

# A critically reflective response to behaviour management issues in key stage 2

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A Critically Reflective Response to Behaviour Management issues in Key Stage 2 I strongly feel as though I learnt a great deal from my observations during my Key Stage 2 placement. There are certain things which I wish to take forward into my own teaching practice. The experience certainly helped me to eradicate a feeling of cognitive dissonance. It was interesting observing a wide variety of classes throughout Key Stage 2 as it gave me an opportunity to observe a variety of different teaching styles and behaviour management techniques. I was keen to focus on how teachers dealt with behaviour management issues as this is something I was very apprehensive about. Effective teaching and learning can't exist without effective behaviour management. From my initial observations, I noticed that there was a clear consistency in how behaviour is managed throughout the school. I noted that most members of staff were following the same strategy of gaining pupils attention at the start of the lesson. After giving out verbal instructions to the pupils to settle down or listen attentively, most of the teachers would raise their hand up in the air and wait for the pupils to listen. This practice of raising ones hand in the air to gain the attention of the class is something I would want to implement in my teaching practice in secondary school. This practice is mentioned in one of Canter's behaviour management strategies which is to try and use non-verbal gestures in support of verbal statements (Canter, 1992). Another common practice I observed, was that teachers would refer back to the rules of behaviour which were on the school's code of conduct whenever there was any disruptions in the classroom. The teachers would reiterate the fact that all the pupils should know these rules by now and the purpose behind the rules, they would then point out, how,

some pupils are affecting the rights of others who are keen to learn. The possible sanctions that were highlighted were in-house consequences. Although I found this approach a little patronising, it did work well with the pupils as according to my observations, most pupils did re-engage with the lesson. This approach is supported by Bill Rogers's research which points out that if teachers use preventative techniques and positive correctives measures then this is likely to result in positive and responsible behaviour amongst pupils, (Rogers, 1995). Teachers were very quick to praise any good answers to questions, or any good work that was being done, often ignoring low level disruption but praising something good that was happening in another part of the classroom. I also noticed that some pupils had their own personal target cards for behaviour. I saw a pupil with a 'catch me being good card.' This practice mirrors Skinner's (cited in Edwards, 1997) 'positive reinforcement theory'. This approach of behaviour management promotes the use of immediate praise, feedback, and reward when seeking to change troublesome or encourage correct behaviour in the classroom. I was particularly impressed with the 'catch me being good card' as it was clear to me that the pupil valued it, as he was eager to show his teacher how close he was to gaining a prize. Although this strategy certainly has its merits and there are strategies that come out of this approach that I will certainly use in my teaching practice, I do think Skinner's research methods (using animals) are questionable. There are some academics who disagree with using animal experiments as a basis to discuss human behaviours. Chomsky (1967) criticised Skinner research methods, as he did not see how his laboratory work could be extended to humans. Most teachers did use positive language

throughout their lessons. They tried to be as enthusiastic as they could. The benefit of coming into your lesson in a good positive mood is that this positivity will then rub off on your pupils (Cowley, 2003). This approach is something I would certainly implement in my own teaching practice as during my own life as a student, I know, I learnt more when the lessons were delivered by teachers who were enthusiastic and positive and the lessons I paid very little attention to were the lessons that were led by teachers who were very negative in their approach. However, during my placement I noticed that there were some teachers who appeared to have a very negative approach in tacking discipline. This was more evident in the Year 4 classes I observed. The teachers in those classes were quick to snap out any misdemeanours and on reflection it felt as though they were disregarding what seemed to be the official policy of the school in dealing with indiscipline. For example, some pupils were made to stand up if they were talking too much and their names were put on the board with alongside a sad face. I noticed that this didn't stop some of the pupils from talking and causing further disruption. I view this approach as humiliation and this is something I did not see in most of the classes I observed and it's something I will not consider applying to my own teaching practice. Punishments in the classroom shouldn't be psychologically harmful (Canter, 1992). For a pupil seeing this inconsistency must be confusing, as in one year group they could be punished harshly for speaking out of turn, not completing a task on time. On the other hand, once that pupil progresses into another year group, they would see a completely different approach. It can be suggested that Inconsistency in expectations can lead to disorder in the classroom. On

reflection, It can be argued that pupil will behave better and then learn more if a teacher highlights examples of good behaviour in the classroom; remains positive at all times and is consistent in the range of sanctions they have in place for persistent misdemeanours. Canter's (1992) ' assertive discipline model focuses a teacher attention on the development of clear classroom rules, positives recognition of good behaviour and disciplinary consequences for bad behaviour. Schools in the U. K appear to have been influenced by Canter's theories into behaviour management and there are studies that have reported positive changes in behaviour (Fleming, 1994). Controlling a class of children is potentially one of the most difficult issues that teachers have to face and is also one of the most daunting aspects of teacher training. This is why it is so important to perfect your behaviour management skills. There are strategies that I saw which I will certainly take forward. The strategy of using non-verbal communication to gain a pupils attention and using positive language at the first sign of disruptive behaviour are the key things that I will want to use in my own teaching practice. There are also some behaviour management strategies that I saw which I feel is very out dated and hope not to replicate in my own teaching practice. Canter and Skinner's approach to behaviour management was clearly evident in the school I was in and my plan is to read through their research in more detail as there are elements to both their approaches that I wish to model in my future teaching practice.