Good Afternoon, How are you doing?

I am very well thanks and you?

Okay, well thank you. So as we have spoke already, I am Narescha Naidoo and given that you are familiar with the PBIS discipline approach, implemented at your school for a few years now, I thought that it would be valuable to interview you so that you may share some of your perceptions about the PBIS system with me. During the interview I will be asking you to share your experiences in education with me and also pay careful attention to that experience from the time that you have implemented the PBIS. Is this fine?

Yes, that’s great.

Okay, so I also do hope that this information will be valuable to you as an educator, to the school where you are at and to the Department of Basic Education and hopefully to other schools as well.

The interview session should be between 40 and 60 minutes. I do know that the zoom session is 45 minutes so if we run out of time we can just sign back in. Okay, I am going to get started. Would you please tell me about your history as an educator; how long have you been in the field of education?

Okay so I started as a matric learner teaching the childrens’ church and that’s when the love of teaching was born. I really have a passion for little children especially children who are struggling a little bit. Ya, so that’s where it started and then I went on to study drama and I got my degree and I love the fantasy part of drama especially for little children. Their reaction was so innocent and I love that. After that I studied at UNISA to for early childhood development and foundation phase. That just went on and I started working at a nursery school while studying and I worked for a couple of months at the ADHD, it was a little school; it was a little school with a few children but it wasn’t really right for me and then I started at the school where I am at the moment

Okay, thank you. Thank you for sharing that really rich experience with me. Given all those experiences how you would you describe your journey thus far?

Uhhm I think I will always stick to little children. It’s just that they are so innocent and childlike. I can’t find the right word that I’m looking for right now but they are not gullible but like little sponges, they just take in all the information and I love that. I think my experience has been like a rollercoaster ride from the little little ones to where I am at the moment and I also deal with the bigger children with concerts and things like that but it’s been a good experience.

Okay so you’ve answered the question about whether your experience has changed so when it comes to discipline in the schools even with your experience with the little ones that you work with, what has your experience with discipline been like from when you started and perhaps when you done you may expand on how its changed

Okay, so with the little ones obviously they struggle with this discipline thing. I’ve learnt over the years that routine is crucial. Even with my own child you have to have a very structured environment for children to understand what their boundaries are and they need to know what is expected of them. That’s one of the biggest things that I have learnt that you need routine and you need structure. Ya, and also how you build relationships with them. Obviously with different ages its going to change but the basics need to be the same, you need to be respectful, you need to be fair, you need to be consistent. Ya, those are the things that I have learnt over the years that if you slip up on that it just makes things a bit more challenging to deal with.

Thank you, thank you so much for sharing that. Those are great principles to incorporate into your teaching and with your kids. Would you say that this has changed from the beginning of your teaching, in any way, is there a greater need for the discipline or has it stayed the same?

Well in some cases I think it stays the same. A child still needs the structure and routine and with that comes discipline and values. The way we present that has changed for me because in the beginning I was very insecure and they (the kids) could pick up on that but later my confidence grew as I tried and tested different ways of implementing the structure my confidence has grown, and ya, I don’t know how to relay it to you now. . .

No your explanation is perfect

Okay, does it answer the question though?

Yes yes it does

It has changed though. With the technology and things that have changed and parents that become parents at a younger age, that has also really been a big influence in how the children are raised. I sometimes feel that the uhhm like respecting your elders, how to treat someone with respect, those core values are not really being taught from home always and the way that you address your family when you’re having a fight, the kids pick up on that and I think probably why the discipline isn’t always great is home stuff, so its different from when I started but there’s definitely a need for positive values and uhh I cant remember the word now..consequences. They need to know if they do this, this is going to happen

Thank you so much for that, that’s really insightful. Based on what you shared, what has your experience of discipline been like in this particular school?

When I started it was really bad, I really… A lot of people could hear the shouting, you could hear the unruliness that was happening. Once this system was implemented it brought a conduct that there wasn’t before. I think people now knew how to deal with certain situations. It was noisy, busy and frustrating in the beginning but I feel that its more calm now.

Sorry, I had laughed just now when you answered just because when I reflect on my own experience teaching, I do recall my own shouts and the hustle and so I just had a little bit of a chuckle

So next, you touched on this when you spoke about it being a little bit noisy but how would you describe the overall climate of the school where you are at now? In this case, climate refers to the overall safety and the relationships between learners and teachers and that atmosphere that’s created.

At the moment I think that us teachers really have a good relationship with the parents and the learners. If the parents are on board it really makes everything so much easier. I think involvement from all aspects. From the learners, from the parents and from the teachers seem to be good at the moment.

So prior to the question you alluded to the system that’s been implemented and we were or are speaking about PBIS. When the PBIS system was implemented in the school did you understand the need for it?

At that stage I had a very very difficult class and I was so thankful that the school actually brought somebody in to help with the discipline. I think it wasn’t just me, there were many teachers that felt very overwhelmed with the discipline because you couldn’t even get your teaching things done because discipline was always an issue and when they introduced it, for me personally I was just so thankful. I felt like, “ There’s help!” and there’s something we can do to help the children and to help us get through the curriculum because our main thing is teaching and if you can’t get that done, it gets frustrating.

Exactly, thank you. So you say you were incredibly grateful for having that assistance. How would you describe the PBIS training that you received?

The first time that I was exposed to it, I remember it was like at the end of a term and everyone felt like why are we doing this now, we are supposed to go on holiday, what’s up with this? So we were sitting in the hall and most people were sitting like this (arms crossed across chest) and once he started talking and started sharing his experiences about where he came from I felt so embarrassed towards having that attitude towards this whole thing, so asking like why now, why do we have to do this now? But the experience was so inspiring as he explained his life story and where it started and how it came to be. It was really inspirational and I think everyone left that hall felt inspired and feeling like they want to make a change. They want to improve on themselves and improve the way they do things when it comes to this.

Yes, thank you. I know we don’t have this question down on the schedule but for the purposes of insight, after that initial experience with that training, have you had other training, meetings etc.? And how have you experienced those?

So that was obviously the first one and there was this hype and inspiration but when you start having the meetings you see that it is actually quite a lot of work to get a system like this into place and the way that you sell it and the buy in that you get from everyone else is very important and I think so many people find it frustrating because you realise how much work and effort you have to put in to getting it started but there was always brainstorming. People always came up with ideas on how to do things and we tried a couple of things. The things that didn’t work we changed. Like I said in the beginning also, technology has really changed so many things. You really have to keep up with your game, you have to keep evolving with the technology so I think it was inspiring in the beginning and frustrating along the way. There was good and bad, up and down to get it going. Overall it was a very positive feeling that I got from the meetings that we’ve had and the training.

Thank you for that. 

Obviously the training helped with the process but…sorry I made a mistake with what I was saying…when it comes to PBIS as a whole, how would you describe it, now that you’ve seen it in practice and you’ve been implementing it for a few years now. What are your perceptions of the system?

Firstly, I think that you as a person have to look at the way you are used to saying things and the way that you were spoken to like, “Don’t do this or don’t do that”. You have to really change your whole way of thinking and I think that process is quite challenging for most people. For years and years and years you grew up in a certain way where your parents said to you, “ don’t do this, don’t do that, stop this” and now you have to change your whole way of being so that you can become more focused on positive reinforcements. I think that was the biggest challenge for me and for many other people I think, to get your mind shifted to a positive reinforcing way of thinking and to teach learners in a positive sense how they need to do certain things, you can’t be saying, ‘Don’t do and Stop it, you have to use, “Come on guys, let’s rather walk; isn’t it safer to rather walk to the classroom. You have to change your whole way of thinking, the tone of your voice…did I answer the question?

Yes, yes you did. Just if you could elaborate more because your experiences are so interesting with how you as an educator changed or how you had to change, before you even speak about the children so thank you for sharing that. If we can, can we still stay on the same question, but now reflect towards the children, what is your perception of the system when it comes to the kids?

I think for them also to feel more proud, like you get your learners that struggle and always get into trouble like everything is always negative around them. I think for them to suddenly achieve something by being kind to somebody and being noticed at that moment for doing something good and being praised for that. I think their whole confidence grew thinking I can actually do this, I can do well, I can behave better so I think their personality and their character also changed to a more positive a more confident child.

Thank you for that. Earlier you had spoken about technology assisting. What preparation have you had to do or have done to implement PBIS besides the training and the meetings?

I think you can’t always just use one thing; there are lots of things so you have to take what you normally use in your classroom and adapt it to accompany the PBIS like merits, demerits, that’s what we started with and that kind of changed when technology changed. We got an app that we use to immediately inform the parents if the child is doing something well or if the child is struggling with something, you can send pictures or make a comment, today this was a bit challenging please encourage your child at home to behave better tomorrow or something like that. So you use different things to incorporate or to build on the PBIS system. So you still use the positive reinforcement but we use different methods to get to the goal.

I like that

So we started using the app, we also recently attended a kids skills training. You can actually incorporate that into PBIS to do a whole class activity. There’s lots of…to keep up with the technology, there’s so many things like if you are a very visual person we’ve got charts up and explaining and if you’re an audio person, maybe you’ve got something that makes a trring that makes that sound when you do something positive in the class. I think each teacher can adapt PBIS to their learning environment and the possibilities are endless. You can do so many different things like pinterest has a lot of ideas, facebook has a lot of ideas. When you google stuff you get a lot of information. To prepare for this depends on the teacher and what you feel comfortable with and also you know your learners, you know what they will enjoy and how to implement it.

Okay, thank you. I think you’ve touched on the next thing actually, so how would you describe the impact PBIS has had in your classroom and I know the question specifically mentions classroom but you could reflect on the impact of PBIS on the classes you’ve had over the years.

I think In the beginning I really had a passion for children since I was young but the inspiration with this specific program was good; to inspire learners to be better people, like your teaching style has changed, their confidence has changed, ya the way you present lessons to make it more fun. It obviously takes more work to do more visual things, especially for little children but to put in that extra effort because you know the reward at the end will be greater. You need to work harder to put the stuff in place that you need to make sure that the lessons are fun. If I think of a child that’s maybe a bit hyperactive, like how would you implement PBIS to that child? You need to make it so fun or involve that child into your lesson, again the confidence of the learner, the excitement of the lesson and all of that builds towards that positive feeling.

It’s interesting, I don’t know have this down as a question but just hearing you, would I be correct in saying that the PBIS may have initially been known as a discipline system but it actually affects teaching, well not affects but actually influences the teaching for the better?

Yes, because it adds, like when I first started to introduce this discipline program, if they understand what is expected of them in the beginning of the lesson and if you use the positive reinforcement to keep telling them “Well done, I see you’re sitting very still in the lesson, good job!” It makes them also be more aware of what they are doing, how they are affecting the child next to them and how they are learning and interpreting the information that you give them.

Yes. I don’t mean to throw you off guard, it’s just such an interesting conversation to have. With the school that you are at being a full service school, do you then think that PBIS assists with the demands placed on you as an educator like when dealing with the hyperactive child etc

Yes, we basically teach in a multilevel way. You’ve got your weaker learners, your average learners and your stronger learner. We also use the stronger learners to help the learners that are really struggling. That gives them also more confidence, so you really incorporate this in everything. That’s why I said in the beginning also your whole mind shift needs to change because you need to think about everything as an opportunity to teach a child positivity and see themselves as a human being.

I don’t want to be redundant because you did mention that you teach the little ones in the foundation phase but that you also have experience with the children in the concerts, working with the older kids. So, if we speak about the impact that you have in your classroom, have you seen the same kind of impact on the school (PBIS’s impact on the learners in the school)?

I think the impact all depends on the educator. If you don’t have buy-in from the educator then they won’t follow the procedure and they don’t set the ground rules and they don’t have the

consequences. The children might take chances but if you as the person

reinforce what you expect of them then I think you can do it for any age

and the learners do benefit from it. They start to understand as a whole

there’s these four values we need to abide by and it must become part of everything. Like in every section of our school, in the playground, in the bathroom, in the corridor, in the classroom when you walk they know what is expected of them. There is an impact on teaching as a whole. If I see a bigger child walking past, as a foundation phase educator, you still need to reinforce those same values. Obviously you’re not going to do it like you would for the little ones, but you would say isn’t it safer to walk than run. So wherever you are you, if the teacher does really apply the values, it becomes apart of your everyday routine.

Okay, thank you. Since you have been implementing PBIS for such a long time and you can see how it works with the children in your class and in the school; what are the barriers or obstacles that you believe hinder the implementation of PBIS?

I think the inconsistency. If a teacher is not consistent, say for example your responsibility is when they let the bell ring in between when children change periods, you have to step outside to make sure that the values are being followed, and you slip up on that children are going to take chances. It’s very important to stick to the routine and know where you need to set boundaries as an educator and stick to that. The consistency is absolutely crucial in that sense. Everyone must stay consistent and stick to what you’re supposed to do.

Okay, thank you. So we’re speaking about barriers and obstacles and you’ve touched on things that the educator should do to maintain consistency and create structure. What about from the child’s perspective? So if you have a child who has behavior difficulties and is more on the extreme side of having behavioural challenges, do you still see the PBIS as being well suited and being well able to work for a child like that?

Definitely yes, but in that case you need to get the parents involved as well. So it must be teaching with the whole structure. You’ll use the PBIS system but you need to educate the parents on how to apply it and also educate the child on how to apply it. So what we normally do in those severe cases, we would have a meeting where the child is present as well as the parents and actually discuss and we come up with some sort of solution on how are we going to deal with this type of behavior and again it has to be consistent at home. They can’t just be expected to behave like that at school. I know that you asked specifically about the child but its interlinked…

Definitely, please go ahead…

Also your relationship with that child, in every single teacher’s class maybe that child will not always behave the same way because of the teacher’s personality and the relationship that they have with one another. It’s very important. I think fairness in that sense is also very important. A learner with behavior issues needs to know that they can confidently come to a teacher and say today is not a good day and the teacher can guide and help throughout the lesson while they are teaching. I hope that answers you.

Yes, perfectly. Thank you so much. I love the comment that you made about the consistency even in the different contexts. I can understand how that would make a huge difference to a child who is struggling and who has behavior difficulties of a higher severity. Next, you can tell me if you’ve already answered this question. Are there aspects that you feel facilitate the PBIS program? I know that you have mentioned teacher buy-in and teacher consistency, as well as involvement from parents so I don’t want to be repetitive, but is there anything else that you would like to add or are those the main things?

You need to see what works at your school. You can’t expect to take the same program the way that we use it at our school and implement it exactly the same way at your school, it’s not going to work. You need to use what you have access to and you need to know your children and know the kind of parents that you are dealing with, so you need to actually adapt this to fit your specific need. You get schools where behavior is terrible all the time in all the classrooms and in that sense you’ll have to approach it differently to implement it. Ya, I think it needs to be customized to each classroom, to each teacher and to each school, but the basic core values need to stay the same.

Then, your school has been implementing it for a few years now, do you feel like PBIS should continue to be apart of your school and be practised within your school in the foreseeable future?

Definitely, definitely. When you meet with the parents that come in that’s new to the school, when we explain to them what the school is all about, we definitely refer to the PBIS values always. We explain to them that this is expected of all the learners and this is what is going to be taught and reinforced constantly so they know at this school this is what we teach learners. What I like about our school is that its visually seen everywhere like in the hall you see the charts up, on the field there’s places where its advertised and there’s posters on the wall, I think it’s everywhere if you look. If you walk down the corridors you see it. That’s what our school has done and its changed us for the better. I don’t think we will ever not have PBIS.

Carrying on from question, would you then recommend PBIS to be implemented in other schools? I think we can start to consider other schools in the community, and then schools in the area or vicinity?

I think we are very privileged in the sense that we were one of the pilot schools that it was tested on and I absolutely would feel so proud if we can promote this to the other schools because it really is something that changed my life for the better, my teaching style, even the way I treat my son at home like you can hear my parents would speak to me like in a certain way and I’m like no no no or wait hold on this is how we say it, so it’s really become a part of how I do things. It’s not just at school; it’s how I interact with anybody so I think this is an amazing program to do in the schools. I would definitely recommend it. It’s hard in the beginning to get it started but once it’s going it becomes part of who you are and liable for.

So speaking about it being implemented in other schools, let’s think of our context so let’s take a scenario where it would be promoted to be implemented in a rural area where the resources are limited and perhaps teacher training and meetings don’t take place regularly, teachers are overworked and burdened. Would you say that PBIS could still be implemented and perhaps in a different way so that it will still be a benefit to them?

I think that you need atleast one person at the school that runs with it. So if you have one person that’s really passionate about changing the behavior at the school. Their drive basically becomes implementing it. Obviously, you don’t need all the fancy stuff everywhere. It’s convenient and its nice but you don’t need it. This is a mind thing and a way that you stick to the program. It’s not just visual, though it helps but like I said if you have someone who can run with it and implement it you can do it anywhere.

Okay, thank you. I know again I didn’t pen this down as a question so you may feel like, “you didn’t tell me about this (Participant laughter), but I’m Just curious if you had to share with an educator of a different school about PBIS and they asked you, well what is PBIS? In a brief summary how would you explain it to a fellow teacher?

The way I see it and everything will probably experience it differently but for me the word positive. If I hear the word PBIS I see the word positive. Sorry…now I forgot the question

How would you explain it to someone whose never heard it before? So they say to you, you say you implement this PBIS for discipline or teaching values but what is it?

It is basically you reinforcing positivity to change the behavior that you expect. So if you want a child to behave a certain way, you need to reteach them how to behave in a certain way, you need to show them what the boundaries are and you need to positively with happiness, a smile, good vibes, you need to help them change it for the better to help them become a better person. So you teach (I’m trying to think of the right sentence)

No please don’t stress

You reteach expected positive behavior

Almost model it

Yes model is the word

Yes that’s the word I was looking for. You cant just expect them to know, you need to show. That’s why I said its in your whole being. It must be how you are then they learn from it.

Thank you, that’s so insightful and a very different approach to what we’ve been accustomed to when it comes to discipline and even to teaching. So just to round off everything, do you, in your expert opinion and I really mean it because you have been implanting PBIS and experiencing it day by day, do you have any additional suggestions when it comes to PBIS or concerns anything regarding the system

I think when you do decide on choosing this program you need to understand that it does take a lot of group work and it is a big process but the rewards are endless. For me PBIS, the challenges was to implement it and to get it started the obstacles were to get buy in from all the teachers and all the stakeholders, the children, the parents. I mean obviously that would be in the ideal world that everyone does it the way it’s supposed to be done but what I like about PBIS is that you can use your own individual personality to implement it. It doesn’t sit in a box. You can, it can be anything, creative, it can be changed, it can be molded to suit any structure or institution or classroom

Okay, so I have asked all the questions from my side. I really appreciate you being so honest and transparent about your experiences, truly insightful. So thank you so much. Is there anything that you would like to share from your side?

I just want to say thank you as well because it’s nice to go back and think of how it was in the beginning and realize how much we’ve changed and grown because you don’t realize it actually when you are part of it and doing it all the time. I think one thing that I would like to improve on from this meeting is to make sure that the new teachers that are coming on really understand how far we’ve come because now that we’ve been talking about this I realize that there’s such a lot of new teachers coming in but they don’t really understand what is happening and how far we’ve come and how we’ve built and I think they just pick up and carry on. I think they need to understand the history of it. There’s a lot of growing pains in the beginning but I think that’s the one thing I took from this is to make sure that people understand how important this is and how long it took to get where we are today and how essential it is

Thank you so much, it was a privilege. I have learnt so much. I can’t wait to go back and listen to it reflect on it. Thank you so much. I really appreciate your time, it’s been so well worth it

Thank you, it was so nice doing this. It was such a lovely experience and thank you for the experience for the opportunity.

Thank you for being willing and we managed to stay within our time.

Good afternoon. Thank you so much for agreeing to be part of my study, I do appreciate it. I hope that it will be beneficial to you as I know it's going to be to me. As we had spoken about this previously, given that you are familiar with the place discipline system and have been implementing it an actual school for a few years now. I knew that it would be valuable to interview you on your perceptions about the system. And so that will be the crux of our interview. And in doing the interview, I will ask you to share about your experiences with discipline in education and also paying particular attention to this experience after the PBIS system was implemented. And as I said before, I do hope it will be a valuable contribution, not only to you as an educator, but also to your school and to the GDE as well. Our interview should be between 40 and 60 minutes. Before we start, do you have any questions or concerns?

No, no I don’t.

Okay, thank you. So I'm going to transition straight into the questions. I would like for you to please tell me about your history as an educator. How long have you been in the field of education?

Whoa, this is my thirty fourth year. It's been a while since the start of those 34 years...

(laughs)

Yes, that’s a long time and a valuable time I’m sure.

Do you want me to tell you a little bit about that?

Yes please, I was just about to ask for you to share about that experience?

You know it's been varied, I started in the primary school in the period when education was still segregated, so I was teaching in a coloured school with coloured teachers and coloured learners, and that was how it was. And then primary school changed and things changed, they also rebuilt the school. Learners could then attend any school they wanted to. We got mostly black learners so that changed, some black teachers. I then taught matric and left that school and then came to the primary school which was then a Model C school with predominantly white learners

And so our school now, we have also transitioned from that demographics and dynamics to to what it is today. And along the way, ya, I've seen a lot of changes, like interesting things over the years. And like I say many experiences at different times.

Yes, thank you. Thank you for sharing and what has your experience with discipline in schools been like?

Also very different, because remember it was long ago. It's different, but it's the same to me, let me put it that way. When I started we used the cane, corporal punishment for children for discipline, using the cane no, I shouldn't say discipline, they were punished using the cane. They were smacked and basically just physically abused. And so during that time, it was relatively simple to administer this. If you don't listen, I beat you. Out of fear, most times children obeyed and the parent, strangely enough, supported that kind of thing. So if you beat a child, nobody came to the school to ask you why, how you know? So, yes, and then gradually we moved away from that. Corporal punishment was outlawed and so things changed. So that is where the change came. But the attitude of teachers, that's why I'm saying it's the same it hasn’t changed, though. So we still want to punish. But because we can't instil fear or that degree of fear into the child, it seems like there is no way to discipline the child. In fact, we don't have a means to punish. And that, I think, for me is is the glaring similarity, but difference. So we haven't changed how we think. It's just that we have different ways of punishment. And that's why teachers complain all the time, and say you've taken away corporal punishment and you’ve given us nothing. So so yes. So I've been at various levels, you know, from teacher to at the previous high school, we instituted a disciplinary committee, which tried cases after school of children that didn't follow the rules. Late comers, so, you know, what we used to do, a child came late right and was supposed to stay after school for a kind of hearing but they leave so what we used to do is we take his left shoe and we keep it for the whole day so that they can’t leave, can you believe the humiliation. So it was that kind of thing, easy to have control because the punishment was effective. When things changed it became less of a threat to children and so teachers still want to punish but they don’t have effective ways to punish. So ya, at the new school where I am now, we’ve been trying to with the PBIS change that kind of thinking.

So since you’ve just mentioned the new school, what has your experience of discipline been like at the school where you are now at?

From when I arrived to now?

Yes

Look it was a Model C school so it had a lot of processes in place, you know, the merit and demerit system and initially I was quite impressed with how things were running, but then I realized it's the same story, they've just got an effective means to punish the child. You know, it was ruled by fear and the teachers themselves seemed to fear the management…the principal if I could say so. So it was that kind of thinking. It wasn’t so much that the people were doing what they’re doing, but what they're doing was cause you stay out of trouble and Ya, then we introduced the PBIS system. So, yeah, it was it was very strange because the punishments that that the children had, although it wasn't physical punishment. No, they made children stand and face a pole for the whole break. Or sit in lines, you know, take away the breaks and made them write lines… the insults and the humiliation, it’s all still that instilling a fear, you know, to punish rather than to teach the behaviour

So just on what you’ve shared, you know this isn't a pinned down question on the on the interview schedule, but would you say that instead of some educators having an understanding of discipline they have an understanding of punishment?

Yes, they confuse the two. Absolutely. Discipline is not punishment, discipline is teaching the behaviour you would like to see and it takes support for the child and it needs to be done, you know, and the ability to withstand the temptation to do the wrong thing.

So it's a long process, but ultimately we're looking at good citizenship. If you look at our current situation. People walk around, they don't wear mask, the lockdown rules don't apply very simply because the punishment is not effective…it’s a problem. It starts in the schools. We teach our children to behave out of fear not because it's the right thing to do. And I think teachers, we still the old guard, you know, we we still come from that. A lot of teachers come from that period at our school where children were beaten, you know, and we’re sending that message over to the new ones coming in also, unfortunately. So it's perpetuating itself.

Yeah, and also perhaps they aren't realizing that they are perpetuating where they come from even where they came from in their homes.

Yes. So so we have to reteach the whole discourse on what discipline is. What does it means? Yes in society in the homes in the religious institutions all of it. To make a significant change its going to take generations. 

So I think for us to expect that the results that we hope to achieve will be achieved overnight is yeah, it's wishful thinking

 It's very much. When it comes to the climate of your current School, how would you describe it? So when you think about you know School climate is about the safety and the relationships between Learners and the teachers in the overall atmosphere.

I think I think we've got quite a mixed bag. We are in transition I think. I think we've achieved a lot of success in terms of changing how some people think, you know to building relationships to nurturing a safe environment. And also we want less shouting we want less humiliation of children. So some people are on board than you get, you know, people that are battling to change and That you know, it's again, it's a fear because the fear of the teachers is to complete the curriculum and what’s standing between them and completing the curriculum is that child and what do they do to that child? They do well, you understand that but there's also a lot of thinking around building relationships, creating trust, you know, promoting the values that we’ve brought in. I think the new younger teachers that are coming in are coming in at a good time where they can see, you know, the difference between the two and many of them are choosing to build relationships to nurture the child. Oh, so it fluctuates, so I can't say that it's a nice climate, but generally, you know, well you know a school is a very difficult thing because there are so many children some days some people build the relationships and the next day because of this because of that because of what happened at home, they’re completely different. There are fluctuations, but I think we’ve marked out the part. We’d like to travel on and we’re getting there for us now is just a journey.

But even that just making the progress to be able to do that I think is admirable and so, you know going back just tracking back a few years ago when the PBIS was initially implemented into the school. Did you personally see the need for it?

Look, I knew that what we are doing is not necessarily going to just benefit the child right away. I’ve always had this thing that uhhm we need to change how we discipline and teach the behaviour

(Noise)

Sorry, will you just repeat yourself just from the start of your response. It was just a little bit noisy.

It was me. I was moving around.

So so no I'm saying that I felt that you know the way we were trying to get the children to behave there was something wrong with it and I've been reading quite a lot of things and different methods and whatever and you know, you try and apply those things and then Khalil Osiris came to the school and made this presentation about PBIS, which I'd never heard about, behaviour intervention and support and he was quite a persuasive guy, you know he pushed all the right buttons and and I was part of the team of teachers that listened to the presentation and promoted it or advocated it, you know to the rest of the staff? So yes I thought that at that point that this was something that we needed as a school and a community. Definitely.

Okay. And how would you describe the PBIS training that you received whether it be you know that initial meeting and then on going meetings and trainings that you've had with other staff members over the years?

Look initially when he came, you know, like I say he was a persuasive guy. So he spoke to the staff. He spoke to the parents, spoke to the children and got everybody up into a frenzy. We got a group together that would you know, like pilot this thing and they would direct and organize everything and have meetings with him. But while we did this we realised that he’s not actually giving us a lot of direction. There was a lot of feeling our way through and thinking around it which which I suppose is right, but we needed practical ways to get it off the ground and we had a committee that was formed and we then did a lot of reading and research and whatever else and and we came up with the expectations grid you know, all of those kinds of so, I think that the training that he did with us was more on the motivational side but I think there could have been a lot more practical training and practical support. You know for example the system has got three tiers. Yes, the general Tier level 1 and then 2 and 3 but he never at any point introduced us to tier 2 and 3 interventions. you know because that's a point we were eventually going to reach so the training could have been a lot better, but it was necessary just to keep us going to inspire and motivate the parents to get on board Yeah, but very much from an American perspective. You know, I remember once he bought pizza for the entire grade. I thought if this was going to be the PBIS we do we going to be bankrupt in no time, but ya that kind of thing. Mmm, very charismatic guy, you know and I think from a business business perspective he tried to capture that PBIS thing with his brand of PBIS Africa almost to try a kind of a copyright kind of thing. You know, he changed it a little bit. But there’s a whole lot of information on PBIS because it's a big thing in the states.

 Yes it’s a global a global initiative, you know.

I know they've changed it I think in Australia. It’s not PBIS but it's the same thing. I forget what it is now,

Not RTI?

No RTI was before?

Not just PBS?

No that was something else. I've written it down somewhere. But in any case, yeah, so there was a lot of information out there so we didn't lack for that but I think yeah, he focused a lot more on just philosophical part of it.

 As a school, you know, you've had to take and implement the process And and teach the expectations, what are your perceptions of the PBIS system?

Yeah, I think. There's a lot that’s good about it, but I think there's always the danger of taking and importing a system in its entirety and using it within your context.

Yes.

 So I think we are at the stage now where we keep alot of the PBIS but a lot needs to be added you know like those values that we've spoken about I mean that everything is based on, you know, be safe be healthy and all of that, that's brilliant. We probably want to add a “be caring” you know, yes

So that we’re happy with the fact that it's intentional, intentionally building relationships though. So that's good. We also like the teach the behaviour, teach , practice, model, remodel, so that aspect. I think one thing we’re becoming more aware of is the paperwork that is required because I think in the states, they've got systems

 Yes

Yes, electronic systems that make it simpler. I also know that the districts and states are involved, you know funding is even dependent on some schools having PBIS

Yes exactly and that makes a huge difference.

So we don't have that in place and so we need to look at that carefully particularly the office referrals so so we'll keep some of it. I think for us also I've been talking a lot about the reward system and how that is more extrinsic motivation and maybe there needs to be less of that. We also want to bring in some social and emotional learning as a tier 2 and tier 3 interventions.

So we haven't been doing much on our two and three because if tier one isn't working properly then the filtering through supposedly as tier two and three may not be accurate. So if a child for example is constantly called up for doing homework. But it's because of the home context then that child is not in a tier 2 or tier 3 range, you know, so so interventions, we have to be careful about how we're going to approach that but it is something we need to work on. So we're looking at Social and emotional learning. We looking at restorative practices in the school because I think that goes in and worth teaching. You know. We also want to look at kids skills. I don't know solution-focused. This is solution focused therapy and based on that is a program called kids skills where you teaching the child skills without having to go into the deep background of the child. So irrespective of the child's context of psychological makeup or whatever it is. He can be taught skills. In fact with kids skills our teachers were part of 15 in the country. We've got I think seven or eight that are qualified kids skills coaches internationally qualified so that’s our next step you know to talk a little more in terms of tier 2 and 3 interventions. Hmm.

 So I would say PBIS yes some of it but some of it we definitely going to throw some out. Yeah, so you take the good and what doesn't work for us. We'll just not use it and find something that we can use.

Exactly. Thank you. Thank you. That was extremely extremely valuable, you know, you've been sharing your perceptions and through that you've answered so many of the other questions, you know, whether it be what are your concerns about it? What are your thoughts about it suggestion?

So if we just take the PBIS is to understand you correctly you're saying that now in your school that you have to make it adaptable to your context. For it to be implemented within the school and within the home context, it's not a one-size-fits-all solution and that's why their were problems with discipline in the past.

Absolutely, you know what it is. It's a it's a framework. it's your business because it's your school. Yes. We need something that you're going to hang everything else on and I think they have that and even without them knowing it they offer a lot of support like from other websites, you know that are overseas. It's helpful you can't you can't ignore that. So for us, I think that's that's It's a good structure. But there’s a lot of other things that they don’t have that we can Implement. I mean yesterday if you read about it is so many things, conscious discipline is another one that you know, I've been reading about you.

Oh, yeah, but yeah, like you say, you know, you can't take what works in America and just try it as it is in South Africa.

Would you say that the expectations that have been taught and practiced and modelled and the focus on you know, nurturing positive relationships between teachers and children. Have you seen those positives of the PBIS benefit the children that you teach and in the school overall?

Yeah, that's a difficult one. You know, I don't think the teachers teach the behaviour expectations within the context of the values as they should so that is definitely an area we need to work on but for me a plus is that if you talk to the child and you'll say what does it mean to be safe, you know, so the language is beginning to become a part of what and who they are. Yes. And even if you don't tell them it's a value even if they don't know what a value is you know, you are teaching you them that whatever they do is attached to something, you know what I’m saying so that's a good thing. I think we still need to jack up a lot on because again, you know curriculum is a priority. Oh, you don't want to take up your teaching period with a feelings check or yeah started practicing how we should walk to the bathroom or things like that. So that for me is a bit of a constraint, but it's always there. Always we must teach we must teach and I think with time people will begin to understand what it is we want. Yeah, I think for sure there's an awareness around the values even if they don't understand it yet. Now, you know that I like with the kids skills program like is that the child identifies the area where a skill is lacking. Okay, you know we have that conversation and the child also is part of naming a skill that they going to learn but also now practices the skill brings along some friends on board that will support in learning the skill. when they learn the skill there’s a celebration of some sort and then the child must teach the skill to somebody else, you know, so you reinforcing it through teaching and it's a step-by-step and also from teachers to childrenthey can all learn the skills. So yeah, and I think for the for the tier 2 and 3 it's going to count a lot. Yes, the other thing I am really excited about is emotional learning and build that into our curriculum, you know, so so that that's something I'm reading up on ya. 

Thank you just to go back. I want to make sure that I haven't missed anything. We spoke about you know context and how the PBIS can’t be a one size fits all system , are there any other barriers or obstacles that you feel hinder? Wait. I know he's speaking about P based implementation of PBIS for these and any other you know system that you might try to implement even yeah, do you think there are any other barriers or obstacles?

You know, the schooling system itself is a barrier. It really is if I look at our school system a lot of what we do is dependent on management to drive it to ensure its implementation its very difficult for teachers to become agents of change in a situation where the principle has all the control. And so if you have a principal like ours that when the initiative is made that's you know supporting the people that are trying to make it work the chances of change are good hmm But taking it to a school where that principle is not interested and there is no support it stops there, you know, so unfortunately the difficulty will always be in moving it into a school is how much support it receives from the management and I don't know that's also part of what I'm getting interested in me is to empower teachers to be able to be those kinds of changes and stop being the victim and those kinds of processes because it must come from there it can't come from the top all the time because Yeah, you will just make your life unpleasant, you know, when you're not part of anything and you're just being told what to do, please. So for me, I'm like PBIS is yeah, that's that that would be one of the biggest challenges the fact that it must have support from the top to be implemented down. 

It's also frustrating I can imagine, you know for teachers because they know their children and they know their experiences. They know what they are experiencing on a day-to-day basis. They are the ones that are interacting with those children but to six seven hours, if not more, you know with extra murals or kinds of practices. So for them to almost have their hands cut off for lack of a better expression. Yeah, definitely frustrating.

 They don’t have their hands cut off, hey cut off their own hands and hand it to the principal. I’m serious, we have the power to make the difference. Hmm, you know just don't realize it even during this period that we are experiencing now teachers are still playing the victim. Unfortunately and where that comes from, I don't know but it’s the reality and if you keep playing the victim you’re going to teach that attitude to the child, because they’re perceptive these little buggers, they pick up on everything

Okay, I think you've already touched on what helps facilitate the implementation of PBIS do you and you may have just you know, you actually have answered this but you might feel like you want to elaborate on it further, do you then feel like PBIS should continue to have a place with in your school in the foreseeable future?

 Yes definitely but like I say, you know parts of it, a modified version of it. Yeah, but it's a good structure, I think. You need to start somewhere. You know, and for me it balances the old with the new yes, because the old wanted consequences, you know, that's why a lot of our teachers still focus too much on on the demerit if you can use that word part instead of the affirmation part. But it allows that little bit of old but it also brings in new ideas. So I suppose it's from the known to the unknown. Yes, you know.

Would you then recommend PBIS being implemented in other schools, even if we just start off with schools in our community?

 Yes, I think so. And so it's got its got good underlying principles. It's got good structure. It's got good resources and adapt it to you. So yeah. There’s nothing harmful about it. It’s better schools than what most schools have at the moment . It’s almost a supercharged merit and demerit system, you know that just adds other interesting dimensions because I think a lot of the school's I have got a merit and demerit system you know that’s going again to being punished.

For sure, I think so.

Thank you.

But you mustn't go sell the product, you know people need to understand what it's about. Yes, and I'd like to see it must come from the teachers up. Hmm, then it's more sustainable rather than from the top down.

Thank you are there any other thoughts that you have regarding it or anything that we've spoken about?

Yeah, no, nothing nothing that I can think of right now there's a lot of things that goes through your mind, you know, and but for now that is it.

Okay, Thank you so much for your time. Thank you for your valuable information. It's been so insightful, you know for myself, and I know it will be for my study.

I really do appreciate it.

Yes, I can't wait to see you to read what you have found.

Good morning. Thank you so much for agreeing to participate in my study, Sir. It's a privilege to have you I do hope that the time that we spend will be beneficial to you. And I know it will definitely be beneficial to me.

Absolutely

And so throughout this interview, I will ask you to share with me about your experiences as an educator, especially after the implementation of PBIS at your school.

I had asked for you to be part of the study because I know that you are familiar with the PBIS discipline system. And I know that it will be insightful for me to hear about your perceptions and your experiences on this system being implemented at the school that you are teaching at.

Okay

Okay, and so I'm going to just ask you to please share with me what (coughs)…excuse me.. What your journey as an educator and what it has been like in within the field of education.

Certainly, okay. I started teaching back in ‘1987 in Canada. So I taught for about six years in Canada and then seven years in South Africa. I was in the ministry for 15 years. So we were involved in growing and organising children for trips and holiday clubs. We ran life skills courses in schools, church bible club so ya that is more personal but its still a personal product of being involved in education

Wow, that’s a long time. I mean, I'm sure you have rich experience

Definitely

How would you describe that 28th year journey? What has it been like?

Mostly rewarding, I mean beyond children learning and achieving, I love the feedback from both parents and learners which I appreciate it, not only PBIS values but life skill values, how to take initiative and taking part in things well and not just working to meet expectations but to exceed expectations with their teachers, with their behaviour, with their achievement. I think another benefit to me teaching in South Africa has been then having the freedom to integrate my Christian faith in learning and teaching and reinforce some biblical principles such as working hard or being the best you can be and more importantly teaching them to honour God. The highlight has been Bible Club, where we were having well before lockdown about 25 To 27 kids, we have time to praise and worship, have testimonies and bible teaching. But on the flip side there have been some disappointments so something that’s stood out for me over the years has been investing a lot of time and energy into the disciplining of learners, providing feedback to their parents about unacceptable behaviour, messages on class dojo, phone calls, meeting with parent you receive very little change in the child's behaviour because parents do little or next to nothing to affirm or reaffirm, uh the discipline we’ve given their child in school. So far it’s been a joy to witness the behaviour of children who are transforming from repeating behaviours into behaving positively as a result of the interventions that I have invested into them you know with reporting unacceptable behaviour, sending messages on Class Dojo, phone calls to the parents and parent meeting. One more disappointment I want to share is that too many children have underachieved on my assessments. Some don’t care or have little ambition to learn, they don’t appear to have a vision for their future and they don’t value their education or put much effort into their studies at school, so that’s been a hard one to recover

Okay, thank you. Thank you so much for sharing. So you mentioned discipline when you were sharing about your experiences and in teaching and I'd like you to just share what your experience with discipline has been like throughout your teaching journey.

Gladly. Discipline’s always been a challenge. It depends on the discipline that the parent community of a school instils in the child. So at some of the meetings, at Discovery primary school children, Mr Abraham's shared at a meeting, he said, “ It’s the job of the parents to teach and discipline their children. So however with the parents who don’t teach their children it becomes difficult to properly calm their children so then it becomes a case where you are taking energy away from providing instruction to covers discipline. It takes the teachers energy and the learner’s right to learn and the teacher’s right to teach, so it’s difficult to balance

Yeah, I can I can imagine that with, with that experience of discipline, how would you say yours has changed from the time that you started teaching to now?

It's certainly taken a lot more. I can remember I mentioned starting my career in in ‘87 back in Canada. And you know, back then compared to now learners were more behaved. They certainly came from more whole nuclear families, with both the father and mother, not all but some. I’m estimating but let’s say 80% of the families of the parents were together.

But now being in a South Africa context I have witnessed and studied an alarming decline in the discipline of learners not all, but where it used to be maybe one or two in the class that were rowdy and would need all kinds of support to now five ill-disciplined learners in the class who need behaviour modification interventions and of course we know some of the families, there’s so many children coming to school from broken and dysfunctional families that also impact on the child’s behaviour.

Yes definitely and your experience of discipline at your current school? What has that been like?

Yeah, so I started teaching here up in 2014 and yeah getting established as a new teacher and getting to know and respecting the authority, your authority as the teacher, yeah so it was a battle, but we persevere and then I think uh, I think it’s good that PBIS came to our school in our school because I had reached the stage then that the discipline was demanding too much. It was impacting on my profile, of course, taking it home and taking it out on the family, wasn’t good for our family life. I had actually spoken to our principle and started giving him notice that I was going to start looking for a teaching position elsewhere. Thankfully. It was just at the right time that the implementation of PBIS as well as Class Dojo started soon after that that the discipline of the learners at our school generally started to improve. I do want to note for the record that you know before the implementation of PBIS our school lost several good teachers as a result of ill-discipline of too many learners at this school and when I asked about the root of them leaving, certain learners has just become too much to cope with and they couldn’t handle it up. 

Thank you. I think thank you so much for sharing that. So with you sharing about the the implementation of PBIS. I'm just going to jump there so would you say because of your experiences with the learners you were teaching, did you understand the school's choice then implement PBIS? Did you see the need for it?

Clearly there was a need. I think every teacher had their rules and code of conduct , at the time you know what we needed was convergence. A school community wide standard of behaviour that I think the PBIS brought to the fore. It adds of course to the convergence, to the agreement to our core values of being respectful and being responsible and healthy and safe, that we could all promote within our own classrooms, across the grade as an entire school community.

Definitely, when the PBIS was implemented initially, how would you describe the training that you as an educator received?

I would say it was adequate. The Professor Osiris, Khalil Osiris was an inspiration; he was a charismatic kind of guy to get us going. But I think what was needed was lessons from other South African schools that had implemented PBIS although it may have been that we were among the first, I do remember there were some allusions to that. So we did come back, we had more training and follow up meetings. With the PBIS representatives as well, I think he had some follow up meetings with them so I think that it was a good start. I want to share that one of the most valuable lesson we learnt in our training was that just as misbehaviour is a learnt well I can’t say it’s a skill, a learnt practice, is behaviour can be unlearnt and positive behaviour can be taught and learnt in its place and practised by our learners. Of course that has taken time but we have made some progress which is most encouraging.

Would how would you then describe your training after or has has there been any so after that initial, you know meeting and follow up with Professor Osiris has there been other training based on the needs that you now saw as a teacher, you know while teaching in class and having to implement the system.

There hasn’t been subsequent training or courses but there had been mention of it in the staff meeting in the beginning of the year but something else that concerns me is that with the new teachers that we’ve had coming in, I don’t know if they’ve had orientation or training in PBIS practices. So I think PBIS seems to be losing some momentum, losing some profile and grab attention and I think we do need to and keep it as a focal point, under current but that we are flowing and I think there needs to be as I say some, with the new people coming in they need to be caught up to speed.

Thank you. And since you have been a part of implementing PBIS for several years. Now. How would you please share with me your perceptions of the PBIS system?

Sure, you know, uh, I when I think positive behaviour interventions and supports strategy, I think it really is a package. It packages principles teachers have always known. We all know, you know to get the most out of our learners or inspire them to, you’ve got to, as a teacher in a sense you’re their boss you’ve got to go and develop a positive relationship with them. As well we know that we need to keep things simple in principle and to simplify and improve on all our expectations or core values that are easy for all parents and learners to remember was progressive, so that’s good. So I think in principle the PBIS strategy is good, it has been valuable to our own school and would be helpful to any school that would want to engage with a the possibility of integrating PBIS at their school.

Yes, okay. Thank you. Then as an educator who has had to implement it, what kind of preparations have you had to do, you know to implement the PBIS within your classroom and your interactions with learners?

At the classroom level I don’t think that we’ve had to do a lot. We’ve got posters of the core values that we could build in the classroom, you know the school at large displayed the core values around the school as well as the expected behaviours of what that behaviour looks like in the bathroom and along the corridors and so on. The prominence of PBIS and the profile of it is credible at present around our school that’s a good thing to keep it in the fore of the minds of our learners but I must say that in the classroom it didn't create a huge amount of work. We also have the different levels, codes of misbehaviour and consequences, that is also on the framework. I did do the preparation, I took the time to present that to my classes, what the different levels of misbehaviour and the consequences if they disregarded those rules,what the consequences and misbehaviour would be. Yes, there’s some preparation involved in presenting it to new classes everywhere.

Then within your classroom. How would you say PBIS has impacted your classroom if if at all?

Sure it's certainly it's certainly helped, I’ve got to just uh make mention of how well PBIS pairs with Class Dojo so, you know, we’ve got the merit and demerit system in PBIS paralleled on Class Dojo that we can merit and demerit learners readily and then of course, you know when I demerit a child, I usually send a note to explain what it what misbehaviour the child displayed to warrant the demerits that they received and then too often, I send a message to the parents to give even more detail for them to know, in hope that that the parent with follow up with the child and get the child learning and as well impress upon them the need for them to correct the misbehaviour to behave appropriately so with that effort that would take up time. I think more, I’ve had parents who follow up those reports and reinforce and sometimes, parents will add their own discipline to whatever discipline we as teachers give whether that’s a reprimand or detention, yeah so I think overall, the PBIS practice has helped significantly in the class.

Okay, thank you. Thank you. Thank you for sharing that and you know since we've now spoken about how its impacted in the classroom, given the amount of yearss that you've had the opportunity to implement it, what would you say are the barriers or obstacles to to the

PBIS and to the implementation of it?

Okay, let me just remember that one. I think barriers are when not everybody, when not all the teachers are are on board, with the PBIS practice. Ya we have teachers who are with us, who teach appropriate behaviour, who also give demerits and merits and who have close communication with parents but unfortunately there are some teachers who don’t seem to reinforce the core values of PBIS and who don’t bother to use the Class dojo, to communicate with the parents about the positive behaviours as well as the misbehaviours of children, I don’t know if there’s a possibility that they do because I’ve been in staff meetings where they’ve said that there are those who hardly do, but it seems to be left to the teachers to do as they please, where as I would have expected the head of department to come alongside them and find out what’s the barrier? Why aren’t they? I mean we receive reports that teachers don’t have data to communicate on the Class Dojo. You know our school for the first time, they did ask teachers to give them a claim of who how much data did you use during the lockdown period, that suggests to me that if there are teachers who don’t available access to Wi-Fi at home, they do have the pay for data to communicate with their parents, especially with Class dojo, then they should be encouraged to buy the data and claim it back from the school so that’s not a barrier.

They don't seem to reinforce the current value of PBIS and don't make use of the possibility to communicate with the parents about the positive behaviours as well as the risk behaviours of our program, but I think we and I don't know what to do. I think another or obstacle are the lack of follow through of consequences and rewards. I think with our system, from time to time we’ve been good with the white, pink, blue slips but there are teachers and I have personally called teachers to order where I can see, since I’m connected to every Intermediate and senior class teacher through Computers. I can see where learners have exceeded 30 demerits and they have not been issued a detention letter so there’s just a lack of accountability there, to letting things go without holding learners accountable for their misbehaviour and the consequences. At the same time as learners who are supposed to be getting detentions, once they get 60 demerits, there’s supposed to be a disciplinary hearing or interview and in the first term there were kids who were over 60, Grade 7 kids and there was no disciplinary hearing or interview, so as I say there’s been a lack of accountability in terms of sticking to the consequences that we’ve set out on our, so that erodes then when there’s a lack of consequences, you don’t see the value of demerits. Then on the flip side with merits, you know, we, over the years there was a time that we gave those kids who had achieved a certain percentage of positive behaviour, 75 per cent positive behaviour or more, we would reward them with a packet of ice cream cool or maybe to wear civvies but that seems to have faded away.

So they’re getting demerits but they aren’t being rewarded in anyway for that good behaviour that good work, so that also I think detracts from the value the significance of earning those merits. There was a change in kind of practice with merits in rewards but that was a time when we would give badges if they earned over 50 merits or over 200 merits. Then we changed it to percentage because the reason for that, that I alluded to earlier was that there were some good things and some grades where two teachers were giving more merits than other grades and so the problem of merits was that it wasn’t the best barometer of the child’s behaviour. Then we did percentage of the positive behaviour using Class dojo and that was better because then it didn’t matter how many merits they had accrued, it was put as merits versus demerits, it was perhaps 75% or higher then where they would get to wear civvies which was kind of an anomaly with

For Grade six and Grade five, for 75% of positive behavior,they would get to wear civvies, in Grade 6 they had to get 80% and then in Grade 7 the bar was set higher to 90% of the behaviour for the learners to be able to wear civvies at the end of term so there was that obscurity in terms of standards in the grades, but there wasn’t any kind of consensus of what the standard should be, what the reward should be and so on and so on. I think the thing here is that with PBIS you need a champion, someone who can drive it, keep it fresh you know Mr Feldman was doing that at the time and I think Mrs Whitcomb, our two deputies and then it kind of lost…uh...uh I think it lost emphasis or I don’t know what happened but it seemed to be fading.

Okay, thank you. Thank you for all that uh that valuable information. I uh I wanted to ask from what you were sharing about, the barriers and obstacles. Let’s paint the scenario that there is a champion running with pushing the PBIS and making sure that it works and teachers are more progressive and consistent when it comes to the merit and demerit system and in using the lass dojo, so in that ideal situation, would you then say that PBIS would work even for your child with intensive behaviour difficulties?

Ya, I think it would work. I mean it is working just not as effectively as it could. It would certainly work more effectively if we did have, as I say the support of a HOD or deputy principal who could come alongside the teachers and just give us the points we need about recognizing parts of behavior, uh, reporting bad behavior to parents or Uh, look, I see learners are now over 10. Have you given them the white slip? just that followed up and reinforcement and support that teachers need. Because, you know, they get busy with things. Well, now I wrote about one or 2% but there's very few children who require behavior modesty who need, you know, a significant amount of more support. Okay, my logic is that we've got learning support teachers, or as you know, LSC and their focus has been on, Of course, the academics in English and math. You know it. You know, it seems to me that they have done, you know, certainly a lot like done in Turn Around Tuesdays. I mean, I thought having an intervention like that, uh, for those learners, you know, who have your challenges. Uh, some kind of special intervention like that, you know, would be valuable. Unfortunately when you left there wasn’t anyone to continue that intervention. And so it stopped. But you know, I think if not the LSC teacher , you know, maybe there could be potential to train them up and bring them up to handle, you know way a small group interaction? I think you had an incredible challenge I think it was very brave to take all those Grade 7s into one place and to try and work with them but maybe a HOD or deputy could be, uh, tasked with that job off reforming the behavior, looking very closely to reform, the behavior off those learners and get to know their home situations. And there were there, were times when Mr Feldman did take some initiative in that direction and he would have, uh, kids reporting to him who are on the daily reports before school after school and check in with them. 

Yes.

Yeah. So you know, the daily report we have continued to use from time to time. And that certainly, uh, has been helpful and we’ll probably continue to use. Uh, so yes I think PBIS does have the potential you know, to be, uh, the work more effectively than it has.

Thank you. And, you know, I think in your responses, you've already shared, you can correct me if I'm wrong, and you’ve really shared all the things that you believe could facilitate the implementation of PBIS, you know, uh, a lot more efficiently. Given some of the things that you shared in the beginning about coming from Canada to to South Africa and even now, just mentioning learners home context, I want to know whether you believe if PBIS, um is well suited, you know, to our South African context to the different context that children find themselves in at your school. So, you know, just given the many transitions that you've had, do you feel that PBIS is well suited to our context?

Yeah, I think, uh, what I think it gives a school. Uh, structure, you know a system to implement that, that works. Uh, I think, you know, with the situation, we have so many broken families, single parent families. I think the more structure and discipline, the school can provide and support the single parent with the you know, their effort, to train up and discipline their children better so I would say PBIS is needed even more when in countries like ours that have a higher divorce rate and more single parent families. 

Thank you. So having said that then, do you feel that PBIS should continue to be a part of your school within the foreseeable future?

Absolutely, you know, I think we have a good foundation. We have made, you know, inroads and strides. Uh, but I do think we need to redouble our efforts, I mean ask any teacher, the discipline at our school has improved but it’s not where we want it to be, there’s certainly still room for growth but I think that…when you hear about schools that all over that are struggling with discipline so I think that PBIS is a good system to introduce and implement in every school so that schools are better equipped to be able to provide the discipline to learners that they’re not getting at home

Yes, thank you.

Sure.

So just to round off…we’ve had such a valuable discussion and conversation. Are there any additional thoughts or concerns that regarding PBIS that you have?

I do want to emphasise the beautiful partnership between PBIS and Class Dojo. They really do work hand in glove together. Where PBIS is going to be introduced at a school I think that class dojo should be at the same time, embraced by the school. There was something that happened in the beginning. They did some mentoring skills with the Grade 7s on a Friday afternoon. It was one day after school, they did something, one day after school we had a session. What’s strange about that is that I don’t remember if there was a teacher, deputy principal, HOD part of that. That would sort of make more sense seeing that the mentorship that was going on so I think that has to do with PBIS implementation

Yes

You know that peer mentorship is good. Before corona virus we did have monitors, head boy and head girl, those boys and girls were often a point of relating. I think that the monitors and the leaders in Grade 7 could be engaged again and tasked with helping to reinforce the PBIS values to the learners and not just have it left entirely to the teachers, as they did in the beginning, that’s something that should be revisited and reintroduced. I only spoke about the leaders but there are those children in every class that do need special intervention and something should be done. I would like to see our school counsellor involved and maybe a deputy or head working with those learners. It was a bit awkward when you took them out of class for a session but at the same time I appreciated that the value of what was imparted to them in terms of life skills was more important than the academic subject that other teachers were teaching but there was also the Saturday…you know with a lot of things I think that we start things but there isn’t follow through. Were you still around when they had the Saturday session for. . .the idea was father or to try and establish some big brother type of relationship between some of the dads and lads at our school that were in need of a father figure, It was a once off. The report that we got back from Mr Peters was that it was fantastic but I don’t know what happened after that. I think there’s potential for something like that. I think it would be a benefit if something like that could be implemented because if we could work with children with discipline, if you can help with the reformation at a young age and get them onto the straight and narrow, that could clear them from getting into more trouble down the road so if we can concentrate more resources on prevention before things get lost. I just noticed the time we better wrap up.



Yes yes, im good. We are nearing the end

So are there any other comments that you’d like to share in closing. I’m good with all of my questions. I have gained so much insight and learnt so much from the experiences you’ve shared and all the suggestions and reflections on the trainings and initiatives you’ve taken in the past. So thank you so much.

One last thing that I would like to say is that with PBIS I think that the professor did so as one person I think that uh…uh I’m sure that he’s working with others by now but I think that he needs a team and South African educators who have experience, personal experience of PBIS in South Africa, in South African context, I think that would be invaluable and one more thing and that is I think that we have made another advance in terms of developing our discipline system at school. You’ve heard of solution focused training, maybe you were part of it? I think we had about 5 teachers who are part of that training, more than any other school in the country, but so far they haven’t done anything with the teachers or the learners but obviously the corona virus blocked whatever implementation plans they had. I think that the solution focused approach will also be useful with PBIS. I like what Mr Feldman has reiterated. We did have one training session as a staff on a Saturday about solution focused approach and that is in an absence of a skill or what is lacking in a child who displays continuous misbehaviour that need to be taught skills that is potentially what PBIS is all about. I think when that comes in that will also help rejuvenate PBIS.

Yes, I like how you mentioned that the two can feed one another and can actually work together to create a more holistic and even better approach.

Thank you, I truly hope so.

Thank you once again. Thank you for your time. Thank your effort put in and the thought and time taken to share your experiences and insights it is really appreciated. I really hope that the findings will add value to yourself as an educator, to the learners, to the school and even to the department and how we do discipline in our schools.

Yes you are most welcome and I am very pleased when you mentioned that the department, that will be most valuable to them to be able to sanction this. You know I just want to mention one more thing and that is about Scripture Union Ministry that I worked with for so many years. There is a program called the Chaplaincy program in Scripture Union Australia and it’s really big. It gets government funding. If it’s a really big school, they might use it or work between schools so Scripture Union because I’m on the committee, Scripture Union South Africa has been pitching to the government to the department of education and it looks very promising, there’s a memorandum of understanding developing between them and you know the solidarity fund. The approach would be for Mr Chaplain to come in and that would be a youth pastor that they worked with from the local church to provide psycho social support to the school to the learners. One of the problems as essential workers we expected to work with those children who need special support with behaviour so that’s an exciting prospect I wanted to leave you with. Thank you Miss Naidoo, for asking. It was very helpful to have an idea of the questions ahead of time to formulate some thoughts in response to them. It’s been great to see you again and catch up with you.

Thank you so much, likewise. I wish you everything of the best for the rest of the year and I will keep the school informed as to when the study will be done so that you may benefit from the information.

We look forward to that. Every blessing.

Hi, so and thank you so much for agreeing to participate in my study, I really appreciate it.

So I just wanted to share part of the reason why I reached out to you to be a part of the study is because the school that you are at has obviously been implementing PBIS for a few years now. And so I know that you're familiar with it, you have experience on it and obviously your own thoughts and perceptions around it. So I knew that interviewing you would be really valuable. So I hope that the interview with me will be as beneficial to you as well.

Yeah, I'm just excited to be speaking to an adult.

I can imagine

When we are done and when I'm done with the study, I will be sharing the findings with the school and I do hope that it will be beneficial to the school as well and help with you guys planning your way forward, even if it's in a small, small way.

So, um, when we start now, I will be asking you to just share a little bit about your experiences as an educator, your history, and obviously it will pertain mostly to that experience after the PBIS implementation.

Okay, I’m so sorry. Can you pause for a second?

Okay, yes I will.

Okay, so to get started, I'd like for you to please tell me about your history as an educator? So how long have you been in the field of education?

Okay, so I started teaching on January 20, 2002, so I've been in education for 18 years.

When I started off, I taught grade two for six years and then I moved over to grade six, where I taught maths, technology and creative arts. Then I moved to grade seven, where I taught maths and creative arts. And then I went on to stay as in grade seven. And I did natural science. During my years of discovery I’ve moved from a post level one teacher to a great head, to a departmental head, to the school based support team coordinator, and now to the deputy principal. And in that time, I've actually seen quite a big change at the school that I've been. We went from being predominantly white with white kids to now being a completely multiracial school. So I've watched the transition of children come in with different cultures, different backgrounds, and I've been there through the whole metamorphosis until now. And that's it.

Thank you, for sharing.

So obviously, discipline has also changed since then because there's been a lot of I started off when children were still allowed to get spanked. And now, of course, you can't even be verbally shout at them or anything. So, yeah, I've really seen quite a change in education in my last 18 years.

Yeah, I can I can imagine and your experience with your experience with discipline over over those 18 years, what is that what is that been like?

Well, when I first started teaching, I was very I didn't have my own kids. I was very young. I was very determined. I was very stubborn and strong willed. So I needed everything to be done my way. And I was very I was an authoritarian kind of person like. No nonsense, and after the first couple of weeks, you, like, fall in love with the children and then you start adapting and then you can you start seeing that you can't use you know, you want to see the best out of the children. So you realize that sometimes it's a give and take and sometimes you have to adapt the discipline you use according to the child and their background and their circumstances. And, you know, also when I first started, I didn't have any relationship with parents, a lot of parents took their kids out of my class because they found out that even though I have the surname Whitcomb, I was an Indian person and not a white person. So kids were moved from my class, so I didn't have their buy in and their support with the discipline. So I basically was alone working with whatever I had with.

And then, of course, I had two lovely teachers, Mrs Damon and Mrs Feldman, that helped me to just find my way and mentored me and showed me what sort of things they were using and disciplining techniques they were using, and I had to tailor it. And so to suit into my personality so that I wouldn't change who I am in the process. And so that whatever I was doing was more authentic instead of, you know, like a script you would think you were following. And after many you know, every year, I just found that I got better and better and better at understanding children. And there was less stress with the academics because I was becoming more qualified in the teaching. So I had less stress myself. So I was able to focus more attention on the kids rather than my curriculum. I wasn't so much curriculum driven and trying to find myself and what kind of a teacher I am. So because I gained experience in what I was teaching, it gave me more time to work on other things that I enjoyed, like getting to know kids and trying, helping them out whichever way I can. And of course, changing my disciplining techniques and actually making a change in who they are, rather, just in that in that same minute, their behavior, you know, I found that instead of just like punishing them for what they're doing and whatever, I found that it was actually better if you taught them a skill for them to learn how to deal with their anger and their frustrations and You know, building self-esteem and self-confidence rather than than just listening to you out of fear.

So I yeah, I've just grown a lot in that.

And I often say now when I see kids that I taught in my first few years, the first words that come out of them is like, oh, my goodness, I'm so much better now and I'm a better teacher because I was so crazy, you know, in the beginning I was so crazy and I was so over-the-top and dramatic and, you know, and now I'm more calm and I'm OK And I don't take discipline or bad children, Behaving badly as a personal attack on me I’ve grown. I've had to learn that when a child behaves in a certain way, it's actually because of a background, not because of you all the time. Sometimes you might be irritating them and not understanding them, and then they have frustrations and things. But most of the time there's deeper there's a deeper meaning towards the way they behave and the way they're achieving their progress rather than what you just see in front of you. And the more you dig in to what it is, the easier it is for them to learn, the safer the environment is so that they want to learn the more they love you. So they want to they first start wanting to please you and then they actually start mimicking you and your beliefs and your you know, your values, and I think that's what I really enjoyed, were teaching the great sevens, is that you are really able to communicate with them as though they were your peers. And they are so much more mature when you talk to them about things. And you don't have to get to that argument. You know, that point where you having screaming matches and arguing with each other because it's so much easier for them to understand. And if you explain to a child what you require and why you require it and they understand it, then it's so much easier for them to do what they need to do without it being that constant bickering and fighting. And also So I don't know if I answered your question because I probably answered not what I was supposed to.

No, no, thank you. Thank you for the insight and the detailed answers. It's really valuable. Coming back to the school where you’ve been at Maybe you've been in. I think you can tell me if you shared this, you shared about moving from an approach of fear with discipline, but rather actually building skills and so you experience at your current school with discipline. What has that been like?

You know, I think it's a difficult question to answer, because from a personal point of view, I have seen being at that school for such a long time, I have seen changes in the staff and I think it's been changed for the positive right at the beginning when corporal punishment was taken away and we were changing all the ways in which we addressed children and things like that, people were frustrated and they were they gave up hope and they just wanted to resign. And this wasn't for them. And they were quite negative. And when we first introduced PBIS to our school in the beginning, everybody was resistant to it because they wanted to see immediate consequences and immediate action and immediate change. And there were a lot of people who were from the old way of thinking, where they were, where children were seen and not heard. When they transitioned, they needed that change. And I found that once you start, they started it took taken a long time to get people to where we wanted them to get in for their entire transition to happen. So it's taken a lot of time for that to happen. But I know now that I would say at least 90 percent of our community, 80 percent of our teachers, and now we're there understanding the concept of PBIS and they're understanding the concept of not being negative and not trying to do all the negative things and focusing on the negative and rather building the children up and building their confidence and building their self-esteem where they want to make the right decisions and they want to be who they actually are. And so they believe that now. But there's still a lot of people that are battling with the follow through. You know, they give up too easily. So they see it's not work. They tried for 15, 20 days and then they like, OK, this is not working. So they give up quite quickly. So the whole change of the the way we were focusing on negative things to the positive things, that transition is still after. I think we are doing PBIS for about six or seven years now. That transition is still happening and the newer teachers that are coming in being taught the similar things at university, now, they're more open to it rather than the people who have been using the old ways. You know, the older teachers that were stuck in their way of doing things have been battling with learning new tricks. Basically, you can’t teach an old dog new tricks. You can teach an old dog new tricks. It just takes a lot longer and a lot more patience. And I find that now with our the way our PBIS has been in the last three years, I think we are. We're 60 per cent of the way there, the way there where the entire school is going to have the same vision and the same plan as opposed to where we were. So there's about 80 per cent of people who buy into the idea, but still need the confidence and the training and the patience and the emotional intelligence to get to where we need them to be. But there's definitely an improvement in the way teachers are dealing with discipline. You do get where we still find that there's quite a bit of teachers that are not empowered themselves when it comes to their own self-confidence, because it's their own self-confidence in that is affecting the way they're disciplining their kids, you know, so they don't feel confident enough to not control, but be the manager of the class to be the facilitator of the class. Instead, their kids are taking control of the class and they feel like they don't have enough training or they don't feel empowered enough or confident enough to pull off what they need to do in order to get the kids to listen to them. So they revert to the screaming and the shouting and contacting parents. And the often they feel helpless. So they report it to an HOD or myself, or Mr Feldman to deal with with it rather than attack attacking it themselves.

I don't know if I answered your question.

Yes, thank you gave of a lot of detail about the transition from the way the discipline used to be approach to how it is now and that it's not just about implementing the system, but correct me if I'm wrong, almost a mindshift.

Absolutely a mind-shift and what the mind- shift comes new training, the if they're not trained in that in how to do it, then they feel like it's not confident enough that the system would work.

You'll be able to pull it off.

You know, speaking about the system, the system, what are your perceptions on it? Your thoughts on it?

I the second I heard about PBIS is I was already sold because without even knowing about PBIS, is it what I've been using for many years now. It's just given that the title, that name PBIS, but I've been using it for many, many, many, many years as a teacher is that if you love a child, you treat them like a human being and you reward their good behavior. They're more likely to not behave inappropriately or rude. I mean, I don't think I've ever had discipline problems, and it's not like the kids are fearful of me. Yes, it is because they respect me and it's about that they respect me, because I respect them as human beings. I have time for them. I listen to their opinions and I do it in a loving way rather than a punitive way where they feel threatened. And so when when I heard about the PBIS is I was like, OK, this is great because this is a name and a process and. Yeah, a process that. What I believe in can be followed through and can be carried out, can be…can be taught to others as well. So there's an official name for that, so it's almost like it is more like a better reputation if you have a name for a system that you use

Yeah, okay.



I love it.

 And So, you know, with your school being a full service school, one of the things that I think seem to bug teaches down a lot is administration and paperwork and in prep.So with with the PBIS , have you had to put it in like, well, what are the preparations that you had to make as an educator and even as a member of management to implement PBIS?

Yes, so I'm sure you were there when we started the class dojo is so, yeah, we put that in place, the class dojo, which was to build a bit of communication with parents. And also it was an easier reward system. So where before they were using books, it was time consuming for them to write out each merit for each child. At the end of each period, people didn't have the time for their paperwork.

So anyway, now they've got this app and it's at a click of a button. You can give your entire class, 15 or 20 kids a merit. So it's way easier for the children to rack up points. And with that, we’ve had to make financial restraints, too, so that we could do the things we really want to do like take them on outings and buy them lovely things as rewards and stuff. We could do that. So with them racking up the points rewards for this was quite simple. It would be for the positive, it would rack up the points and when kids get to 50, then they can wear civvies. And if they get to one hundred and it's very clear on the app that when you see it at first glance. So it's not a lot of telling yourself and adding yourself, and it's not so time consuming, you can print out an Excel sheet and it'll tell you exactly which kids are due for a reward and which kids you need to tell their parents that they're not behaving the way they're supposed to at school.

So that I think there’s infinitely less of the load and now much more little with the class dojo. We've refined it to be using it even more now to communicate with parents, with homework and things that are happening at school and pictures of things that the kids are doing And so it's very easy with the Excel system at the end of the year.

At the end of the term, we go, OK, everyone with over two hundred minutes they must receive civvies and their class gets a day off or whatever. So it's it's way easier that when compared to the old way, I think people would really like it if someone else was doing it for them. But that's living in a dream world. And as a teacher you are going to have to do some sort of admin, so you might as well have the easiest way to do the admin. And I think that's what we've come up with, with the class dojo. And even with that, initially everybody was against it, like change, people were against it and have had to fight and fight and persuade and then get willing people to help them. And once they started seeing that it was working, they started using it a little bit more. But now with the lockdown, they are loving it even more because now we can even send schoolwork to the kids on the dojo, messages on the dojo so they not see know. Whereas the previous way, if you wanted to send a message, it was hard copy. You had to have a hard copy that you send out. So the dojo took a whole lot of extra effort from what the teachers had to do and now have to. it's way less complex now because it's all in one little app, you know, so we can control the behaviour, we can control building relationships with the parents and the other stakeholders.

It's easy to keep a record because now with the class dojo, you can check what a child was up to three and four years ago. So it's that constant and it's all in the cloud. So it's not like you have to have 50 books for 50 classes each day, each year and so on. Now we just have it's in the cloud and you can download it and you don't have to. Anybody can ask. Any teacher can access it. And so the paperwork, I believe this will assist. And once the teachers need it, they'll be happy to use it. Also with our PBIS is now that we we've been an inclusive school, we've realized that one of the ways that you as an inclusive school work is to celebrate all children's abilities. So in the old way know where we were doing merits and demerits. It was just for kids who were academically excelling. Now we can give to kids on a sports team or full participation or for artwork or for picking up litter. So it's an easier way to holistically reward children for everything that they do, not just academics, it's academics or cultural personality, kindness, being willing to cooperate. Oh, it's a huge with the dojo being so accessible, you covering so much more in such an easier way.

Compared to the old way, those children who were good and kind and but were not performing academically, they wouldn't be rewarded with much things. So now they could wrap up their dojo points and then they can get certificates. And I think last year we handed out almost ten thousand certificates to our children for all sorts of things. It was persistence and hard work and dedication. So it's not only your academic achievement, it's for for all round, for just doing your best all round and for supporting the child and showing them that no matter what they are good at, they will be rewarded for that and building their self-esteem so that you don't have to be in a top 10 to be worth something in society. You can be a kind, loving, generous child. You can be a child that will tackle everything and persist and not give up. And you will be rewarded for all the wonderful things that you qualities that you have and with PBIS and with the class dojo, your working hand in hand together, we've literally been able to make every child feel as though they are contributing to the school in some way or the other and make every child feel, like they're worth something, and not focus always on the negative and I noticed that even with the PBIS the children who behave poorly…Yeah, they behave poorly. They get demerits and. Things and there's always there's always a consequence for that, so we give them the pink slip here and context, that sort of thing. So we we're trying to do the tiers you know all those little I think it's called tier one exchange things. And then it's with the dojo and with the PBIS. They also feel like, yes, I'm naughty and I've done naughty things and I behaved behave poorly. But I've also been able to rack up merits for the things that I have done that were good and quality. And so it's given them almost like a, you know, a way where they feel like they can overcome their behaviour and that it's not just a big ball of your naughty. You're useless. You're. That if you're whatever, you know, they now are able to see that it is, I think now they attach it more to the behavior rather than in you as a person because they m as a person directing a good and negative points at the same time. So, you know, nobody's perfect. They see that I'm not perfect. Yes, I've done bad things, but I've done good things also, and I am worthy of that. And then we don't ever take away the positive points from them. So if a naughty child or a child is behaving badly, it's the one hundred minutes they can still with a service because of those that they've worked for. And even with that, you know, we've had to teach our teachers that you cannot take those positive points away from the child because that child has worked for it. So it's almost like you are teaching them that you have to disconnect the child, the child's behaviour from who the child actually is. You know, because in the beginning when we started with the PBIS, teachers were very frustrated because they saw children that behave poorly, getting the rewards, they wanted these child to spend their entire year being miserable and always being treated as the bad child, you know, and nobody ever appreciating anything they do because they're the bad child. And so that has broken down many children over the years that have passed us and…And now we're focusing on building children and building their self-esteem, their confidence, their willingness to cooperate, their.

Everything we show showing each child that they matter, you know, that, yes, you're an individual, you can't be in the same category as the child sitting next to you because you all have different backgrounds. You have different beliefs. You have you're a different person. And so I think with the PBIS, children are now starting to see their qualities, all their qualities, not just their academic qualities, but everything that they have to offer. And they feel appreciated that they are being noticed for even the littlest things that they're doing. And the more they feel appreciated, the more they want to do. And, you know, when we were when we started PBIS and we started with the dojo and the points, there were many negatives, many, many negatives. It was a battle to try and get teachers to think critically and to think objectively when they saw a child, you know, not just go, oh, I hate that child. So I don't care if you picked up later. I'm not going to give you a minute for that. And so that whole mind shift is happening. It's slower than we're expecting it to happen. It's slower than what we would like to happen. But then, like everything in life, you know, it comes with trying things out, trial and error and eventually we'll get to where we are.

But I'm quite happy with the progress we've made so far. We have way less disciplinary hearings than we used to. So we have way less parental interviews than we used to. We have less Punishment before the kids used to line up on the tarmac for days and days, and even if you were a child who didn't even do anything, it was class punishment. It wasn't an individual. Oh, Lord, it was difficult. But now people are starting to realize that it is the child's behaviour that needs a consequence and that consequence has to be directly related to what the action was and not, oh, you irritate me every day. So now tomorrow you are having a disciplinary hearing. You. Yeah, I'm so sick and tired of this. This child, whatever. You know, he needs to be expelled because now they see that every child deserves a chance. You know, you get 15 demerits, then you get 20 demerits and you get 30 demerits. You look at the merits versus the the demerits and you try and figure it out or you use that information to see what is the problem if the child is now behaving badly only in a certain teacher's class? Is it because there's no relationship between their child and their teacher? Is it the way the teacher is disciplining the child or disciplining the class that is affecting the child? So now we're not only pointing the blame at the child, we are looking at what is the situation, what is the circumstance, what is the overall reason for the behaviour? Because, you know, it's a lot of telling information and analyzing information and analyzing the statistics that makes you realize we are our problems, do we have problem areas, do we have problem people, real problem teachers, do we have problem families? What is actually the problem so that we can find the problem and we can fix the problem to help the child? And PBIS is aimed at doing that mainly

Mainly, let's not say, mainly, because its not only that…what it is directed towards is cultivating a child and not humiliating and degrading and breaking a child down, and I would absolutely love the way education has transformed and discipline has transformed over the years that I've been a discovery from going from a mainstream mainstream school to an inclusive school has just warmed my heart so much because I've always felt for the child who couldn't perform academically because they weren't taught in the way that they understand they needed to be taught it. So discipline is not just the child behaving badly. It is why the child is behaving the same way. What are the frustrations that this child is having that are making this child act out in a certain way? And once you go down deep down and you find out the exact reasons why the child is behaving that way, and you tackle each of those areas that are a problem for each of those problems that the child has, then they have no reason actually to act out. Mean, even if you think about adults, you know, on a day when I'm hungry, tired, I come home and I'm a complete cow. And that's because of me and not because of what's happening in the house at the time. And then I act out and I want to shout at the kids or whatever it is. And even with the lockdown is I've had to do a lot of. Deep down, thinking about who I am and how am I affecting my children and how is the way that I'm feeling, whether it is my physical health, which is my diabetes or hypertension, that is that is making me act out in a certain way And by doing that in myself as a teacher and teachers doing that. That's reflection, self- reflection and self-understanding, we are able to see if we are the problem also and if we are the reason why the child is not behaving in the way that they are, are we the person that only likes a certain type of child that never swims upstream? Or are we the type of teacher that loves a child no matter which way they swim or no matter what type of fish they are? You know, it is just embracing each person for exactly who they are and understanding that if a child talks to you in slang, it is not because they are disrespectful, but it's because it's their background. The background is to speak and go “Yo” or whatever it is, or it is just their culture and it's their background. And so you have to decide why are you taking it so personally? Why do you why you feeling like that? Is a child actually being rude or are you feeling personally attacked because of your low self-esteem or because you are not aware of other people's cultures? This discipline thing is..It is so..So Enormous, it's not just it is I don't know, it is so much that goes behind people and the way they act rather than just punishment and reward and that sort of thing, because kids let me tell you, they will know if you are manipulating them or you using the positives just to manipulate them into behaving well. So whatever you do, you have to be authentic and you have to be genuine and you have to be they have to believe you that they deserve it. Because if they feel like you're giving them positive rewards only to manipulate them to being good, they will see right past it and it will backfire. So you have to be genuine in the reasons why you're rewarding the child as well. So don't just give a child a positive thing for us. If you're wearing a school tie today, it can't just be for that your child for wearing a school tie, because every other day they weren't wearing a school tie and now they've changed their behaviour. So you're rewarding that change in you, acknowledging that change and not just, OK, I just need to blast this child that they're worth something so that they can like me and then they can behave because kids can see right through that people can see of.

I don't even know what your question was. I had a few things to say, but I hope I answered.

You did more than answer. Thank you so much.

And, you know, as we've been speaking, you know, just to mention what else I have learnt is that teachers are not consistent with this, in buying in or they haven't had a shift in perspective And in their mind-set. They are having a bad day and they feel they mentally, mentally have too much issues happening that they…The last thing on their mind is others, they're quite selfish, they worried about them and their feelings in their homes, it's just situational and their low self-esteem and them, them, them. And they're not in it. They're not in the teaching profession for the right reasons. So that is also another reason why this is uphill, is because their mental and emotional state is also an issue.

You you know, given everything that you've shared and knowing your school and in the challenges that you have. Do you feel that PBIS should continue to be a part of the way that you guys work, you know, in the future?
Absolutely, we have noticed a change in the children in the last years that we've been using the PIB, PBIS and There has been quite a significant change in the children, and that's the bottom line. The bottom line is the children and I feel like if every school used it and, that was the mandate basically for every school around the world. It would be a Huge change in our society because we'll be tackling the kids at a young age and finding out what their issues and do interventions, the proper interventions so that you're healing them and once you heal them as a child, you'll find less crime, less everything even less gender based violence, less everything, because you've basically when a child is young and they are, what is the word I'm looking for? They easily influenced by outside society and whatever. And when they're in a school where everybody is speaking the same language and everybody's interested in him beside the school, the parents as well, you know, if the parents and the teachers are working closely together for the best interests or in the best interest of their child, and we are finding the interventions early enough, you'll find less people growing up and having a lot less baggage, being able to deal with their issues and be able to move forward from there. So the whole thing about PBIS is not just to do positive interventions, it is to find that Tier three, Tier four children that are not and Why are they not changing and why are they not performing like everybody else is? And then find the intervention for those tier three and tier for Tier four children. That is individual interventions so that you can make a change in their mind at a young age so that it becomes who they are and not just punitive if you get a detention and that's it, they're learning nothing from the detention, but if they're doing mindful meditation and mindfulness in their detention or they're learning how to deal with their anger or they're learning how to use the right words to express their feelings, or they know how to say things like when you do this, this is what I feel, what I would like you to say. So to basically teach them the language of expressing themselves and expressing the way that they feel and understanding why they're feeling in certain ways, why do they have an anger or resentment towards a certain person or towards a certain thing or towards a certain situation that is deep rooted things? It's not just a once off thing. Sometimes it's a once off thing where they're just irritated and they want to smack you. Most of the time. It's a type of trigger. What are the triggers they need to realize? What is my trigger and will I be able to notice other triggers and notice what my old behaviour is and what the new behaviour could be. And we can't expect the children to do that on their own. They're little. They need adult supervision. Adults that are trained in this that can say, OK, so if you're feeling angry, what are possible? These are the possible ways. Which one of these? So in the beginning you can say which one of these would you like to try out? Until eventually they find what actually works for them and they are looking for other ways to display their anger, their frustration, they sadness, their fear, their anxiety. And, you know, the children these days actually even in our days. But nobody actually cared about us to worry about it or even acknowledge it or even notice it. Children have a lot of stress. The stress of schoolwork is going up. The family stress, financial stress of, you know, in our days, although nowadays. But back in the day, other people, parents ran the home and the children had no idea what was happening in the home. And they only saw the consequences of whatever was happening. There was no food. They would see that they're hungry and that was just the consequences. But now parents are actively talking to their children about their financial situations, and that is becoming a burden on a child and becoming making children more anxious. You know, if you talk about when we were young, we could go out and play with the neighbours and never think about being abducted and raped and molested. And the uncle next door being a threat and don't use your phone in the street because you could get robbed. Children in South Africa are dealing with those stresses every day. Am I going to get are we going to get hijacked when we get home? Why do our daughters need to be locked all the time? And, you know, parents often don't realize that these anxieties that they have is passed onto the children and makes the children have those anxieties. And with those children are threatened, they are in the fight to freeze mode. And so they do whatever they need to. They freeze so they don't do the speeches in class. They can't do anything. When people are picking on them, they're not empowered. They fight. They hit and punched and kicked and shoved to whatever they need to do. They just run away from the situation so and they avoid conflict. So you're not teaching them the skills that they need in order to be functional, happy adults, functional, happy children. And they need it more than a curriculum. That's what they need at school. They need those life skills to be taught to them. And yes, you get the children who respond well to things with good homes and that sort of things where they you can do the tier one and tier two interventions with them. And that will be OK. With your tier three and four children who are the most vulnerable. You need to have proper systems in place so that you can heal them and so that you can…and when the healing happens, that the bad behaviour goes away, too, because you're empowering them.

I don't know what your question was. Again.

That’s okay, you answered most of the ones that I was going to ask. Thank you so much 

Oh my you have to sort of edit all of this.

That’s fine. It's just so valuable, it's such a valuable experience for me. You've answered all of my questions and even more because I think you just also highlighted that teachers who are there for the right reasons and present, they become experts with their children and what's going on with them every single day. So the information that you have to share is so rich and so valuable, and I look forward to it again, being able to be useful to you.

So I get frustrated because I wish I could. I don't know. I wish there was a way in which I could learn, first of all, how to present things properly. And I could put you know, I could just say. Share information with other people so that they can also have that love for the children and just, you know, I don't know, it's not like I'm blowing my own horn or anything, but I really do love children very much, which is why I'm possibly even going to resign at the end of the year. I want to go into running a children's village in the Drakensberg for orphans and vulnerable children, which is no salary as in zero. But it's because I feel so passionately about those orphaned, vulnerable children and even, you know, in our schools, we have so many vulnerable children and Those two, three and four tier children are your vulnerable children, and there needs to be something done so that they Can get the help that they need so that they don't become delinquents when they are older and you know, they don't come and hijack you at your gate. We need a lot more attention on our youth and our children then on. On the adults. Because once you fix the children, the adults, they grow up into good, decent adults. And I see it in my own family with my own three kids, you know, there are ups and downs with my teenage son. But the more I use the PBIS and I explain to him the reasons for me not wanting him to do certain things, but our relationship is the place he wants to hide things from me and the place he wants to be, his natural or natural teenage tendency is to want to try and like try not to be like their parents at all, but, you know, his dad realized that you can't avoid it. He is his mother’s child and that's it. And it's not a bad thing. That's what he says is not a bad thing to be like my mother. So, yeah, it's trying times with my 14 year old and my 10 year old and my five year old. I think she runs the house but PBIS works in my house and. It works at school and it works for anybody who wants to use it. 

All right. Well, thank you. Thank you. Thank you for sharing. It's been so valuable and I really, really appreciate it to all the girls and bimbos, including the people. And I appreciate the time that you took just to think about everything and share your thoughts and your experiences so transparently.

And then I also tell you what we've done now for our Tier three, Tier four children. I don't know whether Kevin told you about the kids skills.

Yeah. So we've now there's a there's eight of us that went to that Helsinki Brief Therapy Institute, Institute, whatever, with this Finland. This guy from Finland teaches you how to become a kid's skills coach. So now with the tier three and four children, you are teaching them a skill that they can use to not act out in the ways that they were used to. They used to act out, but in a more productive ways. And so so we are now as kids skills coaches. Well, just before lockdown, we became kids, coaches. We now want to go and train our staff and train other people to also be able to coach children. You know, so they have a problem. The solution focused, how are we going to fix that problem? What is the skill that you need to learn that will be a life skill, not just a skill for this time that will help you to deal with those situations when it comes to you. And I've used it in my family now with my kids, and I promise you this, less screaming and grounding and. Frustrations for them and for me, and we've bonded and we've gotten so close as a family now because we I've had to learn the kids skills myself, you know, so that I could stop screaming and shouting like a mad person and rather know that the reason I'm behaving like this is because of that. And I need to do that. I need a count to ten. I need to calm down. I need to take time off and not respond, because with ADHD, it's very difficult to not just react immediately, impulsively. And I've had to acknowledge that these are my weaknesses.

And I had to develop skills as a forty, almost forty two year old adult. I've had to develop this these skills in order to make me a better person so that I'm more approachable with my children and I'm more approachable And I'm able to handle conflict better and not become this manic depressive or just the person that feels overwhelmed all the time.
And my marriage is so much better because now I'm not biting at people all the time and frustrated and unrealistic demands. So this kid's skills, skills, anybody could learn anybody, wherever you are. And I feel that everything is divine intervention. Everything in my life that I've been exposed to is divine intervention. I mean, I have had a miserable childhood with. The worst circumstances you could ever, ever describe, from poverty to abuse to molestation to crime to physical, emotional, mental, every kind of abuse. And as a child, I had to think a lot about how I became an introvert, where I hated people and I didn't know how to handle things and whatever, and I wasn't sociable and I couldn't speak in public and I couldn't tell people how I felt and things like that. And when I became a teacher, my job as a teacher was more beneficial to myself than it was to any of the kids that came through my life. Each of those children that I've had to deal with, I realized that all the things that I went through as a kid equipped me to be more empathetic and to understand exactly where each of those children are coming from and can judge them, but rather see their heart and see their their their fight and their whatever they whatever they're going through. It's really taught me how to be empathetic. And in my 18 years of teaching, I have healed so much, which would have been impossible had I not been a teacher and had I not been in contact with children, because children help you to find out who you actually are and because they see you for who you are, they love you for who you are. And it's that unconditional love and understanding that that you can actually get from children, which is why God says you must always you need to become a child in order to enter the kingdom of God, you know. So it's.

As much as I love teaching, I feel like I'm quite selfish because it was a journey that I needed to take for me more than it was a journey that I let my children go through, so they've benefited from having me as a teacher also. But I think I benefited way more from being a teacher then, that anything I would say to anybody else that teaching is the best profession to go into anything that anything that enables you to work with children, that's what you should do.

Thank you so much, this was so beautiful and empowering.

Thank you for sharing.

And again, I can't thank you enough for your time.

It’s been amazing. Good luck in typing all that out.