and outcomes.
- Contents** This material is structured around five [Questions](#) relating to a scenario about Brianna, who has recently moved from primary school to high school. Under each question there are several suggested activities to aid you in exploring the issues, which you might do alone or in a group. Your lecturer may ask you to complete certain activities as part of your assessment, or in preparation for a tutorial. A list of suggested [Resources](#) is provided.
- Scenario:** You teach English in a local secondary school. It is only a few weeks into first term and you have noticed that some of the junior students are having a little trouble settling in, after making the transition to high school.
- One student you've noticed is Brianna, who is a little shy and doesn't share any classes with her friends from primary school, particularly her best friend Jessica. In one of your lessons, Brianna sits alone and is excluded by some of the other students. You restructure your lesson so that Brianna will have an opportunity to work within a group. At the end of the class, you chat with her and discover that she used to play netball. You suggest she take it up again, as a way of getting to know some of the other students.
- Please Note:** A dramatisation of this scenario is available on video and CD-ROM
- You're fairly confident that Brianna will be fine and is just having a little trouble settling in. However, her situation has prompted you to think about what your school can do as a whole, to support students who may be feeling disconnected from others. In the staffroom, you talk with some of your colleagues about students in transition and pastoral care approaches in your school. This also raises discussion about the changing roles of teachers and other aspects of the teaching profession.

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This case study can be explored using the following five questions.

The aim of this case study is to help you explore a range of issues relating to the social and emotional wellbeing of adolescents, with a particular focus on younger adolescents and the middle years.

Your lecturer or tutor may ask you to complete selected questions or activities, or to read some of this material in preparation for a tutorial discussion. He or she may divide your tutorial class into smaller groups and assign particular activities to each group.

If you are using this document on a computer, you can go straight to a particular question by clicking on the hyperlink on the left hand side below. You will find other hyperlinks and web links throughout the document.

Case Study Questions:

- Question 1:** Brianna and her peers can be said to be in the 'middle years'. What does this term mean and what issues may be particularly important for young people at this age?
- Question 2:** What can teachers do to build social and emotional wellbeing in young adolescents like Brianna and Jessica? Can such strategies also contribute to positive academic outcomes?
- Question 3:** How can you create a classroom environment that will help students like Brianna to build their own personal strengths and to learn more effectively?
- Question 4:** Social and emotional wellbeing has an impact on young people's behaviour and academic outcomes. What can be done in the school as a whole to ensure that it supports the wellbeing of Brianna and her peers?
- Question 5:** The teachers in this case study reflect on what brought them to teaching. What draws you to the profession of teaching? What do you think are the most important roles of teachers and what challenges do they face?

The following resources may be useful for this Case Study:

Alton-Lee, A. (2003). Quality teaching for diverse students in schools: Best evidence synthesis. In *Building Teacher Quality: what does the research tell us? ACER Conference Proceedings 2003*. Available on-line at: <http://www.acer.edu.au/news/documents/Confproceedings2003.pdf>.

Anderman, L. (1999). Classroom goal orientation, school belonging and social goals as predictors of students' positive and negative affect following the transition to middle school. *Journal of Research and Development in Education*, 32 (2): 89-101.

Australian Curriculum Studies Association. (1996). *From alienation to engagement: Opportunities for reform in the middle years of schooling*. Commonwealth of Australia: Canberra.

Barber, B. and Olsen, J. (2004). Assessing the transitions to middle and high school. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 19 (1): 3-29.

Benard, B. (1995). Fostering Resilience in Children. *Educational Resources Information Centre (ERIC) Digest ED386327*. Available on-line at: <http://searcheric.org/digests/ed386327.html>.

Benard, B. (1997). Turning it around for all Youth: From risk to resilience. *Educational Resources Information Centre (ERIC) Digest ED412309*. Available on-line at: <http://searcheric.org/digests/ed412309.html>.

Bullough, R.V. Jr and Gitlin, A. (1995). Life History / Educational Autobiography. Chapter 2 in *Becoming a Student of Teaching: Methodologies for Exploring Self and School Context*. Garland Publishing: New York and London.

Caissy, G.A. (1994). *Early adolescence: Understanding the 10-15 year old*. Insight Books: New York.

Carrington, V. (2002). *The Middle Years of Schooling in Queensland: A way forward*. Education Queensland: Brisbane.

Chadbourne, R. (2001). *Middle Schooling for the Middle Years: What might the jury be considering?* Australian Education Union: Melbourne. Available on-line at: <http://www.aeufederal.org.au/Publications/Middleschooling.pdf>

Useful resources continued:

Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) [website], affiliated with the University of Illinois. Available on-line at: www.casel.org.

Department of Health and Aged Care. (2000). *MindMatters: A Mental Health Promotion Resource for Secondary Schools* [kit]. Department of Health and Aged Care: Canberra. Available on-line at: www.curriculum.edu.au/mindmatters.

Department of Health and Aged Care. (2001). *Community Matters* [booklet; supplement to the *MindMatters* kit]. Curriculum Corporation: Melbourne. Available on-line at: www.curriculum.edu.au/mindmatters.

Elias, M.J. (1997). *Promoting social and emotional learning: guidelines for educators*. Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development: Alexandria.

Elias, M. (2001). Easing transitions with social-emotional learning. *Principal Leadership*, 1 (7): 20-25.

English, R., Longaretti, L. and Moss, J. (2004) Do you see what I see? Chapter 3 in Moss, J. *et al* (Eds) *Invitations and Inspirations: Pathways to successful teaching*. Curriculum Corporation: Melbourne.

Fuller, A. (2001). A blueprint for building social competencies in children and adolescents. *Australian Journal of Middle Schooling*, 1 (1): 40-48.

Groundwater-Smith, S., Brennan, M., McFadden, M. and Mitchell, J. (2001). *Secondary Schooling in a Changing World*. Sydney: Harcourt.

Groundwater-Smith, S. Cusworth, R. and Dobbins, R. (1998). *Teaching Challenges and Dilemmas*. Sydney: Harcourt Brace.

Gumbiner, J. (2003). *Adolescent Assessment*. John Wiley and Sons: New Jersey.

Healey, K. (1998). *Secondary Education in Australia, Issues in Society*. The Spinney Press, Balmain.

Hunter Institute of Mental Health (2001). *Risk and Resilience: A teacher's guide to mental health*. Department of Health and Aged Care: Canberra. Available on Response Ability CD-ROMs and on-line at: www.responseability.org.

Useful resources continued:

Hunter Institute of Mental Health (2001). *Response Ability Resources for Teacher Education* [multi-media kit]. Department of Health and Aged Care: Canberra.

Ladwig J. and King, M.B. (2003). Quality teaching in NSW public schools: An annotated bibliography. NSW Department of Education and Training: Sydney. Available on-line at: <http://www.curriculumsupport.nsw.edu.au/qualityteaching/>

Lovat, T. (2003) The Role of the Teacher: Coming of age? In *Building Teacher Quality: what does the research tell us? ACER Conference Proceedings 2003*. Available on-line at: <http://www.acer.edu.au/news/documents/Confproceedings2003.pdf>.

Ma, X. (2003). Sense of belonging to school: Can schools make a difference? *The Journal of Educational Research*, 96 (6): 340-349.

Ministerial Advisory Council on the Quality of Teaching. (1997). The image of teachers and teaching. In *Raising the Standards of Teachers and Teaching*. NSW Department of Education and Training: Sydney. Available on-line at: <http://www.det.nsw.edu.au/reviews/macqt/standa04.htm>

Norris, J. (2003). Looking at Classroom Management Through a Social and Emotional Learning Lens. *Theory into Practice*, 42: 313-318. Available on-line at: <http://www.casel.org/downloads/42.4norris.pdf>

Parsons, E. (2003). A teacher's use of the environment to facilitate the social development of children. *Journal of Research in Childhood Education*, 18 (1): 57.

Patton, G., Glover, S., Bond, L., Butler, H., Godfrey, C., Di Pietro, G., and Bowles, G. (2000). The Gatehouse Project: A systematic approach to mental health promotion in secondary schools. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry*, 34: 586-593.

Potter, L., Schlisky, S., Stevenson, D. and Drawdy, D. (2001). The transition years: When it's time to change. *Principal Leadership*, 1 (7): 52-55.

Racism No Way! [website]. Available On-line at: www.racismnoway.com.au.

ReachOut! [website]. Presents information relevant to young people on a range of issues, available on-line at: www.reachout.com.au.

Useful resources continued:

Rice, P. & Dolgin, K. (2002). *The adolescent: development, relationships, and culture*. Allyn and Bacon: Boston.

Rigby, K. Bullying in schools and what to do about it [website]. Available on-line at: <http://www.education.unisa.edu.au/bullying/>.

Teven, J. (2001). The relationships among teacher characteristics and perceived caring. *Communication Education*, 50 (2): 159-169.

Vick, M. (2004). In and out of the classroom: Teacher's work in a changing society. In J. Allen (2004) (Ed): *Sociology of Education: Possibilities and Practices*. Third edition. Thomson Learning: Melbourne.

Wells, J., Barlow, J., and Stewart-Brown, S. (2003). A systematic review of universal approaches to mental health promotion in schools. *Health Education*, 103 (4): 197-220.

Wentzel, K. (2002). Are effective teachers like good parents? Teaching styles and student adjustment in early adolescence. *Child Development*, 73 (1): 287-301.

Withers, G and Russell, J. (2001). *Educating for Resilience*. ACER Press: Melbourne.

Zins, J.E., Bloodworth, R.P., Weissberg, R.P. and Walberg, H.J. (2004). The Scientific Base Linking Social and Emotional Learning to School Success. In Zins, Weissberg, Wang and Walberg (Eds) *Building academic success on social and emotional learning: What does the research say?* New York Teachers College Press: New York.

Question 1:

Brianna and her peers can be said to be in the 'middle years'. What does this term mean and what issues may be particularly important for young people at this age?

Learning Goals: After completing this unit you will be able to:

- define the term 'middle years' and consider some of the characteristics of this broad group of young people. [Activity One](#)
- discuss the physical changes of adolescence and the impact of these on the social and emotional wellbeing of young people. [Activity Two](#)
- list some of the difficulties that adolescents may face during the transition from primary to secondary school. [Activity Three](#)
- discuss the influence of social issues, including perceptions about oneself and others, on the mental health of young people. [Activity Four](#)
- describe how relationships with others change during early adolescence, within the broader context of the whole lifespan. [Activity Five](#)

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Question One: Activity One – Defining the middle years

Brianna and her peers could be said to be in the 'middle years.' Research this term through the library, the Internet, or other resources. Gather photographs from magazines and the media that depict the middle years. Then join with other students in a small group to negotiate a definition for the term 'middle years.' What were the similarities and differences in your ideas?

Construct two 'typical' middle years students, one male and one female. List their possible interests and hobbies. How do they spend their time? Who are the important people in their lives? Make a list of issues that might affect them socially and emotionally.

Tip – For this activity, you could draw on print or video vignettes about young people, your own recollections of the middle years, popular images about young people, and factual research. The following resources may be helpful:

Australian Curriculum Studies Association. (1996). *From alienation to engagement: Opportunities for reform in the middle years of schooling*. Commonwealth of Australia: Canberra. (student vignettes)

Response Ability Resources: Supplementary Material (2004). Case Study video relating to Brianna and the *Young Lives* video. (CD-ROM or VHS)

ReachOut! [*website*]. Presents information relevant to young people on a range of issues; on-line at www.reachout.com.au.

Question One: Activity Two – Physical changes and emotions

Prepare and act out one of the following role-plays, to explore some of the impact of the physical changes of adolescence on emotional wellbeing.

(1) Brianna wants to go to a party with Jessica. Her mother is concerned about Brianna's choice of clothes and who will be at the party. Brianna's mother tries to discuss the physical changes of adolescence with her daughter and the issue of friendship with boys. Brianna says boys seem pretty immature to her and she's not really interested.

(2) Hassan is in his second year of high school and likes Brianna's friend, Jessica. He's getting ready to go to the same party and is being teased good-naturedly by his older brother about flirting with girls. Hassan gets more serious and says he hates how he looks and that lately he's really uncomfortable around girls and doesn't know how to talk or behave.

After sharing role-plays, discuss in class how it felt to be the adult, or the young person. Did conversation become uncomfortable, angry or defensive?

Discuss the emotional / social implications of various aspects of physical development, such as: acne, voice breaking, growth of facial or body hair, having erections in public, developing breasts, onset of menstruation. What about the issue of developing crushes on others – of the same or opposite gender, crushes on older students, or even crushes on teachers?

Tip – For this activity, you should research the changes that occur in adolescence and perhaps draw on your own experiences. The following sources may be helpful:

Caissy, G.A. (1994). *Early adolescence: Understanding the 10-15 year old*. Insight Books: New York.

Gumbiner, J. (2003). *Adolescent Assessment*. John Wiley & Sons: New Jersey. (Chapter 2: Adolescent Development).

Question One: Activity Three – Changes at school

Brianna and her class are asked to write a half to one-page assignment, about how it felt to move from primary to secondary school. Write this as though you were Brianna, thinking about what she might see as the positives and negatives of moving to high school. You might consider that some things could be both negative and positive, daunting but also exciting.

Following on from the assignment, the class is asked to list reasons why they or other young people in their group might not want to ask for help or support if they're worried about something. Again, write or discuss this from the perspective of a young adolescent, keeping in mind their level of intellectual and social development.

Tip – For this activity, reflect on your own experiences as well as drawing on other material such as books or video footage. The following sources may be helpful:

Barber, B. and Olsen, J. (2004). Assessing the transitions to middle and high school. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 19 (1): 3-29.

Elias, M. (2001). Easing transitions with social-emotional learning. *Principal Leadership*, 1 (7): 20-25.

Potter, L., Schlisky, S., Stevenson, D. and Drawdy, D (2001). The transition years: When it's time to change. *Principal Leadership*, 1 (7): 52-55.

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Question One: Activity Four – Perceptions of self and others

Brianna and her peers are at an age where their own identity is becoming increasingly important. Prepare a collage of magazine or other images that may impact on adolescents' perceptions of self and others. Discuss with a group: how could these images affect the adolescent's sense of personal identity, self-worth and sexuality?

As a group, brainstorm a list of words that adolescents might use to describe themselves or others – for example, physical characteristics, popularity, specific groups or cultures, personal achievements, *etc.* (If possible, talk directly to some young people about the language they use). Can some terms be either positive or negative, depending on context?

What factors influence our self-image or personal identity? How does self-image or identity change in certain mental illnesses that may arise in adolescence, such as depression, or eating disorders like anorexia nervosa?

Tip – The following resources may be helpful:

Response Ability Resources: Supplementary Material (2004). Case Study video relating to Brianna and the *Young Lives* video. (CD-ROM or VHS)

MindMatters Resources: *Community Matters* booklet page 16; *Understanding Mental Illness* booklet pages 30-35. Available in the kit or on-line at:
www.curriculum.edu.au/mindmatters.

Potter, L., Schlisky, S., Stevenson, D. and Drawdy, D (2001). The transition years: When it's time to change. *Principal Leadership*, 1 (7): 52-55.

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Question One: Activity Five – Changes in relationships

The people we feel are most important to us may change at different stages in our lives, particularly in adolescence. Brianna's relationships are changing and that could have a significant impact on her social and emotional wellbeing. Watch the Case Study Video about Brianna and also the Young Lives video. Discuss whether the participants describe any changes in their relationships with:

- Family members – parents and siblings, extended family
- Friends – people of any age or sex that they consider to be friends
- Peers – young people of the same sex or opposite sex
- Teachers and school staff, or other professionals

Create a timeline of a person's life, from birth to the age of ninety, and divide it into decades. For each section, how important will the above groups be in regard to social and emotional wellbeing? Will there be differences between male and female timelines? Now focus particularly on the ages from 10 to 20 and discuss how relationships change in this period.

Tip – The following sources may be helpful:

MindMatters Resources: *Enhancing Resilience* booklets. Available in the kit or on-line at: www.curriculum.edu.au/mindmatters.

Rice, P. & Dolgin, K. (2002). *The adolescent: development, relationships, and culture*. Allyn and Bacon: Boston. (Chapters 10 and 11).

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Question 2:

What can teachers do to build social and emotional wellbeing in young adolescents like Brianna and Jessica? Can such strategies also contribute to positive academic outcomes?

Learning Goals: After completing this unit you will be able to:

- discuss the relationships between social and emotional wellbeing, physical health, behaviour and academic outcomes. [Activity One](#)
- define adolescent mental health and differentiate this from mental illness. [Activity Two](#)
- define resilience and discuss its relationship to mental health and wellbeing. [Activity Three](#)
- define risk factors and protective factors and discuss the relationship of these to resilience and to mental health. [Activity Four](#)
- identify the broad roles of the teacher in regard to adolescent mental health and wellbeing. [Activity Five](#)

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Question Two: Activity One – Social, emotional and academic outcomes

After your chat with Brianna, you talk with other staff about the roles of teachers in regard to adolescent social and emotional wellbeing, also called mental health. Most people agree that social and emotional issues are important but it is hard to make room for them in a busy school environment. In a small group, research one of the following statements and discuss whether you agree. (Groups in your class could cover one statement each).

- Improving young people's social skills can lead to better academic outcomes
- Emotional wellbeing in young people can lead to better academic outcomes
- Improving social and emotional wellbeing can contribute to physical health
- Building social and emotional wellbeing could improve behaviour in the classroom and school

Share your findings with your larger tutorial or class group, either by a short verbal presentation, or by acting out a role-play or debate between teachers in the case study scenario, to dramatise different sides of the 'argument'.

Tip – Reflect on your own beliefs and experiences about school and young people, as well as looking up some of the following sources:

Zins, J.E., Bloodworth, R.P., Weissberg, R.P. and Walberg, H.J. (2004). The Scientific Base Linking Social and Emotional Learning to School Success. Chapter One in: Zins, J.E. *et al* (Eds) *Building academic success on social and emotional learning: What does the research say?* New York Teachers College Press: New York.

Norris, J. (2003). Looking at Classroom Management Through a Social and Emotional Learning Lens. *Theory into Practice*, 42: 313-318. Available on-line at: <http://www.casel.org/downloads/42.4norris.pdf> .

Elias, M.J. (1997). *Promoting social and emotional learning: guidelines for educators*. Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development: Alexandria USA.

Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) web site, affiliated with the University of Illinois. www.casel.org.

Question Two: Activity Two – What is mental health?

In thinking about Brianna's wellbeing, we could also use the term 'mental health.' Write down 10 to 20 words that come to mind when you hear this phrase. Then, by consulting some of the recommended resources, construct a more formal definition for each of the following terms:

- mental health
- mental health problem
- mental illness

Did your initial list of words have more to do with mental illness than with mental health? How would you know if a young person in his or her middle years had *good* mental health? What might you see if a young person had a mental health *problem*? How is Brianna's mental health?

Tip – The following sources may be helpful:

Response Ability Resources: *Risk and Resilience: A Teacher's Guide to Mental Health*. Available on Response Ability CD-ROMs or on-line at:

www.responseability.org.

Response Ability Resources: *Mental Health Promotion in Schools: An Overview*.

Available on-line at: www.responseability.org.

MindMatters Resources: the *Understanding Mental Illness* booklet. Available in the kit or on-line at: www.curriculum.edu.au/mindmatters.

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Question Two: Activity Three – Understanding Resilience

Resilience is a term often used in regard to adolescent mental health. Briefly research this term in the library or on the Internet, then watch the case study video showing interaction between Brianna and Jessica. In small groups, discuss the following:

- Define resilience, as it is applied to mental health.
- Which of the girls is more resilient? Why?
- What factors promote resilience in young people?

Choose one factor shown to promote resilience and broadly discuss how a teacher might foster this skill or attribute in the classroom. Would these strategies be consistent with sound educational practices? Develop an activity you could use with middle years students to foster resilience.

Tip – The following sources may be helpful:

Response Ability Resources: *Risk and Resilience: A Teacher's Guide to Mental Health*. Available on Response Ability CD-ROMs or on-line at:

www.responseability.org. See also *Resilience* on this site, under Education.

Benard, B. (1995). Fostering Resilience in Children. *Educational Resources Information Centre (ERIC) Digest ED386327*. Available on-line at:

<http://searcheric.org/digests/ed386327.html>.

Benard, B. (1997). Turning it around for all Youth: From risk to resilience.

Educational Resources Information Centre (ERIC) Digest ED412309. On-line at:

<http://searcheric.org/digests/ed412309.html>.

MindMatters Resources: the *Enhancing Resilience* booklets. Available in the kit or on-line at: www.curriculum.edu.au/mindmatters.

Question Two: Activity Four – Risk and protective factors

After your experiences with Brianna and your discussion with other staff, you raise the issue of student wellbeing at a staff meeting. The school decides to hold an information night for staff and parents to foster discussion about strategies. Several staff are asked by the principal to do some background reading and present a short overview (5-10 minutes) on a particular topic.

You are asked to talk about risk factors and protective factors as they relate to mental health in young people. Research this topic and develop a plan and handout for your presentation. You should define risk and protective factors, list several that are important in the middle years and explain how these factors relate to the concept of resilience.

After your presentation, an audience member asks whether moral values or spiritual beliefs have a protective impact in regard to mental health. How will you respond? You should base your response on research rather than personal beliefs.

Tip – The following sources may be helpful:

Response Ability Resources: *Risk and Resilience: A Teacher's Guide to Mental Health*. On Response Ability CD-ROMs or on-line: www.responseability.org.

Response Ability Resources: *Mental Health Promotion in Schools: An Overview*. Available on-line at: www.responseability.org.

MindMatters Resources: *Enhancing Resilience* and *School Matters* booklets. Available in the kit or on-line at www.curriculum.edu.au/mindmatters.

Withers, G and Russell, J. (2001). *Educating for Resilience*. ACER Press: Melbourne. (Chapters 1 to 3).

Question Two: Activity Five – What teachers can do

After your chat with Brianna, you talk with other staff about the roles of teachers in regard to adolescent social and emotional wellbeing, also called mental health. Most people agree that social and emotional issues are important but it is hard to make room for them in a busy school environment.

A few of you decide to brainstorm strategies that teachers could integrate into their work to foster wellbeing. You might find it helpful to think about your own experiences of education, your favourite teacher, or your observation of other schools you have known. In a group, list several ways in which teachers could foster social and emotional wellbeing in the following areas:

- when interacting with young people on an individual basis
- in the context of teaching and classroom management
- in contributions to the broader school community and beyond.

Tip – The following sources may be helpful:

Response Ability Resources: *Risk and Resilience: A Teacher's Guide to Mental Health*. On Response Ability CD-ROMs or on-line: www.responseability.org.

MindMatters Resources: *Enhancing Resilience* and *School Matters* booklets. Available in the kit or on-line at www.curriculum.edu.au/mindmatters.

Benard, B. (1995). Fostering Resilience in Children. *Educational Resources Information Centre (ERIC) Digest ED386327*.
<http://searcheric.org/digests/ed386327.html>.

Benard, B. (1997). Turning it around for all Youth: From risk to resilience. *Educational Resources Information Centre (ERIC) Digest ED412309*.
<http://searcheric.org/digests/ed412309.html>.

Fuller, A. (2001). A blueprint for building social competencies in children and adolescents. *Australian Journal of Middle Schooling*, 1 (1): 40-48.

Question 3:

How can you create a classroom environment that will help students like Brianna to build their own personal strengths and to learn more effectively?

Learning Goals: After completing this unit you will be able to:

- list several attributes of a quality classroom environment that will build the personal strengths of students as well as promoting good academic outcomes. [Activity One](#)
- define the role of the teacher in creating and maintaining a quality classroom environment that will build the personal strengths of students and support academic outcomes. [Activity Two](#)
- discuss how social and emotional wellbeing could be promoted in the classroom within various learning areas. [Activity Three](#)
- outline an appropriate response to an upset school student in various contexts, including within the classroom. [Activity Four](#)
- list some of the factors that may work against achieving a supportive, quality classroom environment. [Activity Five](#)

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Question Three: Activity One – The classroom environment

In a conversation with two or three other teachers at Brianna's school, you mention your interest in creating a classroom environment that will support social and emotional wellbeing, as well as academic outcomes. They ask what such a classroom would be like. Prepare a short role-play with those teachers in which you explore attributes of a quality, supportive classroom environment. In preparation you should consider the following:

- The physical environment
- Relationships between students
- Relationships with the teacher
- Student behaviour and discipline
- Teaching and assessment strategies
- Students' level of engagement with learning.

Tip – The following sources may be helpful:

Ladwig, J.G. and King, M.B. (2003). *Quality teaching in NSW public schools: An annotated bibliography*. NSW Dept of Education and Training: Sydney. Available on-line: <http://www.curriculumsupport.nsw.edu.au/qualityteaching/>

Norris, J. (2003). Looking at Classroom Management Through a Social and Emotional Learning Lens. *Theory into Practice*, 42: 313-318. Available on-line at: <http://www.casel.org/downloads/42.4norris.pdf>.

Anderman, L. (1999). Classroom goal orientation, school belonging and social goals as predictors of students' positive and negative affect following the transition to middle school. *Journal of Research and Development in Education*, 32 (2): 89-101.

Parsons, E. (2003). A teacher's use of the environment to facilitate the social development of children. *Journal of Research in Childhood Education*, 18 (1): 57.

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Question Three: Activity Two – The teacher's role in a quality classroom

Brianna's school is looking for ways to foster social and emotional wellbeing in students. Because you have an interest in this area, the principal asks you to give a five-minute presentation at a staff development session, about specific strategies a teacher could use to create a supportive classroom. You're also asked to develop a poster that captures the key ideas for display in staff rooms. Develop your presentation and poster, considering:

- What aspects of a quality classroom environment are in the control of the teacher? What aspects might be beyond your control?
- How can you involve students in decision-making about their own learning and encourage greater participation in class?
- How might students' wellbeing be affected by the following?:
 - explicit classroom rules about behaviour
 - the language used by the teacher
 - the discipline style used by the teacher
 - implied or explicit expectations the teacher has of a student
 - the feedback given to students by the teacher.

Tip – Reflect on your own experiences and consider some of these sources:

Groundwater-Smith, S., Cusworth, R. and Dobbins, R. (1998). Effective Communication in the Educational Environment, In: *Teaching Challenges and Dilemmas*. Harcourt Brace: Sydney.

Fuller, A. (2001). A blueprint for building social competencies in children and adolescents. *Australian Journal of Middle Schooling*, 1 (1): 40-48.

English, R., Longaretti, L. Moss, J. (2004) Do you see what I see? Chapter 3 in Moss, J. et al (Eds) *Invitations and Inspirations: Pathways to successful teaching*. Curriculum Corporation: Melbourne.

Norris, J. (2003). Looking at Classroom Management Through a Social and Emotional Learning Lens. *Theory into Practice*, 42: 313-318. Available on-line at: <http://www.casel.org/downloads/42.4norris.pdf>.

Benard, B. (1997). Turning it around for all Youth: From risk to resilience. *Educational Resources Information Centre (ERIC) Digest ED412309*. Available on-line at: <http://searcheric.org/digests/ed412309.html>.

Question Three: Activity Three – Wellbeing across the learning areas

The principal of Brianna's school asks staff to integrate issues of social and emotional wellbeing into various learning areas (not just health) so that relevant skills and attitudes are reinforced and become central to the school culture. As a staff member with an interest in wellbeing, you are invited to participate in a curriculum working party to look at the issue.

Divide a page into three columns: knowledge, skills and attitudes. List those you think would help young people to value social and emotional wellbeing and to support it in others. For example, knowledge might include specific information, such as how to get help for a problem; skills might include aspects of communication; attitudes could include respect for others.

Choose two secondary school learning areas other than Health and discuss how you could integrate some of these elements of knowledge, skills or attitudes into the curriculum. This could be either by selecting particular content or by choosing to address issues in a way that builds relevant skills.

Tip – You will find the following resources helpful, but you should develop your own ideas rather than relying on those presented in these materials:

MindMatters Resources: *Enhancing Resilience, Bullying and Harassment, Educating for Life and Understanding Mental Illnesses*. Available in the kit or on-line. Also the web site section on *Classroom Ideas*, on-line at: www.curriculum.edu.au/mindmatters.

Question Three: Activity Four – Responding to a troubled student

As a class, discuss how you as a teacher could respond constructively in each of the following situations:

- Brianna becomes visibly upset in your classroom; you don't know if this relates to topics in the lesson, or to external factors.
- Jessica comes to see you to say that she is worried about her friend Brianna, because she seems upset and stressed all the time
- Brianna comes to see you after class to say that she is really unhappy

In pairs, conduct a short role-play relating to one of the above scenarios – for example, talking with Brianna after class or talking with Jessica. Swap roles and talk again. As a class, discuss how the role-plays made you feel. Did it feel different if you were playing the teacher or the young person? Do you think that creating a supportive classroom environment will help troubled students to approach you for help?

Tip – You may find the following resources helpful:

Response Ability Resources: *Risk and Resilience: A Teacher's Guide to Mental Health*. On Response Ability CD-ROMs or on-line: www.responseability.org.

MindMatters Resources: *School Matters, Loss and Grief*. Available in the kit or on-line at www.curriculum.edu.au/mindmatters.

Groundwater-Smith, S., Cusworth, R. and Dobbins, R. (1998). Effective Communication in the Educational Environment, In: *Teaching Challenges and Dilemmas*. Harcourt Brace: Sydney.

English, R., Longaretti, L. and Moss, J. (2004) Do you see what I see? Chapter 3 in Moss, J. *et al* (Eds) *Invitations and Inspirations: Pathways to successful teaching*. Curriculum Corporation: Melbourne.

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Students' Resources for Teacher Education

Question Three: Activity Five – Challenges in creating a supportive classroom

You've been teaching at Brianna's school for some time. Even though it's a priority for the school, it is proving difficult to build supportive classrooms throughout the whole school. You've been asked to do some research in the school to determine what factors may be working against this and what can be done. You meet with three or four like-minded teachers to talk about possible issues. Organise your discussion around three columns as shown:

Examples:

<i>Factor</i>	<i>Problem</i>	<i>School / Teacher Strategy</i>
<i>Little time with students; large numbers of students</i>	<i>Difficult to develop positive relationships and get to know our students</i>	<i>Start each year and selected classes with ice-breakers and get-to-know-you activities; join students in playground or extra-curricular activities more often.</i>
<i>Bullying between students of different cultural backgrounds</i>	<i>Bullying occurs outside but divisions persist in classroom, students don't work well together</i>	<i>Reinforce principles of tolerance and diversity in all classrooms; suggest review of bullying policy and discipline; more staff supervision of 'trouble spots'</i>

Tip – You may find the following resources helpful:

MindMatters Resources: *Enhancing Resilience, School Matters and Community Matters*. Available in kit or on-line at www.curriculum.edu.au/mindmatters.

Teven, J. (2001). The relationships among teacher characteristics and perceived caring. *Communication Education*, 50 (2): 159-169.

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Question 4:

Social and emotional wellbeing has an impact on young people's behaviour and academic outcomes. What can be done in the school as a whole to ensure that it supports the wellbeing of Brianna and her peers?

Learning Goals: After completing this unit you will be able to:

- outline the elements of a whole school approach to wellbeing based on the health promoting school model. [Activity One](#)
- discuss diversity in the school from the viewpoint of a whole school approach rather than from the perspective of difference. [Activity Two](#)
- list several community or agency partnerships that are helpful for schools in regard to promoting social and emotional wellbeing. [Activity Three](#)
- discuss the role of school policies and formal or informal leadership in promoting the wellbeing of those in the school community. [Activity Four](#)
- outline some structural approaches or programs within schools that could be used to ease transitions and/or to promote wellbeing. [Activity Five](#)

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Question Four: Activity One – Wellbeing and a whole school approach

During a class, Jessica says she wishes all classrooms were like yours. When you ask what she means, she says 'some teachers just don't care' and 'kids give Mr Elson a hard time – it's because he couldn't be bothered with us, so why should they care what he thinks?' You talk with several staff and students and find out that wellbeing isn't a priority for everyone. You want to raise the profile of this important issue across the whole school.

A health teacher tells you about something called the *Health Promoting School* and you wonder if this framework could be useful as a way of talking about social and emotional wellbeing. The framework looks at three areas:

- curriculum, teaching and learning
- school ethos and environment
- partnerships with the community and services.

Make a list of strategies that your school could adopt in each of these areas, to promote social and emotional wellbeing across the entire school. What resources would the school need to have or put in place to make this work – for example: professional development, financial resources, staff time, *etc*?

Tip – You will find the following resources helpful:

MindMatters Resources: *School Matters* and *Community Matters* booklets. Available in the kit or on-line at www.curriculum.edu.au/mindmatters.

Elias, M.J. (1997). *Promoting social and emotional learning: guidelines for educators*. Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development: Alexandria, USA.

Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) [*website*]. Presents resources about Social Emotional Learning (SEL), affiliated with the University of Illinois. Available on-line at: www.case1.org.

Ma, X. (2003). Sense of belonging to school: Can schools make a difference? *The Journal of Educational Research*, 96 (6): 340-349.

Question Four: Activity Two – Diversity and the supportive school environment

Brianna's school has a growing number of students from non-English speaking backgrounds and a small but significant number of Indigenous students. There are also students who may feel disconnected from school, through disability, bullying, same-sex attraction or other differences. The school has a duty of care to ensure that all these students are supported. Rather than focussing on the differences of these people in the school community, your school is keen to take a *whole school approach* to diversity. What strategies should be considered? Divide your tutorial class into six groups. Each group should brainstorm strategies that relate to one of:

The school curriculum

Staff professional development

Teaching and learning practices

Partnerships with the community

Involving students in promoting diversity

School policies and leadership

Tip – You may find some of the following resources helpful:

MindMatters Resources: *School Matters* and *Community Matters* booklets. Available in the kit or on-line at www.curriculum.edu.au/mindmatters.

Alton-Lee, A. (2003). Quality teaching for diverse students in schools: Best evidence synthesis. In *Building Teacher Quality: what does the research tell us?* ACER Conference Proceedings 2003. Available on-line at: <http://www.acer.edu.au/news/documents/Confproceedings2003.pdf>.

Racism No Way! [*website*]. On-line at: www.racismnoway.com.au.

Rigby, K. Bullying in schools and what to do about it [*website*]. Available on-line at: <http://www.education.unisa.edu.au/bullying/>.

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Question Four: Activity Three – Partnerships that support wellbeing

Schools like Brianna's that wish to focus on student wellbeing can benefit from strong partnerships with the community and external agencies. This provides a communication channel by which schools can: work more closely with parents, refer students to other agencies, invite guest speakers and role models to school, get students involved in the community, and more.

As a class or in small groups, brainstorm some agencies and community members with which a school will want to form partnerships, and map some of these onto the acronym 'Partnership' as in the example. How will each partnership benefit the school, and what can the school do to create and maintain a good relationship?

P

Alcohol and drug services

R

T

N

E

R

S

H

Indigenous community leaders

P

Tip – You may find the MindMatters resources helpful, especially the *Community Matters* and *School Matters* booklets. Available in the kit or on-line at: www.curriculum.edu.au/mindmatters.

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Question Four: Activity Four – School policies and leadership

The principal at Brianna's school is consulting with staff as a first step in reviewing some of the school's policies, so that they better reflect the school's commitment to providing supportive classrooms and a supportive school environment. As a staff member participating in a workshop, you are asked to work with others in a small group. Make a list of any particular issues that you think should be emphasised in the following policies:

- the school's discipline policy and procedures
- the school's anti-bullying policy and procedures
- the school's policy documents about diversity

As a class, discuss the importance of leadership in creating a supportive school environment for both wellbeing and academic outcomes. Consider:

Does a whole-school approach require formal leadership, involving the principal or school executive – or could informal leadership work? Are all principals so consultative? What happens if a key person driving these ideas leaves the school? How much impact do policies have on school culture? Can a beginning teacher influence policies or culture?

Tip – If you can, look at some examples of relevant policies from schools you have visited. You may also find some of the following resources helpful:

MindMatters Resources: *School Matters, Community Matters and Bullying and Harassment*. In kit or on-line: www.curriculum.edu.au/mindmatters.

Patton, G., Glover, S., Bond, L., Butler, H., Godfrey, C., Di Pietro, G., & Bowles, G. (2000). The Gatehouse Project: A systematic approach to mental health promotion in secondary schools. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry*, 34: 586-593.

Wells, J., Barlow, J., & Stewart-Brown, S. (2003). A systematic review of universal approaches to mental health promotion in schools. *Health Education*, 103 (4): 197-220.

Question Four: Activity Five – Middle schooling, transitions and wellbeing

After your discussion with Brianna, you discuss with other staff whether there are specific structures or programs your school could introduce to support students in their first year. Someone suggests your area needs a middle school, or that middle schooling approaches could be used within your traditional high school structure. Another staff member talks about pastoral care programs. A third mentions peer support and mentoring.

Develop and deliver a role-play in which you discuss these options and perhaps others. Include what the term means and whether it would be effective in supporting first year students. Your role-play should be based on research including written material (especially on middle schooling), and if possible interviews of school staff, young people, and your peers in regard to school practices.

Tip – The following resources may be helpful:

Carrington, V. (2002). *The Middle Years of Schooling in Queensland: A way forward*. Education Queensland: Brisbane. Available on-line at:
<http://education.qld.gov.au/curriculum/middle/docs/carrington.pdf>

Chadbourne, R. (2001). *Middle Schooling for the Middle Years: What might the jury be considering?* Australian Education Union: Melbourne. Available on-line at:
<http://www.aeufederal.org.au/Publications/Middleschooling.pdf>

Potter, L., Schlisky, S., Stevenson, D. & Drawdy, D (2001). The transition years: When it's time to change. *Principal Leadership*, 1 (7): 52-55.

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Question 5:

The teachers in this case study reflect on what brought them to teaching. What draws you to the profession of teaching? What do you think are the most important roles of teachers and what challenges do teachers face?

Learning Goals: After completing this unit you will be able to:

- discuss how your own experiences and values may impact upon your practice as a teacher. [Activity One](#)
- discuss societal views of the profession of teaching, as one element of the social fabric within which teachers practice. [Activity Two](#)
- analyse selected curriculum and policy initiatives in the Australian education system and consider any implications for teachers' roles in promoting social and emotional wellbeing. [Activity Three](#)
- identify some challenges that teachers face in Australia and develop strategies to address these. [Activity Four](#)
- recognise the importance of support for the professional, social and emotional wellbeing of staff as an important contributing factor to creating a supportive learning environment. [Activity Five](#)

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Question Five: Activity One – A teacher's life history

In the case study, the teachers in Brianna's school discuss what drew them to teaching. Write for yourself a 'teacher-related' life history (500 words) that reflects your experiences at school (positive or negative, relationships with significant people) and your reasons for choosing teaching as a profession. You could share elements of your reflection in a tutorial, but not anything that is distressing or deeply personal.

Map out an imaginary line in the room, with one end of the scale indicating that you strongly agree and the other end showing that you strongly disagree. Your lecturer or tutor will give you a number of statements and will allow time for you to place yourself somewhere on this line. There are no right or wrong answers; think about clarifying your own values and about how these might affect your practice as a teacher.

Tip – The following resources may be helpful:

Healey, K. (Ed) (1998). *Secondary Education in Australia, Issues in Society*, 98. The Spinney Press, Balmain.

Bullough, R.V. Jr and Gitlin, A. (1995). Life History/Educational Autobiography. Chapter 2 in *Becoming a Student of Teaching: Methodologies for Exploring Self and School Context*. Garland Publishing: New York and London.

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Question Five: Activity Two – Views of the teaching profession

At a function you hear someone say: 'Teachers have no control over kids anymore and half the kids these days can't even read. Teachers knock off early, get too many holidays and they're overpaid.' You tell the person you're a teacher and you think they might be misinformed, but the incident gets you thinking. Where do people get their ideas about this profession?

Survey 15 to 20 people outside the teaching profession, verbally or with a written survey. Ask if teaching is an important profession, a high-status profession, whether the pay and holidays are appropriate, and how people form their image of teachers. Summarise the results. Explore images of teachers in the popular media as well (eg soap operas, movies, magazines).

Discuss your findings in a tutorial. What influences perceptions about the profession? If you were writing an editorial to send to a local newspaper, that challenges negative images of teaching, what points would you make?

Tip – The following resources may be helpful:

Ladwig, J.G. and King, M.B. (2003). *Quality teaching in NSW public schools: An annotated bibliography*. NSW Dept of Education and Training: Sydney. Available on-line: <http://www.curriculumsupport.nsw.edu.au/qualityteaching/>.

Lovat, T. (2003) The Role of the Teacher: Coming of age? In *Building Teacher Quality: what does the research tell us? ACER Conference Proceedings 2003*. Available on-line at: <http://www.acer.edu.au/news/documents/Confproceedings2003.pdf>.

Vick, M. (2004). In and out of the classroom: Teachers work in a changing society. Allen, J. (Ed) *Sociology of Education: Possibilities and Practices*. Third edition. Thomson Learning: Melbourne.

Ministerial Advisory Council on the Quality of Teaching. (1997). The image of teachers and teaching. In *Raising the Standards of Teachers and Teaching*. NSW Department of Education and Training: Sydney. Available on-line at: <http://www.det.nsw.edu.au/reviews/macqt/standa04.htm>.

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Question Five: Activity Three – Current initiatives in Australian school systems

The principal at Brianna's school asks you to join a staff working party to examine two initiatives in a range of states or territories, in light of the school's recent focus on social and emotional wellbeing. Keep in mind that social and emotional wellbeing is a broad area, which embraces teaching relevant content, teaching in certain ways, building life skills, embracing diversity, creating a supportive learning environment, and much more.

Examine an integrated curriculum framework or pedagogical model in at least two states or territories. Many such models have 'essential learnings' or key elements that cross various learning areas, rather than focussing only on particular subjects. Assess whether any of these cross-curricular skills could also impact on social and emotional wellbeing in young people.

Tip - Visit Education department web sites. Examples may include: SACSA in South Australia, New Basics in Queensland, Essential Learnings in Tasmania, the Quality Teaching pedagogical model in NSW.

Examine standards or competencies required of teachers in at least two states or territories. Does your own state/territory have these? Do any of the standards relate to practices that would support social and emotional wellbeing as well as fostering improved academic outcomes?

Tip – Examples may include the Victorian Institute of Teaching, the NSW Institute of Teachers, Teacher Standards within Education Queensland, Competency Framework for Teachers in WA Dept of Education and Training.

Please note that these tips are current at the time of writing (late 2004) but that the areas of curriculum, pedagogy and teacher standards will undergo further change in the future. You may need to do a more general Internet search or ask your lecturer or tutor for guidance on these activities.

Question Five: Activity Four – Challenges of a teacher's role

At dinner with friends and acquaintances, someone else finds out for the first time that you're a teacher. Knowing some other teachers, she says: 'Teaching must be such a challenging job! Do you like being a teacher?'

Working in pairs or a small group, make a list of good things about being a teacher (eg contributions to learning and society) and a list of challenges (eg workload, juggling different roles). Choose one or two challenges and discuss them further – why is this issue difficult? How could you address it in a constructive way as you develop your career?

As dinner continues, the person you're chatting with says 'I have a friend who's about to start her first job as a teacher ... Will she get some kind of induction when she goes into the school?' Make a list of elements you feel would be helpful in a school induction program for beginning teachers. What would you need to know? What would make you feel connected to the school and comfortable in your role?

Tip – The following resources may be helpful:

Lovat, T. (2003) The Role of the Teacher: Coming of age? In *Building Teacher Quality: what does the research tell us? ACER Conference Proceedings 2003*. Available on-line at:
<http://www.acer.edu.au/news/documents/Confproceedings2003.pdf>.

Ministerial Advisory Council on the Quality of Teaching. (1997). The image of teachers and teaching. In *Raising the Standards of Teachers and Teaching*. NSW Department of Education and Training: Sydney. Available on-line at:
<http://www.det.nsw.edu.au/reviews/macqt/standa04.htm>.

Vick, M. (2004). In and out of the classroom: Teachers work in a changing society. Allen, J. (Ed) *Sociology of Education: Possibilities & Practices*. Third ed. Melbourne: Thompson.

Google Search – a search on *Teacher Induction Program* (pages from Australia) may yield examples that will be helpful for the second part.

Question Five: Activity Five – Supporting the wellbeing of teachers

Write a brief response to each of the following items, then discuss these with a peer or with your tutorial group.

- What is collegiality? How does it differ from friendship? How can it help teachers to deal with the challenges of their role?
- You are a teacher in Brianna's school. You notice that a fellow teacher you know fairly well has seemed very stressed and anxious over the past two weeks. What could you do to help?
- Your school wants to develop a mental health plan that will promote the wellbeing of everyone in the school community. Staff are invited to contribute to the plan, including the development of a section about looking after the wellbeing of teachers. What items do you think should be included in this section? You may wish to consider how this might intersect with other plans or policies in the school.

Tip – You may find some of the following material helpful:

MindMatters Resources: *School Matters, Bullying and Harassment and Staff Matters*. Available on-line at: www.curriculum.edu.au/mindmatters