



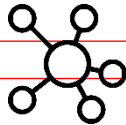
Establishing a Classroom Environment That Promotes Interaction and Improved Student Behaviour



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Introduction

A key focus for me since joining Kelso High School has been how I can create positive behaviour within the classes that I teach in order to promote positive pupil interaction in the classroom. Something that I wanted to develop was my approaches for limiting low level disruption by having strong, consistent classroom routines. In a 2004 US survey, 75% of teachers noted that they would spend more time teaching effectively if they had less disruptive behaviour in their classroom (Public Agenda, 2004). I have measured the impact of this since September 2022 and will discuss the methods and results throughout this enquiry.



Methods

For this enquiry, a qualitative approach was adopted which allowed me to capture accurately the existing experiences of pupils (Opoku et al., 2016). It was essential for me to incorporate a wide range of data sources which allowed me to cross-check, validate and yield more powerful results in order to make my enquiry more accurate (Ortlipp, 2008; Opoku et al., 2016). The data I collected was from classroom observations, pupil feedback surveys and pupils' work. This enquiry followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) approach of thematic analysis where I identified and analysed themes found within the data which allowed me to explore the impact of the routines implemented. Importantly, this enquiry considered ethics and accounted for all pupils involved. Confidentiality was a key ethical principle when writing up results and pupils always remained anonymous. Thomas et al., (2014) states that "there is a recognition that participants have rights ... it shouldn't be a question of simply using people and then waving goodbye". I carried out this enquiry with an S1 class, who I felt were very unsettled which often led to disruptive behaviour.



National and Global Influence



- United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) - The Rights of the Child.
- Scottish Government - *Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC)*.
- Education Scotland – Promoting Positive Relationships and Behaviour in Educational Settings.



What I implemented/results



I started my enquiry by identifying what types of behaviours were being displayed in my classroom and if there were any factors influencing this. I concluded that disruptive behaviours were more prominent at the start of the lesson and in between change of activities, where pupils were out of seats at unnecessary points and having negative interactions with their peers. Work from Guardino and Fullerton (2010) highlight that teachers often don't know how to implement environmental changes however when done effectively it can have positive effects on student behaviour and academic achievement (Hood-Smith & Leffingwell, 1938; Visser, 2001).

In order to put theory into practice I assessed my classroom and made changes to the following:

- Routines – Established and maintained the same routine and referred to expectations consistently. This was not a quick fix and pupil behaviour changed gradually over a longer period of time. Every lesson I would greet pupils at the door, reminded them of the expectations as they arrived (jackets off, phones away, pencil to write with, jotters out, starter). At first this seemed very repetitive and ineffective but over time pupils adapted to the routine and knew what to expect when they came into class. This had notable effects on pupils' engagement as it helped settle the class at the start of the lesson. I also noticed that there was less on interruptions during instructions and more participation during discussions.
- Accessibility – Negative interactions from pupils were most common between activities or when materials were not as accessible for individual needs. This resulted in a change to my organisation as I would often rely on the iPads for pupils to access resources. This worked for most pupils in the lessons however some pupils never had their iPad or their iPad had no battery/charger. From this, I ensured I had additional laptops and materials printed to limit low level disruption taking place during the lesson. I also found that pupils motivation increased by giving them the choice over using their iPad or worksheet. In addition to this, from reviewing the pupil surveys pupils identified that they like the choice of paper/jotter activities and iPad activities as they had often used their iPad/jotter in the previous classes which could have potentially impacted their motivation and engagement in my classroom.
- Classroom climate – Pupil feedback surveys highlighted that they enjoyed when their work was displayed around the classroom. I had noticed that I hadn't asked this class to produce a wall display since they started in August. The literature highlights that displaying pupils work and having them part of the process can be highly beneficial to pupils' sense of achievement and pride. By getting pupils to work together to construct a wall display relevant to their learning I noticed a huge difference in how pupils interacted with one and other (offering help and being well mannered) which stood out for me the most. As well as this, I also made changes to the seating plan, moving pupils to seats that were most suitable for them (this also helped reinforce to pupils that I am approachable as many felt confident enough to ask for a change of seat if there was an issue for them at that point with other peers). I also adjusted the lightening in the room as pupils in this class preferred lights off and blinds open when working. Litratione highlights that the lighting in classrooms can affect how students perform which can have an impact on the overall classroom environment.

By applying these changes and having a strong, consistent approach there was a significant change to pupils' interactions and behaviour during lessons. Pupils feel safe and supportive in class and there has been a notable increase in their engagement and participation as a result of these changes.

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