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B L O O M S B U R Y

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Engagement

How are we managing behaviour?

7

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Introduction



Behaviour management is of perennial concern to all teachers because of the numbers of children in a typical classroom, as Jackson (1968, [Reading 6.1](#)) indicated. This means that, in a sense, the teacher is always dealing with a 'crowd'. Control of that crowd must, therefore, be a priority. For many student teachers in particular, this concern initially displaces almost all other aims as they take on the challenge of coping with 'the class'. In such circumstances, relationships with individuals – a vital building block – may even be displaced.

'Good behaviour' is most easily obtained and maintained by establishing appropriate relationships (Chapter 6), providing clear expectations and ensuring that pupils are fully engaged in learning activities. The focus of attention should therefore be directed at achieving a positive climate for learning and at the prevention of managerial problems, so that crises are avoided. This is by no means easy, since classrooms are such complex places where events can unfold very quickly. Doyle's analysis of the 'multi-dimensionality, simultaneity and unpredictability' of this is excellent (1977, [Reading 7.1](#)).



It is easy, and understandable, for classroom management objectives to take precedence over learning requirements. Moreover, even where teachers have control of the classroom, pupils may remain unclear about the aims of learning tasks set for them. As Galton (1989), suggests, the consequence is a sense of ambiguity and risk, which then undermines the quality of children's engagement with learning. Holt (1982) made this idea more controversial by suggesting that pupils 'learn to be stupid' in schools. They do this when teachers' requirements for conformity with managerial rules, structure and order override the pupils' need for understanding and engagement in high quality learning tasks. The vital message for us is that classroom management is a necessary means to an end – but it is not the end itself. TLRP's principles on pedagogy build on, and extend, this point.

TLRP principles

Two principles are of particular relevance to this chapter on achieving an ordered classroom through pupil engagement:

Effective teaching and learning promotes the active engagement of the learner. A chief goal of teaching and learning should be the promotion of learners' independence and autonomy. This involves acquiring a repertoire of learning strategies and practices, developing positive attitudes towards learning, and confidence in oneself as a good learner. (Principle 6)

Effective teaching and learning fosters both individual and social processes and outcomes. Learning is a social activity. Learners should be encouraged and helped to work with others, to share ideas and to build knowledge together. Consulting learners about their learning and giving them a voice is both an expectation and a right. (Principle 7)

See Chapter 4

Before starting work in a new school, reflective teachers will ensure that they know and understand something about the ethos and values of the school and department/s they are about to join. At the very minimum they will ask to see copies of the school's behaviour policies and talk with mentors and other teaching and support staff about how those policies are put into practice.

This chapter has been structured in six sections. We begin by affirming the significance of behavioural issues both for teachers and policymakers, and also review some sources of professional support which are available. Section 2 analyses how to establish classroom authority. Section 4 focuses on practical teaching skills for engaging pupils, whilst Section 5 looks at how to manage typical classroom episodes. Finally, we consider positive and negative cycles, tying back to Chapter 5 on relationships, and provide a summary.

1 Understanding classroom behaviour

There are a great many explanatory theories about children's behaviour, whether in or out of school. Three elements are typically posed:

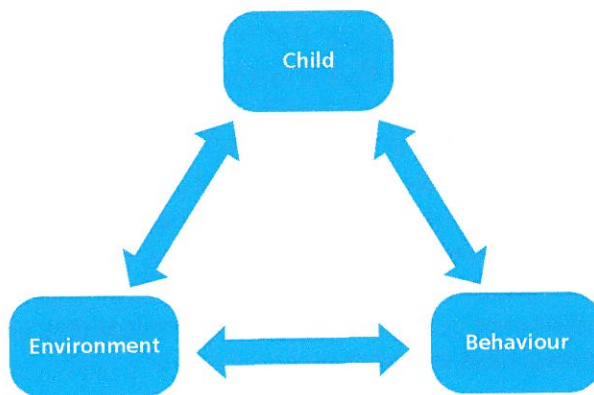


Figure 7.1 Child, environment and behaviour

The terminology above is that of Chaplain (2003) who draws on the social learning theory of Bandura (1995). Bronfenbrenner (1979, [Reading 8.1](#)) has a similar conceptualisation (see Chapter 8, Section 1). Symbolic interactionist sociology would tend to speak of 'children', 'contexts' and 'strategic action'. Such nuanced distinctions can certainly be drawn.



The basic point though, is that the actions taken by anyone relate both to the person they are and to the situation they are in.

From the teacher perspective then, to understand classroom behaviour, we must first appreciate the circumstances of the children and young people for whom we have responsibility; and we must then really think hard about the educational provision which we

make for them in school. The latter constitutes the environment – the context, to which pupil behaviour is a response.

1.1 Children and young people

Expert question

Connection: does the curriculum engage with the cultural resources and funds-of-knowledge of families and the community?

This question contributes to a conceptual framework underpinning professional expertise (see Chapter 16).

We need here to take stock of the issues raised in Chapters 1, 2 and 4 of this book and to recognise that pupils in the same classroom may have very different home circumstances. Contemporary societies are seeing extreme differences in wealth and in the associated forms of cultural capital. Many families maintain a conventional, two-parent structure, whilst others sustain more diverse relationships. Some children will start school with great eagerness to learn, whilst others may feel deeply uneasy or even be frightened. As they get older, some pupils will receive significant support and interest

from parents or carers, whilst others will find that their efforts may be treated as being of little consequence. Many will find that the language of instruction is their mother tongue and will be familiar with typical teacher discourse. Others may find that they need to adapt to the use of their second language in the school setting, or that some patterns of their home language are frowned upon at school.

It is very easy to succumb to stereotypes in seeking to make sense of the complexity of children's lives, but this really should be resisted. Being 'poor' does not denote a lack of commitment to one's children, just as being 'well off' certainly doesn't in itself produce valuable support. Each form of social difference – social class, gender, ethnicity, disability, etc. – is simply a circumstance which needs to be understood. The question then, despite the patterns which research and experience might suggest, becomes: 'What do people make of their circumstances?'.

In summary, teachers need to do what they can to understand prior experiences of the children and young people that they teach.

1.2 Providing an engaging environment

The school environment is crucial to establishing positive behaviour amongst pupils. Watkins has suggested that this is associated with proactive policies, a strong sense of community, teacher collaboration and promotion of pupil autonomy (2011, [Reading 7.2](#)).

There are four dimensions of the classroom environment which teachers must review with particular care:

Curriculum – it is clearly crucial that pupils find the curriculum of interest. If they do, then that commitment will engender more engaged behaviour. If they don't, then they may seek diversions. This can be particularly tricky where basic skills need to be mastered over



many years, and teacher creativity to find interesting ways of teaching these is imperative. Chapters 9 and 10 focus on curriculum.

Pedagogy – pupils tend to be particularly aware of how they are being controlled – of the rules, routines and rituals of the classroom, the fairness which should underpin them and the security which they offer. Beyond this, they will hope for pedagogies which are participatory, make the subject matter interesting, support success in learning and enable fun, laughter and enjoyment. Chapters 11 and 12 address such issues.

Assessment – anxiety about being judged by others is commonplace, and for children and young people school may be the first place in which they experience formal assessment. On the one hand, feedback which enables progress in learning is likely to be greatly welcomed. It indicates that the teacher has taken an authentic interest (see Chapter 13). On the other hand, the experience of more formal assessment may not be a happy one, and certainly needs to be managed with great care (as discussed in Chapter 14).

Relationships with others – this dimension is essentially about relationships between peers, which can be fraught and challenging for some children. Feeling accepted by a peer group is very important for surviving in school and is manifested in ‘having friends’. But children can also be unkind and some children may become isolated or even be bullied. Teachers need to create classroom rules and a climate in which everyone is valued, but must then be watchful to ensure that the experienced environment lives up to these expectations (see Chapters 1 and 6).

Expert question

Engagement: do our teaching strategies, classroom organisation and consultation enable learners to actively participate in and enjoy their learning?

This question contributes to a conceptual framework underpinning professional expertise (see Chapter 16).

Where a classroom environment provides for such high-quality curriculum, pedagogy, assessment and relationships, poor behaviour is likely to be minimised.

Or, to put this another way, if poor behaviour arises, as well as thinking about the needs and perspectives of the child or children themselves, it is very valuable to review one’s classroom provision. Might it be possible to engage the children more effectively?

1.3 Progression in behaviour

In principle, an effective teacher will expect to make progress during the school year in classroom control and the stability of pupil behaviour. And a similar progression may be experienced when a student teacher takes a class over a sustained period of time. It is helpful to try to see this positively in terms of ‘leading learning activities’, so that control itself is a by-product.

Figure 7.2, on p. 179 overleaf, comes from Chaplain (2003, see also [Reading 6.4](#)) and highlights some of the characteristic processes which are likely to be found in ‘early encounters’ and ‘later stages’.

The model shows how pressures of establishment and active negotiation are gradually



replaced by greater levels of trust. With this, most importantly, comes teacher encouragement for pupils to take more control of classroom situations and exercise more self-control. Of course, such agency remains framed by the understandings which have been established and honed over time. For many teachers, a summer term, unless dominated by tests or examinations of one sort or another, is a time when they feel able to give pupils more freedom to explore their interests and potential.

Reflective activity 7.1, below, invites a 'stock take' on classroom behaviour and engagement.

Reflective activity 7.1

Aim: To understand pupil behavior in our classroom circumstances.

Evidence and reflection: Reflect on the proposition that pupil actions relate both to the person they are and to the situation they are in (as discussed above).

- Review Section 2.1 and consider: how far do you really understand, and make connections with, the circumstances of your students' lives?
- Review Section 2.2 and consider: do pupils feel engaged by the curriculum, pedagogy, assessment and relationships you are providing?
- Review Sections 2.3 and consider: how are things going in terms of the *progression* of classroom relationships and behaviour over time?

It would be very valuable to discuss these issues with a colleague, so that there is an exchange of insights.

Extension: It would be excellent to make a visual recording of some periods of classroom practice to review and discuss in terms of the questions above.

Having developed a deeper understanding, the question becomes: What to do next? It is often helpful to map scenarios for consideration. Such analysis provides a foundation for successful behavioural strategies.

But this is an endpoint, and we must always start with establishing authority.

2 Establishing authority

Establishing authority over a class is partly about self-belief, in the sense of acting with confidence as a teacher – and it is also partly about capability, in the sense of being professionally competent in the core skills of teaching and, in particular, in being able to interpret and analyse classroom events as they develop so that adjustments are possible. Underlying these qualities, as we saw in Chapter 6, is the relationship which one develops with pupils and, in particular, being seen to act fairly.

The best teachers are competent, reflective and understanding – and thus become confident. Pupils respect these qualities and thus trust their teacher. Bennett suggests that these qualities are associated with justice, courage, patience, wisdom and compassion

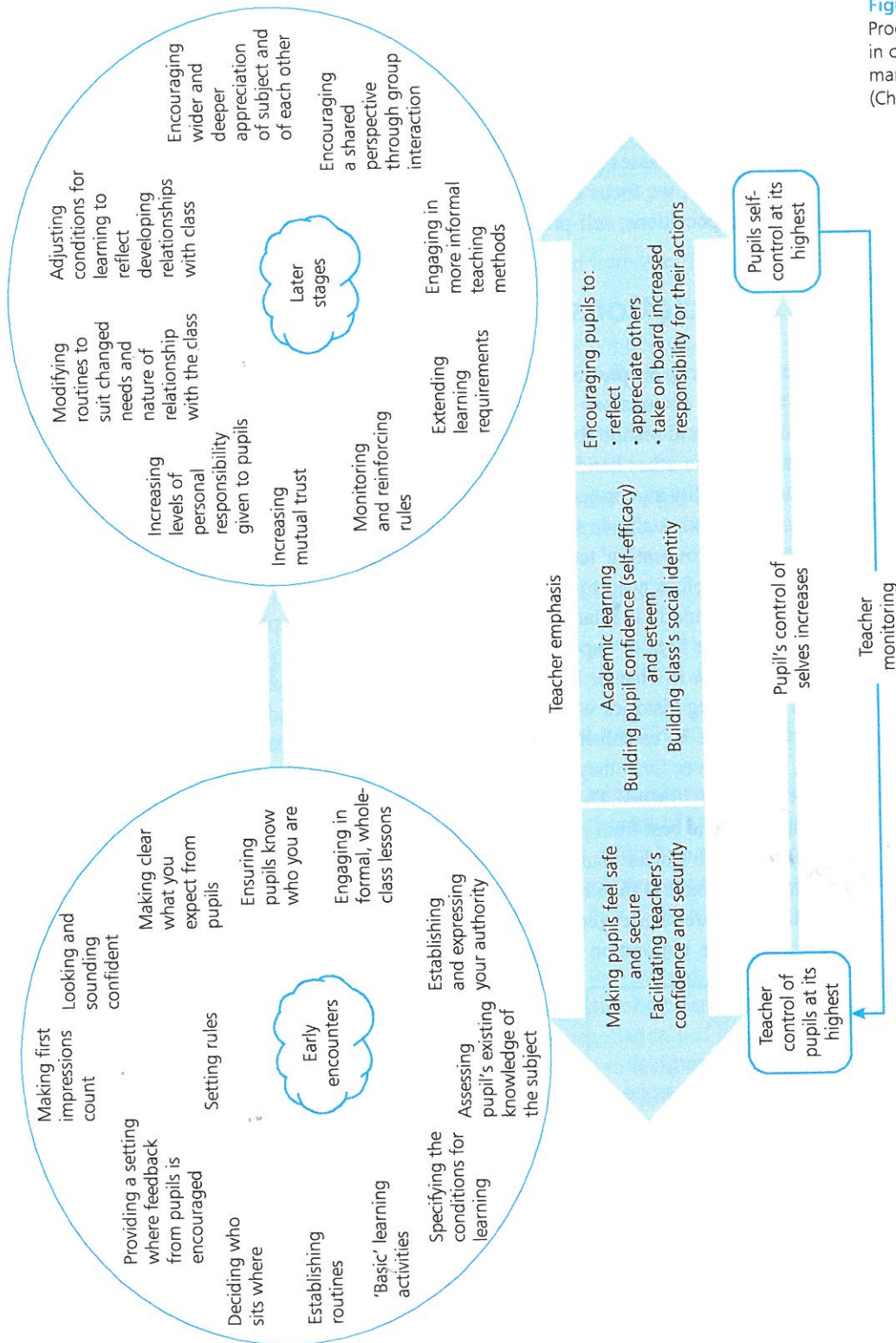


Figure 7.2
Progression
in classroom
management
(Chaplain, 2003)



(2012, [Reading 7.3](#)) and that there is a need for visualisation and self-belief. One has to 'take the stage'.

The difficulty is that competence and understanding take time to develop – and whilst advice can support such processes, there is no substitute for direct experience. So trainee teachers face the difficult challenge of working on their competence and understanding whilst groups and classes still need to be taught.

In this section, we focus on four issues which support the establishment of classroom authority – expectations, self-presentation, use of language and strategic repertoire.

2.1 Expectations

Children and young people are, just like most of us, extremely good at sensing the beliefs, motivations and dispositions of others. Teachers who appear to presume that pupils are 'up to no good' and 'cannot be trusted' are likely therefore to engender similarly guarded responses. On the other hand, if a teacher is able to convey a set of expectations which presumes capability and projects realistic goals towards success, then it is likely that pupils will try to respond. A classic study by Hargreaves, Hester and Mellor (1975) characterised the former as 'provocative' teachers, and the latter as 'insulative'.

Teachers therefore need to take control of their own expectations, and to review these carefully – particularly in relation to personal theories about pupil behaviour. Beliefs of any sort evolve in the light of experience, but can also be culturally and personally embedded. Indeed, as we saw in Chapter 1, section 3, contrasting ideas of children as inherently 'good' or 'bad' have long histories within contemporary cultures – and may also be found within some staffrooms. To establish authority, teachers need to be cautious about unquestioned beliefs, in whatever form they may emerge. In the long term, neither being too 'soft' nor being too 'strict' will work. The most realistic and effective strategy is to consistently convey presumption of the best from pupils, whilst watching carefully for signs of the worst.

Expectations for behaviour in respect of classroom rules should thus be made explicit through discussion and then reinforced. Whenever things begin to slide, or if established understandings are challenged, then such rules need to be reasserted. But the trick here is to achieve the reassertion in an incorporative way, without precipitating a negative reaction. As discussed in Chapter 2 on learning, it helps to 'credit' pupils with what they do, rather than focus on deficits and failures.

Setting high expectations about behaviour, as for learning, is thus an important foundation for establishing teacher authority. This is greatly helped if the expectations we seek to establish are congruent with whole-school policies and culture, and Reflective activity 7.2 suggests ways of exploring this.

Expert question

Expectation: does our school support high staff and student expectations and aspire for excellence?

This question contributes to a conceptual framework underpinning professional expertise (see Chapter 16).

Reflective activity 7.2

Aim: To explore and understand a school's policies and practices with regard to behaviour management.

Evidence and reflection: Answers to the following sequence of questions may be found by studying your school's behaviour policies and through talking to staff at various levels within the school.

- 1 What are the school's primary aims and values?
- 2 What principles about discipline and behaviour are derived from these?
- 3 What are the implicit and explicit 'school rules'?
- 4 What reinforcements and sanctions are accepted?
- 5 What are the greatest challenges in implementing the school's policies?
- 6 How can I appropriately reflect the schools disciplinary principles and rules in my classroom organisation?
- 7 Where and in what way should I ask for support if things go wrong?

Add other questions to the list as they occur to you.

Extension: Having gathered information, the next process is to relate this to your own expectations and strategic repertoire for managing behaviour. How does the school support you, or qualify your original intentions?

2.2 Self-presentation

In this section, we consider self-confidence, judgement and various professional skills including an ability to 'act out' the teacher role.

Teachers who are able to project themselves so that pupils take for granted that they are 'in charge' have a valuable capability. There is an important element of self-confidence in this and student teachers, in particular, may sometimes find it difficult to enact the change from the student role to the teacher role. Perhaps this is not surprising, for a huge transition in rights and responsibilities is involved. The first essential, then, is to believe in oneself as a teacher.

Judgement is needed about self-presentation because the process of establishing authority, as we saw in Chapter 6, is essentially one of negotiation between the teacher and the class. Authenticity is an important contribution to any negotiation and it is likely that, in the challenges of the classroom, attempts by novice teachers to bluff, and to pretend that they are hugely experienced, will be found out. Whilst necessary skills and understanding develop, it is therefore normally wise to progress carefully and 'with' the students if at all possible. This does not mean that one should not act the part and fulfil the 'teacher role' (see below) – indeed, the pupils will expect this. But it is best to recognise that establishing authority requires careful reflection on, and management of, the complementary roles and relationships between teacher and pupils.

Professional skills, as reviewed in Chapter 6, Section 3.3, come into their own here – for they are all related to demonstration of classroom competence. *Non-verbal skills* relate

to such things as gesture, posture, movement, position in the room, facial expression, etc. These will be actively interpreted by children. The intended impression might be one of confidence and competence, but the reflective teacher will need to consider how effectively this is achieved. How do you feel? How do you move within the classroom? *Voice control* is particularly crucial, for changing the pitch, volume, projection and intensity can convey meaning. If one's voice is to be used in this way then it will require some training and time to develop. Teachers, like singers and actors, can learn to use their diaphragm to project a 'chest voice', to breathe more deeply and speak more slowly so that their voice and their message is carried more effectively. And, of course, the skill of really *listening* to pupils and understanding what they have to say is also critical to the establishment of authority – for this is the basis of its legitimacy. Learning pupil names is extremely important. It helps the build-up of confidence and establishes the groundwork for positive relationships with individual children.

A final and more general area of presentational skill is that of 'acting' – as though on a stage. In this sense it is the ability to convey what we mean by 'being a teacher', so that expectations are clear and relationships can be negotiated. Do not underestimate the power of turning your class into an audience when appropriate. As an audience they will feed your self-presentation and, if you actively observe and listen to your audience, you will know exactly where your efforts are succeeding or misfiring.

Acting is also an enormous strength for teachers for one other particular reason. When one is acting, one is partially detached from the role. It is possible therefore to observe oneself, to analyse, reflect and plan. Acting, in other words, is controlled behaviour which is partially distanced from self. In the situations of vulnerability which sometimes arise in classrooms this can be a great asset.

The skills which have been reviewed above are necessary but are not sufficient. They have no substantive content or merit in their own right. A self-confident performer who lacks purpose and gets practical matters wrong (for example has ill-defined objectives, mixes up children's names, plans sessions badly, loses books, acts unfairly, etc.) will not be able to manage a class. A teacher has to be purposive as well as skilled and must understand the ends of education as well as the means.

2.3 Language

Sometimes, our primary purpose in speaking to pupils is to ensure that they correct some aspect of their behaviour. We may, quite simply, need to be assertive. But in so doing, as the adult and as the teacher, we also need to bear in mind our broader educational purposes. Every time we speak to pupils, for whatever purpose, we have educational opportunities. In relation to behaviour, the aim is to keep them 'on track' as effectively as possible as a means to educational ends.

Rogers (2011, p. 83) identifies seven ways in which language should be used to support good discipline:

- 1 keep corrective interaction as 'least-intrusive' as possible;

- 2 avoid unnecessary confrontation;
- 3 keep a respectful, positive tone of voice wherever possible;
- 4 keep corrective language positive where possible;
- 5 restore working relationships with a reprimanded pupil as quickly as possible;
- 6 follow up with children on matters beyond the classroom context;
- 7 if we need to communicate frustration, or even anger, do so assertively rather than aggressively.

In his final point, Rogers is warning teachers not to get 'out of control'. Pupils do have ways of describing this – the teacher has 'flipped', 'gone mad' or 'lost it'. This is the 'non-legitimate censure' discussed in Chapter 6, Section 2.3 – and the images of teacher insanity are not there by chance. Such uncontrolled use of power is a long way from establishing legitimated authority and respect.

Standing back from this a little, the basic point is that to establish our authority as teachers, even with the pressure of the busy classroom, we must carefully think about what we say and how we say it. In principle, teacher language to build good discipline should:

- *connect personally* with relevant pupil/s;
- *identify the behaviour* which needs to change;
- *encourage re-engagement* with curricular intentions;
- *minimise disruption* to others;
- *follow through* to ensure conformity.

For example:

- A simple, routine and individual primary example might be: 'Sally' (teacher gains her attention with a neutral tone of voice and then sustains eye contact), 'that's enough talking for now', 'let's see if you can complete your story before playtime' (teacher watches beneficially, and makes that clear, to see that Sally goes back on task).
- Scaling this up a little in a secondary context: 'Sean' (teacher moves to stand closer to pupil, but without threatening), 'it really isn't fair to take Alan's book without asking him', 'please give it back and we will find you another' (teacher checks return of Alan's book, provides another and checks that Sean understands the activity and is able to begin his work).
- In a routine whole-class, primary situation the teacher might say: 'Now everybody' (gain attention, perhaps with a clap or other sign), 'we have been becoming rather noisy this afternoon and this isn't good for concentrating on our work', 'I'd like us to try really hard now so that we can all focus on what we have to learn', 'and then nobody will fall behind' (teacher presents the learning goals for the session and moves actively within the classroom to reinforce the request using proximity).

- If secondary students become more challenging, which should not be assumed, a more assertive strategy may be necessary – but the five points above remain a sound guide. For example, the teacher might try: ‘4C, we need to talk about those of you who are arriving late to lessons. This is not acceptable because it is making it impossible to cover the syllabus and, in the end I’m afraid, you may all suffer from that’, ‘we need to review the reasons, and then agree how to avoid lateness in future’ (teacher and pupils discuss issues and agree ways forward. Teacher monitors progress over successive lessons to establish a new expectation).

Put another way, measured and constructive assertiveness combined with provision of an interesting curriculum can sustain and reinforce good order – and thus help in the establishment of authority (Canter and Canter, 1992). Intemperate use of language can fuel poor discipline by undermining authority.

Although audio recordings never seem flattering, recording a lesson introduction or some other whole-class episode can be a useful way of seeing how much your verbal repertoire is developing.

2.4 Strategic repertoire

Expert question

Repertoire: is our pedagogic expertise sufficiently creative, skilled and wide-ranging to teach all elements of learning?

This question contributes to a conceptual framework underpinning professional expertise (see Chapter 16).

Experienced teachers are aware of a repertoire of strategies on which they can draw to establish and maintain appropriate pupil behaviour. Rogers (2011) reviews a range of strategies and suggests that teachers should minimise their ‘intrusion’. The proposal is closely tied to the existence of tacit classroom understandings, as described in Chapter 6. So good classroom relationships provide a sort of ‘moral order’ in the classroom which underpins behaviour. When this exists, it seems almost invisible – but don’t be taken in! Teachers work continuously to maintain such relationships.

Teacher strategies become more intrusive when we feel the need to draw on our authority and assert our power. They are least intrusive when we are able to rely on the tacit understandings of the ‘working consensus’.

Strategies identified by Rogers can be considered in three groups. These reflect *minimal*, *routine* and *assertive* levels of teacher action.

Minimal intrusion strategies

The efficacy of these strategies rests on the existence of well understood rules and good classroom relationships. Good behaviour can thus be achieved with simple reminders. Three of Rogers’ minimal strategies are:

- Tactical ignoring – the teacher is aware of, but temporarily ignores, minor misdemeanors whilst focusing on and affirming positive behaviours. Pupils then come into line.

- Incidental language – reminders of classroom rules are given without attributing blame to anyone. Because rules are established and accepted, pupils self-adjust to conform. ‘We have a rather messy classroom at the moment, and we can’t go out if it’s like that can we?’
- Take-up time – after a rule reminder or request, the teacher moves away to give pupils time to cooperate. In so doing, she communicates trust (though she might also keep an eye on progress!)

Routine strategies

This group of strategies reflects the ebb and flow of teacher–pupil interaction and the fact that relationships are always dynamic. A little jostling and testing of boundaries is thus to be expected. The strategies below are typical of those which teachers use to frame and control classroom situations, particularly when children or young people may have non-curricular activities in mind.

- Behavioural direction – expected behaviours are directly, positively and briefly communicated. ‘All paying attention to me now please.’
- Rule reminder – rather than ‘picking on’ a particular transgressor, the teacher reminds everyone of a rule. ‘Now what are our rules about getting ready for PE?’
- Prefacing – with awareness of potential misbehaviour, this strategy can be used to anticipate and frame activities without being too heavy-handed. At appropriate moments, the teacher interacts with relevant pupils to show awareness, to nip unwanted aspects in the bud, and to redirect attention back to curricula goals.
- Distraction – this contrarian strategy involves deliberately drawing attention to something that is going well and thus by-passing something which might be problematic. With the class refocused, the difficulty fades away or can be quietly dealt with.
- Direct questions – such questions challenge pupils to justify themselves and to take responsibility. ‘What should you be doing now? Where should you put the ...?’ Such questions may be the starting point for discussion and clarification of rules.
- Directed ‘choices’ – these are pupil options which are circumscribed by established rules and routines. ‘Yes, you can go in the play area once you’ve finished your story.’ ‘When you have made notes on your homework, you can certainly go out for break.’

Assertive strategies

The strategies in this group depend on the teacher asserting their authority and ‘standing up’ to pupils in various ways. Whilst, they are more categoric, they still make reference to established understandings and rules. However, they leave pupils in no doubt that the teacher is in charge.

- **Blocking** – this is an important strategy to maintain focus on important behavioural issues in the face of all sorts of distraction tactics which may be deployed by pupils. ‘Hold on. Now let’s get to the point about what really happened – and I’ll hear you one at a time. John. ... Sam ...’
- **Assertion** – this strategy calmly deploys verbal and non-verbal skills and draws on reserves of self-confidence to defend and promote a principle about behaviour which has been threatened. ‘It is not OK to hit people in school, at any time at all.’ ‘Language of that sort is unacceptable.’ The stance should be non-aggressive, so that the teacher is clearly holding the moral high-ground. We thus demonstrate to the class as a whole that our action is responsible and legitimate – which erodes support for transgressors, re-asserts more routine expectations and gradually calms things down. It is quite possible, in some situations, that there may need to be a sequence of blocking and assertion moves as the complexity of pupil feelings, explanations and actions is worked through. Judgement is needed in what to block so that progress can be made, whilst also dealing with the issues which are felt to be important. From the pupil perspective, an overall judgement will eventually be made about the ‘fairness’ of the teacher in dealing with the incident.
- **Command** – a direct instruction. To be effective, a command needs to be delivered with clarity and confidence, and to be followed up immediately. ‘Louise, put down the hose pipe NOW.’ Eye contact, proximity and firm tone of voice will all convey the seriousness of teacher intentions. This strategy is one of direct intervention and should not be common in classroom use. If it is, it may be a sign that relationships are breaking down. The plight of a student teacher ineffectually demanding things from an alienated class of children is not a pretty sight. Thus, to be effective, commands still draw on mutual respect, for pupils will conform best when they trust the teacher – just as army officers command the respect of their troops.



We have reviewed a repertoire of strategies for managing behaviour and Cowley (2010, [Reading 7.4](#)) offers yet more. The moral foundation of these strategies rests, in all cases, on classroom relationships, as described in Chapter 6. Teachers’ power is always circumscribed but, as responsible adults, we have the task of analysing and interpreting what is going on – and taking action if necessary. To do this, it is important to be able stand back a little.

Reflective activity 7.3

Aim: To review the repertoire of strategies for managing behaviour which we typically use.

Evidence and reflection: Brainstorm, perhaps with a group of colleagues, on the strategies which you use to manage behaviour – just get a list. Use the ideas above from Rogers, or harvest from other sources if this is helpful. Then maybe refine it a bit, to eliminate overlaps.

Now see if you can sort your strategies into categories based on the degree of intrusion. Which rest on tacit understandings? Which contribute to routine patrolling? Which demand really assertive activity?

Extension: Having expanded and analysed your strategic repertoire for managing behaviour, it is good to try it out. Acting mindfully, look for opportunities to experiment! In the light of your experience, refine your repertoire.

3 Skills for engagement

In this section, we look at a magnificent seven management skills which relate to the maintenance of classroom engagement: ‘gaining attention’, ‘framing’, ‘withitness’, ‘overlapping’, ‘pacing’, ‘orchestration’ and ‘consistency’. Such skills enable lesson plans to be put into action successfully (see Chapter 10, Section 4).

3.1 Gaining attention

This is often one of the first problems to confront a student teacher. With children in the classroom, talking, moving around, playing or whatever, how do you get them to stop what they are doing and turn their attention to you? Established teachers are likely to have at least one routine for this. Thus a single, sharp clap of the hands may cut through the noise and produce a short pause which creates an opportunity to take the initiative. On a sports field where speech may not carry well, a whistle is the conventional tool. In some primary contexts, teachers use a signal requiring children to raise both arms and face the teacher. This has the considerable merit of making it very obvious which children are now paying attention, and which are not. An equivalent in a very ordered secondary classroom might be to establish a routine in which students file into the room, move to their established places, take out their books for the subject and look to the front. Sadly, things are not always so simple and gaining attention often has to be worked for.

To understand why this is, it is worth considering what is at stake. When children or young people are milling about, talking and playing amongst themselves, they are free of adult constraints and able to indulge in all the excitements and diversions of peer culture. The switch signal given by the teacher is an interruption in this freedom. It is an assertion,

based on the teacher's authority, that the time has now come for the children to assume the role of 'pupils' again. They are to set aside what they were previously doing, and must now accept the rules, routines and expectations of the classroom.

As with so many aspects of teaching, it is helpful to think of building up a repertoire of ways of gaining attention so that various strategies are available. Whilst a clear, firm command may be effective from time to time, is important to avoid uncontrolled shouting, or indeed, to take any other action which could be interpreted as desperation or weakness. Pitch of voice and speed of talking need to be watched. For student teachers, it is very good practice to study the strategies used by established teachers and to discuss their routines with them. Acting confidently, which such consultation will enable, will communicate competence so that, hopefully, success builds on success.

Gaining attention is a crucial test of authority. If we have earned the respect of the pupils as their teacher, and they know that we are likely to offer them an interesting curriculum, then they will normally pay attention when asked appropriately.

3.2 Framing

Understandings about classroom behaviour are not static. Indeed, even if an expected behaviour is well established, pupils are expert at gauging the degree to which they need to conform and the extent to which they might be able to 'get away' with something. To do this, they interpret the mood and intent of their teacher by monitoring their actions, statements and movements. For example, an active, purposeful entry to a classroom is a clear signal that a teacher 'means business' and will normally tighten the frame immediately. As long as something substantive and interesting follows, things should be fine. Conversely, acting rather casually, or withdrawing into conversation with a visiting adult, will usually cause behavioural expectations to weaken and may result in children relaxing in their approach to activities

Framing thus indicates the extent to which situations or events are structured by expectations. It may apply in particular settings, or from moment to moment within a lesson. For instance, one might compare the strong frame which often exists in a hushed library, with the weak framing which often exists in classrooms during wet dinner breaks. For some purposes, such as during the introduction to a teaching session, one might want the frame to be strong thus ensuring tight control and attention. On other occasions, such as for group problem-solving discussions, a weaker overall frame may be perfectly acceptable and may enable children to take initiatives which are necessary to fulfil learning objectives. Situations of difficulty often arise where strong framing is expected by a teacher but children act as if the framing is weak. If this happens, a teacher has to act quickly to redefine the rules in play.

The ability of a teacher to manage the strength of behavioural framing over time has a great deal to do with classroom discipline. It sustains expectations, and avoids a lurch from routine to routine. In particular, skilful management provides a means of pre-empting serious difficulties through giving clear expectations about acceptable behaviour. By its very nature, though, the development of such understandings cannot be rushed and frequently needs to be explicitly reviewed by teachers and children.

3.3 Withitness

This is a term coined by Kounin (1970, [Reading 7.5](#)) to describe the capacity of teachers to be aware of the wide variety of things which are simultaneously going on in a classroom. This is a constant challenge for any teacher and can be a particular strain for a new teacher until the skill is acquired.

Teachers who are 'with-it' are said to 'have eyes in the back of their head'. They are able to anticipate and to see where help is needed. They are able to nip trouble in the bud. They are skilful at scanning the class whilst helping individuals, and they position themselves accordingly. They are alert; they can pre-empt disturbance; and they can act fast. They can sense the way a class is responding, re-establish the framework of expectations if necessary and act to maintain a positive atmosphere.



3.4 Overlapping

This is another of Kounin's terms and describes the skill of being able to do more than one thing at the same time. This is similar to the popular term 'multitasking'. Most teachers work under such pressure that they have to think about and do more than one thing at a time. Decisions have to be made very rapidly. It has been calculated that over 1,000 interpersonal exchanges a day typically take place between each teacher and the children in their care. Frequently scanning the class, even whilst helping one individual, should enable the teacher to identify and reinforce appropriate behaviour or to anticipate and intervene at the first signs of trouble. As Kounin ([Reading 7.5](#)) points out, if children perceive that the teacher is 'with-it' enough to know what is going on, they are more likely to remain on task and achieve the appropriate learning objectives.



3.5 Pacing

Pacing involves making appropriate judgements about the timing and phasing of the organisation and content of teaching-learning sessions. Organisational decisions have to be made about when to begin and end an activity and how much time to leave for tidying up or a plenary discussion. It is very easy to get involved in activities, forget about the clock and suddenly to find that it is break time. More complex educational judgements are necessary in relation to learning activities and the various phases of a typical session. For example, the motivation generated at the start of an activity has to be sustained or managed throughout. There may also be a need for 'incubation' and 'developmental' phases in which children think about the activities, explore ideas and then tackle tasks. From time to time there may be a need for a 'restructuring phase' where objectives and procedures may need to be clarified further. Finally, there may be a 'review phase' for reinforcing good effort or for reflecting on overall progress. (For more detailed discussion on the pacing of content delivery, questions and answers, etc. see Chapter 12, Section 2).

In England, strict lesson structures were once imposed on teachers and learners through ‘national strategies’ for literacy and numeracy, but scope for flexibility and exercising judgement about pacing are vitally important. They depend crucially on being sensitive to how children are responding to activities. If they are immersed and productively engaged, then one might decide to extend a phase or run the activity into the next session. If the children seem to be becoming bored, frustrated or listless, then it is usually wise to retain the initiative, to restructure or review the activity or to move on to something new. If the children are becoming too ‘high’, excited and distracted, then it may be useful to review and maybe redirect them into an activity which calms them down by rechannelling their energies. As will be discussed in the next section, working with a class of individuals may involve being able to respond to many, if not all, of their responses at the same time.

3.6 Orchestration

We use the term ‘orchestration’ to refer to the way in which a teacher works with the whole class rather like a conductor controls an orchestra or a standup comedian ‘plays’ an audience. Whether the teacher is adopting whole-class, individual or group teaching strategies, part of their job is to maximise the time that all the individuals in the class are on task and paying attention. Involving all the children in the learning activities of a classroom involves developing the sensitivity to be able to ‘read’ how individuals or groups are responding and to be able to anticipate the most effective way of maintaining interest or re-engaging attention. Bored, listless behaviour might be engendered because a task is too easy or too difficult (see Chapter 10 on differentiation). On the other hand some children may be highly motivated by an activity which others find tedious and dull. In all cases the teacher has to be aware of everything that is happening in their classroom and be prepared to act accordingly. This may involve a differentiated response in which some children are allowed to continue with what they are doing whilst a new focus is found for others. Certainly, teachers have to be aware of a range of ways of motivating all the individuals in the class (Gilbert, 2002).

3.7 Consistency

We identify one final, overarching skill for maximising learner engagement. This concerns the maintenance of consistency in the promotion of classroom rules, routines and expectations.

After all, in the domain of the classroom, the teacher often acts as government, police, judge and jury all rolled into one. Pupils are one of the crowd and remain subject to the teacher’s right to evaluate and power to punish (cf. Jackson, 1968, [Reading 6.1](#)). Teacher inconsistency, if it occurs, reduces the integrity of the working consensus and the sense of fairness on which it is based. This, in turn, can lead to a variety of subsequent control difficulties and to risk-avoidance strategies so that new learning is compromised.



Pupils will feel vulnerable unless they can rely on teacher consistency and fairness. However, with such security, children and young people are more likely to open themselves up to the challenges and risks of new learning. Teacher consistency thus provides an underlying structure for high-quality pupil learning.

Reflective activity 7.4

Aim: To investigate one's classroom management skills.

Evidence and reflection: Ask a colleague to observe you in a teaching session and to make notes on the way in which you manage the children. They could watch out for examples of gaining attention, framing, withitness, overlapping, pacing, orchestration and maintaining consistency. Discuss the session together afterwards.

Alternatively, set up a video camera to record a session which you take. Analyse the playback in terms of the issues above.

Sometimes people only see what seems to be going wrong! If there is a danger that you are becoming negative about your management skills and judgements then adopt the 'three to one rule'. This rule states that you can only identify one negative thing after you have identified three positives. When you run out of positives you have to stop. (This strategy also works with children who have been asked to evaluate their own work or that of others!)

Extension: Such analysis should increase self-awareness of management skills. Try to identify possible improvements which could be made. These can be practised and worked on. Give yourself time to develop your expertise.

4 Managing classroom episodes

'Flow' is a summary criterion which can be used to describe the consequences of classroom management over time. It highlights the degree of continuity and coherence achieved in a learning session, and implies steady, continuous progression. The suggestion is thus that we should work with the children to develop a coherent sense of purpose within our classes; organise our classrooms in ways which are consistent with those purposes; and manage the children, phases and events so that learning objectives are cumulatively reinforced. Consistency and reinforcement of desirable behaviours can be important here, as Merrett and Wheldall (1990, [Reading 7.6](#)) emphasised.

In this section we discuss five issues which pose particular management challenges to the flow of sessions. We discuss 'beginnings' of sessions; their 'development'; 'transitions' between phases of sessions or between sessions themselves; and the 'endings' of sessions. We also consider strategies for dealing with 'the unexpected'.



4.1 Beginnings

Just as, for curriculum, it is essential that pupils understand what they are expected to learn so, for behaviour, it is helpful that there should be clarity concerning how they should behave.

The beginning of a session is often seen as important because of the way in which it sets a tone and clarifies intent. Simple strategies such as being in the classroom to receive the children help to establish that you are receiving them on your territory and, by implication, on your terms (Laslett and Smith, 1992).

The next important goal is usually to: introduce and interest the children in the planned activities; provide them with a clear indication of the learning objectives of the session, a clear understanding of what they are expected to do; and structure the activity in practical, organisational terms. See Reflective activity 11.2.

Reflective activity 7.5

Aim: To evaluate the beginning of a session and to consider areas for improvement.

Evidence and reflection: Video record a session you have taught or observe someone else's lesson. Consider what happened in terms of the following questions.

- How did the teacher attract the children's attention?
- Did the teacher explain the objectives of the session?
- What did the teacher use as a stimulus at the start of the lesson and how effective was this?
- Were the instructions to the class clear?
- Did the children know why they were doing this activity?
- Did the children know what they were going to learn from it?
- Did the children know if any follow-up is expected?
- Did the children know on what criteria their work was to be assessed?
- Did the children know how this activity links with other work they had done or would do next?

Extension: What specific actions could be taken for improvement? What general skills need to be worked on?

4.2 Development

This issue calls for careful thought. However carefully the session begins, how does it develop? Pupils will expect to find some progression which will maintain their interest and engagement with curricular tasks. This is a clear example of how good behaviour can be seen as a product of good teaching – in this case, of appropriate curriculum planning (see Chapter 10).

Transitions

Transitions are a regular cause of control difficulties, especially for trainee teachers. This often arises when lessons about behaviour concerning one activity are left behind and those of the new one have yet to be established. In these circumstances, a skilled teacher will have to plan carefully, involve available support staff and start an initiative early and structure the transition carefully.

For example, it would be a challenging prospect if a range of creative, artistic activities were in full swing in primary school children suddenly had to get ready for a physical education session in the hall. This would suggest that it is important to break down a transition such as this into three discrete stages. The skill lies in first, anticipating problems that may arise; second, in pre-structuring the next phase; and finally in interesting the children in the next phase so that they are drawn through and into it. These principles (anticipate, pre-structure and engage) apply to any transition.

Expert questions

Progression: does the curriculum-as-delivered provide an appropriate sequence and depth of learning experiences?

Engagement: do our teaching strategies, classroom organisation and consultation enable learners to actively participate in and enjoy their learning?

These questions contribute to a conceptual framework underpinning professional expertise (see Chapter 16).

Reflective activity 7.6

To monitor periods of transition in your own teaching.

Anticipation and reflection: Consider a transition phase in your own teaching in the light of the following questions.

- Did you give an early warning of the transition?
- Did you give clear instructions for leaving existing work?
- Did you give the children clear instructions for the transition and for any movement that was necessary?
- Did you arouse the children's interest in the next phase?

Review: Reviewing your performance as a whole, what are the major points for improvement? Do you see these as technical, as personal, or as associated with other factors? What might you try next time?

Endings

At the end of a session is a further management issue and four aspects will be reviewed. The first is a very practical one. At the end of any session equipment must be put away and the classroom must be tidied up ready for future sessions. The second aspect relates to evaluation and control. Children and young people can sometimes get a little 'high' at the end of a session when they look forward to whatever follows. This, combined with the

chores of tidying up, can require a degree of awareness and firmness from the teacher. The procedures that are called for here are similar to those for transitions.

The two other aspects involved in ending sessions have more explicit and positive educational potential. One of these concerns the excellent opportunities which arise, for example in the plenary of a literacy lesson, for reviewing educational progress and achievements, for reinforcing good work and for contextualising activities which have been completed. This is complemented by the opportunities that also arise for asserting the membership of the class as a communal group. Shared experiences, teamwork and cooperation can be celebrated and reinforced through the enjoyment of poetry, singing, games, stories, etc. Moreover, there are lots of very productive opportunities at the ends of sessions and even an odd space of unexpected time, perhaps waiting for a bell, which can be used constructively.

Overall, a carefully thought-out and well-executed ending to a session will contribute to the flow of activities by providing an ordered exit, by reinforcing learning and by building up the sense of 'belonging' within the class as a whole.

Reflective activity 7.7

Aim: To review the end of a session and identify areas for improvement.

Evidence and reflection: Reflect back on a session you taught recently in the light of the following questions.

- Did you give early warning of the end of the session?
- Did you give clear instructions for tidying up?
- Did you reinforce those instructions and monitor the tidying up?
- Did you take opportunities to reinforce the educational achievements, efforts and progress made?
- Did you take opportunities to build up the sense of the class as a community?
- Did you praise the children for what they did well?
- Did you provide for an ordered exit from the room?
- How might you respond differently in future?

Extension: You could very usefully ask a mentor or an experienced colleague to observe your session and offer specific comments. Before you do, highlight the particular issues on which you want feedback. This might also be a good moment to do some reading about the principles of class management.

4.5 The unexpected

As Doyle (1977, [Reading 7.1](#)) identified, unpredictability is one of the most salient features of the classroom for trainee teachers. It is difficult to predict children's reactions to questions or how they will respond to specific activities. Similarly, it is difficult to predict how long it will take for a class to complete an activity. These are skills which are acquired over time and with experience. However, in any classroom there is the continuous

ility of internal and external interruptions; for example, there may be changes in normal schedule or a potential breakdown in equipment. Skilled teachers learn to plan to anticipate potential difficulties and to have a range of strategies for dealing with the unexpected. In this section we consider how teachers might deal with the unexpected outcomes of both learning outcomes and 'crises'.

In line with a social constructivist approach to learning, teachers are encouraged to pose open-ended questions which can be interpreted and answered in a number of different ways (see Chapter 7, Section 1.3 and Chapter 13, Section 1.2 for further discussion). As appropriate answers are not predetermined, teachers may be surprised by the children's responses. Where the answer is unexpected the teacher then faces the dilemma of wanting to acknowledge the legitimacy of the response without being drawn too far away from eaching point being made. Consider, for example, the following situation. A teacher introduces her class of 7-year-olds to the subject of soil erosion and, assuming that the children are following her discussion, asks how grass might help to control this process. Unfortunately, several members of the class remember an earlier lesson about the oxygen cycle and want to discuss the idea that grass is important to humans because it releases oxygen into the atmosphere. As a skilled practitioner the teacher affirms the children's remembering the previous lesson before returning to her original topic. Being able to handle the unexpected in a way which reinforces children's prior learning and yet remains true to the original learning objective is the mark of a skilled teacher. (Note the role of teacher knowledge in making this possible, as discussed in Chapter 8, Section 3.)

On a more practical level, a classroom 'crisis' is a clear example of the unexpected. Crises can come in many forms, from a child being sick or cutting a finger, to students (or perhaps a parent) challenging the teacher's authority and judgement. Despite the wide-ranging issues which are raised, there are three fairly simple principles which can be applied from the classroom-management point of view.

The first priority is to *minimise the disturbance*. Neither a child who is ill or hurt, or a parent or child who is upset, can be given the attention which they require by a teacher who has continuing classroom responsibilities. Help from support staff, the school secretary, an ancillary helper, or other teacher should be called in either to deal with the problem or to relieve the class teacher so that they can deal with it. In this way disturbance to the classroom flow can be minimised and those in need of undivided attention can receive it. The school should have an identified procedure for how to handle crises. Of course, a student teacher usually has a full-time teacher upon whom to call.

The second step for handling a crisis is to *maximise reassurance*. Children can be upset when something unexpected happens and it may well be appropriate to reassert the security of their classroom routines and expectations. A degree of caution in the choice of activities for a suitable period might therefore be wise.

The third strategy, which is appropriate when a crisis arises, concerns *pausing for sufficient thought* before making a judgement on how to act. Obviously, this depends on what has happened and some events require immediate action. However, if it is possible to gain time to think about the issues outside the heat of the moment, then it may produce more authoritative and constructive decisions.

Reflective activity 7.8

Aim: To monitor responses to a classroom crisis.

Evidence and reflection: After a crisis has arisen, a diary-type account of it and of how it was handled could be written. This might describe the event, and also reflect the feelings which were experienced as the events unfolded. It might be valuable to encourage children to record and talk about a similar account and reflection after the event, so that you can gain an insight into why they behaved as they did.

The following questions might be asked:

- Did you minimise disturbance?
- Did you maximise reassurance?
- Did you make appropriate judgements on how to act?

Extension: Having examined your actions and the children's responses to the crisis it would probably be helpful to discuss the event and the accounts with a friend or colleague. An interesting reading would be David Tripp (1993) on 'critical incidents'.

5 Cycles of behaviour

5.1 Towards engagement and independence

Here we revisit the discussion in Section 2.5 of Chapter 6. Positive relationships between teacher and pupils are sustained if teachers' act thoughtfully, constructively and fairly towards their pupils but also, most particularly, by the quality and appropriateness of the curriculum and educational experience which is on offer. Children and young people are alert to this. They want to be interested and they want to learn. School can otherwise be 'so boooooorrrrring'. Pupil engagement will be high if tasks and activities are clearly introduced, appropriately chosen and well- matched to pupil needs. If this is done, success is possible and a sense of achievement can be gained.

So, to summarise, in terms of dealing with behavioural problems the most effective strategy is, without doubt, to try to prevent them from happening in the first place. Certainly, the incidence of inappropriate behaviour is likely to be significantly reduced by following some basic rules of thumb to improve pupil engagement (see Checklist 7.1).

Unfortunately, whilst such strategies should significantly reduce the incidents of misbehaviour they may not prevent it in all circumstances. Consequently, a prudent teacher will develop in their repertoire a range of strategies for dealing with inappropriate behaviour ... before it develops into anything worse.

Checklist 7.1

Aim: To pre-empt general misbehaviour and improve engagement.

- 1 Be clear about general class rules and what constitutes acceptable behaviour.
- 2 'Catch 'em being good', and 'give credit' for appropriate behaviour.
- 3 Select tasks and activities that offer appropriate challenge and interest, but which also enable pupils to achieve success.
- 4 Have clear learning objectives and make sure pupils understand these.
- 5 Explain the activity or task clearly and be sure that everyone knows what to do and how to do it.
- 6 Be supportive of any problems encountered and provide feedback.
- 7 Show approval of appropriate work and reward effort.
- 8 Be consistent and be positive.

5.2 Managing challenging behaviour – avoiding a negative cycle

Although, hopefully, crises will be rare, there may be behavioural problems which gradually erode good relationships and threaten classroom order. In this section we present them in terms of recurring challenges which even the most experienced teacher may have to deal with. The aim, of course, would be to anticipate undesirable behaviour and to 'nip it in the bud' so that it does not lead to a negative cycle (see Chapter 6, Section 2.1). Nevertheless, difficulties are bound to occur from time to time and prudent teachers are likely to want to think through possible strategies in advance so that they can act confidently in managing such situations.

If behavioural problems are serious or repeated it would be appropriate to consider the strategies listed below. Suggestions are offered for five progressive stages. The emphasis should remain on prevention, and you should bear in mind that, whilst the 1997 Education Act enables teachers to restrain pupils with 'such force as is reasonable in the circumstances', corporal punishment in any form is illegal.

- 1 If inappropriate behaviour occurs only once and seems relatively minor:
 - Indicate that you have noticed and disapprove of the behaviour – eye contact and a shake of the head.
- 2 If repeated:
 - Make sustained eye contact, use more empathic non-verbal gestures.
 - Move towards the child.
 - Invite the child to participate – ask a question or encourage a comment, direct the focus onto work to be done.
- 3 If persistent, in addition to the responses above:
 - Name the child firmly and positively.

- Move to the child.
 - Stop the action.
 - Find out the facts if the situation is ambiguous; avoid jumping to conclusions.
 - Briefly identify the inappropriate behaviour, comment on the *behaviour* (not the child), keep voice low and controlled, avoid nagging/lecturing.
 - Clearly state the desired behaviour, and expect a compliant response.
 - Distance the child from the situation – avoid a contagious spread, a public clash and an ‘audience’ which can encourage ‘showing off’.
 - Focus on the principal individual involved; don’t be drawn into discussion with a group; followers will conform if you control the leader.
 - Deal with the situation as quickly and neatly as possible; don’t be drawn into long arguments; don’t let the situation distract your attention from the rest of the class and the goals of your lesson.
- 4 If punishment is judged to be necessary:
- Ensure that the punishments you consider are consistent with school policies and established classroom norms.
 - Be sure that the punishment you decide upon is appropriate and will be seen to be ‘fair’.
 - Avoid indiscriminate punishment of class or group which would be deemed ‘unfair’.
 - Be confident that you can implement the punishment as announced.
- 5 Closure/after the event:
- Take those involved to one side, perhaps individually, and present them with ‘the problem’ – preserve their dignity, avoid ‘supporters’ chipping in.
 - Encourage the child to identify what had been wrong, thus sharing responsibility.
 - If you have acted inappropriately in any way, then apologise, so you are seen to be fair.
 - Invite the child to draw up a ‘contract’ for the future.
 - If privileges are to be withdrawn, show how they can be earned back.
 - Provide new opportunities to earn praise.
 - Conclude with ‘peace terms’ which are clear to all parties.

The point of all this is to be ‘firm but fair’. You, as the teacher, are responsible and must take control. But you have to act appropriately and negotiate a new foundation for future conformity and a sustainable, positive relationship (see also Chapter 6).

Other problems can also exist in any classroom. These may be associated with an individual child who has particular difficulties. These need to be understood rather than lead to condemnation. To do this, it is important to record and analyse the behaviour and try to identify the possible causes before major action is taken. In keeping a diary of events

one might record the conditions, characteristics and consequences of the behaviour and thus produce evidence for future action.

Checklist 7.2

Aim: To record incidents of ongoing 'problem' behaviour.

Conditions: When exactly does the disruption occur?

- Is it random or regular?
- Is there a pattern with a particular child?
- Is there a pattern regarding a particular task?
- Is there a pattern with a particular teacher?

Characteristics: What exactly happens?

- Is it a verbal reaction?
- Is it a physical reaction?

Consequences: What are the effects?

- On the child, the teacher?
- On the class, the school?
- Do others join in, ignore, retaliate?

Such major, persistent problems are best discussed with other colleagues and a common strategy worked out in line with the school's behaviour policy. In some circumstances, this might also involve the parents, if necessary, so that a consistent approach can be adopted.

Whether a problem is associated with an individual child or most of the class, a consistent, balanced, firm and constructive approach is essential and would, hopefully, provide security for pupils as well as support for the teacher. It must be remembered that children and young people respond to situations and experiences. We, as teachers, structure such experiences. Thus, if students respond problematically, we must reflect on the experiences that we provide rather than simply trying to apportion blame elsewhere. As we have seen, teachers can be 'provocative' or 'insulative' (Hargreaves, Hester and Mellor, 1975). Which are you? Can you find ways to manage behaviour which draw on and sustain a positive cycle in your classroom relationships?

Expert question

Reflection: is our classroom practice based on incremental, evidence-informed and collaborative improvement strategies?

This question contributes to a conceptual framework underpinning professional expertise (see Chapter 16).

[www.C](http://www.reflectiveteaching.co.uk)

For consideration of whole school issues and a summary checklist of principles for classroom management deriving from the Elton Report, see the supplementary material for Chapter 7 on reflectiveteaching.co.uk

Conclusion

This chapter has examined aspects of behaviour management which help to establish and sustain conditions for successful learning. Such issues are of great concern to us as teachers, because they underpin our effectiveness.

However, most of us gradually grow in confidence and competence with such challenges. Indeed, 'good discipline' is, above all, the product of professional expertise (see Chapters 1 and 16).

Student teachers should allow themselves time to learn, experiment, and learn some more. We all make mistakes too, but it is important to see these as learning opportunities. Direct experience is irreplaceable in developing competence, but there is also much to be said for sharing ideas, problems and successes through discussion with colleagues and mentors.

Key readings

For a sophisticated and influential analysis of classroom environments and engagement of pupils in learning tasks, see:

Doyle, W. (1986). 'Classroom organization and management', in M. C. Wittrock (ed.), *Handbook of Research on Teaching* (3rd edn). New York: Macmillan. (Reading 7.1)

There are many books which provide practical advice on classroom strategies to achieve good behaviour. For example:

Bennett, T. (2011) *Mastering the Art and Craft of Teaching*. London: Continuum. (Reading 7.3)

Cowley, S. (2010) *Getting the Buggers to Behave*. London: Continuum. (Reading 7.4)

Robertson, J. (1996) *Effective Classroom Control: Understanding Teacher-Pupil Relationships*. London: Hodder and Stoughton.

Rogers, B. (2011) *Classroom Behaviour*. London: SAGE.

Watkins, C. (2011) *Managing Classroom Behaviour*. London: ATL (Reading 7.2)

For a layered model for managing pupil behaviour, based on psychological research (Reading 6.4), see:

Chaplain, R. (2003) *Teaching Without Disruption in the Primary School*. London: Routledge.

Chaplain, R. (2003) *Teaching Without Disruption in the Secondary School*. London: Routledge.



For a book which provides many insights on classroom management, and which has become a classic, see:

Kounin, J. S. (1970) *Discipline and Group Management in Classrooms*. New York: Holt Rhinehart and Winston. (Reading 7.5)



The classic on assertive discipline is:

Canter, L. and Canter, M. (1992). *Assertive Discipline: Positive Behavior Management for Today's Classroom*. Santa Monica, CA: Canter and Associates.

On 'positive teaching' see:

Merrett, F. and Wheldall, K. (1990) *Identifying Troublesome Classroom Behaviour*. London: Paul Chapman. (Reading 7.6)



It is crucial to hold on to management issues in the context of broader educational objectives and with awareness of the overall effect on a classroom. On this, with a useful scale for analysing the 'working atmosphere', see:

Haydn, T. (2007) *Managing Pupil Behaviour*. London: Routledge.

Taking this even further, for a philosophical account see:

Straughan, R. (1988) *Can We Teach Children to be Good? Basic Issues in Moral, Personal and Social Education*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

From time to time public concern is expressed about behaviour in schools. The outcome of one such episode led to the Elton Report. This is a balanced summary of the factors and issues, and is well worth consulting:

DES (1989a) *Discipline in Schools*, Report of the Committee of Enquiry chaired by Lord Elton. London: HMSO.

reflectiveteaching.co.uk offers additional professional resources for this chapter. These may include *Further Reading*, illustrative *Reflective Activities*, useful *Web Links* and *Download Facilities* for diagrams, figures, checklists, activities.

