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Re-engaging young offenders with education and learning

Authentic Inquiry and Learner Voice: Theory Session

“Every child matters but not every
child is heard”

Learning Objectives

- Understand the ethical principles for listening to children and young people
- Understand the theory and importance of the learner's voice in supporting engagement with learning and generating positive outcomes
- Apply the theory of learner voice in developing practice to support authentic inquiry.

Children have a “right to be heard” (UNRC, article 12) – respect children’s views

A voice as:

- An opportunity to express opinions
- An opportunity to access events/people and influence decisions
- Active participation in decisions and events.

United Nations. (1989).

Learner Coice

- The “opportunity to influence decisions that will shape their lives” (Toshalis and Nakkula, 2012)
- Autonomy to make decisions related to their learning; engagement and motivation increase (Black and Deci, 2000 & Mitra & Gross, 2009)
- Learners have the ability to shape and make decisions regarding their education in ways that adults cannot anticipate (Mitra, 2003).

If we lack a focus we fall back on routine/ritual, rules, compliance and regulations (Shirley, 2015)

Participation depends on; who is speaking about what issues and in which context, how voice is heard and whether it is transformed into 'action' or 'agency' (Fitzgerald et al. 2010)

Facilitating and Guiding Learning

Children are less likely to be viewed merely as subjects or objects of inquiry, but as active participants in the research process. (Simmons, Graham and Thomas, 2015)

Student voice involves learners and teachers sharing a narrative and working in partnership with one another to increase learning outcomes and inclusivity (Cook-Sather, 2014).

Potential Barriers

- Interestingly, the areas of improvement identified by teachers responded to the unease others had felt around the loss of power and authority, which has been a limiting factor in previous research.

(Davison et al., 2016)

Learner Relationship and relatedness(Deci & Ryan, 2008)

Practical Strategies

Requires a sense of autonomy, competence and
relatedness

Being cared for and about

Supporting student voice and decision making
develops the perception of being valued and cared for

The environment needs to be caring and supportive if
young people are able to participate and take risks

WARM approach

W
atchfulness

A
daptability

R
eflectiveness

M
odesty

Middleton & Perks (2014)



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WARM approach



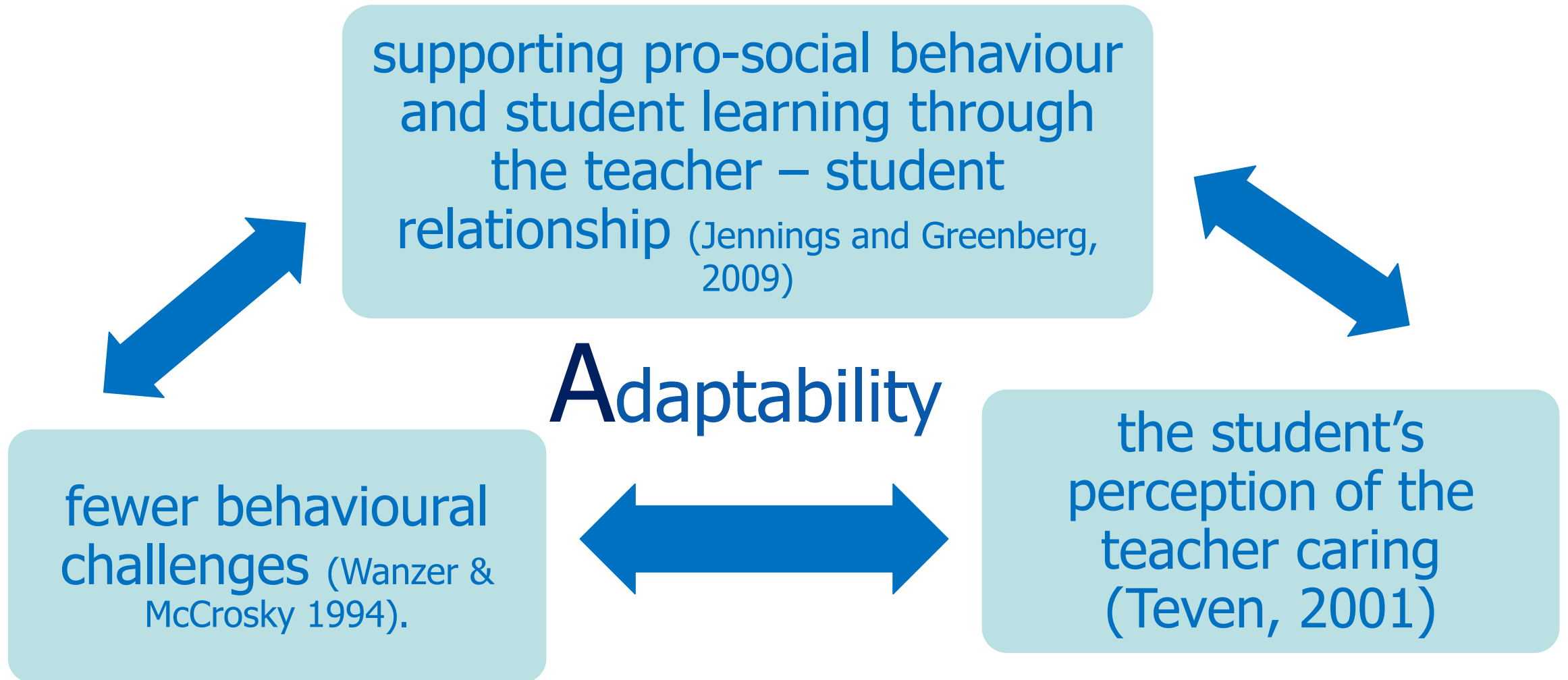
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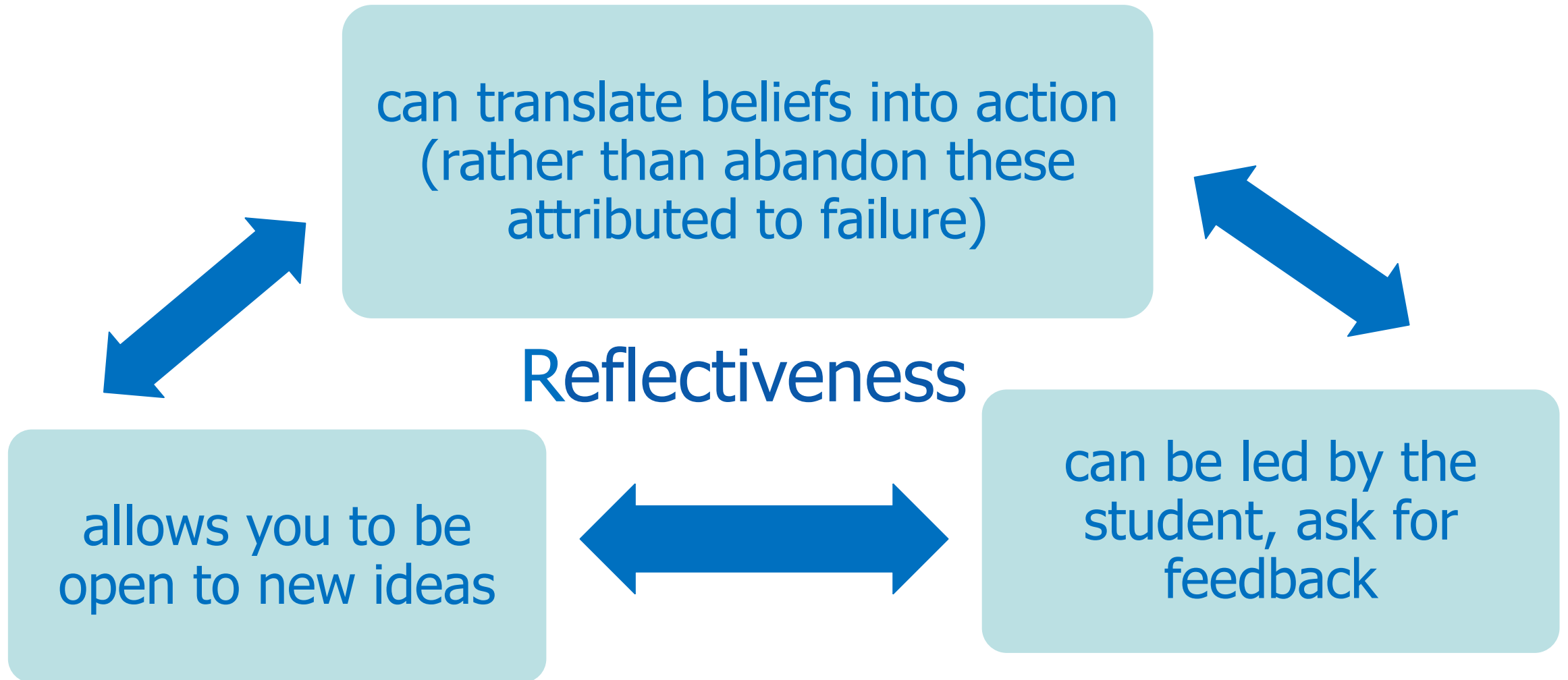
being open to what is taking place- **observant** and objective in our interpretations (Siegal, 2010).

Watchfulness

higher **engagement** and fewer disruptions (Wolfgang, 2005)

takes time and effort to build student **trust** (Schon, 1990)







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WARM approach



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look beyond our own experience,
find new and innovative ways to
practice and support the belief
that each individual can achieve



Modesty

remain open to
feedback and
suggestions



embrace the role of reason
and research over personal
experience and a respect for
the student perspective (Hare,
2006)

Reflect on.....



- How do you provide the opportunity for students to make decisions and express a voice?
- What opportunities are there for relevant and meaningful tasks/activities?
- How are students being challenged at an appropriate level and being successful with that challenge?
- **What is happening to develop and foster a sense of belonging through relationships?**

Tips for Mentors

Reflection allows practitioners to conceptualise better and respond to what students say (Kidd 2012)

Show interest (2 minute intervention for 10 days) talk about only positive elements / interests

Keep your word (Noddings 2005) apologise and explain if this becomes not possible

Keep a visual log of progress / key points / positive moments

Write it down/develop a contract strengthen student – teacher relationship (ask the student)

Consistently demonstrate interest in students lives

Promote speaking *with* rather than *for* learners

Be reflective and reflexive

Learn to listen to promote authentic partnerships

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