

# CONNECTING CLASSROOMS

Crowd control or  
engagement? Engaging and  
motivating students with  
challenging behaviour in  
large classes  
Marie Delaney



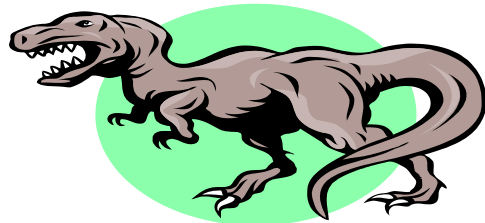


Who or what has to change?





# Issues





## Understanding the problem

• “It must be recognized that ***the area of pupil behavior is highly sensitive***. It ***challenges teachers’ sense of their own professional competence*** and both teachers’ and parents’ self-esteem. ***Emotions often get in the way of constructive planning***”

- Peter Gray and Sue Panter, Support for Learning, Vol 15, No 1.





## Understanding the problem

- A child's current behaviour often reflects an essentially sane response to an untenable set of life circumstances.'
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- Bray 1997 (Quoted in Visser, J and Rayner, S (1999) Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties : A Reader. QEd.)

## I behave badly when.....

I cannot hear

I cannot remember

I cannot understand what to do

I cannot focus

I cannot make myself understood

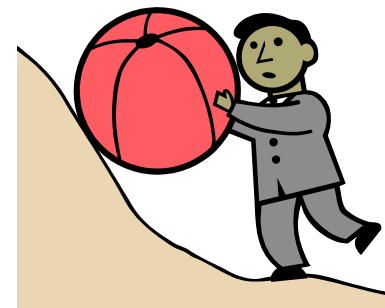
I cannot write as well as I speak

I cannot see properly

I do not feel safe

I do not know what is expected of me

It is the only way of behaving that I know



## Why might students be de-motivated?

- They don't see the point in the learning
- They don't feel comfortable in the class
- They have no confidence
- They don't know what to do or how to ask for help
- They don't have the world knowledge
- They don't have the vocabulary or communication skills
- The task is meaningless
- It is not their learning style
- They don't have a good relationship with the teacher or their peers



## Questions

- Do students care about the size of classes?
- Does the size of the class impact on learning?
- What other factors influence student motivation and learning?
- Are there any advantages of large classes?





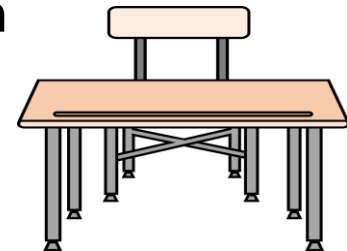


## Advantages for students

- More people to talk to and work with
- More diverse and interesting
- More chance to work independently
- More opportunities to learn life skills of working together in groups and co-operating
- More opportunities for peers to help each other
- More practice at getting your point across in front of people
- .....BUT can also hide!

## Maximise space

- Physical environment – how can you maximise the space, reduce feelings of crowdedness, frustration and frustration
- Maximise classroom space – can you
- Remove furniture eg big teacher's desk
- Let younger students sit on rugs or mats
- Create space for movement and drama
- Store materials and books somewhere that students can collect them and put them away easily and where they do not take up valuable space. For example, maybe in the corridor or in a box under a shady tree outside where students can easily go to get them.



## Facilitate movement



- How can students best enter and exit the classroom. For example, students who sit at the back of the classroom can enter first, followed by those seated in the middle, and lastly by those seated at the front. A reverse strategy can be used for exiting the classroom.
- Plan in advance and give enough time if you need to change the classroom arrangement depending on the type of activity you are doing.
- Have moving teams, with a student in charge of their team. Practise moving furniture so that students become efficient
- Plan on how routine activities will be conducted, such as handing out written assignments and then handing them back to students after grading. Eg students take responsibility if at the end of a row.



## Use space outside the classroom

- How can you use your school grounds for learning?
- Students learn important skills about cooperation, respect and responsibility when they are working outside and have to behave appropriately.
- Look around your school, identify good areas for learning, and try to include them into your lesson plans. For instance, in learning about geometric shapes, for instance, students can explore the school grounds and identify as many geometrically-shaped objects as possible.



## Student displays

- Display student work creatively.
- Space is needed to display student work. Student work can be hung on the classroom wall or just outside the door. Strings can be used onto which each student's work is attached with clips, tape, or even blunt thorns.
- Decorating the room with student work also makes the room more welcoming and attractive to all students.
- Involve the students in managing the displays. Allocate teams.



## Make a large class feel small

- Think about your movement around the class. Move around, get to know everyone
- Learn names eg seating plan, photos, use names actively, use name cards, allow introductions of a few students each day, take the register and note a way to remember each student, play games of names and association, use name cards/tags
- If possible, bring in students in smaller groups at the start of the year

## Involve students – who does these jobs ?

- hands out the books and equipment
- puts away equipment
- rearranges tables and chairs for different activities
- takes the register and check attendance
- sets up the equipment
- writes on the board
- helps the students who have trouble understanding or writing things down
- notices when a student with a SEN or disability is not coping
- organizes the wall displays
- monitors the noise levels in class
- Sets student targets





## Self-directed learning

- 3 before me
- Book, Brain, Buddy, Boss
- Think, Pair, Share
- Groupings – according to interests, abilities, quiet and loud, roles, learning styles, topics, friendship,
- Have communication strategies and phrases on the wall and practise
- Create self-access box
- Assessment for learning - set own targets and mark according to criteria
- WALT and WILF
- - Make it fun – creative naming of groups eg The Think Tank,



# Behaviour management



- Have a few positively phrased rules
- Involve the class in drawing them up eg a contract
- Appoint behaviour monitors , use a card system eg red, amber, green
- Develop non-verbal signals for stopping and starting eg hand up
- Create non-verbal routines eg barometer
- Remind always of the positive ethos 'In this class we are kind to each other'
- Make good use of your space, think about how you are standing, what energy are you creating?
  
- Have a cooling down space if possible



## Mind your language

- **Focus on need ‘ You don’t need to do that in here’**
- **Praise those who are doing the right thing ‘ Great, this table is ready, who else is ready?’**
- **Name positive intentions ‘ I know you are very funny, you don’t need to be unkind to be funny’**
- **Keep the focus on learning, bring it back to the task ‘ Is there a problem with number 2?’**
- **Ignore secondary behaviour**
- **Separate description from behaviour**
- **Label the act, not the child ‘That was unkind.. .not.. You are unkind’**
- **Use language with a higher expectation ‘ I know you are a kind person, I am surprised you are being unkind today’**
- **Give a future focus ‘ How can we make sure this doesn’t happen again... what needs to be different?’**

## Relationships



- Take every opportunity to build relationships. Show you remember something about them or something they said.
- Create displays which show something about everyone in the class.
- Create shared experiences and document them eg with class photos
- Allow for the repairing of relationships. ‘ I know you are sorry, how can you put this right?’
- Model what you expect. Acknowledge if you have made a mistake.
- Acknowledge feelings and have a check-in time eg everyone show me 1-10 how you are feeling today.



## Pupil voice

- Buddy systems
- Peer mentors/educators
- School council
- Assessment for learning
- Creating learning states
- Celebrating strengths – what is working
- Letting them in on the ‘secret’
- Rewards and sanctions



## Develop peer relationships

- Buddy systems – explain why you are choosing someone ‘ I am choosing you, Anya, because I know you can show understanding of someone else’s point of view’
- Peer mentoring – set up systems, let students apply, create roles and systems
- Student councils



## Want to know more....?

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- [www.thelearningharbour.ie](http://www.thelearningharbour.ie)
- Teaching the Unteachable, October 2008, Worth Publishing,UK
- What can I do with the kid who....2010. Worth publishing,UK
- Forthcoming publication OUP Into the Classroom : Special Educational Needs
- [www.worthpublishing.com](http://www.worthpublishing.com)
- [www.teachingenglish.org.uk](http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk) – webinars and course