



## **Advice for Behaviour Management**

Contributed by Barry Pemberton

This isn't the Gospel, but just a few ideas that came to me as I sat at my computer after school. The opinions and viewpoints are my own. It is unlikely that everything I say will get a nod of agreement, but here goes .....

Sit in a number of the student seats in your room. Be critical of what they will see and how they will interact with the teacher from that place. Rearrange the furniture to maximise learning. Does the classroom atmosphere affirm that someone cares about them? Can things be improved? Are there some places in the room that learning is made more difficult and you should avoid using if possible? Repeat this regularly, to allow you to see things from their perspective. Move things forward one stage at a time by requesting continual changes to your classroom to create the correct atmosphere.

When you meet a class for the first time, be prepared to be tested out to see how you react. Don't bark at children. Have a response ready for any challenges they throw at you. Stick to your guns. Don't be afraid to look them in the eye and have a confident look! Consider deciding on a seating plan in the first lesson, by observing the class as they come in and noticing those that focus their attention on you and those that don't. Position students in seats to maximize learning in your lesson. Say that it is to help you learn names and write down a seating plan. It is vital that in the first lesson you learn everyone's names.

In the first lesson, have a task that they can do that doesn't require extensive teaching. If you can survive this first hour and not had any significant challenges, things are going to be easier for you in the long run. Keep someone back for a minor offence as an example.

Once you have a few lessons under your belt, you can start to build up the relationship with the class and individuals in it. Always mark exercise books before the next lesson. Act on

what you see. Communicate individually with students to improve their confidence and enjoyment of being with you and being in your lesson. Try to get them to look forward to the next meeting, perhaps in what you will say, what you have written in their books or your willingness to help. Equally important, don't threaten things you can't follow through. Examine your timetable for the best times to sort out problems with children over a break or lunch. Realise that students don't necessarily interact with adults in the way that you think is right. There are regional differences in the phrases that children use, which although at first they may seem confrontational, may not be. Keep a notebook handy and paper in your pocket to note down events that you may need to remember later on that evening after you have been teaching all day, otherwise you are likely to forget.

When a student is causing you problems, don't show your emotion. Be matter of fact and avoid being dragged in too fast. Other children are watching to see how you respond and making their own minds up. Be aware that body language is more important than what you say. Model your performance to have the most impact.

If lessons do not go well, consider if it was because the material you used was not suitable. Be enthusiastic about your subject but mindful that students that struggle in your subject need help. Examine the stages of learning that you are trying to teach and build the child up gradually through this. It is like teaching a child to walk. Support them as long as necessary until they are able to manage more independently.

Be prepared to have bad days. Go home and return the next day determined to make a difference to the futures of the children you will encounter. Some children do not appreciate your efforts, but some do. Be positive and keep the same belief. Children can stop your intentions from becoming reality, but they can't stop time. There is always the next day...

Take time to celebrate the progress you have made so far. Your line-manager may give you a pat on the back, but even if they don't, know yourself that you have done a worthwhile job. Create good relationships with as many children as you can. Encourage them to work hard and give their best. Be supportive when they fail or display behaviour that is not as you expect. Avoid criticism. Put yourself in their position. They may have home lives that you cannot imagine.

Be prepared to ask more experienced teachers for advice, and act on what they say. When the time comes, be prepared to pass on your expertise and help to those just starting out on their teaching career !

Finally, after proof-reading this, I realise this is just the tip of the iceberg and there are many things I could have added to give greater advice. However, it is a start.

*All resources in the "Contributions" section of our resource bank have been submitted by delegates on our Taking Care of Behaviour Online course. For more information about this practical, self-paced course, please visit: <http://www.pivotaleducation.com/taking-care-of-behaviour-online/>*