



BEHAVIOUR FOR LEARNING

Proactive approaches to behaviour management

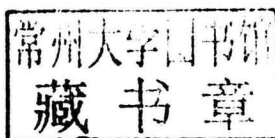
SIMON ELLIS AND JANET TOD

A **David Fulton** Book

Behaviour for Learning

Proactive approaches to behaviour
management

Simon Ellis and Janet Tod



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Behaviour for Learning

Behaviour for Learning offers teachers a clear conceptual framework for making sense of the many behaviour management strategies on offer, allowing them to make a critical assessment of the appropriateness and effectiveness of particular strategies in the classroom.

Teachers need to be asking themselves the question ‘How can I improve a child’s learning?’, rather than ‘How can I get them to behave?’. The authors present a unique focus on the relationships that underpin learning, placing an emphasis on the development of ‘learning behaviours’, and endorsing Ofsted’s view that it is essential to evaluate the efficacy of behaviour management against progress in learning.

Essentially, this book will help teachers:

- decide what strategy is best for individuals in their classroom;
- be aware of the evidence/theoretical base that underpins that strategy use;
- be able to evaluate the effectiveness of that strategy.

Located within an emerging body of research focused on improving holistic outcomes for individuals and increased partnership working, this book seeks to synthesise the practical with the theoretical.

Authoritative and timely, *Behaviour for Learning* is compelling reading for all training and practising teachers, CPD coordinators and other professionals working with challenging pupils.

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The authors would like to express thanks to those involved in the original EPPI review and also to colleagues and students who have contributed to our thinking.

The views represented in this book are those of the authors and are not intended to represent the views or policies of any particular body.

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Introduction

This book expands upon a conceptual framework that emerged from a systematic literature review (Powell and Tod 2004) funded by the Teacher Training Agency (TTA). The framework has evolved over four years, having been tried and tested with teachers, trainees and tutors.

We acknowledge there is already a plethora of books, guidance and support material available to trainees, teachers and tutors in relation to pupil behaviour. This text does not seek to replace these but we consider it to be different in several ways:

It builds on teachers' existing expertise

Teaching as a profession promotes learning, normally in group contexts and conditions. The conceptual framework builds on this area of expertise as a route to improving behaviour in the classroom. As such the key theme of this book is the explicit linking of learning and behaviour, via the term 'learning behaviour'. The use of this term will hopefully serve to reduce perceptions that 'promoting learning' and 'managing behaviour' are separate issues for teachers (McNally, *et al.* 2005). Teachers and schools already have experience in using a range of existing behaviour management techniques. This book does not seek to replace such approaches but in Chapters 8, 9 and 10 examines ways in which such management techniques may be enhanced via the behaviour for learning conceptual framework.

It provides a way of evaluating the efficacy of behaviour management strategies

Through the use of the term 'learning behaviour', pupil-progress in *learning* provides a relevant indicator against which to measure the efficacy of school-based *behaviour* management strategies.

It promotes the development of learning relationships

A core feature of the behaviour for learning conceptual framework is that it places emphasis on the relationships that underpin learning and behaviour in school contexts. It endorses the view that learning and behaviour are influenced by the quality of relationships that characterise classroom interactions. These relationships are changing, interdependent and reciprocal, and as such do not lend themselves to any one quick-fix set of strategies.

However teachers and others can prepare for – and pupils can contribute positively to – these relationships.

Within classroom contexts the three core relationships identified from the research that underpins this book are:

- relationship with others;
- relationship with self;
- relationship with the curriculum.

It explicitly recognises and utilises the interdependence of the cognitive, social and emotional aspects of learning and behaviour

These three relationships reflect the social, emotional and cognitive factors that influence pupil behaviour and learning. Although in school contexts the relationship with the curriculum is seen as a priority and teachers are able to draw upon extensive curriculum guidance in this area, it is clear that for some pupils improving their relationship with the curriculum will require attention to their relationship with self and/or their relationship with others.

It adopts a proactive approach to behaviour management

The behaviour for learning approach does not seek to pathologise individual pupil behaviour or place blame on teachers. This book adopts a proactive approach to behaviour management, placing an emphasis on supporting teachers to identify and develop the learning behaviours that are relevant to *all* pupils.

It recognises diversity, delay and difference within individuals in group contexts

This book accepts that teaching necessitates ‘responding to the complex needs of individual learners and therefore involves making multiple decisions in non-routine situations’ (Haggarty 2002). It places emphasis on the fact that contexts and conditions of the classroom designed for groups will be experienced differently by individuals. In asking teachers to consider how their behaviour management strategies are experienced by individuals, it is anticipated that teachers will become more confident in supporting pupils with diverse needs, including those with special educational needs (SEN).

The book is realistic in its aims

The book is honest in accepting that it does not seek to provide a solution to the range of behaviour problems that trainees and teachers encounter or fear. This is an unrealistic pursuit given that individual pupils interpret, experience, and make sense of classroom events from their own personal perspective. However, the behaviour for learning conceptual framework enables teachers to make informed choices from the existing and ever-emerging plethora of behaviour management strategies and approaches.

Ways of using this book

This book explores and explains a relatively new and emergent conceptual framework designed to support teachers in addressing behavioural concerns in school contexts. As such it necessarily combines exploratory content related to underpinning concepts alongside sections that relate familiar existing practices to these concepts.

As with many educational texts it is more likely that many readers will home in on particular chapters, dependent on their time, need and experience. Readers will note from Chapter 3 that there are three broad levels of use of the behaviour for learning conceptual framework. These are:

- day-to-day;
- core;
- extended.

Day-to-day use

At whole-school and class levels, teachers need to provide contexts and conditions that promote the development of learning behaviours through a focus on learning and teaching. Readers who seek to improve their understanding at this level of practice will be best directed towards Chapter 3, followed by Chapters 8, 9 and 10. This will provide a working understanding of the behaviour for learning conceptual framework and its relationship to more conventional behaviour management approaches. It would also be beneficial, particularly for trainees, to have an idea of the origins of practice in relation to behaviour management. Chapters 1 and 2 provide this historical context.

Core use

At the core of this book is the concern for groups and individuals for whom the day-to-day behaviour management strategies do not suffice. We believe that a *core* behaviour for learning stance would be particularly useful and suggest once again that Chapter 3 is pivotal. Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7 then explore the framework in more depth, allowing readers to secure greater understanding of the relational aspects of learning as well as the interdependence of the cognitive, social and emotional components of learning and behaviour.

Extended use

For those individuals who experience significant delay, difficulty or difference in the development of their learning behaviour, there may be a need to go beyond 'day-to-day' and 'core' use of the conceptual framework. Chapters 11 and 12 consider *Dealing with more challenging behaviour* and *Reframing special educational needs (SEN)* so as to support schools and teachers in the extended use of the behaviour for learning conceptual framework.

The final chapter of the book endorses a developmental view of behaviour and covers *Transitions*, in recognition of the differing expectations and conditions that pupils experience as they progress through school.

Our own thinking with regard to the behaviour for learning conceptual framework has

developed through our face-to-face teaching in contexts that allow for discussion and critical debate. This book represents a further stage in development in that we have had to communicate to practicing teachers and tutors through the more limited medium of the written text. In producing a book format we would hope that this text will provide the necessary content and impetus for active engagement with fellow trainees, school colleagues, mentors and tutors. Such engagement will allow readers to activate this book and apply it to their own practice-based concerns and professional development.

The chapters

Chapter 1 adopts a historical perspective, starting with the 1944 Education Act. The rationale behind this chapter is that behaviour and learning do not occur in a vacuum. An understanding of past developments, priorities and political, social and economic agendas is necessary in order to make sense of the current educational challenges in relation to learning and behaviour. There is a social and political context that has shaped perceptions of what acceptable behaviour is, what school based learning is, the type of learning that is valued, the desirable curriculum content, and the role of educational settings in developing this learning and behaviour in children and young people.

Chapter 2 looks specifically at policy and guidance since 1989 related to behaviour and discipline in schools. It reveals a considerable degree of consistency over the years regarding the overall principles of good practice in relation to pupil behaviour. Policy and guidance has typically attempted to balance a concern for both discipline and control with a need for pastoral support and nurture. Despite reassurances (e.g. Ofsted 2005a) that the great majority of children and young people enjoy learning, work hard and behave well, behaviour in schools has continued to remain a concern with regard to its negative impact on pupils' learning, the recruitment and retention of teachers and the needs of society.

Chapter 3 argues that the traditional separation of learning and behaviour is not only conceptually flawed but is ultimately unhelpful to those who seek to improve behaviour in school and raise achievement in school contexts. The chapter examines the limitations of an exclusive focus on behaviour management. Central to this chapter is the introduction of the behaviour for learning conceptual framework. The key terminology within the framework is explored and a case study is provided that illustrates how a behaviour for learning stance could change the approach to tackling behaviour issues and would change approaches to the evaluation of the efficacy of the behaviour strategy employed by the teacher.

Chapter 4 focuses exclusively on 'learning behaviours'. This is a relatively new term that is used to represent the fusion of learning and behaviour that is a central theme of this book. The chapter seeks to maintain a view that promoting positive behaviours is more effective than seeking to stop negative behaviours. In order to support teachers to identify particular behaviours, this chapter draws on relevant literature as a source for descriptors and definitions. This critical review of learning behaviours allows readers access to the meaning and the utility of the term in school contexts.

Chapter 5 sets the scene for working within a framework that roots classroom practice within the building and maintenance of positive relationships. Teachers are familiar with the term and have experience of relationships. This chapter builds on this knowledge to explicitly place relationships within the behaviour for learning conceptual framework and notes the dynamic interactions and interdependence that make up the activity and purpose of the classroom.

The chapter steers readers towards an understanding of how a focus on relationships may not necessarily change what they are doing in the classroom but will change their thinking and in so doing will allow them to develop increasing confidence in their choice and evaluation of strategies.

Chapter 6 focuses specifically on the ‘relationship with the curriculum’. In so doing it explores what it means to have a relationship with something that is inanimate but nonetheless mirrors what we experience in human relationships. If, for example, we experience success and enjoyment, this usually leads to positive approaches to relationships; whereas failure is more likely to lead to relationships characterised by a cycle of negativity, such as a will to disrupt or harm the relationship. This chapter draws on literature to consider what it might mean in practice to have a positive relationship with the curriculum. It directs attention towards factors that should then influence choice of strategies that will support the building and maintenance of a positive relationship with the curriculum.

Chapter 7 focuses on the pupil’s relationship with self and others. Pupils cannot easily escape working within the public gaze of the classroom and will almost inevitably make assessments of their position relative to their peers and of themselves as individuals. Pupils need to both work with others, and also concentrate on their own, if they are to build an effective relationship with the curriculum. As such they need to develop learning behaviours that reflect responsiveness, responsibility and resilience. The chapter looks at how pupils make sense of their classroom experiences and highlights the importance of relationship with self as an enduring and potentially powerful influence on their relationship with others and relationship with the curriculum.

Chapter 8 looks specifically at whole-school behaviour policies. It examines some of the key elements of behaviour policies to evaluate their potential compatibility with the principles of the behaviour for learning conceptual framework.

Chapter 9 focuses on the contexts and conditions for developing learning behaviour within the classroom. It considers the nature of the pupil–teacher relationship, general group management and aspects of the physical environment.

Chapter 10 focuses on what are commonly known as ‘positive correction’ techniques. It is recognised within this chapter that there will be occasions when teachers need to correct or re-direct. A number of familiar positive correction strategies are outlined and discussed in the context of their potential to address the behaviour whilst also protecting the three relationships at the core of the behaviour for learning framework.

Chapter 11 deals with more challenging behaviour. It considers procedures for exiting a pupil from the classroom in a manner that minimises the risk of compromising one or more of the behaviour for learning relationships. The chapter also looks at behaviour that is motivated by anger. The nature and dynamics of anger are explored. The assault cycle (Breakwell 1997) is presented as a means by which a pupil’s behaviour in an angry incident can be understood. Each stage of the assault cycle is discussed in the context of the implications for the teacher’s priorities.

Chapter 12 is concerned with those individual learners who may experience particular difficulties, delay or difference in developing the relationships that underpin their learning in school contexts. These learners are likely to include, but are not necessarily restricted to, those who are described as having special educational needs (SEN). Using the examples of dyslexia, Asperger syndrome and social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, the chapter reframes special educational needs in terms of the behaviour for learning conceptual framework. The chapter seeks to look at provision in terms of supporting the development

of meaningful relationships from the perspective of the individual and in so doing supports teachers in making informed choices from the plethora of available strategies.

Chapter 13 covers transitions. The focus is on four specific transitions: Foundation Stage to Year 1, Year 2 to Year 3, primary to secondary school, and Key Stage 3 to Key Stage 4. These transitions are considered from the perspective of identifying risks to the three behaviour for learning relationships and the practices that can help to reduce these.

We hope you enjoy reading this book and experience a positive impact on your thinking, learning and teaching and above all on the experience and behaviour of individuals in your class.

Learning from history

As you enter your classroom you may wonder about the relevance to your practice of starting with an overview of educational history. The answer is that behaviour and learning do not occur in a vacuum. As a teacher you will be working within a context that reflects some inheritances from history alongside relatively new practices emerging from ongoing innovation and change. Understanding of past developments and priorities, and political, social and economic agendas, is necessary in order to make sense of the current educational challenges in relation to learning and behaviour.

Each successive educational change leaves its mark and potentially exerts an influence on future thinking and practice. Even after the more significant changes, residual elements of the previous era continue to influence practice or remain in practitioners' consciousness. This leads to tensions, inconsistencies and contradictions that teachers need to resolve at the level of classroom practice. This point is illustrated by Newby (2005) in his observation that:

Today's curriculum is disjointed. At primary school, we struggle to reconcile a post-Plowden, child-centred, progressive curriculum and a National Curriculum emphasising (some would say, 'fixating upon') literacy and numeracy. In the secondary school, we teach young people an amalgamation of the subjects of a content-based curriculum (which remains in many ways that of the grammar school opened up to the comprehensive) and an instrumental, vocational curriculum focused on the world of work.

(Newby 2005: 297)

Starting from the 1944 Education Act we seek, through this chapter, to provide an understanding of the sources of some of these tensions, inconsistencies and contradictions, as well as exploring how the current policy context has developed and the challenges this presents.

The 1944 Education Act

The 1944 Education Act (the 'Butler Act') implemented the tripartite system of secondary schools (grammar, secondary modern and technical high schools), with the principle of free and compulsory schooling for all primary and secondary aged children. The three types of secondary school were designed to cater for different types of ability which could, it was believed, be distinguished through the administration of the '11 plus' test (Allen and Ainley 2007). In addition, the Act raised the school leaving age to 15. Previously, since the 1918 Fisher Act, education had only been compulsory up until 14 years old.