

Rethinking Behaviour: The Role of Developmental Knowledge in Restorative Practice.

Uniting Policy and Practice in Wales through Developmental Insight.

Key objectives

- Investigate how teachers' understanding of child development impacts their behaviour management strategies and attitudes, including the connection between developmental psychology and educational practices.
- Evaluate supportive and restorative behaviour management approaches by analysing theoretical frameworks and studies that address the root causes of student behaviour, emphasising preventative and relationship-focused strategies.
- Compare local and national policies in Wales with international frameworks to assess their influence on behaviour management approaches.
- Analyse teacher training and professional development in Wales, focusing on qualifications, content, and barriers to effective implementation in behavior management and restorative practices.

Aim

The aim of the question is to explore how a teacher's understanding of child development and its influencing factors can enhance behaviour management strategies in the classroom. Specifically, it seeks to examine how this knowledge enables educators to implement supportive and restorative approaches that address the underlying causes of student behaviours, rather than merely responding to the behaviours themselves. Prioritising a preventative approach.

INTRODUCTION

This research explores the intersection of child development, teacher attitudes, and behavior management strategies in educational settings. It highlights the importance of teachers' understanding of developmental psychology and its impact on their approach to student behavior. Additionally, the study evaluates restorative practices, behavior management policies in Wales, and the effectiveness of teacher training and professional development in addressing these issues. By examining these elements, the research aims to enhance behavior management strategies and promote positive student outcomes.

THEMES

CHILD DEVELOPMENT

- BEHAVIOUR OFTEN REFLECTS DEVELOPMENTAL NEEDS, NOT DEFIANCE. ERIKSON LINKS BEHAVIOUR TO COMPETENCE AND RECOGNITION (CHARRY, 2024; LUNSKY ET AL., 2017), THOUGH HIS THEORY CAN BE CULTURALLY RIGID (LOVETT, 1986).
- PIAGET SHOWS HOW COGNITIVE STAGE AFFECTS REASONING AND BEHAVIOUR (JAIN & ADAV, 2022), WITH DISENGAGEMENT SIGNALLING DEVELOPMENTAL MISMATCH (REYNOLDS ET AL., 2024).
- BEHAVIOURIST APPROACHES OFFER QUICK RESULTS BUT RISK HARMING MOTIVATION (RYAN & DECI, 2020; JONES ET AL., 2024).
- BRONFENBRENNER REMINDS US THAT BEHAVIOUR IS SHAPED BY FAMILY, SCHOOL, AND CULTURE (HAMRE & Pianta, 2019).

CULTURAL RELEVANCE AND INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES

- COLLECTIVISTCULTURES FOCUS ON HARMONY; INDIVIDUALIST ONES ON PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY (ZHANG, POWERS AND PANG 2023; KAUR AND MOHAMMAD 2020). SOCIETAL “INVISIBLE BOUNDARIES” OFTEN LIMIT RESTORATIVE PRACTICES (HWA 2024).
- FINLAND AND NEW ZEALAND USE SUPPORTIVE RESTORATIVE APPROACHES (SAHLBERG 2015; MOLLER 2023), WHILE THE U.S. AND EAST ASIA RELY ON PUNITIVE DISCIPLINE WITH NEGATIVE EFFECTS (FONTANINI-AXELROD 2024; RUDOLF 2024).
- IN WALES, RISING EXCLUSIONS REVEAL A GAP BETWEEN TRAUMA-INFORMED POLICY AND PRACTICE (WELSH GOVERNMENT 2024).

NEUROSCIENTIFIC INSIGHTS INTO BEHAVIOUR AND TRAUMA

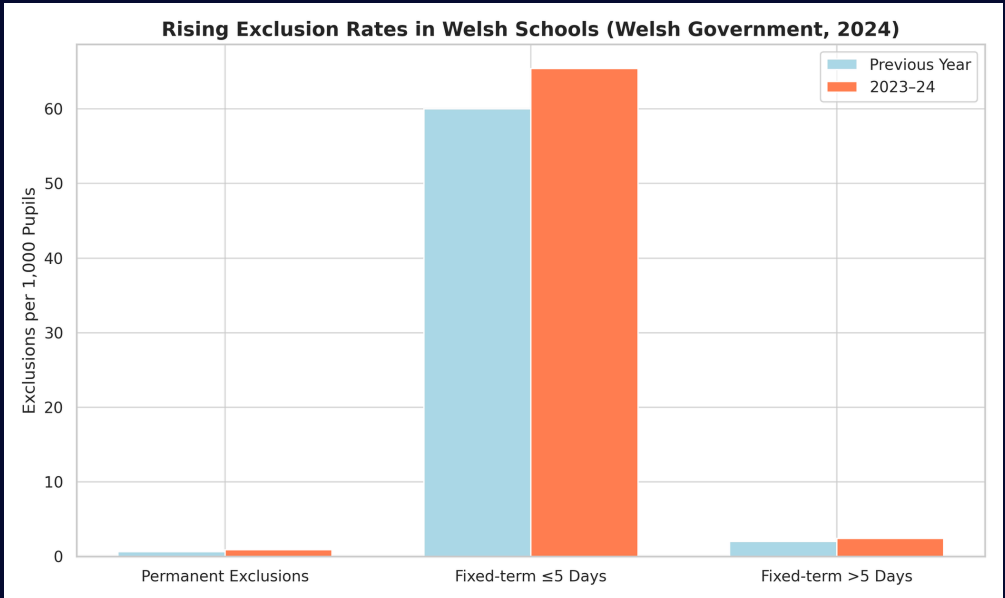
CHILDREN’S EMOTION REGULATION RELIES ON DEVELOPING BRAIN AREAS LIKE THE PREFRONTAL CORTEX, CRUCIAL FOR IMPULSE CONTROL AND SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR (FRIEDMAN & ROBBINS, 2022). TRAUMA AND STRESS CAN DISRUPT THIS DEVELOPMENT, CAUSING BEHAVIOURAL CHALLENGES (ROUSSEAU, 2023). MIRROR NEURONS, WHICH SUPPORT EMPATHY AND SOCIAL UNDERSTANDING, CAN BE IMPAIRED BY TRAUMA, AFFECTING STUDENTS’ ABILITY TO CONNECT AND RESPOND POSITIVELY (RIZZOLATTI & SINIGAGLIA, 2016). SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL) PROGRAMS HELP BUT OFTEN LACK ADAPTATIONS FOR NEURODIVERSE OR TRAUMA-AFFECTED STUDENTS (WOODALL, 2024). NEUROPLASTICITY OFFERS HOPE, WITH RESTORATIVE PRACTICES FOSTERING EMPATHY AND POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR THROUGH RELATIONAL SAFETY AND BRAIN RECOVERY (SHAMAY-TSOORY, 2022). HOWEVER, SYSTEMIC BARRIERS AND INCONSISTENT POLICIES HINDER EFFECTIVE SCHOOL IMPLEMENTATION.

TEACHER TRAINING, KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING.

- CLEAR, POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR EXPECTATIONS SHAPE RESPECTFUL, INCLUSIVE SCHOOL CULTURES AND SUPPORT STRONG STUDENT-TEACHER RELATIONSHIPS (BEAUCHAMP ET AL., 2021). RESTORATIVE PRACTICES REDUCE CONFLICT BUT REQUIRE CONSISTENT TRAINING, RESOURCES, AND WHOLE-SCHOOL COMMITMENT (GREGORY ET AL., 2022).
- CURRENT INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION (ITE) IN WALES OFTEN LACKS PRACTICAL BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT AND NEUROSCIENCE TRAINING, LEAVING TEACHERS UNDERPREPARED FOR DIVERSE CLASSROOM NEEDS (ESTYN, 2023).
- ONGOING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IS HINDERED BY WORKLOAD AND FUNDING LIMITS, REDUCING TEACHER READINESS AND WELL-BEING (EDUCATION SUPPORT, 2023).
- COMPARISONS WITH SCANDINAVIAN MODELS HIGHLIGHT WALES’S NEED FOR MORE INTEGRATED, RESEARCH-INFORMED TRAINING FOCUSED ON CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND TRAUMA-AWARE STRATEGIES.
- SYSTEMIC INVESTMENT IS ESSENTIAL TO ALIGN POLICY WITH CLASSROOM REALITIES AND FOSTER INCLUSIVE, EMOTIONALLY LITERATE EDUCATION.

CONCLUSION

DESPITE THE WEALTH OF RESEARCH LINKING TEACHER UNDERSTANDING OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT TO EFFECTIVE BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT, MANY EDUCATORS LACK THE NECESSARY TRAINING AND SUPPORT TO IMPLEMENT THIS KNOWLEDGE. THE RELIANCE ON OUTDATED PRACTICES REMAINS PREVALENT, HINDERING THE POTENTIAL FOR POSITIVE STUDENT OUTCOMES. POLICY DISCREPANCIES IN WALES COMPARED TO SUCCESSFUL INTERNATIONAL FRAMEWORKS EMPHASISE AN URGENT NEED FOR REFORM IN TEACHER TRAINING AND BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT APPROACHES. WITHOUT ACTION, THE GAP BETWEEN THEORY AND PRACTICE WILL CONTINUE TO UNDERMINE STUDENT SUCCESS AND WELL-BEING.



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