

## Teachers guide to AERO

### **Introduction**

It is important that our Education system not only reflects the needs both of the individuals being taught and learning, but also the needs of the communities that they are part of. Amongst the children attending school who later go on to college or University or choose a different pathway in life there are people with great ideas which given the support and means could be shared not only locally but also on a worldwide basis. AERO can help to do this by introducing for life an approach that is based on positive exploration. It is about helping people to think in a practical, creative way. When using AERO views should not be considered as right or wrong but should be challenged so that students think about why they have those views and the consequences of having them.

AERO can help students look at dreams in the context of the real world in a balanced way.

AERO stands for :

Aspirations

Encouragement

Realism

Openness

This combination can help students become more positive not only in life but also in how they approach learning across all subjects.

It gives students a sense of 'give and take' rather than just considering their own situations.

Many of the Worksheets contain exercises were used in a secondary school in Staffordshire some evolved along the way. Each can be interchangeable and be dipped in and out of.

For any help with how to use the worksheets please contact the author

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Below is an evaluation of AERO.



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A study of a school social work service:  
Aspirations, Encouragement, Realism and Openness

### **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

A high school in the English West Midlands reduces annual school exclusions from 251 to 6 in three years. A social worker is employed by the school to join the student support services. A new method of brief intervention is introduced by the social worker based on 'aspirations, encouragement, realism and openness' (AERO). All of this is put into place with no special pilot project status or additional resources. This research was designed to consider the relationship between these factors and, in particular, to evaluate the workings and impact of the AERO method of social work at Wolgarston School, South Staffordshire. Research interviews were held with key stakeholders: 12 (randomly selected) students currently in Wolgarston school who had experienced the AERO method; six professionals; and a parent.

#### **Overview of findings**

The AERO model (detailed in Bramble, 2008) is successful in engaging a broad range of young people experiencing a wide variety of problems, whether these are focused at school, at home or a mix of both. Specifically, the method was found to help in these ways:

- increased young people's self-knowledge
- developed greater awareness of others' perspectives
- encouraged a release of feelings that had been pent up
- made problems manageable by breaking them down into smaller parts
- gave students a choice in an informal setting

- helped young people to make plans and to carry them through successfully
- had a lasting effect that went beyond a 'feel-good' at the time.

Typical comments from students at the school about the impact of the AERO method of working:

*You find out things about yourself that you didn't know before ... you're learning about yourself.*

*It [AERO] works because it puts other people's views across to you so you can understand what you're doing and why it's affecting others.*

*It makes you sort out your feelings, makes you recognise your feelings.*

*It broke things down and made them manageable.*

*[What I liked best was] that it was me making choices.*

*I made sense of it straight way. It was really easy to refer to.*

The AERO model helped students to build their self-confidence, to make and keep friendships, to grow up, to behave better, to control anger, to change thinking, feeling and doing, and many other personal and social improvements. All of the students were able to understand the method, especially after they had actually tried it. Only one of the twelve was critical, but she had been 'volunteered' to demonstrate it, so she did have an actual problem to work on.

The professionals and the parent interviewed for the research were positive about the impact of AERO. A student social worker learned how to use the model very quickly and with success, and there was general agreement that it could be used with adults as well as young people, and possible with younger children, too.

Suggested changes to the model were minor and aimed at improving some of the language. It is highly adaptable, so these changes can be made on the spot by practitioners who use it. The research revealed that the core elements of the model (The Words and The Scale) were adapted according to the individual situation and that this flexibility was part of its success.

Though a relatively small sample, it is a representative one. It is evident that those who experience this method of working like it and find it effective over time. Coupled with a supportive school environment, it has helped sustain the policies that have been put in place by the head teacher and the staff at the school.

**In conclusion**, this research has found that the philosophy of social inclusion introduced by a new head teacher can be sustained by a systematic approach to providing social and personal support to students, and by the use of an effective and efficient social work practice method - with dramatic results.

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Bramble, R. (2008), *Aspirations, Encouragement, Realism and Openness: a guide to help increase children's happiness and potential inside and outside schools*, UK: Bramble Jordan Publishing.

The four elements of Aspirations, Encouragement, Realism and Openness are interchangeable and with each it is about considering the 'who, what, why, when and where' of life.

The nature of AERO could appeal to any of the core subjects including English and Maths but it is principally rooted in Communication studies, Psychology, Sociology and Philosophy. There are two main parts to AERO which are interchangeable. One is the use of trigger words to explore aspects of life. The other is a personality chart to help consider how individuals see the world.

There are several approaches to using AERO.

This is a practical approach with worksheets that can be used with secondary school students. Other approaches are acknowledged in the further reading.

### **Using the worksheets**

Each worksheet has been designed to be used either in a logical sequence or as stand alone

Although AERO is divided into the four elements they can be combined or separated.

It would be helpful for students to collate and date their worksheets. They can then refer back to them from time to time allowing for extra ideas to be added.

Many of the exercises can be used either individually or in groups. AERO is devised for students of all academic abilities. For students with dyslexia they may need help with reading the words but their interpretation and use of the words should not be influenced.

It may be helpful to have a dictionary available so that students can look up any or all of the words.

Work sheet A1

### **Aspirations**

Having Aspirations whatever they are, give us greater motivation in life. That's why so many films and stories become important to us because we can dream and imagine that one day we might be there doing that thing, or being with that person or people.

If you are unsure of what the word means to you look it up in a dictionary first.

Imagine you could be anywhere in the world having the best kind of party you ever could

**Who would be there with you?**

**What would be your role?**

**What kind of place would you be staying in?**

**What kind of food and drink would you have?**

**What kind of party would it be?**

**What music would you have?**

**What might go wrong?**

**What could happen afterwards?**

Work sheet A2

**You are in charge of school and given the freedom to choose the curriculum**

**What would you choose and why?**

**Who would you employ and why?**

**What hours would you have for your school and why?**

**What rules would you have and why?**

**What problems may you have and why?**

**How would you sort out these problems?**

**You have a budget to do this, remember that you have to pay your staff**

Worksheet A3

**Where do you want to be and what do you want to be doing when you are**

**A| 19**

**B| 25**

**C| 30**

**D| 45**

**How will you achieve this?**

**What if it doesn't work out the way that you hope?**

**What can help you achieve your goals?**

**What might stop you from achieving your goals?**

**Who can help you and how can they help you?**



Worksheet A4

**Draw your future world and the people that will be in it**

Use whatever colours you like

Draw whatever seems right to you

This is not a test of artistic skills although it could be if you want it to be but that's up to you.

Be prepared to explain your world to an other or group of people. How will you explain it?

## **Encouragement**

### Worksheet E1

What is encouragement?

Do you think that people need encouragement, if so why?

Who encourages you?

How do they encourage you?

Who do you encourage?

How do you encourage them?

What do you feel like when you get encouragement?

What do you feel like when you encourage someone?

E2 Work in two's. Write down an A-Z of things you can and can't do and how you feel about being able to do these things or not being able to do them. Then look at your partners chart and encourage them. How can you do this?

	I can do	I feel	I can't do	I feel	Encouragement
A					
B					
C					
D					
E					
F					
G					
H					
I					
J					
K					

L					
M					
N					
O					
P					
Q					
R					
S					
T					
U					
V					
W					
X					
Y					

Z					
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### Worksheet E3

Encouragement isn't just about helping someone to do things it can be about lots of different situations.

Work on your own or in small groups.

Choose one of the following and think of how you can encourage the person. Write down or draw what you could do.

#### 1] Tom

Tom would like to go swimming with his friends but had a bad experience on holiday a few years ago and is now scared of going in the pool. How can you help him?

#### 2] Kate

Kate doesn't like the way that she looks and so sits at home and plays on her Xbox. She says that she doesn't want to go out because she is too busy, but tells you that she does really. How can you help her?

#### 3] Lewis

Lewis is always getting in trouble in class and gets moaned at by his parents. He tells you he wants to change, but is scared of being seen as weak. How can you help him?

#### 4] Sarah

Sarah wants to sit next to you but gets you in trouble when she shouts out to get the teachers attention when she doesn't understand the work. You don't want to sit next to her but feel sorry for her. How can you help?

#### 5] Kyle

Kyle plays a guitar at home and writes his own music. You think that he could perform in public but he is too shy. How can you help him?

#### 6] Jenny

Jenny is picked on by a Teacher because her sister was a nuisance in school. She copes in the class but you find her crying on the way home. She doesn't want to tell her Mum. How can you help her?

Worksheet E4

Either

You start a group called 'The hopeless at it but have a go group' You are good at lots of things. How can you be a member and encourage the other members of the group who know you are good at lots of things?

Or

You feel that you are hopeless at everything but have been asked to start a group called 'The hopeless at it but have a go group' who will you get to join the group and how will you encourage them?

Realism

Worksheet R1

**1] The law says that you have to stay at school until you're 18 so you'll just have to accept that. How can we work together to make this a positive experience?**

## Worksheet R2

A new student starts at your school and after a short time is very popular and you feel left out. Your best friend tells you that it is because you spend most of your time moaning about things and this new student is fun. You didn't realise what can you do?



### Worksheet R3

A friend of yours is disruptive in class and you get blamed for what the friend has done. You want to do well in the subject because you need good results to get on another course. This has happened before, but now the teacher tells you that if it happens again it will affect your reference from school. What do you do?

#### Worksheet R4

Your brother or sister did well at school or was disruptive. Some of the teachers think that you will be the same. You feel different and want to be different but you also feel loyal to your brother or sister what can you do to stay loyal but also to be what you want to be?

Who can help you?

## **Openness**

### Worksheet O1

#### **What is openness?**

Openness I think is a hard thing to achieve without becoming nosiness and takes trust in others

Think about what it means to you

Write down your ideas

Is it a good thing or a bad thing?

Why do you think this?

Should we become more open as a society?

## Worksheet 02

### **Confidentiality and Power**

Write down what you think confidentiality means, if you are not quite sure look it up in a dictionary.

Who has the power in this relationship, Is it the person sharing the information or the one who is listening to it?

Who should have the power?

Which is better confidentiality or openness?

Discuss one of the following

Mark who is your friend tells you that he copied Gary's work because he didn't understand what he had to do and didn't want to get told off. You find out that Mark gets a higher grade than Gary. What do you do as he has asked you not to tell anyone?

Clare has been sending a rumour around that you fancy Luke and Luke's girlfriend comes to confront you. The truth is that you do fancy him. What do you tell her? And what may the consequences be?

A friend of yours tells you something very personal. What they have told you worries you, what do you do and what could the consequences be?

You think that a teacher is picking on a fellow student who you don't like much. What do you do, ignore the situation or try to intervene. What might the consequences be?

Worksheet O3

**Martian Confused .com**

Write a letter for a local newspaper about a topic that you think should be discussed.

Share your letter with a fellow student

Write a reply letter to his/her letter

Share both letters with a small group and discuss the content of the letters

Should the first letter have been written?

Should the second letter be written?

What could be the consequences of writing the letters?

## Worksheet O4

### **Super Character**

Create a super character who is always open about what she/he does and thinks

Either write a story or do a story board

What are the consequences for the character?

Pick a word 1

Attached is a chart of words some you may know, others you may not be sure about and some you might not know at all.

All of these words may affect you sometime in your life. Other people might see each of these words differently to you and might think some are more important than you do.

Try using some words on your own or in a small group and see how you get on

Pick a word

- 1] Choose a word from the chart
- 2] Look it up in a dictionary write down a meaning
- 3] Write down something good about that word
- 4] Write down something bad about that word
- 5] Why did you choose that word?

Pick a word 2

Attached is a chart of words some you may know, others you may not be sure about and some you might not know at all.

All of these words may affect you sometime in your life. Other people might see each of these words differently to you and might think some are more important than you do.

Try using some words on your own or in a small group and see how you get on

Pick a word and draw a picture linked to that word

Share your drawing with another



Pick a word 3

Attached is a chart of words some you may know, others you may not be sure about and some you might not know at all.

All of these words may affect you sometime in your life. Other people might see each of these words differently to you and might think some are more important than you do.

Try using some words on your own or in a small group and see how you get on

Choose 3 words

Explain why you chose them

Which word is the most important to you, why?

Write a short story using two of the words and leaving out one

Which did you leave out and why?



**Pick a word 4**

All of these words may affect you sometime in your life. Other people might see each of these words differently to you and might think some are more important than you do.

Try using some words on your own or in a small group and see how you get on

**In a small group**

Take the two piles of words.

Decide how many words you will each choose

Take it in turns to choose a word. Will you pick one from the orderly pile or the random shapes?

Say something good about the word and why you picked it from the particular pile.

Hand it to the person next to you who must say something bad about the word

Decide whether the word should go in a good pile or bad pile of words

When you have completed the number of words count how many are in the good and the bad pile.

Vote as a group on which words should stay in the bad pile. Give your reasons for your decision.

Expectations	Senses	Age	Image	Gender
Intellect	Education	Culture Religion Class	External influences Family, friends Bureaucracy, Law	Stereotypes
Attitudes	Assumptions	Loyalties	Power	Grief/ Loss

