

### **A Practical Strategy for Teaching Behaviour**

The methods used to teach different expectations of behaviour can vary quite dramatically. Simply stating the rules to all pupils and then using rewards and sanctions to reinforce them, or backing this up by posting printed rules and expectations in each classroom, does not guarantee complete understanding from all pupils.

It is important to give pupils the opportunity to become accustomed to the rules, to understand them and to be directly involved in their application. In other words, teaching behaviour should be approached in just the same way as any other curriculum activity, taking into account the learning needs of all the pupils.

It is also important to give due regard to pupil involvement and provide pupils with the opportunity to improve their social and emotional skills, such as:

- being part of a team
- coaching
- leadership
- self-esteem
- verbal- and non-verbal communication
- planning
- review
- evaluation.

If the system of teaching behaviour in the classroom only requires the pupils to play a passive role in the process, it may take many months for them to attain mastery (if at all).

The following teaching strategy is designed to involve all pupils in the learning process, taking account of learning styles, and will develop or improve the above-mentioned social and emotional skills.

#### **Practical Tips**

##### **Step 1**

The first step in the process is to highlight five or six behaviours or expectations that you wish to teach and embed in your classroom practice. They may be something like:

- attracting the teacher's attention
- clearing up at the end of a lesson
- working in a group
- what to do when you have finished your work
- how to enter the classroom
- what to do if you do not have the right equipment.

The above topics are purely random. You may well have other issues you want to address with your teaching group!

##### **Step 2**

Spend some time with the whole class giving clear instructions about the five or six topics you have chosen. Use your usual teaching techniques and include feedback sessions to evaluate their understanding of each topic. The topics should be broken down into clear stages, ie:

What to do when you have finished your work

Check you have completed all required sections.

Check your presentation (spelling/handwriting/typing, etc).

If requested, hand in your work (pay attention to how to move around the room).

If there is time remaining, go on to stand-by or extension work.

Remember that classroom guidelines still apply even when you have finished.

The above is not intended to be prescriptive but as an example of how a task can be broken down into steps.

### **Step 3**

Now split your class into groups of four, five or six (you might consider social groupings at this stage).

Ask the groups to give each member a number.

Now allocate one of your chosen topics to each group, ie:

Group A How to attract the teacher's attention.

Group B Clearing up at the end of a lesson.

Group C Working in a group.

Group D What to do when you have finished your work.

Group E How to enter the classroom.

Group F What to do if you do not have the right equipment.

Now ask them to work out a strategy for teaching that topic or rule to another group member or another group.

Emphasise the need to be structured and planned. Encourage all members of the group to make a contribution. It may be useful at this stage for the group members to write down each stage when agreed.

### **Step 4**

Once teaching strategies have been agreed, the number ones from each group should move on to the next group and teach them their topic. They should be sufficiently prepared and may even have a written script to help them.

### **Step 5**

Now it's the turn of all the number twos to move on the next group and teach their topic.

Continue the process until all pupils have had the chance to:

- discuss and plan the teaching programme
- deliver the topic to a new group
- be part of a taught group.

The strategy involves all pupils in all stages and at all levels of the teaching and learning process. The process requires pupils to develop their interactive skills in terms of:

- speaking and active listening
- role play
- empathy
- being part of a group as a passive member
- being part of a group as a leader
- questioning and evaluation.

The process also confirms that all pupils have been involved in the behaviour management process and fully understand the reasoning behind your guidelines<sup>1</sup>.

**Please do e mail [justteachers](mailto:justteachers) any tips that have worked for you to [paul@justteachers.co.uk](mailto:paul@justteachers.co.uk)**

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<sup>1</sup> This e-bulletin issue was first published in May 2009 by Dave Stott who has nearly 30 years' teaching experience including seven years as a headteacher. He has worked in mainstream and special schools and Local Authority Behaviour Support Services, and is now a writer, consultant and trainer.