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ASSESSMENT COMPONENT: One

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Assignment

PART 1:

Critical evaluation of behaviour management strategies and learner engagement in post-compulsory education

Introduction

Managing student behaviour and engaging them in all aspects of the learning process are among the most effective teaching methods in post-compulsory education. In educational institutions, teachers' roles extend beyond simply imparting specialised knowledge; they also include providing comprehensive and supportive learning environments that encourage student participation and foster positive behaviour. Managing behaviour directly contributes to the success of educational strategies through the methods teachers use to establish order, maintain positive behaviour, and eliminate classroom chaos. The success of this approach depends on the effectiveness of engaging students cognitively, emotionally, and behaviourally in the learning process (Fredricks, Blumenfeld and Paris, 2004). Within post-16 education, there is no doubt that these fields are of particular importance, given the diversity of the backgrounds, experiences and motivations of the learners.

Unlike compulsory education, post-compulsory learners enter educational environments selectively and voluntarily, and may possess varying levels of motivation, confidence, and prior educational experience. Many learners in further education institutions need to balance studies with work or caregiving responsibilities, as well as personal challenges. All of these factors can affect attendance, participation, and behaviour. Therefore, educators must choose flexible, inclusive behaviour management approaches that engage students and meet the needs of diverse learner groups.

This article aims to assess current approaches to behaviour management and learner engagement in post-compulsory education. It will critically examine key theoretical frameworks, including behavioural and humanistic approaches, and highlight strategies that foster positive learning and learner engagement. The article will also review relevant legislation and policy frameworks, including the Equality Act 2010 and the Education and Training Institutions Professional Standards, along with potential challenges associated with implementing behaviour management strategies in post-16 education contexts.

Behaviour management within post-16 education

Managing behaviour in further education settings is not limited to responding to disruptive behaviour. It extends to creating a learning environment that fosters respect, inclusion, motivation, and emotional security. Rogers (2011) suggests that effective behaviour management is based primarily on positive relationships and clear expectations, rather than punishment alone. This perspective is particularly important in post-compulsory education, as adult students respond more positively to mutual respect and flexible, collaborative approaches than to various forms of control.

Behavioural science and its related theories have a profound impact on behaviour management. Scientists like Skinner have highlighted the importance of reinforcement in

shaping behaviour. Positive reinforcement, which includes praise, motivation, and recognition, encourages learners to repeat positive behaviours. In complementary learning environments, teachers may use verbal praise, recognition of achievements, or constructive feedback to encourage learners to complete assigned tasks. Petty (2021) stated that praise can positively affect a learner's confidence and motivation if it is applied sincerely and consistently.

However, behavioural approaches have limitations. The use of rewards and punishments should be avoided, as these may encourage extrinsic motivation rather than foster intrinsic engagement in learning. Some critics argue that behavioural approaches may oversimplify learner behaviour if they neglect the emotional, social, and psychological factors that influence behaviour in educational settings. For example, students experiencing anxiety, trauma, or financial stress may exhibit challenging behaviour that cannot be effectively addressed through punishments or rewards alone (Deci, Koestner and Ryan, 2001; Woolfolk, 2019).

Humanistic theories add a new dimension by focusing on the learner's well-being, autonomy, and self-development. Maslow's hierarchy of needs indicates that learners must feel safe, valued, and supported before effective learning can occur. This is particularly important in post-compulsory education, as learners may enter further education with negative past experiences or low self-esteem. Rogers' learner-centred approach also emphasises the importance of empathy and positive teacher-student relationships. Teachers who demonstrate respect and understanding are better able to build strong relationships that support positive behaviour and learner engagement (Maslow, 1943; Rogers, 1969).

Reformative approaches to behaviour management are used in contemporary continuing education practices. These approaches primarily focus on repairing relationships, promoting accountability, and resolving conflicts through dialogue rather than punishment. This approach aligns with the values of inclusive education and can be effective in various continuing education settings where preserving the learner's dignity and promoting their mental well-being is paramount. However, these reformative approaches can be time-consuming and may require extensive training to implement effectively (Hopkins, 2004; Wearmouth et al., 2007).

Overall, effective behaviour management in post-compulsory education requires a balance between organisation, consistency, and relational practice. This necessitates that teachers adhere to clear expectations that consider the individual circumstances and needs of learners.

Learner engagement strategies

Academic achievement, continued learning, and learner satisfaction are indicators of learner engagement. Fredricks, Blumenfeld and Paris (2004) define the dimensions of learner engagement, including: behavioural engagement, emotional engagement, and cognitive engagement. Behavioural engagement relates to participation in learning activities, while emotional engagement refers to learners' feelings toward learning, and cognitive engagement pertains to understanding and critical thinking.

Active learning is a popular strategy for improving learner engagement, which encourages learners to participate directly through discussion, collaboration, and problem-solving activities. Gravells (2023) demonstrates that learners are more able to extract information when they actively participate in tasks rather than passively receiving it through lectures. Examples include group discussions, case studies, peer teaching, and practical workshops.

Cooperative learning fosters communication and social interaction skills, which are valuable in professional and technical contexts. However, active learning methods can present challenges in managing behaviour if tasks are not well-structured or if students become disengaged from group work. Therefore, instructors must provide clear instructions, set expectations, and effectively monitor the process (Johnson, Johnson and Smith, 2014; Petty, 2021).

Differentiation is a key strategy for enhancing student participation in post-compulsory education. Classrooms often include learners with varying academic abilities and needs. Inclusive teaching strategies may include adapting resources, diversifying activities, and perhaps providing progressive support to ensure all learners have access to the learning process. Therefore, differentiation is particularly important in supporting learners with special needs and disabilities (Tomlinson, 2017; Gravells, 2017).

The Equality Act 2010 requires educational institutions to make appropriate accommodations to support learners with protected characteristics, including those with disabilities. Accordingly, behaviour management and learner engagement strategies must promote equality and inclusion. Failure to implement these strategies effectively may contribute to frustration, disengagement, and challenging behaviours.

Digital technology has become a prominent tool in supporting learner engagement. E-learning platforms and interactive learning materials have contributed to increased accessibility and participation. Following the COVID-19 pandemic, many further education institutions adopted digital teaching methods that remain effective. Digital technology can enhance engagement by providing immediate feedback, interactive content, and flexible opportunities (Dhawan, 2020; OECD, 2021).

However, digital learning faces challenges; learners may be disruptive with devices or social media during lessons, reducing focus and engagement. Additionally, some learners may experience digital exclusion due to limited access or a lack of digital skills. Therefore, educators must balance the benefits of technology with appropriate classroom management strategies.

Motivation is another significant factor influencing learner engagement. Self-determination theory indicated that learners are more motivated when they experience autonomy, competence and relatedness. In vocational and technical education settings, providing learners with some choice and autonomy in activities can increase their engagement and motivation to learn. However, the learning process requires more structure and support to motivate students and maintain their focus (Ryan and Deci, 2000).

Therefore, comprehensive strategies that are adaptable to learners' needs are the most effective. Furthermore, teachers who understand their students and create appropriate and positive learning environments are best positioned to have a positive impact and foster engagement.

Policy and legislative perspective

Legislative and political frameworks influence strategies for managing behaviour and learner engagement in post-compulsory education. Teachers and educators are expected to maintain inclusive, safe, and supportive learning environments based on professional standards.

The Equality Act 2010 is fundamental to inclusive education practices, as it protects individuals from discrimination based on specific characteristics such as disability, race, gender, and religion. Therefore, teachers in additional education institutions must review their behaviour management policies to ensure that no group of students is disadvantaged. This may include various educational accommodations and resources, additional educational support, or alternative teaching methods.

It is evident that safeguarding legislation has a significant impact on behaviour management. Guidance such as Keeping Children Safe in Education and the Prevent Duty referred to the responsibility of educators to protect learners from radicalisation and exploitation. Behavioural changes sometimes reflect safeguarding concerns. Therefore, teachers must remain attentive and responsive to the well-being of learners. (DfE, 2025; HM Government, 2023).

The Education and Training Foundation (ETF) Professional Standards illustrate the importance of reflective practice, inclusive teaching and positive professional relationships with students. Teachers within FE criteria are expected to value diversity, respect equality and rely on supportive learning methods that encourage participation, inclusivity and respect.

Challenges Within Post-16 Education

In spite of the effective strategies, behaviour management and learner engagement remain complex in FE settings. External pressures may affect attendance, motivation and behaviour for post-16 learners. Furthermore, Financial difficulties, employment commitments, mental health issues and caring responsibilities could influence learner participation (ETF, 2024).

Mental health problems among adult learners are becoming increasingly prominent in educational settings. Anxiety, depression, and trauma can lead to absenteeism or disruptive behaviour. Therefore, trauma-sensitive practices must play a role in contemporary supplementary education, empowering educators to respond with empathy and understanding rather than relying solely on punishment (Department for Education, 2024; Education and Training Foundation, 2023).

Another challenge relates to the diversity inside classrooms. Teachers who work with students from diverse cultural or linguistic backgrounds need highly flexible teaching methods. Furthermore, large class sizes and limited funding can restrict opportunities for individualised support and differentiation among students.

Moreover, some behaviour management policies are criticised for being overly punitive or inconsistent. Harsh approaches may fail to address the underlying causes of behaviour and could contribute to learner exclusion or disengagement. Consequently, many educators advocate for interactive and remedial approaches that prioritise inclusion and learner well-being (Tilley, 2019; Education Endowment Foundation, 2021).

Conclusion

In conclusion, effective behaviour management strategies and learner engagement are crucial for successful teaching and learning in post-2016 education. Contemporary curricula highlight the importance of positive relationships, inclusive practices, and student well-being in fostering participation and reducing disruptive behaviours. While behavioural strategies can facilitate classroom management, remedial approaches may be more effective in addressing the complex needs of learners.

The effective application of active learning, differentiated, and digital learning strategies can enhance learner engagement and motivation. However, teachers must understand and address the challenges associated with student diversity, mental health issues, and limited resources. Furthermore, Legislative frameworks, including the Equality Act 2010 and safeguarding guidance, emphasised the importance of inclusive and supportive educational practice.

Consequently, successful behaviour management in post-compulsory education requires a flexible, learner-centred approach to teaching. Therefore, ongoing professional development and the use of critical thinking tools are essential to enable teachers to respond effectively to the diverse needs of learners in various educational settings.

PART 2 – REFLECTIVE ACCOUNT

Reflective evaluation of behaviour management and Learner engagement strategies (post-compulsory education)

Introduction

Professional practice in post-compulsory education requires reflection, which is of paramount importance to teachers. Reflection provides a form of critical evaluation of teaching methods and clearly contributes to improving learner outcomes. Effective behaviour management and learner engagement are key elements of successful teaching and learning, particularly in higher education institutions serving students with diverse academic, social, and emotional needs. Therefore, observing experienced teachers offers a valuable opportunity to determine effective strategies that can be relied upon and implemented in practice.

This reflective report includes a critical evaluation of two observations from expert educators, focusing primarily on behaviour management and learner engagement strategies used in lessons. It also examines a practical teaching experience related to student behaviour management and engagement. The report draws on relevant educational theories, professional standards, and several reflective models, notably the Gibbs Reflective Cycle (1988).

Observation One

The initial observation took place in an open classroom with over ten students aged between 20 and 45. The session included activities and workshops, as well as small group discussion tasks. The teacher demonstrated a calm and organised teaching style and shared clear expectations with the learners at the beginning of the lesson.

One of the most prominent behaviour management strategies used during the lesson was setting clear standards and boundaries. The teacher greeted the students with a smile and emphasised the importance of punctuality, participation, and respectful communication. Rogers (2011) points out that a positive relationship with students and adherence to specific guidelines contribute significantly to behaviour management, the effects of which were clearly evident during the lesson.

The teacher relied on positive reinforcement. He used praise and verbal encouragement with learners who actively participated or completed their tasks. This appeared to increase learners' confidence and motivation, particularly among the quieter ones, and could therefore increase the likelihood of repeating the behaviour. (Skinner, 1953).

The teacher effectively utilised active learning strategies to maintain student engagement throughout the lesson. This engagement was demonstrated through collaborative group work in problem-solving and discussion of presented scenarios. This fostered communication and peer support, while also providing an opportunity to apply prior theoretical knowledge in real-world professional contexts (Vygotsky, 1978).

The teacher's movement within the classroom enhanced student engagement and positively managed their behaviour. This movement transformed from mere motion into monitoring student progress and providing individual support when needed. This contributed to creating a supportive learning environment and reducing unwanted behaviours (Kounin, 1970).

Nevertheless, some challenges arose, such as some students becoming distracted during group activities and others relying on their peers to complete tasks. To mitigate these issues, a method of asking questions and providing individual guidance was employed instead of confrontation. This proved to be a comprehensive and effective approach to behaviour management (Rogers, 2011).

Observation Two (Online Session)

The second observation was an online adult education class in which learners aged 25 to 45 participated in a live, virtual theory session. The learners came from diverse cultural and educational backgrounds. The session was based on discussion and collaboration, with a focus on self-directed learning activities via digital platforms.

Contrary to previous observations, the teacher's approach was clearly focused on the students. At the beginning of the lesson, learners were encouraged to share their prior experiences through text and audio conversations, which helped create a comprehensive and interactive atmosphere by valuing learners' experiences and perspectives within the learning environment (Rogers, 1983).

To reach all students, differentiated questioning was used. This interactive approach involves directing questions to learners based on their level of confidence and prior knowledge, ensuring the participation of all learners. Some students shared their answers verbally, while others responded via chat windows or interactive surveys. This interactive approach encouraged learners to share their insights and explain their understanding (Tomlinson, 2017).

Communication skills and emotional awareness were impressively demonstrated during the lesson. The teacher encouraged and reassured hesitant students through supportive verbal responses and private messages rather than direct criticism. As a result, the online learning environment became psychologically safe, and learners felt comfortable participating in discussions (Edmondson, 1999).

The effective integration of technology positively impacted the lesson through the use of discussion rooms and online quizzes. Students demonstrated positive engagement with digital activities, and the immediate feedback and group discussions provided a supportive learning environment. This contributed to increased motivation and maintained a good level of focus throughout the lesson (Hattie, 2009).

Despite the generally positive interaction, some challenges arose during the session. Students became disengaged, some turned off their cameras, and others stayed away from the discussions. The pace of the lesson slowed as the instructor worked to regain the students' attention. This highlights the importance of maintaining diversity and interaction in online teaching methods to ensure continued learner engagement (Laurillard, 2012).

Comparing the two teaching practices

Comparing the two observations clearly demonstrates that effective behaviour management is linked to learner engagement, regardless of whether instruction is in person or online. In both lessons, teachers focused on relationship building, inclusive practices, and active participation, showing no signs of over-reliance on punishment or authority. However, the methods used varied depending on the learner groups and learning environments (Marzano & Marzano, 2003).

Both observations highlight the importance of flexibility. Instructional strategies that are successful in one learning environment may not be suitable for another. Therefore, students' needs should be continuously met, and the classroom should be adapted accordingly, whether online or face-to-face, while relying on effective teaching strategies to maintain engagement and positive behaviour (Schön, 1983).

Reflection

In this report, I am evaluating a teaching session I conducted for a group of students (over the age of sixteen). The lesson included introductory theory and short activities. During the session, I observed some students becoming distracted and having difficulty concentrating, which led to minor undesirable behaviours, such as side conversations.

This occurred as the session progressed, with a small group at the back beginning to talk amongst themselves, while others stopped participating altogether.

I verbally reminded the students of the expectations at the beginning and redirected their attention to the previously mentioned parameters. Although this was temporarily successful, the distractions returned. At that point, I conducted a paired activity to increase engagement, which briefly improved student interaction.

Despite the slight improvement in concentration, I felt some concern about the effectiveness of my teaching strategies in capturing the group's attention. However, I managed to address the unsatisfactory behaviour firmly, calmly, and professionally, rather than becoming emotional or resorting to punishment.

After the lesson, I reflected on its structure, delivery level, pace, and how these factors contributed to the loss of engagement. I realised there was a problem with relying too heavily on explanations instead of active student participation.

I also noticed that my instructions for the paired activity were clearer. A few were not clear enough to the learners, some of whom seemed uncertain about the effectiveness, leading to side conversations.

Analysis

I understood that there was a strong correlation between learner engagement and behaviour management. The minor undesirable behaviour stemmed from student distraction and disengagement from the lesson, rather than deliberate intent.

This experience conforms to Petty's (2021) observation that passive learning styles can lead to decreased motivation and focus. Learners in supplementary learning environments benefit from ongoing discussion, activities, and hands-on learning tools. Therefore, relying on lengthy teacher explanations may contribute to decreased learner engagement.

The lesson highlighted the importance of differentiation and understanding learners' needs. Given the variability of these needs, some students may have required structured support or additional learning activities to maintain their focus. Gravells (2023) demonstrates that inclusive teaching strategies are crucial in diverse post-16 classrooms.

Undoubtedly, the experience reinforced the importance of reflective practice. Schön (1983) emphasises that practitioners who possess the ability to reflect have a significant opportunity to adapt their teaching strategies and methods to meet the needs of the classroom. Through reflection, various areas for improvement emerge, rather than continuing to view the lesson passively.

Action Plan

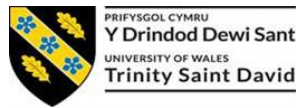
As a result of this reflection, I am striving to develop my strategies for managing student behaviour and enhancing their engagement.

First, I plan to make better use of active learning methods in lessons, including group discussions, collaborative activities, and various events, integrating them to maximise their effectiveness.

Second, I aim to formulate clear instructions and achieve a smooth transition between different activities to prevent confusion and unacceptable behaviour. I also intend to consult with several experienced teachers to develop other strategies for achieving a high level of student participation.

Third, I am seeking professional development opportunities related to holistic teaching methods, understanding and differentiating student needs, and fostering the ability to create positive and inclusive learning environments in post-compulsory education.

Teacher Observation Form



Teacher	A
Date	22/05/2026
Group	Post 16 learners
Topic/Context	Arabic language
Notes about the lesson:	
• The session combined practical activities in workshops with interactive group discussions. • The teacher clearly established expectations and procedures at the beginning of the lesson. • The teacher maintained a structured learning environment throughout the lesson. • The session combined practical activities, workshops, and collaborative group discussions.	
What I have learned:	

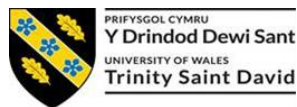
- Establish clear procedures and expectations at the beginning of the lesson
- Greet individuals in a way that fosters a friendly and positive relationship
- Reinforce expectations related to punctuality, participation, and respect
- Use positive verbal reinforcement
- Remain calm when addressing undesirable behaviours, using questions rather than confrontation

Targets to improve my own practice (mapped to professional standards):

I will:

- • Encourage learners not to over-reliance on peers during group work
- • Learn how to reduce sometimes disjointed behaviours within groups
- • Rely on structured accountability in group tasks
- • know how to plan to ensure equal participation from learners

Teacher Observation Form



Teacher	B
Date	14/05/2026
Group	Adult education class 25 to 45
Topic/Context	Accountancy
Notes about the lesson:	
• The session was online. • The session was based on discussion and collaboration • The teacher's approach was clearly focused on the students. • learners were encouraged to share their prior experiences through text and audio conversations • The teacher used a differentiated questioning method	

What I have learned:

- How to start the lesson during an online session
- Greet individuals in a way that fosters a friendly and positive relationship
- Diversifying communication skills and emotional awareness during the lesson
- Use positive reinforcement
- How to create a kind of effective integration of technology

Targets to improve my own practice (mapped to professional standards):**I will:**

- • Use digital activities to create positive online interaction
- • learn how to use immediate feedback and group discussions as a supportive learning environment.
- • maintain diversity and interactivity in e-learning methods to ensure continued learner engagement.
- • know how to plan to ensure equal participation from learners

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