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2. Why bother with pupils' behaviour?

For most teachers it is self-evident that better teaching, better learning and better education all take place when there are fewer discipline and behaviour problems than when there are more discipline problems. Put another way, the "wrong" behaviour slows down the process of the "right" sort of education and learning.

There are only 1000 teaching hours available a year. If you spend 10% of them on discipline and behaviour issues you have removed 100 hours from your available teaching time.

As teachers we may wish to take action because:

- We value reading above hitting (and being hit)
- We do not condone violence
- We seek to protect the weak
- We are concerned about bullying.

These are important points – we have a culture and we are trying to extend it. But we should also stress that getting the behaviour right brings us better opportunities for teaching and learning.

We might want to encourage our pupils to adopt a lifestyle which emphasises kindness, consideration, helping those less fortunate than ourselves, generosity of spirit, and so on. We might want to do this because of the strong religious beliefs that we hold – and that is fine. We might want to because of strong moral principles derived from non-religious backgrounds. But we can also value this style of living because it is culturally more effective. Societies in which people co-operate with and help each other are always more dynamic and exciting and offer greater opportunities for self-development than societies based on "every man for himself". If we can help our pupils see life as a collaboration we will be giving them a much better life and will be making life for each person that they meet that bit better too.

Thus we can argue that pupils need to be:

- Able to co-operate with each other and their teachers
- Able to respond to the teaching methods prevalent in the school
- Able to do homework in the evening and return it the next day
- Able to think energetically and actively about important issues and reach conclusions that are not only beneficial to themselves but also to those around them
- Able to take these abilities and thoughts away from school and retain them in later life
- Able to make use of this approach in order to gain their own pleasure and benefit from helping others.

Thus we do not emphasise a model of being well-behaved for its own sake – although such a model will still enable you to make use of all the ideas in this volume. Rather, we emphasise certain attitudes and certain modes of behaviour because they are good for other people as well as ourselves. As Nowak and Sigmund have successfully argued in a recent edition of *Nature*, people who give to the community around them always benefit themselves in the longer run. As the writers put it, "Society sees nice people as worth cultivating".

Of course this approach does not take into account motivation – and the person who is co-operative, expecting a pay-back immediately, is likely to be disappointed. But what so many of us have always

naturally felt about the obvious advantage of being positive and co-operative is now seen by social sciences as ultimately of benefit to both the individual and society.

It is inescapable - as teachers we are interested in behaviour modification. No matter how liberal our thinking and no matter how much we value every individual's freedom of thought and action, we must retain certain views that include the following principles:

- Rape, bullying, and theft of property are wrong.
- Swearing in class is not acceptable.
- Spending time learning about the basics of maths prepares a child with life skills he or she will need to have.

If you and your staff cannot reach agreement on why there are problems with behaviour and discipline then you are unlikely to be able to do anything to change the discipline and behaviour of pupils in your school.

All that needs to be added is the extra concept that following the moral code which most of us would agree to believe in may be good not only for one's immortal soul, but also for oneself and those around one on the temporal plane.

If you have problems in assessing which way you should be taking the school on disciplinary matters you might wish to discuss the following:

- Certain behaviour patterns are inherently better than others and should be reinforced by policy.
- The way in which teaching and learning is organised not only affects the level of learning that goes on, but also can reduce inappropriate behaviour. Because of this we have a duty to consider alternative ways of teaching, including different uses of ICT, and the utilisation of different methods of teaching and learning.
- Teachers are better utilised teaching the class rather than dealing with the indiscipline of one or two.
- It is feasible to change the behaviour of pupils through the concerted action of all the staff in the school.
- Prevention of indiscipline is far better than merely seeking cure.

If you accept these points then you recognise the importance of changing behaviour in school. All that is left is to discuss the method employed.

3. Arguments against the development of an attitude and behaviour policy

3.1 'If a pupil just won't work there is nothing much we can do about it. You can't change attitudes.'

For many years we have had two different views of the reality of schools. On the one hand *Success for All,* which was advanced in the 1980s, promoted pictures of bright-eyed youngsters entering school for the first time, excited and beyond any doubt highly motivated. On the other we had Mortimore (1991 p9) saying that, "Many teachers will be familiar with the pupil who, though highly talented, appears to lack the motivation to achieve".

The fact that people's behaviour can be changed by circumstances has been known for over a century. Jastrow (1900) tells the story of one of the first cases documented by psychologists. In 1890 a new machine, rather like an early computer, was installed to help count the census data in the USA. The inventor, Hollerith, (who went on to found IBM) recognised that new quasi-typing skills would be required and established that the staff needed two weeks training after which they would be able to enter around 550 records a day. However, because of the large amount of work to be undertaken – the huge levels of census forms in the building – some workers felt pressurised to up their production level. As a result they became stressed and tense.

New staff were being recruited all the time and it was decided that, with the next batch of recruits, neither an estimated level of production nor a forecast would be given of the length of time it would take to get up to maximum performance. After three days the new recruits were processing 700 cards a day with no ill effects. Yet anyone from the original group who got anywhere near that number was likely to suffer a stress-related illness. By the third week the new workers were processing over 2000 cards a day.

The improvement did not come from improved technique, more logical processes, the elimination of certain elements from the production process, or faster machinery. It came from a change in attitude – without the workers even knowing about it.

In short, the attitude of the work force determined both how much work they might do, and whether they would feel stressed because of that level of work.

100 years on, the lessons of the Hollerith experience are still not widely utilised in education. What was the reason for the different attitude observed in the second batch of Hollerith workers? Much of the answer is provided in the very first sentence of Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968): "People, more often than not, do what is expected of them."

Now I want to make a key point here. I have been quoting and will continue throughout this report to quote from books and reports written 20, 50 and 100 years ago. I do this deliberately, not because nothing of interest has been written of late, but rather to make the point that everything that I am saying here has been known for a very long time.

My point is not that new research has shown us how we can improve learning in the school, but that for years and years many people have been ignoring research that has already shown us what we need to know.

This failure to consider such things as the Hollerith experience is a key issue in education today. Why do we do this?

In effect I believe it is because all organisations have their own momentum, and it takes a huge amount of effort and energy to change that momentum. Consider, for example, the snowball that is created at the top of a snow-covered hill. At first the ball is small and can be rolled along the ground, collecting more and more snow, as it goes. But then a point is reached where it becomes impossible to change the direction of the snowball. It has become so large and so unwieldy that it simply cannot do anything but travel in the direction in which it is travelling. In fact if any attempt is made to change its direction it will probably break apart.

This is the barrier to change in school. Schools have a way of doing things. Minor changes can be made (although more often than not, six months later it can be seen that the school has reverted to its old way of doing things, and the reforms have been forgotten). But major changes (like changing the direction in which the snowball is rolling) can cause mayhem.

Attitude, therefore, comes mostly from without, not within. But, as we all know, "without" includes not only the school environment but also the home environment. So, as teachers, we need to work on our relationships with the home. Since improving pupil attitude and behaviour and reducing exclusions is to the benefit of parents as much as to the school, it is clear that everyone should be working together. But as the snowball analogy warns, and bearing in mind the fact that none of these issues are new, it is clear that change can bring about all sorts of results, many of which are unexpected, some of which are unwanted, and quite a few of which defy common sense.

Mortimore's suggestion quoted earlier seems to be that motivation is something buried within the child's personality – genetically encoded perhaps, unreachable and unchangeable by the teacher. But this attitude that motivation is within and cannot be changed is incomplete. In addition to self-motivation we can also consider the overt motivation of pupils by teachers (often through rewards and punishments) and environmental motivation in which the environment (accidentally or through deliberate manipulation by others) has an effect on the motivation of the individual.

Motivation from within (Mortimore's motivation) is the hardest form of motivation for teachers to utilise. In adults, self-motivation shows as a continuing desire to do well, to be tidy, to be first, to be best, to be slim, to be rich, to get drunk, to obey the Lord, to watch every surviving episode of the original series of *Doctor Who* in order, or whatever. It is the motivation which drives an otherwise sane head teacher to get up two hours early each morning, go running and enter the London Marathon only to be overtaken at the halfway marker by people dressed as a duck and a mongoose. In pupils, it can be a highly beneficial trait, often considered to be a part of the child's personality, warmly welcomed by teachers where it results in the pupil working, and working in order to pass exams. It is not considered to be under the teacher's control.

It is the second type of motivation that is under the teachers' control. It consists of overt attempts at motivation through reward ("This work is so good I want you to take it to the headmaster"), punishment ("This work is so bad I want you to take it to the headmistress") or target setting ("By the end of this lesson everyone will know the five standard classifications of life"). The experiences motivation describes and explains are more than stimulus-response, since the concept of motivation puts a high emphasis on the organism receiving the stimulus and mediating it before making the response.

3.2 'As teachers, our job is not to "modify behaviour" but to teach.'

If a pupil sitting in a classroom calls out a remark which the rest of the class considers so humorous that the whole class bursts out laughing, then teaching is disrupted. If the energy that the child put into the disruption were to be channelled into more positive areas, then that child, and indeed the whole class would learn more. In addition, since many teachers find this type of behaviour very distracting

when it happens over and over again, removal of this sort of interruption can have a positive effect on the well-being of the teacher. Clearly, if all teachers in the school could combine to ensure that this disruptive behaviour stopped, then better education would take place.

3.3 'Behaviour modification is a concept reminiscent of Orwell's "Thought Police", and as such has no place in a school.'

It is impossible to teach in any school without having a sense that specific standards of behaviour are being applied. These standards manifestly encourage certain forms of behaviour and seek to stop other behaviour.

Thus, as soon as we issue a school rule or say, "Bullying is wrong", we are encouraging pupils to avoid one form of behaviour and indulge in another. The same is true if we give a prize for good behaviour. To seek to avoid behaviour modification we must also seek to avoid all rules, rewards and punishments. Since this is not an option for any school, we need to admit that we are in principle involved in a behaviour modification regime.

3.4 'Before we think about behaviour modification on a broad scale, shouldn't we think first about the causes of the behaviour we wish to modify?'

The background of the pupils we teach naturally influences our reaction to those children. Consider the truant from a problematic family background who has just been weaned back to school after a series of long absences. For such a child we may make exceptions - seeking to avoid confrontations, which could result in the child truanting again. But we still retain the aim of modifying the child's behaviour - we want to change the child's behaviour from that of being a truant to becoming an attender, or from that of being a non-reader to becoming a reader.

The aim of a whole school behaviour policy is to stop bad behaviour by considering its causes, rather than by just responding to the behaviour as it happens. For most children most of the time there is a choice about how to behave, and we must seek to arrange matters so that children choose to behave well by avoiding situations in which they might choose to behave poorly.

3.5 'Behaviour modification programmes sound like a good idea. Unfortunately they never work.'

There are two methods of dealing with behaviour problems in schools: the most common is an event-related approach in which each individual teacher responds to each event of indiscipline in the way that seems best. The alternative - less common but increasingly in use - tries to stop bad behaviour before it happens and ensures that everyone is pulling in the same direction. There is a lot of evidence that the whole school approach to behaviour is one that not only works - it brings in great benefits very quickly indeed for a much lower expenditure of energy.

3.6 'Maybe behaviour modification works in some schools. It won't work here. Not with these pupils'. (Or, 'Not with these parents'. Or even, 'Not with these teachers'.)

There is no evidence to show that the general principles of good teaching and learning, combined with the development of a supportive system of behaviour modification, will not work in some areas. Yet we constantly come across the argument that "it won't work here". We have been told that it won't work in Hull – because of the special case of that city. It won't work in a particular school in Cornwall - because the teachers have all been there too long. It won't work in a particular school in Cardiff because none of the teachers have been there very long. And so on.

We don't reject this totally. In the case of one school (brought to my attention as part of the work of a student on the Diploma in School Efficiency course in 2012) the whole course team who had written the course were forced to admit that change within the school was nigh on impossible within its present form.

Over the years power had passed from the senior management to certain teachers who had been in the school for many years and to the trade unions to which the teachers belonged. Attitudes had hardened, absences because of illness (including stress-related illness) were very high, and any attempt at change was in effect vetoed by the "hard-liners" at the staff meeting.

This is not to say that the position being taken by the "hard-liners" was wrong. In writing this I cast no political judgement. But rather, the official power structure of the school (if I can call it that) had been supplanted by a de facto power structure which said that all change had to be approved by the staff meeting. Given the unified and organised stance of the hard line members of staff, and the strong backing they got from their unions, this meant that change did not happen.

The only way in which the school could be changed, in fact, was through changing the power structure and taking control back to the head, deputy head, and governors. Because those people did not feel able to take on the battle the school became fixed in its new position, and those of us involved with the Diploma course had to concede the point that change in the school was now impossible and would remain so until a new head teacher, backed by a new governing body, was willing to take on the battle.

Thus it can be true that "you can't do that with this staff" if the power structure within the school has shifted to certain staff. It would also be true to say, "You can't do that with kids like these," if power had been conceded to the pupils or students.

But we have seen change occur, over and over again, often in the most depressing and distressed circumstances. We have seen parents from the most deprived ghetto areas of a US Inner City willingly get involved 100% in the working of the school, despite staff saying, "You could never get parents like these involved". When asked if anyone had ever tried, the answer was, "No". When the parents were asked, the answer was, "We didn't think they wanted us involved".

In other words, it is possible to see situations where change is impossible, but they are very rare.

And we retain the view that change is possible in 99% of settings. All that is needed is the will.

3.7 'The whole-school approach to changing behaviour reduces freedom.'

This is quite true. If all staff agree that they will act in a unified way to stop certain behaviour and increase the chances of other behaviour, then it follows that there must be some restriction of the teachers' own freedom.

We must therefore ask if the removal of this freedom is worthwhile in relation to the benefits that can accrue. This is, of course, a matter for each teacher to decide with reference to the problems they personally experience with regard to behavioural matters.

The view of those of us who have been involved in producing this volume is that all social action and all social settings involve us giving up some freedoms. At a football match in England one cannot take a pint of beer onto the terraces or to one's seat, but one can, more or less with impunity, shout abuse at players, the manager and those officiating at the match. At a private party in a friend's house