Teaching without disruption in the primary school

A MODEL FOR MANAGING PUPIL BEHAVIOUR

Roland Chaplain

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The effective management of pupils' behaviour has long been a principal concern, not only for classroom teachers, but also for all involved with the management of schools. Encouraging positive relationships whilst preventing disruption and motivating students to learn raises complex issues. The author argues that a 'multilevel' approach is the key to successfully responding to the diverse pressures of teaching and managing behaviour.

This well-organised, thoroughly researched book handles a variety of crucial issues with clarity and vision. A range of topics are discussed in detail, including:

- teachers' personal development—coping with stress, developing effective communication and assertiveness;
- whole-school management strategies to anticipate and minimise disruptive behaviour;
- classroom-level management—organising the classroom environment to promote learning and minimise disruption;
- individual assessment and intervention with students who have emotional or behavioural difficulties.

The book is enhanced throughout, with evidence from contemporary school based and psychological research, which is used to support the advice and guidance offered. Each chapter includes thought-provoking activities and questions which encourage readers to evaluate and reflect on their own and their school's practice.

Teachers, student teachers and headteachers will find this book an indispensable guide.

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A model for managing pupil behaviour

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For Sandra
who makes it all worthwhile

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Acknowledgements

In writing this book I am indebted to a cast of thousands. I will start by thanking the many pupils I have worked with over the past twenty-seven years, who taught me so much about schools and schooling. Thanks also to the hundreds of headteachers, teachers and trainee teachers I have taught, interviewed and spent time with, and who also had much to say about schools and schooling. Thank you to my colleagues and friends with whom I have worked, exchanged many thoughts and shared the occasional beer along the way!

In various places throughout this book I have included quotes from a number of those mentioned above. Some were happy to be named, others were not, so I decided to stick with pseudonyms for the sake of consis? tency.

I would like to thank the staff at Papworth Hospital, for making sure I stayed around long enough to finish it.

On a personal note, there are a few others to whom I also owe much. My mother for teaching me the power of reflection, my father for teaching me the need for detailed analysis and my sister, Gloria, for her support and insight.

Last, but certainly not least, my wife, for reading endless revisions and for translating my scribbled hieroglyphics, often written on the backs of envelopes and serviettes, into a manuscript.

Introduction

Behaviour management has always, of course, been of interest to teachers and managers in schools. There are many approaches suggested for improving the ways in which teachers 'control' pupils' behaviour, and each has its own strengths and limitations. Which approach is considered most appropriate by an individual teacher or school depends on a range of interlinked organisational and individual factors (school ethos, relationships and the personal characteristics of those who work and study there). There is no single right way of doing things.

This is very much a point-of-view book in which I have used an integrative multilevel model of behaviour management (see Figure i.1) as a basis for understanding and developing the management of behaviour. The model represents a top-down approach, advocating progressive focusing—that is, moving from organisational to individual strategies. If a behaviour policy is working correctly (is well thought out, supported and operated by all staff) it should eliminate many of the low-level disruptive behaviours, making life easier for teachers and providing them with more time to teach. The behaviour policy, or discipline plan, should also provide the fundamental principles for managing individual classrooms and supporting teachers when dealing with extreme behaviour. However, this does not mean that teachers should not enjoy distinctiveness in how they operate their classrooms. Far from it, the whole school framework provides the continuity, which combines with the idiosyncrasies of different teachers and phases, to construct the school's identity. Obviously, there has to be some balance between the three levels in order to minimise confusion for pupils and staff, so a monitoring and evaluation process is recommended (see Figure i.1).

Before proceeding to describe the contents of the chapters, the reader may welcome some orienting comments. Much advice on managing behaviour focuses on teacher-pupil relationships in the classroom and this book is no exception in that respect. However, whilst classroom

relationships are central to the learning process, there are many other factors which are also influential and, I argue, essential to effective behaviour management. These issues should be viewed alongside classroom activity, as opposed to being seen as something to be kept separate.

Taking on board this wide brief, from whole-school to individual issues, inevitably limits the depth of coverage that can be given to each topic. I have therefore included a large number of references throughout to enable the reader, to follow up any areas they might wish to develop, or find interesting. There is a strong practical theme running throughout, represented through a series of focused questions and activities within the various chapters. I opted to build them into the script rather than putting them at the end of chapters, so readers could engage with them at the relevant point in the text. These can be used for private reflection or with colleagues, and some with your pupils, in order to gain their perspective and enhance your knowledge of how they function. They are predominantly questions to help provide focus for the reader to reflect on their own practice and context, rather than trying to offer rigid prescriptive direction.

Figure i.2 provides an overview of the types of questions this book seeks to answer. These are nested in the various layers of the multilevel model. A brief examination of Figure i.2 reveals interrelatedness and overlaps between the various levels. Whole-school activity is shown as encompassing classroom management and individual work with difficult pupils, the behaviour policy providing the framework and direction for behaviour management at these levels. The *personal* level questions refer to the teacher, and this level is shown as overlapping the other three levels, highlighting the centrality of the teacher in the overall plan.

I have used the term 'classroom managers' to describe teachers, since I wanted to highlight the multiplicity of tasks and decision-making that teachers have to perform, under pressure, in order to achieve their everyday objective—educating children. Unlike administrators, who are bound by procedures and have the luxury of being pedestrian in following them, teachers and managers have to make continual decisions whilst 'on the hoof'—the luxury of taking time to marshal the evidence and considering alternative strategies before acting is not always readily available. However, this does not prevent the proactive or anticipatory planning of behaviour management and the practising of different strategies and procedures outside the classroom, in order to be prepared for what might happen when teaching. Clearly, as any experienced teacher will be aware, it is impossible to prepare for every eventuality when interacting with perhaps

Government legislation and guidance

Local authority frameworks

More direct involvement with pupils

Whole-school policy

Classroom management

Intensive measures for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties

Monitor, and evaluate effectiveness and continuity at each level

Less restrictive approach

Figure i.1 **The multilevel model of behaviour management.**

Note
The whole-school policy is the reference value or standard against which both classroom management and intensive strategies are compared. As the management function moves from left to right, the level of instrusiveness or direct control over student behaviour increases.

Figure i.2 contains the following layered questions grouped by level:

WHOLE-SCHOOL LEVEL
- How are resources allocated?
- Is behaviour management a problem in my school?
- Do I feel that I meet the expectations of the school?
- Am I able to influence decisions in school which affect me directly?
- Do I have the resources I need to do my job?
- How effective is our behaviour policy?
- Does the behaviour policy need reviewing?
- What social supports available to me?
- How can I make better use of the school behaviour policy?
- Am I clear about the role of the SMT in supporting behaviour management in school?

CLASSROOM LEVEL
- Why is my room organised this way? What happens if I change it?
- Does my discipline plan work?
- How can I enhance pupils' motivation?
- Are my rules and routines effective?
- How can I improve my classroom management skills?
- Am I locked into any negative rituals with pupils?
- How can I improve my classroom organisation?

INDIVIDUAL PUPIL LEVEL
- What do I know about intervention strategies?
- How might I better support the learning of pupils with EBD?
- How can I help pupils cope more effectively?
- What do I know about EBD?

PERSONAL LEVEL
- What do I need to improve?
- Do I make unreasonable demands on myself?
- Do I need to develop my professional social skills?
- What types of behaviour do I find most difficult to manage?
- Am I happy with my coping strategies?
- What do I find most difficult about my work?
- Is my work appreciated?
- What are my training needs?
- What are my personal strengths?
- How do I manage myself?
- How do I expect my pupils to behave?
- Am I clear about my role in school?

Figure i.2 Layered questions about behaviour management.

several hundred pupils in a day, so you will not be able to plan for every conceivable problem—meaning you will inevitably have to use deflective and reactive strategies as well. Deflection activities provide a breathing space, whilst the situation is occurring, allowing you to regroup your thoughts and think of the most effective way to respond. Reactive strategies are used after the event. The advantage of using anticipatory strategies (such as seating arrangements, removing temptation, clear rules) as opposed to deflection tactics (such as deliberately ignoring behaviour, praising peers, invading personal space) or reactive strategies (such as warnings, sanctions, exclusion) is that the first are far lower profile than the other two and therefore less damaging to teacher-pupil relationships.

Behaviour management can be considered in a multiplicity of ways, and despite this, the psychological level is, I suggest, the crossroad where all these influences join. It is an individual's appraisal and interpretation of themselves and their situation that holds the key to understanding why they behave the way they do, and why they think others think and behave the way they do. I am a firm believer that teachers will be more effective in managing behaviour if they are reflective, analytical and critical in thinking about their practice and that these processes should be informed by high-quality empirical research.

The plan of the book is to start with the teacher as the focus, move on to organisational and interpersonal issues and finish by looking at individual pupils—a roller coaster ride through the different levels of activity!

Part I considers the personal level or how the individual teacher thinks, feels and behaves. Chapter 1 explores the stress and coping process. Various illustrations are used to explain why we might become stressed and, more importantly, how we might improve our coping. The ways in which we think about pupils and the process by which this thinking might unwittingly influence their behaviour are the concerns of Chapter 2. The final topic in Part I relates to professional social skills. Chapter 3 addresses the complexities of non-verbal behaviour and how such behaviours influence what we think about ourselves, and how we interpret the behaviour of others.

In Part II, the emphasis shifts to looking at the school as an organisation. The relationship between the behaviour policy, school climate and communication, and how each connects to school effectiveness, are highlighted in Chapter 4. The importance of achieving balance between organisational needs and individual goals is also taken on board. In Chapter 5, 1 discuss the role of the headteacher and senior management team (SMT) in leading the development of behaviour management and ask a series of questions about what style of leadership is most supportive to teachers in this respect.

Having discussed organisational climate in the previous section, Part III focuses on the impact of the classroom climate on pupil behaviour. How to manipulate the physical environment to create the desired conditions for learning and positive behaviour is the starting point for Chapter 6. In the latter part of this chapter I consider the psychological effects of classroom climate on pupils' motivation, how they value themselves and the subject of disruptive behaviour. Chapter 7, the final chapter of Part III examines the use of simple rules, routines and rituals in the effective management of pupil behaviour. The thesis being to take up as much of

the management task as possible, using limit setting structures which pupils learn and which become routinised, minimising the need for the teacher to be continually engaged in thinking about and actively directing behaviour.

Part IV takes on board the difficult issue of coping with and helping pupils who have emotional and behavioural difficulties (EBD). How to define, identify and intervene with this group of pupils is a complex activity. I suggest engaging in personal reflection alongside official guidelines before deciding how to go about assessing what the difficulty might be and where it might be located. Again, recognition of the importance of taking account of the multiplicity of potential influences, as well as the multiple levels involved, should be included in the reflection process. The chapter ends with consideration of three different approaches to supporting emotional and behavioural difficulties, which relate to different understandings and beliefs about the causes and control of human behaviour.

Despite the interconnectedness of the four sections, they are designed to stand alone if required. Thus, the book can either be read from cover to cover, or you could follow the topics in your own preferred order, concentrating first on aspects of behaviour management you most wish to develop.

Part I

Developing personal coping and professional competence

Chapter 1
Stress, coping and effective teaching

The purpose of this chapter is to improve your understanding of the causes of stress and how to improve your methods of coping. It is based on the premise that it is possible to improve how you manage behaviour through positive action. Furthermore, it sets the scene for how the rest of the book is organised by examining stress and coping at multiple levels, i.e., personal, interpersonal and organisational levels.

Stress has become a buzzword in recent years, surrounded by an ever-growing industry offering advice on how to avoid and/or cope with it. It is generally accepted that stress is on the increase due, in part, to accelerated social and technological change. In British schools the pace and rate of change over recent years has been dramatic and coping with it has proved difficult for many teachers (Travers and Cooper, 1996).

A commonly held belief is that stress is to be avoided at all costs since it results in bad health. Whilst there is evidence to demonstrate a relationship between stress and ill-health (Bartlett, 1998), this does not mean that all stress is invariably bad for you. Being under too much pressure and unable to cope can make you ill, but stress can also be a motivator—the spice of life! Whether or not events are pathological or inspirational depends on how stress is being defined, together with how an individual perceives and deals with it. Some individuals plan things down to the last letter before proceeding and then pace themselves throughout Others wait until the last minute and, when the pressure is on, leap into action to complete a task. Neither tactic is right or wrong, they just represent different ways of coping and are fine—provided they get the job done and no-one suffers as a result.

Considerable research evidence has demonstrated a correlation between teacher stress and pupil behaviour (Kyriacou, 1998); that is, high levels of stress are associated with high levels of disruptive behaviour. Again, establishing a *causal* link between the two is more difficult. Are pupils

badly behaved because teachers are experiencing too much pressure from other sources? Or do badly behaved pupils cause teacher stress? The 'answer' could include either or both, and the relationship is not necessarily linear since other factors can intervene. One important psychological factor in understanding this relationship concerns how what we *think* might happen can influence outcomes. For example, all teachers are likely to perceive some pupils or groups of pupils as potentially difficult. This perception can lead to those teachers feeling anxious and exhibiting behaviour (often unwittingly) which reflects this anxiety, to which the pupils reciprocate— often negatively. The pupils' behaviour reinforces what the teacher expected, which creates further anxiety and hence the cycle continues.

Teaching in schools makes fairly unique demands on teachers compared with other professionals. They are required to be knowledgeable about a number of subjects and ensure their pupils' success. At the same time, they are required to control and guide the social behaviour of young people— some of whom have little desire to be in school. Furthermore, teachers are expected to empower pupils to make their own decisions, whilst making sure they behave in a way that adults have determined. Remarkably, many teachers balance all of these demands on a daily basis, some with notable ease. Examining the causes of these pressures, how teachers achieve balance and signalling ways of setting about improving coping are the subject of the following sections.

Stress in schools

Armchair conjecture suggests that teaching, in general, is a stressful occupation. That teachers are stressed is often unchallenged and needs little elaboration since many are. However, overall, there seems little clear evidence that teaching is likely to damage your health. Undoubtedly, most teachers will experience some stress at some point during their career. There is also a minority of teachers who are extremely stressed and fall ill and others who are denied apposite help and support.

Twenty years ago, the International Labour Organisation (1982) highlighted teacher stress as a 'steadily growing problem', a problem that, according to the National Union of Teachers, remains unchanged: 'Stress is one of the biggest problems facing teachers today' (NUT, 2000). Workplace stress has been recognised as a health-related issue by the Health and Safety Executive who issued guidance to employers (HSE, 2001) informing managers that they have a duty to ensure that employees' health is not harmed by work-related stress. In recent years, stress has attracted the interest of many research and professional communities.

Thousands of articles have appeared in journals for teachers, educationalists, psychologists and health professionals, who often disagree about what stress is and how it should be measured, leading to 'confusion, controversy and inconsistency' (Elliot and Eisdorfer, 1982:5).

Labelling teaching as a stress-ridden profession can be destructive for both practitioners and those thinking of entering the profession. Doing so can create self-fulfilling prophecies since 'teachers read frequent reports that teaching is stressful and start to believe it. As a result, perhaps normal upsets that are part of most jobs become mislabelled as chronic, inherent stressors, and a vicious circle begins that results in a higher incidence of self-reported stress' (Hiebert and Farber, 1984:20).

In his review of research into teacher stress, Kyriacou (1998) listed five categories of stressors which have repeatedly been identified as major contributors, four of which were concerned with organisational issues and the fifth with pupil behaviour. However, it is important to recognise that the bulk of the studies adopted a particular method of collecting data (self-report questionnaires) and, as Kyriacou points out, 'given the subjectivity involved in self report, one must be very cautious about its use in providing information about a particular teacher's level of stress' (ibid.: 6). Using alternative methods to collect data is likely to produce different results.

There are many possible causes of stress in schools. Stress at the organisational and structural level can result from: ineffective management (Torrington and Weightman, 1989); lack of communication; poor working environment; excessive workloads (Johnstone, 1989); staffing levels; lack of administrative support; time pressures and lack of resources; job demands; role strain, role ambiguity and role conflict (Bacharach *et al.,* 1986); or, in more global terms, through negative organisational culture and climate. Most of these stressors are not peculiar to schools and can be found in any organisation (see also Chapters 4 and 5).

At the interpersonal level, lack of *perceived* support from colleagues can make coping more difficult, since social support correlates negatively with stress. The higher the level of perceived social support, the lower the level of stress (Sarason *et al.,* 1990). Believing your colleagues are there and prepared to offer help in the form of materials, cover or just an adult to have a chat with can combat feelings of isolation and uncertainty. It is long established that social support operates as a buffer to stress (e.g. Cobb, 1976), but the relationship is not a simple one. Social support is multidimensional in terms of structure, function and also changes over time (Kahn and Antonucci, 1980) and, therefore, differs in its power to alleviate stress.

Relationships with pupils, both individually and in groups, can be both the greatest source of job satisfaction and a major source of stress. Where feedback from pupils is positive, it raises levels of job satisfaction; but where it is negative, it can make excessive demands on coping, notably when having to spend time managing disruptive pupils at the expense of teaching (Kalker, 1984).

Many studies of occupational stress fail to acknowledge pressures beyond school, which can significantly influence overall coping. Galloway *et al.* (1985), for instance, reported that one in six New Zealand teachers questioned said they suffered extreme stress from their families, and one in seven reported stress from financial worries. The interplay between home and work was shown in a study by Syrotuik and D'Arcy (1984), who found levels of social support from spouses were inversely related to stress among individuals with high-pressure jobs. Despite the stressful nature of their jobs, social support from spouses could buffer their negative effects. This is not to suggest that teachers are unique in experiencing stress from their personal lives and interpersonal relationships. However, expectations of teachers in terms of commitment, preparation and marking outside school hours, which encroaches on personal lives, along with poor career and salary structures, has the potential to create disharmony in some households and leave people feeling unsupported.

Personal resources or vulnerabilities either facilitate or impede coping. An individual with appropriate resources and weak constraints develops adaptive coping strategies, which results in being healthier psychologically and physically (Jerusalem, 1993). As teachers progress through their careers, factors considered responsible for stress, change. It is often assumed that new entrants to the profession will experience more stress than their older and/or more experienced colleagues (Coates and Thoresen, 1976). Whilst new entrants are likely to experience some anxiety as they attempt to adjust to the demands of work, more experienced teachers have been found to experience stress in relation to their career and perceived obsolescence (Laughlin, 1984). At the beginning of their careers, teachers' concerns are directed inward, to issues concerned with survival and protecting the self, which has been linked with stress (Chaplain and Freeman, 1996). In contrast, experienced teachers tend to be more pupil-focused, concerned with empowering and developing them holistically (Fuller, 1969). Smilansky (1984), however, found that more competent teachers reported higher levels of stress since they felt more pressured to ensure higher levels of performance, which could be difficult to live up to. Hence, just as concerns change with age and experience, so do potential causes of stress.

At the personal level, a range of dispositional characteristics have been shown to influence levels of stress and well-being. For example: type A personality (Cinelli and Ziegler, 1990); self-efficacy (Schwarzer, 1992; locus of control (Steptoe and Appels, 1989); extraversion (Hills and Norvell, 1991); self-esteem (Brockner, 1988); sense of humour (Martin and Dobbin, 1988); assertiveness (Braun, 1989); and hardiness (Funk, 1992). However, their ability to predict coping has been challenged because accurately isolating and measuring single characteristics and controlling for the effects of overlaps between some of the constructs is problematic (Burchfield, 1985; Schaubroeck and Ganster, 1991). It is well established that individual differences can affect how people approach or cope with stress, but there is no complete explanation of the stress and coping process.

In conclusion, stress cannot be explained solely in terms of organisational effects, although certain organisations do generate stressful conditions. Similarly, stress cannot be explained purely in terms of individual characteristics but certain 'types' of individuals appear more prone to stress than others. Separating individual differences from context is unwise because of the dynamic nature of stress.

What is stress?

In seeking to understand what causes stress, it is necessary to first understand what stress is.

Early accounts of stress focused on stimulus or response models and were based on behaviourist or biological accounts. The first group, stimulus models, explained stress in terms of how stressors exist in the environment —school organisation, for instance—to which we respond. Individuals are viewed as having elastic limits (like an expansion spring) in respect of how much stress they can tolerate before being stretched beyond those limits. Some events are identified as fairly constant but low-level or daily hassles (Kanner and Feldman, 1991). Others are more extreme life events and Holmes and Rahe (1967) produced a scale to quantify the various events people might encounter (e.g. death of a spouse, or divorce). However, criticisms of this approach highlight how the same event can be perceived as significantly more or less painful to one individual than to another (Schroeder and Costa, 1984).

The second group of definitions focus on physiological reactions to stressors in the environment and, as such, focus on *individual* qualities. Hans Seyle (1956), the so-called 'father of stress', offered a bio-medical explanation of stress. In his account, individuals respond to all stressors

(food deprivation, heat, and so on) in a similar way. As the body attempts to maintain homeostasis (balance), it goes through a common sequence of events, which he called the 'general adaptation syndrome' (GAS). The sequence has three components. First is the initial shock where resistance to the stressor is lowered. In the second phase, there is resistance of varying levels to the stressor. Finally, if the stressors continue, the individual is exhausted and ultimately dies. Seyle offers no psychological aspects of stress (for example, the person's ability to cope) so his work has limited value in contemporary accounts of stress.

Whilst early studies provided valuable foundations for more recent explanations of stress, they failed to account for individual differences and the human capacity to cope; what is mildly stressful to one person can be interpreted by another as chronic. Being asked to teach thirty (sometimes reluctant) pupils, and managing their social behaviour, would horrify many people, yet readers of this book probably do so everyday without too much apprehension.

My reason for including the above models is that, as explanations, they are often favoured by the popular press—you will no doubt be familiar with the questionnaires so common in magazines and newspapers where you 'add up' your stressors and are then offered simple explanations. Whilst they may be fun they offer little to people wanting to develop effective coping strategies.

Most recent explanations of stress highlight the centrality of a psychological dimension to stress and coping. In doing so, account is taken of how individuals are capable of mentally representing their worlds, which affects their experience of stress and how they cope. Within most psychologically based definitions, cognitive appraisal is seen as an important element. Hence, the degree to which something in our lives is stressful or not depends on: how we perceive or interpret it; to what extent we consider it a potential or actual threat; and what resources we perceive are available to help us to cope with it. An imbalance between perceived stress and resources determines whether we consider ourselves stressed or coping.

To understand the relationship between stress, coping and pupil behaviour, many psychologists refer to an interactive or transactional model of stress. Lazarus (1966) is credited as the founding father of the stress and coping paradigm—arguing that an event could only be considered stressful if perceived as such by an individual. In other words, stress arises as a result of how the individual perceives and interprets events which occur in their environment. Lazarus emphasises the importance of mental activity (cognition) in what he refers to as transactions with the

environment— #8212;individuals both *influence* and *respond* to their environments. Stress is experienced when the magnitude of stressors exceeds the person's ability to resist them. The coping individual then changes themselves or their environment in order to counter or prevent this from occurring. This relationship is interdependent, dynamic and reciprocal.

A number of developments and changes have been made to Lazarus's original model, both in terms of stress generally and more specifically in respect of teaching (e.g. Sutherland and Cooper, 1991). It is to a cognitive model of stress and coping, developed by Freeman and myself (Freeman, 1987; Chaplain and Freeman, 1996) that I now turn to explore stress and coping in school

Thinking, feelings and behaviour

Stress is about thinking (cognition), feelings (emotions) and behaviour. Someone who is stressed will have thought about and interpreted an event, experienced some emotion and will probably behave differently to normal. In his explanation of stress, Lazarus emphasised the role of thinking (cognition) and its 'transaction' with the environment. Kyriacou highlights the emotional component of the process: 'The experience by a teacher of unpleasant emotions such as frustration, anxiety, anger and depression, resulting from aspects of his or her work as a teacher' (1997:156).

However, Chaplain and Freeman incorporated all three elements, highlighting the role of individual differences: 'Stress is a negative feeling state which has both psychological and physical components. It is experienced as an assault on "self". Stress is not consistent between individuals, nor stable over time' (1996:40).

What constitutes an assault on the self is down to the interpretation of the individual teacher. It could be the social self—being made to look stupid in front of others, or the professional self—feeling that your teaching competence is being questioned and so on. The self comprises of, in part, a set of goals which are apparent in ongoing behaviour, many of which are experienced socially, and stress results from these shared experiences being interrupted (Millar *et al.,* 1988). An example of this occurs when disruptive pupils disturb the shared goals of teachers and 'on-task' pupils, increasing coping demands on both parties.

Cognition, emotion and behaviour are not mutually exclusive; they are interlinked. For example, a pupil disrupts a lesson, preventing a teacher from managing the behaviour or learning of the class. The teacher *interprets* the pupil's behaviour as deliberate and directed towards her, then

she may feel anger towards the pupil which is likely to be mediated through body position, facial expression and language. Anger is described as a moral emotion; that is, it is a response to personal offence and usually results from attributing blame to a person for a wrong-doing (Power and Dalgleish, 1997). If the teacher had attributed responsibility to herself instead, because she had not prepared the lesson correctly, she is more likely to experience guilt or shame. These are social emotions (ibid.) which would, again, be likely to be mediated verbally and non-verbally. Cognition and emotion are not the only mental activities to consider in relation to stress, as there is another member of the psychological trilogy—motivation. Attributing blame (see Chapter 2) in particular directions affects the degree to which we are subsequently prepared to persevere with a task (Hewstone, 1994). If a teacher attributes a pupil's misbehaviour to internal, unchangeable and uncontrollable causes, they are unlikely to see any value in persevering in trying to change that pupil's behaviour.

Levels of coping

How we cope depends on how we appraise and interpret potential stressors and how that appraisal makes us feel. Alternatively, how we feel can affect what we select to appraise and give attention to in the first place. If we are feeling sad or depressed, we are likely to attend to negative behaviours; but if we are feeling happy, we are more likely to attend to positive behaviours (Calder and Gruder, 1988).

Not all coping results from deliberate attention (conscious activity); some is carried out automatically or unconsciously (Kihlstrom, 1999). One measure of the competent individual or expert learner is the degree to which they can cope or solve problems with minimal conscious attention; that is, 'automatically' (Power and Brewin, 1991). Automaticity is demonstrated by competent individuals who, with seemingly little effort, solve problems or cope with difficult situations. In contrast, the less competent individual would need to engage more deliberately with a problem in order to find a solution.

A coping teacher is similarly able to integrate cognitive, emotional and physical activity to manage a class apparently without effort. His body language, what he says and how he says it project confidence and authority: expressing appropriate emotions, interacting with pupils, focusing primarily on positive features, but being quickly perceptive to changes such as signs of off-task or unacceptable behaviour and responding with a little fine-tuning here and there to keep pupils on-task. Yet, in the same school, there may be colleagues who seem to have to work flat out, are hurried and

overwhelmed and who struggle to maintain a reasonable level of order. How might we explain these differences, given that they share a similar environment? Can it be put down to personal qualities, and are these qualities inherent or learned? Some people have attributes more suited to particular activities—physical build, attractiveness or manual dexterity, for instance. Others appear able to organise and reflect on their thinking more easily than others. Some seem to flourish in environments that others feel sick even thinking about. These and other differences highlight the multiplicity of factors involved in trying to unravel how people differ in their response to pressure.

However, people can improve their coping skills by redefining the way in which they view the world and how they interact with it. By analysing their resources, seeking appropriate support and reflecting on how they perceive and solve problems, they can extend their repertoire of coping skills. If these skills are then practised (overlearned), they can become automatic, reducing the amount of mental energy required to use them.

A number of cognitive and motor skills, initially carried out deliberately, can be made automatic through overlearning, after which we have no direct introspective access—for example, driving a car. In other words, we cannot reflect *directly* (introspect) on the procedures or operations involved. An example might be asking a competent teacher how they manage their class so easily and effortlessly only to find that he or she finds it hard to explain; this is something people often put down to intrinsic characteristics. However, it is more likely that they will have spent considerable time planning and carrying out various tasks. They will have learnt, memorised, redefined and modified strategies, incorporating what they have been taught and observed, initially in a very deliberate and planned way, before it later became automatic. The process is similar to an athlete who trains continually to develop muscle memory and coordination. Understanding the learning experiences and identifying how they influenced the final outcome can thus be extremely difficult, if not impossible.

In their model of coping, Chaplain and Freeman (1996) offer an architecture which explains how: coping occurs at two levels; coping teachers differ from those who are not coping; and the various personal, situational, organisational and interpersonal dimensions might influence the coping process (see Figure 1.1). In this model, understanding how levels of thinking interact with the different mediating factors is the key to understanding stress and coping. The remainder of this chapter will be used to discuss some of these issues.

The two levels of thinking reflect different systems and are explained by reference to a metaphor of the functional relationship between executives and workers in an organisation or, in the model, BOSS and EMPLOYEE. These terms were adopted from work carried out by Morris and Hampson (see Hampson and Morris, 1989; Morris, 1981, for a fuller discussion). In simple terms, some low-level mental activity is carried out at the *nonconscious* level—for example, perception, memory, learning and thought. They are automatic, routine processes whose operation we find hard to explain but we carry them out continuously throughout our lives. The nonconscious processes in this model are referred to as EMPLOYEE systems and include a range of actions developed by teachers over time and carried out without having to think about them. Standing in a particular position in the classroom to get attention, using ritualised behaviours to gain attention (e.g. clapping, coughing), setting up routines which occur with simple prompts, using peripheral vision to monitor off-task behaviour and so on.

In contrast, higher level cognitive activities (e.g. planning) are controlled by BOSS systems which require *conscious* intentional activity and are flexible and responsive to novelty (see Figure 1.2). For example, if I decide to move house, I would go through a procedure that would demand considerable problem solving and emotional control!

Whether or not a person becomes consciously aware of an event depends on the level of attention BOSS systems pay to particular incoming information, their active knowledge of that information and their current state. In the classroom, whether or not we specifically choose to respond to the behaviour of a particular pupil will be influenced largely by how we are feeling, which behaviours we are generally sensitised to (specifically in respect of this pupil) plus any other things demanding our attention. We may be conscious of a wide range of activities going on around us—through such indicators as smell, taste, images, language and associations—for example, awareness of being happy at hearing a friend's   voice. It is al so possible to close our eyes and concentrate on sounds and smells, bodily sensations, the flow of thoughts and feelings, even though these thoughts and sensations usually encroach minimally on conscious awareness. When the executive system (BOSS) takes in information, it restructures and re-organises it and decides whether to process it further or discard it. This manipulation of information occurs at many levels, from simple images to how we represent the world.

The point at which coping changes from BOSS to EMPLOYEE and vice versa is called the 'threshold' (Freeman, 1987). The coping teacher has a large repertoire of automatic coping responses so has a high threshold,
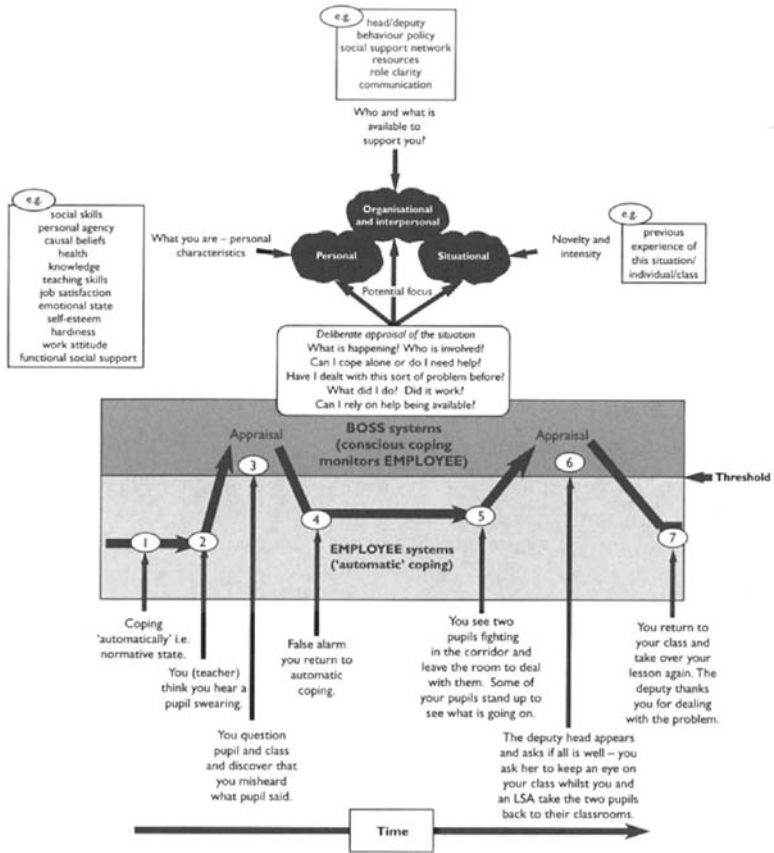
Figure 1.1 **An interactive model of stress and coping.**

Note
Also included is an example of how automatic and conscious coping might interact over a period of time. Mental activity in the dark-tinted box is carried out deliberately, i.e. you are aware of having to solve the problem and able to identify why you may be experiencing a particular emotion (e.g. anger or fear).

In the lighter-tinted box, the teacher is coping with managing the class without having to deliberately think about it, leaving BOSS systems free to concentrate on the lesson content

The three resource boxes represent potential supports—within the teacher (knowledge, experience, personal disposition), and from other people or organisational structures.

hence the longer it takes before having to engage in conscious coping, minimising demands on BOSS. Poor copers have low thresholds, requiring them to make more regular demands on BOSS in order to cope.
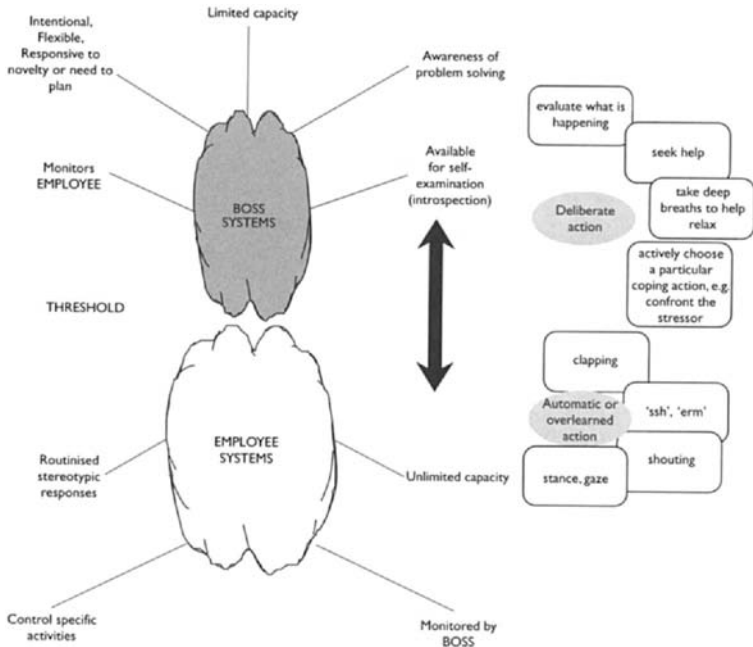
Figure 1.2 **The architecture of BOSS and EMPLOYEE systems.**

Note
The size of the two components symbolises the relative capacity of each—EMPLOYEE having the more extensive capacity but only deals with routinised behaviour. The threshold distinguishes the two different types of coping and changes depending on internal and external conditions. If you are feeling unwell (internal), for instance, you may be preoccupied with your health, which takes up some BOSS processing capacity, limiting its availability for other problem-solving activity.

The threshold is dynamic for both effective and poor copers. Various issues can influence its upward or downward movement. Consider the following example on pp. 20–21 of a teacher's working day.

The example illustrates how levels of coping can fluctuate over even short periods of time and may be accompanied by emotions, which have their own logic. Feeling good in your personal life is no guarantee of feeling likewise at work, and vice versa, but each can influence the other quite markedly.

BOSS is also responsible for monitoring EMPLOYEE systems—to make sure everything is working correctly. If you thought you saw your partner in the street and asked them what they fancied for lunch, only to

Table 1.1 Everyday coping in school

Time	Event	Appraisal	Coping or not coping	Emotional state
0800	Start the day on a high, having just received a tax rebate.	Life is great! Now I can afford a new stereo – will take my husband out this evening for a meal!	Coping.	Happy.
1130	Have a great morning teaching geography and my class is really responsive. One or two pupils are a little excitable but I deal with them quickly.	Teaching is really satisfying, the children are enthusiastic and this is a subject I enjoy.	Normal coping mainly automatic (EMPLOYEE).	Happy.
1315	During lunch find a group of pupils playing with matches on the playing field. Two of the boys become verbally abusive in front of a large group of children and some parents.	I am very unhappy with this behaviour. Arguing and threatening when caught is pushing the limits and especially embarrassing in public.	Coping but requiring more BOSS level thinking to resolve conflict and deal with aggression, feeling a little stressed.	Irritated and angry.
1400	Report incident to head who arranges to meet with the pupils and myself at 4.00 pm to discuss situation.	Could have done without meeting at that time, as I have to pick up my husband from work.	Coping (still using BOSS) with pupil problem but have to negotiate with my husband for later pick up. Head is likely to keep me there until turned 5.00 pm not normally a problem – I could tell him about my date, but I am applying for promotion.	Frustrated.

| 1430 | The deputy head asks me (again) to keep an eye on her group (a regular occurrence when she is teaching). | I am getting sick of this. It is becoming more regular and whilst school is open plan and I am next door, she has a number of difficult pupils in her class who take some watching – she has no consideration for others. Tonight's date looks like being a disaster. | Struggling a little to cope (still using BOSS), quite annoyed at pupils, colleagues and deputy head – I feel really put upon. | Angry. |
| 1530 | Boys involved in incident come to the classroom and apologise. I give them a number of jobs to complete over the next week and tell them I will be speaking with their parents, which they accept without an argument. | Feeling a little better, don't need to go through drawn out discussion with head. Just need to avoid him or he will end up telling me his life story if I tell him I have dealt with the situation, I will send him a message. | Can get back to thinking about winding up this lesson (using EMPLOYEE). I can also go back to thinking about spending my windfall and start smiling again. | Relieved and happy. |

discover it was a complete stranger, you might decide a visit to the optician is called for, as one of your EMPLOYEE systems is not functioning correctly. In the present model, stress is experienced when BOSS systems decide we are *not* coping, usually when overlearned non-conscious coping strategies have been identified as unsuccessful (an example is provided in Figure 1.1).

Automatic coping is the norm, since most people cope with a range of difficulties with little apparent conscious regard for them. To ensure they cope, people tend to select (where possible) activities which they enjoy and in which they are usually successful. However, it becomes painfully obvious if our strategies and actions are not working once we are alerted to feeling stressed, i.e. not coping. Typical signs of not coping include pauses, the careful selection of what we say, taking deep breaths to control our heart rate, and looking for support from others. In this way, coping becomes an intention, of which we are fully conscious (that is, at BOSS level). BOSS, however, has limited processing capacity and so is more restricted in the number of procedures it can carry out at any one time. Try multiplying 5467 by 13 in your head whilst reading this page to see what I mean! However, you could probably recite your two-times table whilst reading the page since you probably overlearned it as a child. Overuse of BOSS to cope with trivia leaves people feeling unable to think about other important issues.

The best copers tend to have a large repertoire of automatic coping strategies (EMPLOYEE) relieving pressure on BOSS. Poor copers are more aware of having to make an effort to cope because they have a limited number of effective overlearned strategies. Thus, they frequently need to think about coping with problems and controlling their emotions, that is, extensively using BOSS. As a result, their preoccupation with having to make an effort to cope and find ways to 'survive' minor disruption reduces available processing capacity in BOSS. In the classroom, poor copers are aware that they are not managing their pupils' behaviour and make efforts to solve more 'crises', limiting attention to thinking about teaching, making lessons less interesting and making matters worse.

Whilst poor copers do have automatic responses, they are usually ineffective, such as overuse of avoidance or withdrawal, which become less and less helpful over time. Many of these responses, developed in childhood, continue into adulthood but remain unchanged and immature: for example, shouting, bullying, running away and sulking, which creates difficulties for everyone. Since they are activated automatically, people are unaware they are using them unless they take time to consciously reflect, appraise and modify their responses.

I have, on a number of occasions, observed teachers trying to reduce the noise level in their classes by repeatedly using commonly recognised instructions such as 'Be quiet' or 'Stop talking' but seemingly unaware that the pupils are not taking any notice. Despite this being the case, they carry on, often increasing the frequency and/or volume to little or no avail. When told about this, they often do not believe it until they see themselves on videotape. There is a range of similar expressions and behaviours which result in similar outcomes, for example, shouting, clapping, folding arms and so on. This is not to say that such techniques do not work for many teachers, nor am I questioning the use of triggers to signal routines or responses from pupils, provided you are sure they are working—which means making sure you monitor what is going on. Many behaviours and expressions that come naturally and which are used automatically often work well; however, they can become inappropriate or redundant. Examining such behaviours can be enlightening and provide information helpful to developing new ways of working (see Chapter 3).

Amongst a large staff group it is probable that some will, at times, use immature and ineffective strategies in order to cope, but until they become aware of doing so, alternative effective strategies will not be forthcoming. For some, this will only occur after they have become angry or dealt with a situation badly. Hence, some overlearned coping strategies create more stress and upset, not because we intended to use them but because they were activated before we became aware of them.

In summary, a lack of coping at EMPLOYEE level usually comes to BOSS's attention through cognitive appraisal or feedback from others. Therefore coping precedes stress, since stress is awareness of not coping. At that point, BOSS systems take over and plan how to deal with the problem and to monitor/control emotional functioning. EMPLOYEE functions continue to be monitored by BOSS as long as overload is not being experienced. New ways of dealing with novel situations, if practised, can become EMPLOYEE strategies.

BOSS is responsible for appraising the nature and intensity of the event which EMPLOYEE has failed to cope with; for controlling emotions and for deciding what actions will solve the problem. A teacher would carry out this process by appraising:

- the current situation—What's happening? Is this a threat to me? Do I understand what is going on? Am I coping? If not, why not?
- personal resources—How can I gain control of what is happening using my previous experience or personality? Could I bluff? How am I feeling?

- interpersonal—Who can help me? Are they available? What sort of help do I need?
- organisational—What does the school policy say about how to deal with this problem? What resources are available to support me?

Appraising a stressful event

Appraisal seeks to answer three questions:

1 what is happening to me and is it a threat?
2 have I got resources to cope with it?
3 did I cope effectively and how might it help me in future?

What is actually appraised will vary from event to event and from individual to individual. For example, what constitutes a threat will differ from class to class, pupil to pupil and, indeed, where in school the event is taking place. Dealing with an aggressive Year 6 pupil in a hidden area of the school carpark whilst surrounded by a group of his friends *may* be perceived as more threatening than dealing with him in a corridor with colleagues nearby.

Figure 1.1 shows the three principal sources of stress—perceived personal inadequacy, external impediments and situational threats—#8212;that are the usual targets for appraisal. Within these three headings, the range of possibilities is almost limitless because of the interplay between individual and context. What follows are just some examples of the potential influence different factors may have, but it is not presented as exhaustive.

Situational variables

The first response to becoming aware you are not coping is usually to consider the immediate situation to confirm whether you have read and understood it correctly, and to what extent it poses a threat. Second, is an assessment of the degree to which it is novel or familiar to you. If it is novel then you may, at first, be alarmed or shocked as to why it has occurred, and the initial emotional reaction may require you to consider how to react. Coping with the unexpected can result in people reacting inappropriately when emotions are running high, because they have not previously considered or rehearsed how to cope with it. However, it is also possible to mishandle the familiar since both teachers and pupils may have fallen into a ritualised negative cycle, which is reinforcing the undesired

behaviour. Always sending a particular pupil to a senior member of staff when they are disruptive may, in fact, be a ritual which the pupil quite enjoys, giving him or her an incentive for misbehaving! The message here is twofold—on the one hand, anticipating possible changes and being proactive in preparing for how to deal with them; and on the other hand, reviewing the strategies you are currently using which may be unwittingly creating problems for you. In a nutshell, it involves evaluating, planning and monitoring how you manage your pupils.

Organisational variables

Organisational support can provide a framework for supporting teachers dealing with difficulties, often in a fairly routinised and predictable way. For example, a teacher is more likely to cope effectively if he or she:

- believes that effective sanctions and rewards are available in school and can be drawn upon;
- perceives the management team as supportive, available and committed to professional development in respect of behaviour management and minimising unnecessary pressure on teachers;
- considers communication systems are appropriate, accessible and effective (see also Chapters 4 and 5);
- works at a school which encourages open discussion of stress and behaviour management, as opposed to viewing stress as a personal weakness on the part of a teacher;
- receives interpersonal reciprocity—an expectation of positive feedback for their efforts from the organisation for doing a good job and from pupils in respect of teacher-learner relationships.

Social support has been shown to be a buffer to stress (Cohen and Wills, 1985). Having colleagues and friends who are perceived as supportive alleviates feelings of isolation and having to cope with everything alone. However, what constitutes appropriate social support is not always straightforward. There is evidence to suggest that having a social network is less important than functional social support (Cassidy, 1999). Teaching in a school may provide a large social network of professional colleagues (structure), but an individual teacher may perceive them as providing little functional support. Schools usually have people officially designated to provide support (with SEN or curriculum for instance) who genuinely (if sometimes mistakenly) believe that they do provide appropriate functional support. However, thinking you are being supportive without

Table 1.2 Functions of social support

Category of social support	Function	Type of stress buffered
Emotional	Someone to turn to for comfort.	Unexpected events which are usually emotionally charged.
Instrumental	Practical advice and tangible support.	Expected events, such as preparing to teach a difficult class where availability of resources is known and they are accessible.
Esteem	Recognition of effort or competence being valued by others.	As an ongoing buffer to prolonged heavy workload or after a particularly stressful period.
Inter-group	Colleagues with shared professional interests.	Sharing teaching methods, developing new initiatives to support teachers and pupils.

regard to how your intended recipients perceive it can make for inefficient working practices and dysfunctional relationships. It is the appraisal and representation of social support networks by individuals that holds the key to the buffering effects of social support. Social support can reduce vulnerability to depression in a number of ways, including supporters providing examples of how to manage difficult situations and demonstrating the value of persistence, as well as providing resources to help deal with difficulties (Major *et al.,* 1990).

A number of different types of social support have also been identified, including emotional, practical, informational and esteem (Cohen and Wills, 1985), which are specific to cushioning particular types of stress (see Table 1.2).

At the organisational level, social support is strongly related to social identity. Where people feel there is a strong sense of social identity in a school, they are more resilient to the negative effects of stress (Cassidy, 1999). Within schools where the emphasis is on shared values and expectations, teamwork and mutual trust, a single individual's stress affects many others.

A useful exercise is to make a list of people in your social network in both your personal and professional life. Alongside each name identify what function you think they should fulfil and, alongside that, the type of support they actually provide (emotional, practical, informational and esteem). Is there a balance or are there gaps? What type of support do you

feel you need more of to cope more effectively? How might you obtain this support?

Personal variables

Personal characteristics are often seen as the key to effective coping and, indeed, much advice on stress looks at how to develop a healthy lifestyle, how to become more assertive, developing skills and knowledge, enhancing self-esteem and the like, a number of which are discussed elsewhere in this text. However, whilst the value of individual strengths is clear, it is equally important to remember that a teacher exists within a complex hierarchy of nested systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), some of which he or she has direct influence over whilst others are more abstract. A wide variety of personal characteristics have been found to relate to levels of stress, including those referred to already in this chapter and others shown in Figure 1.1. Some of these are discussed in more detail in other chapters; for example, causal beliefs are covered in Chapter 2 and social skills in Chapter 3. The remainder of this section will expand on personal agency and social support.

Personal agency refers to the power an individual believes they have to bring about consequences intentionally. Psychologists maintain that people make causal contributions to their functioning through mechanisms of personal agency, a central feature of which is self-efficacy. Bandura referred to self-efficacy as 'individuals' beliefs about their abilities to execute and regulate important actions in their lives, and these self-perceived competencies affect the person's choice of what they undertake [or] avoid' (1981:200). If an individual believes they do not have the ability or power to bring about a particular result, then, they feel, why bother trying in the first place? If two people had the same ability levels but differed in self-efficacy, the one with the higher self-efficacy would persist longer when faced with a problem.

The development of self-efficacy is complex and begins in childhood, through self-appraisal skills which inform self-knowledge and self-regulation. As an individual gets older, self-efficacy continues to be influential in how he or she copes with various life transitions (for instance, home to school, school to work, job to job, and so on) and feedback from significant others. Self-efficacy can be generalised or specific to particular activities (such as professional self-efficacy) and is also changeable. In respect of stress and coping. Maier *et al.* (1985) argued that it is not stressful life conditions that determine whether an experience will be detrimental but the degree to which an individual *believes* they are capable of coping with them. People experience lower levels of anxiety

from threats they believe they can control. High self-efficacy then acts as a buffer to negative stress and fosters positive appraisals of difficult situations (Carver and Scheier, 1988).

Efficacy operates at the personal and institutional levels in schools and the effects on teachers' performance and well-being are well documented. As Bandura points out in his summary of the literature:

> Many teachers find themselves beleaguered day in and day out by disruptive and non-achieving pupils. Eventually their low sense of efficacy to fulfil academic demands takes a stressful toll. Teachers who lack a secure sense of institutional efficacy show weak commitment to teaching, spend less time in subject matters in their areas of perceived inefficacy, and devote less overall to academic matters They are especially prone to occupational burnout…a syndrome of reactions to chronic occupational stressors that include physical and emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation of the people one is serving and feelings of futility concerning personal accomplishments.
>
> (Bandura, 1995:20)

Organisational conditions which undermine teachers' professional self-efficacy include limited professional development, heavy workloads, poor prospects and an unsatisfying imbalance between their work life and personal life (McAteer-Early, 1992). These are features which have an unwelcome resemblance to those highlighted by research into teacher stress reported above (p. 11).

Teachers with a low sense of self-efficacy are vulnerable to difficult situations because they worry about their level of competence, experience strong negative emotional reactions, feel criticism is directed at their self-worth and tend to accept criticism for failure more readily than praise for success. They are also likely to affect their pupils in a similar way, creating an overall negative classroom environment. Gibson and Dembo (1984) found that teachers who have high instructional efficacy empower their pupils to master their learning, whereas those with low efficacy undermine their pupils' efficacy and cognitive development.

Low self-efficacy can be improved by giving attention to issues at personal, interpersonal and institutional levels. For example, this could take the form of forcing yourself to take recuperative breaks from emotionally taxing work, not taking work home all the time and stopping ruminative thinking. Bandura (1997) and Rosenthal and Rosenthal (1985) suggest that those who work this way and who convince themselves that

there is no time to rest, or feel they are too tired after work to engage in leisure pursuits do not usually welcome such advice. Bandura (1997) recommends a guided mastery programme to help them gain control of their lives in order to alleviate pressure. However, this is not likely to be sufficient since the difficulties are not just at the individual level, as previously discussed, and so intervention is also required to prevent organisational demands undermining teachers' efficacy. Teachers need some control over matters which affect their working lives and ownership of schooling as well as classroom process. In appraising their effectiveness, teachers should focus on those features over which they have control. Other areas of empowering staff efficacy are discussed in Chapter 4.

Think of a recent occasion where you felt stressed. Write down what had happened prior to the event and how you coped (did you take some direct action or try to forget about it?). Was the event something which occurs regularly or was it a novel occurrence? Was it something that you feel you had control over (i.e. could you change things to stop it occurring again or to improve the way you coped with it?). Did you think you coped with it effectively? If not, how could you prevent it occurring again or cope more effectively with it next time?

The above analysis offers a simple means of appraising a stressor and, quite often, the very process of carrying out such an activity helps to improve coping. There are some events, however, which are so horrendous that we avoid thinking about them because they are too painful and this is acceptable under extreme conditions, but not a good general coping mechanism.

Balancing stressors and resources

In order to monitor and evaluate existing coping and develop new ways of dealing with potential stressors, Chaplain and Freeman (1996) developed a simple model—the individual coping analysis (ICAN)—organised around identifying and developing new coping strategies (see Figure 1.3). It is used to analyse the (im)balance between stressors and resources to provide a basis for developing new ways of doing things. The analysis is intended to be ongoing and not just a one-off activity since, in some instances, stressors and resources change roles over time; stressors can become resources and vice versa because of changes to our environment and ourselves. One example of this might be professional commitment or enthusiasm. Most people would agree that teachers are expected to be committed to their work and, indeed, many interviewers are looking for evidence of this when making appointments. In practice, demonstrating
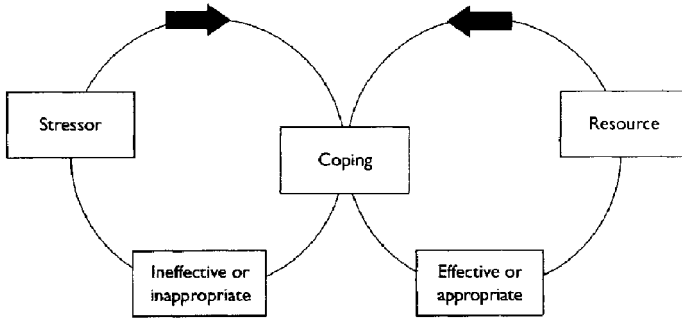
Figure 1.3 Individual coping analysis (ICAN).

one's commitment or enthusiasm often includes completing administrative tasks outside official hours (for example, marking, preparation) or supplementing equipment from personal funds, supporting trips and sports activities outside the working week. If this commitment leads to success in gaining a job or promotion, then it could clearly be viewed as a resource. However, if this commitment leads to a teacher (or headteacher) spending more and more time at work or engaged in work-related activities, and less and less time at home with his or her friends and family, it can lead to difficulties at the personal and/or interpersonal level; thus, it becomes a source of stress. If those close to you feel marginalised and neglected, then there is a danger of losing valuable social support. As one teacher informed me:

> I get home from work by around 5.00pm absolutely tired out. Then I often have two or three hours of marking or preparation to do. Meals at home tend to be convenience or take-away. I used to really enjoy cooking and doing the garden but it doesn't happen any more. My husband also works hard but can't understand why I have to spend so much additional time preparing and marking. He says I am turning him into a 'curriculum widower'. We never even manage to get to the gym together now, despite planning to do so. I really love teaching but this is not helping my marriage at all.
>
> (Rachel, Year 6 teacher)

Disruption in one's personal life can add to difficulties coping at school and vice versa; hence, the need to keep one's personal and professional lives in balance should not be underestimated. As with other aspects of our

lives, it is not difficult to find yourself in a ritual of behaviour in which we fail to acknowledge the thoughts and feelings of others. We need to generate time to stand back and evaluate our situation.

Returning to the model (Figure 1.3), the point at which the two circles meet represents where coping takes place. One might argue that coping invariably occurs (pretending there is no problem, for instance) but some forms of coping are more effective (or acceptable/unacceptable) than others in certain contexts and at certain points in time, but not necessarily in others. For example, an event may be so painful to take on board that initially you ignore it or pretend everything is fine. However, doing so as a long-term or regular strategy is unlikely to work and is likely to lead to further problems. At the same time, engaging with and confronting all of your problems head-on and immediately can also be counter-productive since it is likely to prove exhausting and lead to other difficulties such as being seen as over-aggressive (see Table 1.3 for examples of different coping styles). Some forms of coping have their own logic, such as initially deflecting a problem with a view to making space and time to solve it more directly later. A simple example might be overhearing a pupil swearing and opting not to intervene until the situation is more easily dealt with, perhaps when there is no audience. There is no right or wrong way of coping effectively (beyond legal and professional requirements); it depends on the individual and the social context. To improve your coping requires review and monitoring of what strategies you are using, identifying the balance between them, and being proactive in developing new ones to cope with future potential stressors; what Lazarus and Folkman (1984) called 'anticipatory coping'.

You will no doubt be familiar with preparing for particular social encounters: for example, preparing for an interview and trying to anticipate what is likely to be asked, how you will respond and rehearsing what to say. However, rehearsing coping strategies should go beyond what to say to include how to say it, along with non-verbal communication—something which we are less aware of.

Coping is not simply a matter of 'either/or'—that we cope or we do not. In some instances, for example, we might use a coping strategy which is initially effective and subsequently disastrous. There can also be unintended consequences.

Using the individual coping analysis (ICAN) for personal development

To use this model effectively requires the completion of four elements:

Table 1.3 Coping styles

	Active	Passive
Direct	Confront the problem	Avoid the problem
Indirect	Seek advice on how to deal with the problem	Smoke or drink more

Note
All four coping styles can be effective, but over-reliance on one type can lead to problems. Always confronting the problem may be seen as aggressive; always seeking advice as overly dependent; avoiding a problem as being weak; smoking and drinking too much is unhealthy.

1 identification and description of stressors and resources.
2 evaluation of stressors, resources and coping effectiveness in order to provide further understanding.
3 planning and practising alternative coping strategies.
4 monitoring and evaluating alternative strategies.

The stages of the analysis to be followed are listed below.

- Using the headings in Table 1.4, make two lists. One list should contain factors which you perceive as supportive, and the second those factors which you perceive as stressful. The lists are likely to contain aspects of both your personal and professional life. It doesn't matter what order you place them in.
- Examine your two lists. Which is the longest? It is important to have more resources than stressors in order to cope effectively. Where stressors outnumber resources, effective coping is less likely.

- Look at the lists again. Which stressors and resources are long term and which are more recent? If they have changed recently, try to identify explanations (for example, a change of job, responsibilities, lifestyle, time of the year, ageing, how you feel today/this week). Are you aware of any imminent changes (curriculum, class groupings, organisation)? If so, list possible ways of being proactive in controlling the effects of these changes (for example, additional training/reading, re-organising your classroom to improve control of movement). Planning for future development is central to this process.

Table 1.4 Individual coping analysis (ICAN)

Resource (support)		Difficulty (stressor)
I am a good teacher and I enjoy teaching.	**Self**	I do not feel confident of my knowledge of teaching science.
They are always prepared to listen to my problems.	**Friends**	They want me to go out every night and I can't.
I find teaching pupils with SEN very rewarding.	**Pupils**	I find some pupils hard to motivate.
Most are happy to share ideas for lessons.	**Colleagues**	Some are inconsistent in dealing with disruptive pupils which creates problems for me.
The school is fortunate in having lots of good resources.	**School organisation**	There is a lack of structure.
The head is an excellent teacher and very supportive.	**Management**	The deputy undermines my authority by coming into my room and disciplining pupils when it isn't necessary.

Note
Suggested headings and examples of how to start your personal analysis. The headings should be made to fit your context, so may well be different to those suggested here.

• Consider which stressors you have (or could gain) control over (for example, a change in your lifestyle) and those you cannot (ageing). How might you change the way you cope with each by, for example, putting things in perspective or remodelling them to make them a resource? A perceived weakness in teaching a particular subject could result in you deciding to attend a course which revitalises your interest in professional development.

Since all behaviour can be expressed in terms of the interaction between ourselves, stressors and resources, it follows that the evaluation of our coping strategies is central to understanding whether or not we are dealing with our stressors in the most effective way. Using the above framework you can carry out a number of evaluations; for example if you are concerned about the behaviour of a particular class or pupil you could consider how:

• the behaviour which is causing you concern is influenced by the stressors and resources of the pupils.

- you normally cope with their behaviour and how this may affect their coping strategies and stressors.
- others cope with this group.
- whole school policies interact with what is going on in your classroom.

It is not sufficient to merely list stressors and resources. It is essential that you take time to examine the interaction between you and the various factors involved. You and your colleagues may all be aware of particular difficulties but cope with them in very different ways despite seemingly having similar resources (training, lifestyle and working in the same organisation).

Suggested further reading

Chaplain, R. and Freeman, A. (1996) *Stress and Coping.* Cambridge: Pearson.

Chapter 2
Teacher thinking and pupil behaviour

Much of what is written about classroom control focuses on observable behaviours. Less is said about the thinking processes which are fundamental influences on that behaviour.

There is a popular belief that having high expectations of pupils academically and socially will necessarily result in better behaviour and performance in school. However, just as with a number of other popular beliefs, this is an over-simplification of a complex process. Reducing the relationship between teacher expectancy and pupil outcomes in this way is at best naïve, at worst an insult to the professionals involved. It is hard to imagine any teacher not wanting their pupils to behave well and be successful in their studies, either for their own or their pupils' benefit. The teacher is a 'significant other' in a pupil's life, who, having been a pupil himself or herself, will no doubt realise the importance of feeling 'valued' by teachers. Few teachers, if any, would deny wanting to have positive relationships with *all* their pupils or to treat them all equally.

This chapter looks in detail at the social psychology of interpersonal behaviours in the classroom and how these behaviours can mediate unintended messages to pupils and, most importantly, the effects they can have on the thinking, feeling and behaviour of those pupils. Ways of preventing and overcoming potential difficulties, and enhancing the behaviour and motivation of pupils giving concern, will also be discussed. The central argument of this chapter is that:

- teachers categorise pupils based on perceptions and expectations of how they behave, rather than the behaviour itself;
- teachers respond to pupils in qualitatively different ways and can unintentionally influence pupil behaviour negatively;
- these differences are controlled largely by impressions formed in early encounters interacting with previous experiences to form positive and negative expectations of behaviour;

- perceived differences are linked to both individual pupil qualities and cultural variations;
- teachers' expectations can be mediated to pupils and can result in unintended consequences for both pupil and teacher.

The idea that the way in which teachers think about and act towards their pupils has the potential to influence their behaviour is hardly a novel concept. After all, if they could not, they would not be doing their job. The concern is how normal everyday thinking processes (cognition) can bring about unintended negative consequences for pupils and negative teacher-pupil(s) relationships. To understand the processes involved, it is necessary to consider not just the isolated elements (teacher, pupil), but also the total situation (the classroom, the school, the organisation of the curriculum). As Lewin (1951) put it: 'a person exists in a psychological field that is a "configuration of forces".' To consider the pupil, the teacher or the situation alone is only part of the configuration and insufficient to understand behaviour. Both pupil and teacher have needs, abilities, beliefs and expectations, which differ and are influenced by their socio-cultural context.

The relationship between teacher and pupils is central to classroom management. Whilst it is commonplace to talk of effective behaviour management being based on 'good relationships' with pupils, it is not always made clear what this means, and like most aspects of inter-personal relations, is subject to individual interpretation. It is probably true to say that all teachers seek positive relationships in their classrooms and want to have a pleasant environment where pupils can learn. It is also true to say that most pupils, even those who are difficult to manage, would, given the choice, prefer to have positive and friendly atmosphere in their classrooms —despite their behaviour suggesting otherwise. No-one enjoys going to school every day to face unpleasantness—that may be what they experience, but not what they desire. So where do things go wrong and how might they be explained?

Teacher expectations: turning thoughts into action

The expectancy-confirmation cycle or self-fulfilling prophecy (Cooper, 1979) as applied to education settings has been the topic of considerable interest since the 1960s. The central tenet of this phenomenon is that merely having particular expectations of someone can influence that person's behaviour. Where this influence might disadvantage a pupil,

either by leading to academic underachievement or disruptive behaviour, it is unacceptable.

The expectancy-confirmation cycle links how social perception leads to social behaviour, and the process can operate at different levels.

- *Cognitive confirmation effect.* Expectancy-confirmation effects occur in the absence of any interaction between perceiver and perceived. For example, a teacher perceives and interprets a pupil's behaviour, attributes causes, or recalls actions in ways that confirm their existing beliefs.
- *Behavioural confirmation effect* or *self-fulfilling prophecy.* For example, the initial erroneous beliefs of the teacher channel the course of *interaction* to elicit behaviours, from another individual or group, which confirm the teacher's original beliefs.

The latter effect is the subject of the following discussion.

Perhaps the most famous experiment to test the expectancy effect in schools was carried out by Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968). Rosenthal had demonstrated how researchers could act in ways that resulted in subjects (animal and human) behaving in ways that confirmed their original hypotheses. Rosenthal and Jacobson decided to test empirically whether a similar effect might occur in a school. They selected an elementary school with pupils from a predominantly lower socio-economic background, and administered a test which they told teachers would identify 'late bloomers' (20 per cent of the class)—that is, pupils with latent ability that would 'bloom' later. In fact, the pupils had been picked at random. The idea, however, had now been put into the mind of the teacher. The results confirmed that *generally* the late bloomers showed greater improvement than the pupils not labelled. Additionally, teachers considered the 'late bloomers' were 'better adjusted and more intellectually alive' than their peers. Although the results seemed clear and interesting to many, there were criticisms of both the method and logic used in the experiment (see Elashoff and Snow, 1971).

Nonetheless, despite criticisms, the experiment provided the impetus for hundreds of subsequent studies using a range of different methods— #8212;some examining effects, others looking at the expectancy processes involved (Harris and Rosenthal, 1986). One particularly noteworthy, if disquieting, study was carried out by Rist (1970) who using an ethnographic approach, observing the behaviour of a kindergarten teacher with a class of 'Ghetto children' over a two-year period. Almost immediately after their arrival, the teacher placed the children into three separate groups:

'cardinals', 'tigers' and 'clowns' (no prizes for guessing the status of the clowns!), sitting each group at separate tables. As the teacher had no information about the academic performance of these children, they were classified primarily on the basis of their socio-economic status. Rist argued that the teacher was comparing the children to her perception of the 'ideal' pupil, many features of which bore no relationship to academic ability. Children on the top table were cleaner, better dressed and better behaved than those in group 2, who in turn were 'nicer' than the clowns. The most striking observation was that, two years later, these pupils were still in the same ability groups.

Good and Brophy (1991) highlighted the conditions under which expectations are likely to have most effect. They argued that teachers, having formed expectations of their pupils based on their existing knowledge, naturally expect differences in performance and behaviour from different pupils. These expectations affect the decisions a teacher makes whilst teaching, where pupils are seated, the type of work given to them, how often they are spoken to and how long the teacher waits for them to answer. In this way, the pupils learn what they are expected to do and behave accordingly. The teacher observes the behaviour that confirms his or her original expectations and the cycle continues. But what if the pupils' behaviour does not confirm the teacher's original expectations, or the pupils attempt to change their behaviour, does this result in changing a teacher's opinions? Not necessarily, according to the work of Schmuck and Schmuck (1992), or Rogers, who commented:

> the fact that the pupil's behaviour does not shift in the expected direction will not necessarily have the effect of weakening or changing the initial expectation. It will be the teacher's perceptions of events that count and these will not always be accurate.
>
> (1982:59)

The conditions under which unintended consequences are most likely to occur are most prevalent when teaching large classes. Whilst the regular contact afforded in primary schools allows closer relationships to form, younger children tend to be much more easily influenced than older peers (Rogers, 1982).

Where teachers work with small groups or individuals, they receive more immediate feedback and have the opportunity to gain greater knowledge of individual pupils. It provides them with more opportunity to observe behaviour changes and reassess inaccurate initial impressions. It is not unusual to hear stories of pupils who have been excluded from

mainstream classes who 'become' well behaved and communicative with their new teachers after having been placed in special units with smaller teaching ratios.

If the information received about a pupil is not diagnostically valid for determining dispositions (for example, being told a pupil comes from a low socio-economic group should not be regarded as a diagnostically sound indicator of intellectual ability), a teacher is likely to avoid using it to draw conclusions about a pupil. However, they can become hypotheses about likely qualities they can test against behavioural evidence to make judgements. If the opportunity then arises to acquire behavioural information about someone, people use a 'confirming strategy' to find evidence which supports their original hypothesis, using selective attention towards particular behaviours whilst ignoring others. In other words, looking for evidence of the expected behaviours, weighting the evidence in favour of those that confirm expectancy-beliefs. Inconsistent behaviour is explained in terms of the situation rather than the pupil; thus inconsistent behaviour can be reinterpreted as being consistent with initial expectancy— for example, a 'yob' behaving altruistically might be reappraised as disguising his/her 'real' motivational intent.

Expectancy research has generally supported the proposition that holding a particular expectation under certain conditions can influence outcomes for others, and that these outcomes can be social and/or academic performance and either positive or negative. One set of questions for those involved with trying to bring about change in schools is:

- how are expectancies formed?
- how are they mediated and under what conditions?
- why do they persist if they are known to be inaccurate?
- what are the likely outcomes?
- how can we guard against negative outcomes?

A number of researchers have offered models to explain the teacher expectancy-confirmation cycle (Harris and Rosenthal, 1986; Rogers, 1982). Figure 2.1 offers a summary of the salient elements. Essentially, the process consists of forming expectations, the mediation of expectations and potential outcomes. I emphasise the *potential,* since not all expectations are mediated, or received and attended to by pupils; and, where this does happen, they do not inevitably bring about particular outcomes. Nonetheless, the fact remains that, in a significant number of cases, they do exactly that (Darley and Fazio, 1980; Jussim, 1986). Where they result in the Pygmalion effect, i.e. where pupil performance improves, there is

usually less cause for concern; however, where the opposite occurs there is certainly cause for concern. The Golem effect (Babad *et al.,* 1982) is the negative effect of teacher expectancy and happens when a teacher expects lower performance or problem behaviour from a pupil, which can result in a pupil behaving in that way. There are difficulties in demonstrating this phenomenon since it is unethical to construct experiments which cause pupils to underachieve or behave badly.

Understanding pupils' behaviour

Expectancy formation is dependent upon social cognition, which is, itself, concerned with the acquisition of social knowledge and how we think about and develop understanding of our social worlds. It concerns the processes we use to make sense of other people and also guides our social behaviour (Abrams and Hogg, 1999). Put simply, it concerns how we think about people plus how we *think* we *think* about people.

Social cognition is relevant to the study of thinking, motivation, feelings and behaviour. It includes the study of a wide range of phenomena, including: social perception (Zebrowitz, 1990); impression formation (Brewer, 1988); stereotypes and stereotyping (Leyens *et al.,* 1994), attribution theory (Hewstone, 1989), to name a few. Social cognition has a particular relevance to classrooms and schools, as it provides a link between cognition and social psychology and is orientated towards processes and a concern with real-world issues (Ostrom, 1984). Socio-cognitive processes explain interpersonal relationships in school including the expectancy process.

Our social behaviour arises from a combination of: how we believe we should act in social situations; how we expect others to behave; and our interpretation of the feedback we receive from others. We use all of these factors to self-regulate our own behaviour. However, we do not interact with the actualities of a situation but rather our perceptions of it (that is, what we believe to be true). Furthermore, whether we like it or not, we all make assumptions about ourselves, other people, groups and the situations we find ourselves in. Many of these assumptions are functional and we would not be able to go about our daily lives without using them. However, sometimes they can be dramatically inaccurate or overly rigid and thus resistant to change; this can result in unintended consequences, something which will be discussed in detail later. In familiar situations we rely on typical procedures to direct often complex sequences of behaviour.
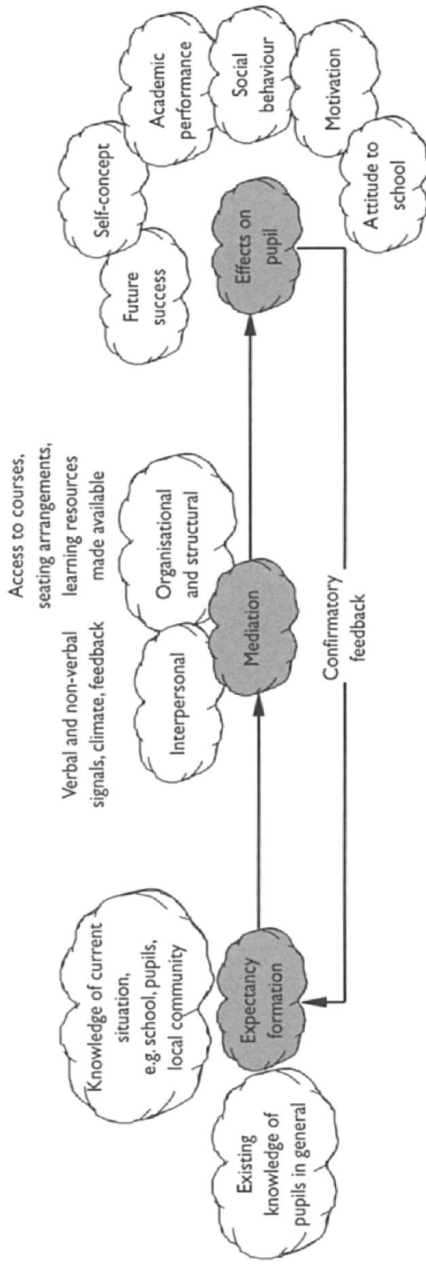
Figure 2.1 **A simplified model of the teacher expectancy-confirmation process.**

Imagine going into a classroom full of Year 4 pupils for the first time. You will no doubt be able to think of how you might expect them to behave, irrespective of how much you know about the actual pupils.

List how you would expect such a group to behave on your first encounter in a new school. Consider the sequence of events leading to you starting to teach the lesson.

It is likely that you will have a sequence in mind, probably along the lines of: as you enter the room, expecting the pupils to stop talking or messing about, scanning the room, picking out specific individuals, maintaining eye contact, making a mental note of who does and who does not respond to your presence, moving to a 'safe' position in the classroom which gives you a good viewpoint, saying hello, pupils saying hello, introducing yourself, letting them know how you feel about how they were behaving (if necessary) and so on. This whole process is regulated by what psychologists call a social schema or, in this specific case, an event schema (Abelson, 1981).

> To appreciate the salience of event schemas, imagine the following lesson. Mr Allen is teaching a class of Year 5 pupils. The class has been working quietly. Suddenly Damien shouts out 'Bloody' and everyone laughs. Mr Allen sends Damien to see the headteacher. Why do you think Damien behaved in this way?

A social schema is a generic mental structure (Taylor and Cocker, 1981) which contains organised prior knowledge of, for example, people, events, roles and self (there are many more possible types, and many overlap). Such structures allow people to simplify the storage of knowledge about their social worlds in an inclusive way, often discarding some data to give an overall impression—as opposed to sorting the data in an elemental way with every bit of knowledge being kept in a 'raw' form. Schema influence social information processing in three different ways, vis-à-vis: perception and encoding of new information; memory of old information and inferences about people where information is missing. A social schema is a rough and ready, but organised, framework, which allows the quick processing of information. For instance, the event schema for entering a class-room we have just discussed is probably unremarkable and familiar rather than novel, and would be generally identifiable (with minor tweaks) in all schools. It is worth noting that the ritualised behaviour of event scripts can, in some conditions, undermine classroom relations. Where the 'script' for the first meeting with a group is negatively evaluated and the messages

in both directions confirm expectations, this can result in a negative cycle, which continues if unchecked.

During the initial interactions with pupils or whole classes, you will automatically make rapid assessments of them. If you couldn't make assessments of your pupils, you wouldn't be doing your job. In the example of a script we have already considered, you would probably note who was first to respond to your arrival; who seemed to ignore you; who needed reminding about how they should behave, any possible trouble-makers and the like. What you attend to will be influenced by a whole range of factors, including individual features of the pupils (for example, physical attractiveness, sex, volume of speech, dress) and cultural factors (ethnicity, social class) as well as the situation and your own characteristics. Your assessments are based on a combination of what you know about schools and pupils which you have acquired over many years through experiences as a pupil, and later as a teacher. Added to these data is what you know about the current situation from official briefing by colleagues/managers, staffroom gossip, the school/class reputation, what you know of the local community and its residents. This information will influence both your expectations and, how you behave towards the group as well as regulating what you say and how you say it. If the school has a reputation for good behaviour and this class appears noisy, you may start with, 'I don't expect to hear this sort of noise from a group of pupils in this school!' (that is, emphasis on the behaviour being unacceptable to the social identity of the school or the group). If, on the other hand, the school/class has a reputation for bad behaviour you may start with, 'This level of noise is not acceptable in my classroom!' (that is, emphasis on a less abstract level—the behaviour being unacceptable to your personal standards or new standards being expected).

> If your answer to the earlier question about Damien being sent to the head was because you think he misbehaved (swearing or shouting out), then your classroom 'script' probably made you assume (quite reasonably) that Damien had disrupted the class and had been sent to the head for his misbehaviour. You were not, however, given this information originally, so your explanation results from your own schema in action. Damien may have been referring to having cut his finger—'Bloody' being his response to Mr Allen asking how bad the injury was. Everyone laughing may have been in response to Mr Allen joking with Damien, and being sent to the head may have been to organise for him to be driven to

> the hospital. Event schemas are not just limited to classroom behaviour; people have scripts for social events in general and all act to provide expectations about the likely sequence of events.

This process is normal and used to make life predictable, and is based on how people reason about probabilities. Social psychologists have directed considerable attention to weaknesses in this process—our biases and our lack of understanding of the rules that govern probabilities of events, along with how we reason. But just how does this process work, what are its strengths and weaknesses?

Impressions of people are not based on the actual behavioural acts of the individual to whom we respond, but our impression of the person carrying out those acts. If a pupil comes into class and greets you in a warm and friendly way, and your existing knowledge of the pupils suggests that he or she is generally a friendly, helpful pupil, you will accept it in the spirit you perceived it to have been offered. On the other hand, if the pupil has, on previous encounters, proved to be devious and calculating and he or she suddenly acts in a warm and friendly way, then you are likely to be suspicious and detect some underlying motive. The ability to understand underlying motives is a component of social competence (see Chapter 3)—competent, that is, if we read the situation correctly!

Before we can apply our existing schema to a person or situation, we have to assign them or it to a particular category. The process of social categorisation is less about accurately matching an individual's attributes to a category than it is an inference process. A category may be invoked when it is *sufficiently* related to a person rather than when it matches a person's attributes. This means that when encountering another person, we rely on a vast range of categories and can even generate categories on demand.

As soon as you assign someone to a particular category (e.g. 'disruptive pupil') based on particular attributes (probably male, perhaps not wearing school uniform, continuing talking when you entered the room, having their feet on the desk) you can apply your existing knowledge of pupils in this category (e.g. trouble-maker). Social psychologists are interested in the necessary and sufficient qualities that define the boundaries of a particular category. How do we decide an individual belongs to one category (e.g. 'disruptive pupil') and not another ('high spirited') or a set of behaviours to one situation (e.g. pupils talking whilst working) and not another? Whilst accurate determination of categories might be possible in mathematics and science, it is less so in the social world. Here people and situations are categorised by their membership of 'fuzzy sets' (Fiske and

Taylor, 1991), so it is sometimes not always clear that someone belongs to a particular category, nor which attributes are being attended to by the perceiver.

> Think of a pupil you consider disruptive. What behaviour led you to place him or her in that category (for example, he or she answers back) and how does he or she differ from other pupils who might answer back but do not belong to that category? An example might be the pupil who is very good at their academic work but who often behaves in a way that, were he/she not so academically talented, would be considered disruptive.

Social perception leads us to decide that some group members are more typical than others and that there is a prototypical member, around which the group is centred. The prototype is generated from a number of examples. Think of the range of pupils you might identify as disruptive. How are they similar and how do they differ? When someone new is encountered, they are classified on the basis of their similarity to the prototype for that group (e.g. bright or dull, naughty or nice). What is encoded may be altered to fit existing elements in memory. However, given that the prototype is the *central tendency,* it follows that there will be individuals at both extremes of typicality and atypicality who also 'belong' to that category. So, a category may range from the gifted but naughty pupil to the pupil with learning difficulties who is well-behaved. Categories are believed to be organised hierarchically and have different levels of abstraction (Cantor and Mischel, 1979).

   A pupil could be categorised as disruptive in class (least abstract) but also be seen as belonging to a larger category of pupils who misbehave. This larger group might include pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties who, in turn, may be assigned to an even bigger group of young people who misbehave, which could include young offenders. As the level of abstraction increases, these smaller categories are eventually subsumed by the category 'all children and young people'. In encounters with pupils, we are likely to draw out category-consistent information and miss that which does not fit the prototype. Furthermore, along with allocation to a social category, we like to think we can predict other people's behaviour even when, strictly speaking, people rarely do the same thing twice. Behaviour is subject to constant change as people adapt to the changing world around them, so it is important that we modify our social perceptions in line with changes to the behaviour of others. Those of you

with children of your own will recognise the difficulties we sometimes have adjusting our perceptions as they move from child to teenager to adult. In the classroom, social perception is multifaceted. Teacher perceives pupil, pupil perceives teacher, teacher perceives how the pupils perceive him/her and the pupils perceive how the teacher perceives them. This perception of perceptions, referred to as 'metaperception', influences the value each party places on the other.

If a pupil feels a teacher did not pay sufficient attention to him or her and believes that this is because the teacher does not like him or her, the pupil may reciprocate, showing disinterest in the teacher. The teacher, on the other hand, may merely have been preoccupied with something else, but interprets the pupil's behaviour as disinterest in the subject. This misinterpretation of one another does not nurture a good working relationship. How they came to these conclusions about each other is clearly of interest. How the pupil perceives the teacher perceives him or her, will influence how the pupil then responds to a whole range of teacher behaviour and vice versa. This perception of one another does not usually take place without other input. Each party will have a prior expectation and/or knowledge of the other. There is a likely imbalance in how much information each will have access to. The teacher is likely to have access to more official information about the background of a pupil than a pupil will have about their teacher. Knowledge of teachers is often in the form of myth and rumour: 'I wouldn't get on the wrong side of Mr Sharp if I were you, he'll knock your head off (not that he ever has of course)' or 'Miss Curtain is a right dork'. Myth, rumour and folklore about teachers are the stuff of school playgrounds and provide much information for the teacher schema that pupils carry.

Where the two sets of perceptions fail to synchronise or are distorted, there is potential to undermine the relationship. The ability to read what others are likely to be thinking about us is a complex socio-cognitive skill and has a developmental dimension. Younger and older pupils differ in the way they understand and interpret the behaviour of others.

In addition to categorisation, social perception is concerned with: how we perceive other aspects of human attributes and interpret emotions; deception in others; group stereotyping; as well as impression formation and causal attribution. It is to the latter two areas we now turn.

Forming impressions of others

The processes involved in forming impressions about others, whether in a bar in Ibiza or a classroom in Manchester, are remarkably similar. These

impressions are based on a combination of our wider (distal) knowledge of people and their membership of a particular 'category' alongside the individual knowledge we have about them and the immediate situation (proximal).

So how does this operate in practice? Here's how one pupil determined the personality of her new teacher before and after meeting her:

> I once heard Miss (Smith) shouting when I was about seven, when I had to go and get something for Mr Astley. She looked very strict and I could see she had a 'grumpy' face like this [pulls a face]. She sounded really angry and I said to Kylie that I didn't fancy going into her class, because I thought she was bossy and wouldn't let us talk to each other. But now I am in her class I really like it, she's really funny and she helps me and lets me sit with Kylie. But she can be bossy with some of the boys in our class, if they are showing off (Tina, Year 5).

So, how did Tina form initial impressions and decide how to behave towards her new teacher? Did she attend to different attributes, weighing up the potential value of each before deciding? Or did she view the teacher as a whole, assigning her to the nearest reference group with which she was familiar and ignoring some of the details—'papering over the cracks', as it were? Does the nature of the encounter or the context make a difference? Tina's early data came from a rapid assessment, based on hearing Miss Smith shouting, at which time she categorised this teacher negatively. Later, having spent time observing Miss Smith, her perceptions changed and she added new, more positive data to her theory about the teacher. Was the initial emphasis on understanding her teacher or was it self-serving?

There are two broad approaches to the impression formation process:

- theory driven (or inferential)
- data driven (evaluative).

Supporters of the theory-driven approach (Asch, 1946; Heider, 1958) argue that we do not experience other people as a sum or average of their traits or 'ingredients', but rather as a complete psychological unit, fitting them into an underlying theme or theory. We combine the various components of a person's make-up to produce an overall impression. In a famous series of experiments, Asch showed how people could infer a whole

Table 2.1 Implying personality from limited information

a	Imaginary person	
	A	B
Adjectives used to describe two imaginary people	Intelligent	Intelligent
	Industrious	Industrious
	Skilful	Skilful
	Determined	Determined
	Warm	Cold
	Practical	Practical
	Cautious	Cautious
b	Ratings of additional descriptors	
Additional descriptors	Person A 'Warm' (%)	Person B 'Cold' (%)
Generous	91	8
Wise	65	25
Happy	90	34
Good natured	94	17
Humorous	77	13
Sociable	91	38
Popular	84	28
Humane	86	31
Altruistic	69	31
Imaginative	51	19

Notes
Table 2.1a shows the initial information given to two separate groups of people. Each received seven adjectives that described an imaginary person, exactly the same, except for the words 'warm' and 'cold'.
Table 2.1b shows a sample of the ratings made by the two groups of further characteristics, which show clear differences, despite the fact that assessment by the two groups was based on minimal information.

range of traits about a non-existent person, based on limited information about specific traits. In one experiment, he gave two groups of people two almost identical lists of seven words (see Table 2.1a) the only   difference between the two lists was that one contained the word 'warm' and the other the word 'cold'. He then gave each group a second, longer list of additional qualities and asked them to identify further traits to describe this imaginary person. Some of the results are shown in Table 2.1b. Asch argued that the presence of the words 'warm' and 'cold' had disproportionate effects on the overall impression that the groups formed, since they were central traits. It is important to note that the two people 'described' by these seven words did not in fact exist; despite this, the groups were able to differentiate readily between them.

Supporters of the structural, or data-driven approach posit the perceiver as attending to individual characteristics of a person (intelligent, industrious, cold) and evaluating these qualities individually in terms of their positive and negative qualities (Anderson, 1981). These individual qualities are differentially weighted and the resultant average determines the impression formed. Thus, whilst being intelligent is positive, being cold is strongly negative, resulting in a negative evaluation.

More recent research has suggested that, on their own, neither of these two models offers a satisfactory explanation of how we form impressions. This resulted in combination models, in which theory-driven or data-driven models are shown to operate under different conditions depending on the decision made by the perceiver (Brewer, 1988; Fiske and Neuberg, 1990). In these models, initial impressions are theory-driven, or formed using pre-existing schema about categories of people. Person-based (data-driven) impressions are only activated if the target cannot be fitted into an existing category or are of interest or personal relevance to the perceiver. Whether or not you change that initial impression depends on whether or not you move on to using data-driven information (as Tina did on page 45).

In addition to expecting disruptive pupils to have particular traits, you are also likely to have expectations about how such pupils are likely to look, dress, the sorts of things they are likely to say, their attitude to school and life in general. So, how and when does the second model come into play? As mentioned previously, you will only resort to identifying personal qualities if the individual or group is of interest or importance to you and/ or you are motivated to do so.

Having expected a problematic group you are more likely to go into your first lesson intent on keeping a lid on things and not letting the group take control. This may involve: being more formal than informal; your concerns making you smile less; and being more sensitive to off-task behaviour or potential disruption in order to maintain control. Your attention is more likely to be biased towards picking up on negative behaviour (in a sense, justifiably) but your actions may, in fact, encourage it.

In the same way pupils have theories about teachers. Tina had categorised her future teacher as strict and quite frightening. Having spent time with Miss Smith and initially treating her cautiously, she became aware of other qualities which she admired in teachers. Miss Smith was funny, helpful and supportive but not prepared to put up with mis-behaviour. These characteristics are not uncommon among children's

descriptions of their preferred 'teacher type'—firm, fair, with a sense of humour.

In sum, research suggests that impression formation is a two-fold process. The first is 'automatic'—putting someone into an appropriate social category and, if you then have no further involvement, leaving them there, with all the inferred qualities—positive and/or negative—attached to that category. The second involves taking on board individuating information, of having time to engage in learning about a person's individual characteristics and gaining understanding of why they behave the way they do. The problem for many teachers is how to spend quality time with individual pupils whilst teaching a class of more than thirty pupils? If this is the case, then how do you set about revising your opinions of individuals?

Explaining the causes of behaviour

Causal attribution is an everyday, normal activity carried out by everyone. Heider (1958), the reputed father of attribution theory, suggested people act like naïve scientists forming hypotheses about what or who causes things to happen in their world, to help make life predictable. Attribution theory is concerned with the answers to three questions:

- what are the perceived causes of an event?
- what information influenced this causal inference?
- what are the consequences of ascribing these causes?

An example will help to explain. Imagine you are walking through the school grounds and are hit on the back of the head with a conker. You are likely to want to find out who or what is responsible. You turn round and see a group of pupils, who you had recently reprimanded for misbehaving in class, standing under a conker tree, with handfuls of conkers and looking sheepish. You might consider the likely cause to be one of this group, based on the evidence described above. The consequence might be that you further reprimand them. If, however, you turned round saw noone, then heard a 'meow', looked up and saw a stranded cat in the conker tree above your head, struggling to balance and knocking leaves off in the process, you might infer a different cause and, hence, react differently. Neither example may, in fact, be the real cause—but it is the perceived cause that really matters in people's understanding of causality.

According to attribution theorists, people seek to identify general causal principles which they use to predict the future, control events and guide their

own behaviour (Fosterling and Rudolph, 1988). People have causal explanations for their own behaviour (intra-personal attributions), for other people's behaviour (interpersonal attributions), and others are shared with groups (inter-group attributions). An example of this last attribution might be the shared understanding among a group of teachers in a particular school as to why pupils misbehave in class. Whilst there may appear to be a shared understanding when with the group, or even at the interpersonal level, individual teachers may not personally hold that view but do so in the group situation.

There are a number of attribution theories which, although different, share a number of qualities. As to deciding which one is right, it really depends on the conditions and the situation being analysed. As Fiske and Taylor put it:

> all of them have some validity, but under different circumstances and for different phenomena. The theories cannot be pitted against each other in the usual scientific manner. Rather, each outlines a series of processes that can be used to infer attributions if the appropriate circumstances are present…
>
> (1991:40)

Two prominent contributions to our understanding of how people make inferences about other people's attributes and behaviour were, first, Jones and Davis's (1965) correspondent inference model and Kelley's two interpretations—causal schemas and the covariation model (1967). The latter will be used to demonstrate the relevance of attribution theory to the teacher expectancy-confirmation cycle. Kelley argued that our knowledge of the social world is often limited and ambiguous. Whilst, under normal circumstances, we have sufficient information to enable us to cope, there are other times when we have difficulty doing so. For example, if we experience an assault on our 'self' (knowledge, social, esteem, and so on) or instances where our coping levels are exceeded, or where information is ambiguous, we are likely to engage in causal analysis, that is, we will search for an explanation for our predicament. If faced with a group of pupils who are proving more difficult to manage than we have experienced in the past, we are likely to look for a causal explanation: 'Am I not up to the job?' 'Are these pupils so disturbed that no-one could manage them?' 'Am I being expected to teach children with extreme behaviour difficulties with insufficient resources?'

Clearly, the answers to these different possible explanations call for different responses. If I feel I am no longer up to the job, then I could get

another job or go on a training course to develop my behaviour management skills. If I consider the pupils to be disturbed, I could ask for assessment and/or support from other professionals. If I consider the lack of resources unacceptable, I could ask for more support. This all sounds very logical and based on common sense—hence, why Heider referred to it as 'common sense psychology'. However, it has been shown that we make errors in some of our causal explanations.

Three types of attribution errors have been identified.

- The first is a tendency—notably in Western society—to overof behaviour. In other words, if a pupil misbehaves, we are more likely emphasise personality, as opposed to situational attributes, as causes to blame him or her than the situation.
- Second, in interpersonal situations, there tends to be a difference between how the person in a situation explains the causes, compared with how an observer sees things. A teacher having difficulty managing a pupil is more likely to blame the situation or the pupil for what is happening, whereas an observer is more likely to blame the teacher for not being in control.
- Third, egocentric attributions refer to the tendency to attribute successes to ourselves and failures to others. If an event at school was heralded a great success, we are likely to claim credit, whereas if it was a flop, we are more likely to blame others.

Attributing causality in these three ways serves to protect an individual's self-worth. Even though they may be incorrect, the perception that we can justify our behaviour to ourselves and others by generating 'plausible' explanations or excuses is an important coping mechanism. The effects of doing so on others might not be so useful. In his search to identify what information people use to arrive at causal explanations, Kelley developed two models: causal schema and covariation. Which one a perceiver uses to explain events depends on the amount of information available. As most teachers have access to information about pupils and see them usually more than once, I will concentrate on his covariation model.

In this model, the perceiver has access to information about the behaviour and intent of others from multiple events and can perceive the covariation of possible causes with what they are observing. Covariance refers to two events happening together. If a class is only badly behaved whenever a particular pupil is present, then there is a high covariance. The disruptive behaviour may be attributed to his influence. If a class is sometimes badly behaved when he is present and sometimes when he is

not, there is a low covariance. He may not be the sole reason for the disruption. Kelley (1967) reasoned that, to conclude a causal explanation for someone's behaviour, people measure covariation across three dimensions:

distinctiveness—does the behaviour only occur when this pupil is present but does not when he is absent?
consistency—has this behaviour occurred when I have taught them in the past?
consensus—do other teachers have the same problem when he is present?

Where high distinctiveness, high consistency and high consensus occur together, people are able to make attributions with confidence. Of the three dimensions, consistency is the most preferred dimension for determining causality. Causation would be directed to a pupil if, whenever he is present in class, with any teacher, there is a problem which does not happen in his absence. If, on the other hand, the pupil was only problematic when a particular teacher was teaching the class and this had happened before with the same teacher, but not with other teachers, you are likely to come to a different conclusion! Table 2.2 shows three alternative causal explanations resulting from different assessments of the three variables.

The casual analyses suggest the attribution of blame to one of three explanations—the pupil, the teacher or the environment (problems at home or Lee being bullied, for example). Whichever explanation is selected will result in different consequences. If Lee is seen as being the cause, then Mrs Black is likely to feel less inclined to want to teach him, since she expects the same behaviour in the future. If she is seen as the problem, then a different set of responses are required—for example, attending a behaviour management course, mentoring, in class support, different responsibilities. If the situation is seen as the cause, Mrs Black may decide to talk to Lee and ask him if there is anything bothering him.

The above description may imply that causal attribution is done in a rational, logical and just way when, in fact, that is not always the case. The self-serving bias and tendency to attribute causes to personality rather than situations discussed above (p. 50) means Mrs Black is *less* likely to attribute responsibility to herself.

Attributing causality may involve deliberate and time consuming logical analyses, or may result from rapid cognitive processing to make a quick decision about what is happening and how you should react. If causality is regularly attributed in a particular direction, it can reach a point where it is

Table 2.2 Explanations for Lee's misbehaviour

Distinctiveness	Consistency	Consensus	Likely attribution
Low Lee is cheeky to most teachers.	**High** Lee is always cheeky to Mrs Black.	**Low** Other pupils are not cheeky to Mrs Black.	It is Lee's fault.
High Lee is not usually cheeky to teachers.	**High** Lee is always cheeky to Mrs Black.	**High** Other pupils are cheeky to Mrs Black.	It is Mrs Black's fault.
High Lee is not usually cheeky to teachers.	**Low** Lee has not been cheeky to Mrs Black before.	**Low** Other pupils are not cheeky to Mrs Black.	There is something different about the situation.

Notes

The table shows three possible causal explanations in answer to the question—Why is Lee being cheeky to Mrs Black?

In Row 1 the problem appears to be with Lee since he is consistently cheeky to most teachers, including Mrs Black, but other pupils are not.

In Row 2 the problem appears to be with Mrs Black, since Lee is not usually cheeky to other teachers but is to Mrs Black, as are most other pupils.

In Row 3 the problem appears to be something beyond the two individuals since Lee is not usually cheeky to any teacher, including Mrs Black, and neither are any other pupils.

done automatically or scripted, becoming difficult to break. Where the perceived cause has been attributed incorrectly, it may continue unchallenged.

Getting the message across: mediating expectations

Forming an impression (false or otherwise), categorising and attributing your pupils' behaviour as disruptive does not mean you will necessarily communicate those thoughts to pupils and, even if you do, that they will take them on board and fulfil your expectations. In order for this to happen, you need to mediate them and, further, for the pupil to recognise, encode and accept the messages.

Expectations are mediated in a variety of ways, including:

- verbal (supportive, encouraging comments versus non-supportive, discouraging comments);
- nonverbal (posture, gesture, social distance, eye contact);
- organisational (ranging from: being placed in particular ability groups which limits/empowers access to particular learning opportunities, to where pupils are seated in relation to teacher and peers, or whether they have access to equipment and particular areas of the school).

Again, I will repeat one of my opening comments: I do not believe any teacher would intentionally make their pupils fail but, given the evidence that teachers treat pupils in quantitatively and qualitatively different ways, and that these are related to social and academic outcomes, it is essential to ask why and how it happens.

In the search to identify which pupil features most influence teachers' expectations, a number of single variables have been investigated with varying and sometimes surprising results. Stereotypical expectations of pupils were found to have some influence. While sex differences proved insignificant, race and physical attractiveness were shown to have modest influences (Gage and Berliner, 1988). The largest influences were found in respect of pupils' past performance and social class (Darley and Gross, 1983).

If working-class boys are expected to be more disruptive than any other pupil, then any information the teacher takes in, from interactions with this group, will be sifted through this belief. The level of influence such a belief might have will depend on how his or her impressions are organised.

Harris and Rosenthal (1986), in their meta-analysis of over 400 studies of teacher expectancy, identified four teacher factors which were central to,

and most influential in, the mediation of expectancies and resultant pupil behaviour. These factors were: climate, input, output and feedback—#8212;with climate as the most influential and feedback the least. The following examples relate to the treatment of pupils for whom a teacher has high expectations.

- climate (and emotional support), communication style and warmth towards pupils, non-verbal messages (especially eye contact);
- input—the amount and level of difficulty of material, plus time and attention given;
- output—frequency of questions and interactions initiated by pupils, opportunities to perform and learn more difficult material;
- feedback—clarity and quality of information given to pupils about their performance; type and amount of praise; acceptance of pupils' ideas.

A number of factors have been identified as being most likely to facilitate the expectancy-confirmation cycle (see Snyder, 1992, for a review). These factors include those attributable to the perceiver (teacher), to the target (pupil) and a third group related to situational variables (school).

- Teachers whose goals include getting along in a friendly way with their pupils and who are motivated to develop an accurate, data-driven view of their pupils, are less likely to produce self-fulfilling prophecies than those who are motivated to arrive at a stable and predictable view of their pupils.
- Pupils who are uncertain of their self-worth, or who have unclear self-perceptions regarding their ability and their self-efficacy are more susceptible to social influences, including teachers' self-fulfilling prophecies. Where a pupil's self-perceptions are clear, they are more likely to convince others to view them as positively as they view themselves. Furthermore, if the motivational goals of the pupil can be facilitated by the teacher (for example, help with a project, a good mark) then they are more likely to conform to the teacher's expectations.
- Pupils moving into new situations (such as moving to a new school, or a transition through school years) are more susceptible to the influences of teachers' expectations as they attempt to develop a social identity, cope with their new surroundings, goals and demands, and so are likely to be less clear and confident in their self-perceptions. The timing of the mediation of expectancy effects is also an important factor. Experiments have shown that, where a false expectancy has been introduced in the early stages of a teacher forming impressions about

pupils, expectancy effects were found more often. When similar experiments were carried out after the teachers' impressions had crystallised, the effects were not found as regularly, reaffirming our earlier discussion about the impression-formation process (p. 45).

- Finally, effects seldom occur separately in social contexts (in the classroom, for example) since it is the cumulative effects, or their interaction with each other, which usually results in expectancy effects. Cumulative effects can include: cognitive (learning, self-efficacy), social (peer group relations), emotional (motivational style, joy, depression) and behavioural (disruptive versus conforming behaviour) factors.

Ways to avoid sending the wrong messages

There are a number of ways in which teachers can help to avoid negative expectancy effects.

- Actively monitor the type, amount and quality of interactions (questions, feedback) to try to ensure equal treatment of pupils.
- Avoid using disruptive pupils as messengers or monitors; don't sit them at the back of the room or praise them for marginal or below average performance.
- Use the same sanctions for all pupils—whatever their ability.
- Contact parents of disruptive pupils for academic reasons, not just behavioural ones.
- Monitor your explanations of the causes of disruption with different pupils and classes.
- Examine the *actual,* not perceived, behaviour of pupils, especially those who have been difficult in the past, to make sure your impressions are accurate.
- Focus on learning strategies, not just outcomes.
- Refrain from grouping, which conveys ability as the sole source of success.
- Determine pupils' perspectives on learning and behaviour.
- Promote cooperation over competition.
- Teach pupils realistic goal setting.

Suggested further reading

Rogers, C.G. (1982) *A Social Psychology of Schooling: The Expectancy Effect.* London: Routledge Kegan Paul.

Chapter 3
Professional social skills
Controlling social communication

When people say that someone is 'a born teacher' what do they mean and what are the implications for those teachers who are not? No-one is born with knowledge of the National Curriculum or of administration skills. However, some people are extremely effective in communicating and influencing others, in some cases from an early age. Such individuals are usually socially active and find it easy to make and keep friends, can communicate effectively, listen to others, negotiate, help resolve conflicts, manipulate the behaviour of others and are able to read social situations quickly and accurately. Put simply, they are socially intelligent or socially competent—but what are the characteristics of social competence and are they inherited or learned? Like most areas of social science, there are a number of competing and often conflicting explanations, many of which accept that social competence is a combination of inherited and learned behaviour.

Social competence

Greenspan (1981) offered a model of personal competence, which included physical, intellectual and emotional dimensions. He subdivided intellectual competence into three categories: conceptual, practical and social intelligences. Conceptual intelligence includes the ability to solve problems (such as mathematical puzzles); practical intelligence includes skills (such as wiring a plug) and social intelligence (such as understanding and communicating with others). His model also offers a framework for understanding social competence which, he argues, comprises of three components:

- temperament,
- character,
- social intelligence.

Of the three, character and temperament are identifiable in newborns. They are the most stable and are the hardest to change. Some babies, for instance, are very socially active. They respond positively to the presence of others and enjoy interacting with them. Others are less gregarious, preferring the company of one or two familiar faces. The third component, social intelligence, tends to develop over time. It is more malleable and responsive to cultural and other environmental influences. What is considered socially acceptable in one culture is considered offensive in others. For instance, turning your backside towards someone and slapping it is considered offensive in some parts of the world. In England, it is used to demonstrate value for money at a well-known supermarket! This malleability is a positive feature, as it means that where an individual has difficulties or is ineffective, change is possible—people can be taught alternative strategies. However, change can be difficult because it is not always easy to monitor exactly how we are behaving, since we cannot see ourselves in action, relying instead on our interpretation of the feedback we receive from others to measure our effectiveness.

It is often assumed that those choosing to become teachers will enjoy communicating with others and be effective doing so. Given the fundamental requirement of having good people skills, one might expect significant parts of teachers' training to be spent developing them, particularly as they represent the 'bread and butter' of the job (Argyle, 1981). In practice, few, if any, courses provide structured developmental programmes for these essential skills, reinforcing the belief that good teachers are born, not made.

However, we are continually reminded of the problems that some teachers face on a daily basis when attempting to manage pupils. Managing pupils' behaviour requires competence in complex interpersonal skills including negotiation, conflict resolution, questioning and assertiveness. The fact that many teachers achieve this, despite not receiving specific training, is praiseworthy but needs to be considered alongside the high levels of reported stress and numbers leaving the pro fession prematurely—because of difficulties in coping (Travers and Cooper, 1996).

Being socially competent requires a large repertoire of social skills, including the ability to read and interpret social cues and being able to respond appropriately to particular contexts. However, social encounters can be affected negatively by emotions, which can undermine social competence. An example will help to qualify this.

Jasmin, a bright, young and newly qualified teacher is meeting her new class for the first time. She is well prepared for her lesson, in terms of having a detailed lesson plan, considered classroom layout, appropriate

resources and background information on the pupils. She has thought about where to stand in the classroom to establish authority, how to stand and what to say. However, when she asks for quiet the pupils seem slow to respond, then some start laughing. Just then the head appears and asks if everything is OK. Jasmin says, 'Yes, thanks'—and the pupils laugh again. She smiles to the head, trying to suggest that she is in control. The situation makes her feel uncomfortable. She feels hot. Her mouth feels dry and she has butterflies in her stomach. She is not sure why at this stage. Everything *ought* to be all right; after all, when she was on professional placement she had coped extremely well. However, she is now feeling stressed, anxious, uncertain and unhappy that things are not going the way they should.

Jasmin's feelings (anxiety, guilt) represent a reaction to the conflict between what she thinks 'must', 'should' or 'ought' to be happening in order for her to be considered a competent teacher and what she perceives is actually happening. Being preoccupied with what 'ought' or 'must' is irrational and can result in strong emotional reactions and is the subject of cognitive behavioural theorists (Ellis and Dryden, 1987; Meichenbaum, 1977). These theories are discussed in more detail in Chapter 8.

Feeling anxious results in a preoccupation with the self and survival. Some of the symptoms result in our experiencing one of the three 'Fs' fight, flight or freeze. What Jasmin is thinking and feeling will be communicated through her behaviour. These behaviours include facial expression, eye contact, body posture, gesture, voice (pitch, speed and frequency), paralanguage, moving to a defensible space, hanging on to something solid, increasing social distance, attempting to get out of the 'spotlight'. Facial expression is likely to signal fear by being more tense than normal, making it difficult to smile. The positioning of her eyebrows and mouth are also likely to signal to the pupils that she is frightened. Eye contact becomes less likely. Body posture and gesture become protective and 'closed', rather than open and confident. Tension in the muscles and having a dry mouth may raise the pitch of the voice, making it sound 'squeaky'. She may retreat to a safer position such as moving away from the group or moving behind her desk—a physical barrier, again signalling fear. Finally, the need to 'get out of the spotlight' often results in a tendency not to take time to explain what is expected of the class/individual pupil, instead wanting them 'just to get on with it'. Unfortunately, the hurried instructions mean that some pupils don't know what is expected of them, so do nothing. Those that do try to participate, by asking what they are supposed to be doing, may be interpreted by the teacher as not having paid attention. The pupils become increasingly aware

that the signals seem wrong, and will often respond negatively, exacerbating the teacher's anxiety and leading to further ineffective messages, perpetuating the cycle.

Social interaction is self-regulated by ongoing assessment, comparison, verification and discrepancy management. An individual behaves in particular ways in order to elicit responses from others, which confirm that they think he is the person he wants them to think he is. We are attracted to people who confirm what we believe about ourselves and avoid, or are less receptive to, those who do not (Swann *et al.,* 1989). People use feedback to monitor if the way they see themselves matches how they believe other people see them.

Assess your feedback to pupils by videotaping some lessons and observe:

- who you allow to ask most questions and the quality of your responses to them;
- what you say and how you say it;
- whether or not you smile;
- what posture and gestures you use;
- the amount of 'banter' (humorous chat) you engage in with pupils;
- who these pupils were and under what circumstances they were being assessed.

Banter is, for many teachers, a valuable part of interacting with pupils, but some pupils are more restricted in what they are allowed to say. The level of tolerance is usually related to a teacher's perceptions of a pupil's ability to know where to draw the line. Pupils are aware of this, especially when a teacher's authority is not perceived to be fair. As one Year 4 pupil informed me: 'She always tells me off when I do something wrong but never says anything to James and he is always messing about. It's not fair' (Carl).

A central theme of this book is self-awareness and self-regulation through feedback loops and how we are not always consciously aware of all the messages that we transmit. Whilst you may think you are interacting with all the group members equally, this is often not the case.

The structure of social skills

Social skills refer to those behaviours used in social encounters; the term is often used interchangeably, albeit inaccurately, with social competence, social adequacy and sometimes 'assertiveness'. Social skills include a wide range of behaviours, ranging from simple micro skills (e.g. eye contact) to the more complex (e.g. interview skills) and fall into two main categories:

- verbal communication (VC);
- non-verbal communication (NVC).

Verbal communication includes speaking clearly at the appropriate volume and using appropriate language and paralanguage—non-verbal communication includes everything else. However, exactly what is included under the heading of NVC is not always clear. Given that, essentially, non-verbal behaviour can include everything except words, there are endless possibilities. Apart from obvious behaviours, such as eye contact, posture and gesture, they can also include smell, taste, touch, dress, choice of setting and so on. Many social psychologists (such as Argyle, 1975) have focused on more obvious aspects of bodily communication for their frame of reference. It is also widely acknowledged that nonverbal behaviours include both biologically determined characteristics (physical attractiveness, for example) and socially constructed and rule governed behaviours (such as standing up at assemblies). Failure to observe, or not understanding, these rules draws (often unwanted) attention, since communication is hampered.

Whilst we are usually aware of what we say, the same is not always the case with NVC. In other words, our mouths say one thing whilst our bodies communicate, or are interpreted as communicating, something else —sometimes despite our efforts to avoid doing so. Non-verbal communication is not always intended in the manner in which the receiver interprets it. Pupils in your class may be paying attention, but cannot control a stray yawn which you may interpret as being bored and respond with, Try and stay awake Holly' which may be treated as a joke or may be resented and stimulate a cycle of negative behaviour between you and the pupil.

Emotions can interfere with NVCs, leading to conflicting messages. For example, a teacher who retreats from an argumentative or aggressive pupil to a position behind his or her desk, and then points and shouts at the pupil from this position, is in danger of escalating the situation. 'Hiding' behind the desk and increasing the social distance suggests fear, whilst finger pointing is an aggressive gesture often encouraging an aggressive response from the pupil. The increased social distance effectively draws in other pupils, distracting the teacher and providing the pupil with an audience.

On some occasions we can sense something is not quite right in a social interaction but do so non-consciously—you have a 'gut' feeling that something is amiss, but cannot put your finger on exactly what it is. This is usually because you are not continuously aware of all the cues you are perceiving. One simple example of such perception is that of (eye) pupil

size— #8212;experiments have demonstrated that when we are attracted to someone our pupils tend to dilate (Hess, 1972) and they become smaller when we are angry. It is unlikely, however, that we will be consciously aware of this-but you might be from now on!

Observing non-verbal behaviour

Rather than try to superimpose a universal set of principles on what is a very idiosyncratic process, the best starting point is to audit your own non-verbal behaviours and identify the areas for improvement. Two ways of doing this involve using a video camera or an observer. Feedback from observers who you feel comfortable with and whose opinion you respect is useful, but having them present in the classroom specifically for that purpose can generate different behaviour to normal. Asking other adults to interpret what you believed you were communicating is potentially problematic in itself. This is not to suggest that having a video camera in class is necessarily an easy alternative, since initially it will distract both you and the pupils. Video cameras can, however, be used over a sustained period (unlike observers), are more readily concealed and hence likely to capture a more natural record of what happened.

The main advantage is that sequences can be played over and over again, helping to identify who did what and how others reacted. When I have used this technique with teachers they are often surprised to find that they had not said what they thought they had said, that they were standing awkwardly, or used 'novel' gestures and projected other unintended nonverbal messages. Their voices sounded unfamiliar with accents and different pronunciation to what they had expected. Figure 3.1 gives examples of where information can be lost during transmission.

Plan one or two lessons or micro situations (such as introducing a topic or issuing instructions) and videotape them.

- Write down what you plan to say (but don't read it out aloud or it defeats the object).
- Compare what you had planned to say, thought you were saying and doing with what actually happened—you might be surprised!
- You might also test how much the pupils took in relative to your output.

People seldom deliberately monitor or practise verbal and non-verbal skills, assuming they go on naturally and that they are effective—unless they become 'painfully' aware that they are not working when, for
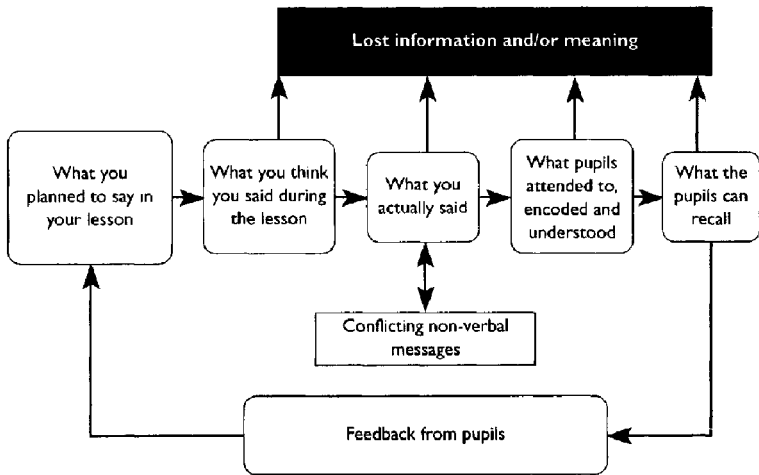
Figure 3.1 **Information loss in classroom communication.**

example, having difficulty managing a situation. Even then, they tend to look for an explanation that is self-serving (see Chapter 2) such as blaming the situation. Social psychologists argue that, in most social encounters, people rely on what is known as 'a script' which provides them with a typical sequence of events for familiar situations to aid understanding of a range of social phenomena (Lallgee *et al.,* 1992). Our scripts help us to plan our behaviour, since they specify the behavioural steps that lead to effective interpersonal relationships. Think of any social encounter, a single lesson for instance, which can simply be divided into a sequence of events, as shown in Table 3.1.

Over time these scripts become ritualised and assumptions are made about what is being said or done without conscious attention and so, even when we are not being effective, the ritual continues. Ritualised behaviour can lead to us being insensitive to change within individuals, groups, relationships and contexts, and can occur in any social institution. It is not uncommon for people in intimate relationships to speak of being taken for granted or their partners not making an effort to notice them or how they have changed. If this can occur with intimate relationships, it's hardly surprising that it should happen with pupils.

Professional social skills include a wide range of possibilities. Table 3.2 offers a few examples of some of those regularly used by teachers. I will not discuss all of them in detail but will highlight some, raise a number of questions and provide some pointers for personal development, including the issue of taking things for granted. When people talk of someone being

Table 3.1 A simplified social script for a lesson

Activity	Behaviour
Greeting	Saying hello
Establishing relationships	Getting attention, assessing receptiveness of pupils, outlining objectives, giving instructions
Completing the tasks	Pupils learning, monitoring their understanding and behaviour, controlling off-task behaviour
Re-establishing relationships	Regaining class attention, pulling group together, summarising the lesson
Parting	Saying goodbye

an effective negotiator, what does this mean, and how might it be quantified? Social effectiveness can be explained in terms of input, process or outcomes. Should the successful negotiator be defined in terms of specific social skills, such as confidence, being well-spoken, appropriate eye contact, posture and gesture; or, alternatively, on their ability to maintain the flow of the process, such as being able to keep people focused and ontask and maintaining the interest of their audience; or is it an individual's ability to get what they wanted? The three are not the same. An individual getting what they want may be an effective negotiator, but if done in an aggressive way is less socially desirable. Alternatively, someone may have the requisite social skills but have difficulty applying them in some contexts because they are anxious.

Two key components of social competence are social perception and social influence.

Social perception (see also Chapter 2) concerns how we form general impressions about people, perceive motivational intent and emotions in others, and explain *why* they behave the way they do. This is clearly central to everyday classroom interaction. Teachers, like everybody else, hold psychological models of what causes them to behave the way they do and the reasons for doing so—it helps us to make sense of our world. This influences how we *perceive,* categorise and predict how others are likely to behave, as well as how we should respond to them. Having perceived an individual, we go on to categorise them (social categorisation). Using categories allows us to make quick decisions about people but it can have negative or unintended consequences if we either misclassify someone and fail to modify our original assessment, or fail to recognise when an

Table 3.2 Some examples of professional social skills used by teachers

Listening skills
Assertiveness
Proposing ideas
Expressing dissatisfaction
Expressing emotion
Expressing authority
Supporting pupils having difficulty expressing themselves
Questioning
Disagreeing and criticising
Negotiating
Scaffolding pupils' ideas
Offering explanations, reasons and ways of coping with difficulties
Seeking clarification, explanation, information
Managing discussion
Encouraging the reluctant to speak
Tempering the over-enthusiastic
Interpreting pupils' ideas
Consolidating learning
Admitting difficulty
Managing aggression
Defending
Scanning the whole class whilst working with individuals
Deflecting challenges

individual has changed which, in a classroom, can result in deteriorating relationships.

Social influence concerns how we guide the behaviour and thinking of others. In the classroom this refers to establishing and maintaining authority, persuasion, negotiation and compliance.

Interpreting non-verbal behaviour

Social skills are arranged hierarchically in terms of their complexity (see Figure 3.2). The more complex behaviours (conveying authority or assertiveness) can be broken down into strategies (listening skills or questioning) or, further still, into basic skills (eye contact or posture). Whilst we don't usually communicate using single micro skills, they are nonetheless triggers for behaviour in others. A gaze or facial expression alone can be a powerful method of communicating thoughts and feelings about someone.

We usually look for combinations of NV signals (macro skills) rather than individual micro skills when communicating. However, it is possible to identify those micro skills that are preventing effective communication and learn alternatives to improve performance. The next section will

Examples

Conveying authority,
conveying enthusiasm,
assertiveness

Scanning, questioning,
listening,
resolving disputes

Eye contact, facial expression,
head position, posture, hand
signals, gestures, intonation

Complex skills

Strategies

Basic skills

Increasing complexity
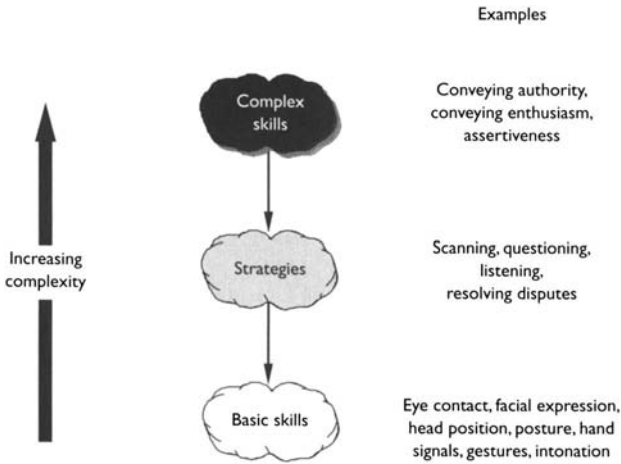
Figure 3.2 **A hierarchy of social skills used in teaching.**

examine a selection of social skills relevant to the classroom in more detail, focusing on:

- the face,
- eye contact,
- posture,
- gesture.

The face

The face is probably our most powerful non-verbal communicator and research has demonstrated that facial communication has deep evolutionary meanings (Harrison, 1976). It frames communication in developing infants (Vine, 1973) as well as in adults (Ekman and Friesen, 1975). Argyle suggests that the face conveys 'the main interpersonal relationships-dominant, submissive, threatening, sexual, parental, playful etc.' (1975: 212). Facial expression has also been linked to emotional feedback, not only in terms of the more familiar interpretation of the emotions of others by their expression, but also how we interpret our own emotional state. The idea that your expression can influence the way you feel (proprioceptive feedback), has a long history (James, 1884). More recently Laird (1974) and Ekman *et al.* (1983) found that holding a particular facial expression intensified an emotional experience. However,
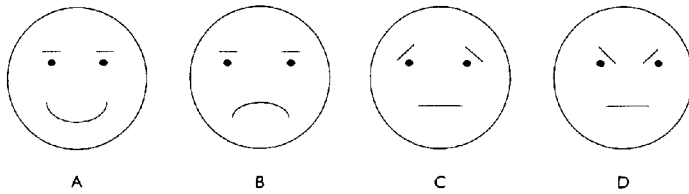
Figure 3.3 Facial code—simplified pictures which show how emotion is signalled and can be changed by the alteration of one simple feature. Whilst A looks happy and satisfied, B looks unhappy and worried merely by inverting the mouth. Picture C shares qualities with B (unhappy, worried) but additionally signals fear and anxiety. Picture D is a menacing expression, signalling anger and disapproval.

whether it is the facial expression per se that influences the emotional experience or whether it is the associated muscle tension or respiratory changes is questionable—it appears to do so in some circumstances and not others (Buck, 1988). Feedback from facial expression appears to contribute to emotional experience if, and only if, it complements an emotional state —it thus has a confirmatory role.

Interest in facial expressions led researchers (particularly those working with children) to develop a facial code (Ekman and Friesen, 1978), a simplistic pictorial representation of the layout and dynamics of the face (see Figure 3.3), which are quickly recognised and interpreted, dependent on the direction of the eyebrows, mouth and diameter of the eyes. They are used to indicate the main influences in making judgements about socio-emotional states.

Eye contact

Ask people what they understand by the term 'non-verbal communication' and most will make reference to eye contact. This is hardly surprising, given that almost 90 per cent of information passed to the brain comes from the eyes, with a further 9 per cent from the ears and the remainder from other sources (Pease, 1997).

Gaze and mutual gaze is another central component of interpersonal relationships. However, Argyle (1975) highlights that, whilst gaze is frequently engaged in by young children, it is less prominent among adolescents when young people become more self-conscious, often avoiding eye contact and gaze before returning to and maximising its use in adulthood— #8212;an observation of particular relevance to teachers.

In the classroom there are clear advantages for maximising gaze and mutual gaze between teachers and pupils. As repeated elsewhere, the principal objective in managing behaviour is to keep pupils focused on legitimate learning goals. Motivating pupils to pay attention is an obvious requisite to learning and Pease (1997) highlights the importance of matching the content of what you say to what you are displaying visually. Take, for example, a lesson in which you are using an overhead transparency and where pupils are required to observe its content whilst you are speaking. If the spoken content does not relate *directly* to the content of the visual aid, then less than 10 per cent of the information is likely to be absorbed by the pupils. In contrast, where the content of the overhead is directly related to the speech, then between 25–30 per cent is likely to be absorbed. Communication can be further enhanced, by using a 'pointer' to gain and hold control of pupils' gaze whilst talking through what is being highlighted. When you need to move attention from the slide to speech alone, take the pointer from the overhead and hold it on an imaginary line between the pupils' eyes and your own. This has the effect of drawing the pupils' attention to what you are saying, re-establishing eye contact and achieving a more concentrated communication of your message (ibid.).

Eyes are used primarily to see rather than transmit messages but, as Argyle points out, they transmit two types of information during social encounters. First, they indicate that you are prepared to receive information by showing that the lines of communication are open. Second, they demonstrate your interest in the other person or persons. The amount of time you spend looking at someone is one indicator of the degree to which you are 'interested' in them or what they have to say. There is also interplay between conscious and non-conscious activity in respect of eye contact. For instance, some people might make a conscious effort and practise looking people in the eyes but find that when a particular encounter takes place they look away, despite making a determined effort to maintain eye contact. For example, if you were planning an encounter with someone you know to be aggressive.

Eye contact acts as a measure of dominance or submissiveness and as an indicator of sincerity. People often assume (inaccurately) that liars tend to look away. When lying, they are 'shifty eyed', hence the saying, 'Look me in the eyes and say that!' In reality, experienced liars are more likely to look you in the eye for longer periods than someone telling the truth. Furthermore, and perhaps surprisingly, people (including teachers) are generally not very accurate at detecting liars (Zuckerman *et* al., 1981).

There are a number of references in everyday language to the power of eye contact in interpersonal relationships. For example, giving someone the 'evil eye', 'looking daggers', being 'gooey-eyed'. Most of these references are concerned with the size of an individual's pupils (whilst recognising the influence of eyebrow and eyelid position). Emotions such as excitement, anger or fear can be signalled through the size of an individual's pupils. When you are attracted to someone, your pupils dilate up to three times their normal size. In contrast, the pupils of someone who is angry or irritated will contract, hence the expression 'beady little eyes'. Detecting the size of someone's pupils is done without conscious awareness —you seldom walk around with a ruler measuring them!

The subtle nature of reading people's thoughts and feelings through their eyes was demonstrated through experiments involving expert card players. Researchers found that experts won fewer games when their opponents wore sunglasses than when they could see their eyes or pupil signals. Whilst these signals are monitored subconsciously, it is possible to influence the process consciously. Chinese and Arab traders for example, were known to spend time studying the pupils of their buyers when negotiating prices, identifying their customers' level of interest in different products. Some military and law enforcement agencies use low peaked hats and dark or reflective sunglasses to hide the eyes and prevent messages being transmitted by them. Holding a steady gaze with an individual can be very difficult, since it intensifies communication and can prove uncomfortable and intimidating.

Teachers wishing to improve their ability to influence pupil behaviour will benefit from knowing how to use and develop gaze to improve their interpersonal skills. Practising a neutral gaze with a friend or colleague is one way of developing this skill. See how long you can hold it for. Deciding where to look to maximise intended effects when talking to a pupil depends on the nature of the encounter: whether it is a formal or informal meeting, how well you know the pupil, along with their age, sex and ethnicity.

Eye movement

There is evidence to demonstrate that we tend to look more often and for longer periods at people we find 'attractive'. If the recipient of our gaze registers this signal, they are likely to reciprocate positively (assuming they find us attractive, too). In contrast, and unfortunately, the anxious, timid or embarrassed individual is less likely to engage in mutual gaze and tends to blink more when anxious (Argyle, 1975)—and so are perceived as 'shifty' and therefore not to be trusted.
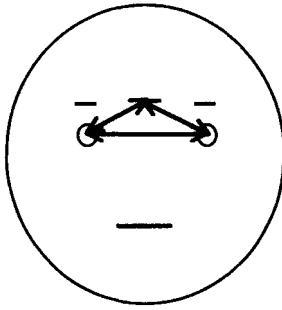
Figure 3.4 **The business gaze.**
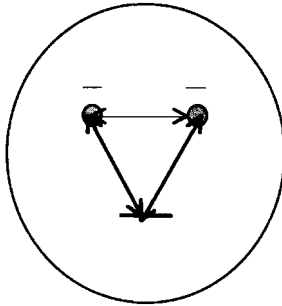
Figure 3.5 **The social gaze.**

Pease (1997) suggests consciously developing different gaze patterns to suit specific types of social interaction. He identifies three distinct gaze patterns: business, social and intimate. The first two are relevant for teacher-pupil interaction.

He recommends the business gaze (see Figure 3.4) for more serious encounters—for letting people know that you mean business.

Here, focus is maintained on an imaginary triangle, the base of which is a horizontal line joining the two pupils and the peak is the centre point between the eyebrows. Pease argues that, provided an individual's gaze does not drop below eye level, you can maintain control of the interaction. This would be particularly suitable when discussing a serious topic with a pupil.

The second type, the 'social gaze', is used for more informal encounters. Here the focus of the gazer moves in a downward triangle, from the eyes to the mouth (see Figure 3.5).

The third type—the intimate gaze—extends the downward gaze from the eyes to the chest and beyond, and is not suitable for encounters with pupils.

Posture

Body posture transmits a whole range of messages—both intended and unintended—and is usually related to the type of activity being pursued. According to Argyle (1975) there are three key human postures—standing; sitting, squatting and kneeling; and lying. Within each category are a series of sub-categories, each with its own combinations of arm and leg positions as well as body angles. These combinations can indicate authority, submissiveness or neutrality. Clearly, in the classroom, a teacher is concerned with demonstrating authority, so awareness of stance and positioning of the arms and legs is important if you wish to avoid unwittingly undermining your authority.

Children are able to interpret the meaningfulness of posture from an early age. It is also important to note that not all postures are used or, where they are used, postures do not necessarily mean the same in different cultures. A useful way of gaining insight into what your pupils perceive and infer from posture and other social cues can be done by using social skills materials (e.g. Spence, 1979) which include photographs from which they identify what is being communicated.

Standing with your arms folded and legs crossed is generally seen as a defensive position, usually observed in first encounters when people are unsure of one another. In contrast, the open handed gesture coupled with uncrossed legs suggests being relaxed. Standing when addressing the class is the norm and communicates your authority to the whole class. However, when working with pupils at their desks, standing and towering above them whilst trying to help can be off-putting to some pupils. Squatting or sitting to share the same head and eye level is a means of reassuring pupils that you are attending to what they have to say and this is less intimidating and more motivating (Van Werkhoven, 1990). Sitting or lying on tables or equipment whilst you teach may seem to be projecting a more relaxed persona, but can be problematic if pupils model the behaviour.

Knowing the effect of particular postures and gestures, and deciding to apply them, does not necessarily mean you will do so when under pressure, with emotions running high—when they are most needed. Practising and overlearning them (in front of a mirror, for instance), when there is no pressure, is a means of being proactive in using body language to its best advantage.

Gesture

People seldom keep their hands still when talking (try it!), and there appear to be two distinct types of hand movement. The first, referred to as 'self-stimulation', includes scratching, fiddling, rubbing the hands, nose and ears. Freedman and Hoffman (1967) called these body-focused movements. Observers often interpret such fumbling or 'preening' movements as indicators of stress or anxiety. In class, pupils are often quick to identify these signs: 'Miss starts rubbing her fingers when she is annoyed' (Gale, Year 5);'…and if James starts being naughty Miss folds her arms…you can tell she doesn't like him doing it and sometimes she gets upset' (Colin, Year 4).

The other type of hand gesture is related directly to speech. There are two theoretical explanations for these movements. The first is psychoanalytic, and claims that hand gestures indicate a speaker's emotional state (Feldman, 1959). The second is that hand gestures represent a communication channel that either supplements speech, or replaces it (Baxter *et al.,* 1968). However, gestures can undermine communication; overuse of arm gestures, moving your hands all the time and making large sweeping arm movements can be off-putting to listeners. The major benefit of gestures is not always easy to demonstrate except, for instance, in communicating ideas about shape. However, it has been shown that changes occur in the quality of speech, notably content, fluency and size of vocabulary when people are not allowed to use gesture (Graham and Heywood, 1975).

Teachers often use hand gestures as a means of control. Pointing at someone or showing them the palm of your hand on an outstretched arm are ways of expressing authority but can have very different meanings. Pointing is perceived as signifying dominance but more aggressively than using the palm of your hand. The palm acts more as a holding gesture; for example, signalling to an eager pupil to wait until instructed to add their contribution to a discussion.

Summary

Verbal and non-verbal behaviours are central to teaching. If you can't get the message across accurately, perceive, interpret and respond to feedback from pupils or influence the behaviour of others, then you are going to find teaching hard work. However, there is no reason why you cannot improve your existing social skills so as to make your life that much easier. It is important to remember the link between social skills and emotional

control since the latter has the potential to undermine your social competence.

Professional social skills: assertiveness and effective listening

Earlier in this chapter were some examples of professional social skills which teachers use in their everyday management of pupils' behaviour. Assertive behaviour is an effective way of expressing authority in the classroom whilst maintaining respect for pupils. Listening skills are generally useful in teaching and particularly so when trying to help pupils who are having difficulty with communicating their thoughts and feelings.

Listening skills

Effective listening is a complex skill often taken for granted in everyday teacher-learner situations. Listening is the first social skill we learn, it is the most used, but taught less than any form of communication in schools (Steil, 1991). Whilst most people are capable of hearing what others say, this is not the same as listening. As a teacher you invariably have to listen to groups and individuals who are distressed, angry or confused. Effective listening requires attention to the motivational intent of the speaker and their non-verbal signals, as well as verbal components, and also being aware of the feedback you are giving to them.

Pupils become irritated when teachers do not appear to be taking an interest in what they have to say, or worse, those who appear to be pretending to listen by making the right 'noises' by nodding and agreeing, but do not 'seem' interested. A teacher who is an effective listener is able to pick up on changes in the responses of the pupil(s) during a conversation, which may indicate a cause for concern. Spotting a mismatch between what is being said and the accompanying body language, posture, gesture, eye contact and facial expression requires attention to the task in hand if perception is to be accurate. The effective listener will also be able to encourage and prompt an individual to convey what they are thinking and feeling, and moderate the conversation according to this feedback.

Sensitivity to physical presentation is also important when interacting with pupils. Facing the whiteboard whilst teaching is not a good means of helping pupils to listen to what you have to say, nor for you to obtain feedback about their understanding and interest. Listening to individuals who have important (to them) things to say in a busy corridor, or in offices with continual interruptions, is not appropriate and does not

suggest that you value what they have to say. Physical conditions which result in the listener being distracted, or listeners who check their watches, fiddle with papers, appear to be attending to other 'important' things or seem to be in a hurry (even if they are) are similarly unhelpful. Not providing appropriate conditions for listening or the expected verbal and nonverbal feedback can result in a negative experience for both parties. The pupil feels undervalued and the teacher does not get the response he or she requires.

The following describes some qualities of effective listening.

- Pupils need to feel they have a teacher who is accessible, has time for them, is genuinely concerned about them, enthusiastic, and will listen and take on board their concerns.
- Providing appropriate space—not busy corridors, classrooms or offices where staff wander in and out, and not answering the telephone. It is essential to concentrate on the pupil even though there may be distractions that appear important.
- Looking and feeling relaxed and unhurried suggests that you are receptive to what is being said and makes the encounter less threatening. Sitting bolt upright, standing with folded arms, slouching on a desk or appearing restless or impatient, fiddling with pens and paper, can be stressful and make the pupil less willing to talk.
- Showing interest by being alert to what is being said is shown through a slight forward lean and being aware of what you and the pupil consider appropriate social distance.
- Matching the mood and reflecting the feelings of the pupil.
- Keeping the conversation flowing and gaining more information by using appropriate supportive prompts—including verbal (such as, 'Go on… Fancy that… Yes… I see…') and non-verbal (such as gentle head nodding, smiling) to convey genuine interest and involvement.

Asserting your authority

Assertive behaviour is when an individual satisfies their own goals whilst maintaining respect for the goals of others; this means tactfully and justly expressing preferences, needs, opinions and feelings. Assertiveness lies somewhere around the midpoint of a continuum that ranges from aggressive behaviour at one extreme and submissive behaviour at the other. The aggressive person is determined to get what they want, irrespective of the needs and feelings of others. In contrast, the submissive person puts the needs and feelings of others before their own. Being assertive in social

situations leads to feelings of positive self-worth and is at the heart of effective social communication.

Indecisive, fearful and submissive teachers who cannot communicate what is required or who do not carry out what they threaten feel inadequate, frustrated and resentful of their pupils (Canter and Canter, 1976). Their pupils feel unsafe, irritated and resentful and are likely to reciprocate in a negative way. The aggressive teacher uses harsh sanctions and maintains order at the expense of pupils, putting them down or humiliating them. Pupils are then fearful and comply but their self-esteem and confidence suffers. The assertive teacher is able to communicate their dissatisfaction when pupils do not adhere to the rules but are just as quick to express pleasure when pupils behave as expected.

Developing assertiveness is not just a method of overcoming immediate problems; it represents a way of life and relates to self-respect, self-confidence, self-regulation and meeting one's own needs and values, but not at the expense of someone else's. Being non-assertive can lead to feeling discomfort, tension, negative self-worth and self-anger and is marked by various behaviours such as:

- saying 'yes' to something when you really mean 'no' and doing so for fear of hurting the other person's feelings;
- feeling embarrassed about speaking out in a group in case you appear incompetent;
- feeling unhappy or angry about being manipulated by others and feeling incapable of stopping them;
- not feeling comfortable expressing a different opinion to that of others;
- feeling anxious about asking someone to do something, even though reasonable, in case they refuse;
- not saying what you think and feel at the time it needs to be said—if, say, you are not satisfied with the behaviour of a pupil.

Whilst standing up for yourself sounds a fair way to behave, people are often reluctant to do so and make excuses because they worry about making the situation worse (Bower and Bower, 1976). Excuses for not being assertive may appear rational but are often just examples of submissive behaviour. For example, procrastination ('Perhaps I am overreacting—I'll give them another chance'), hoping the problem will go away ('It probably won't happen again'), fear of public shame ('I don't want to make an embarrassing scene') or fear of the other party ('He will get angry with me'). The other party may well get angry with you, but the alternative is to get angry with yourself for not doing anything.

Other excuses suggest powerlessness ('Everyone else seems to be prepared to put up with it') or helplessness ('I will not be able to make any difference whatsoever'). Perceived helplessness is a major contributor to submissiveness and is self-deprecating. It externalises control of your life to unchangeable factors such as other people or systems which you cannot directly influence (see Chapter 1).

A person is seldom universally non-assertive. It tends to occur in specific situations.

- Where do you feel most and least assertive?
- Who makes you feel least assertive and why? (Managers, colleagues, pupils?)
- What situations make you feel least assertive?

Becoming more assertive

If you consider that you are not assertive in situations important to you—the classroom, the staffroom, staff meetings or with managers—#8212;there are ways of improving your assertiveness. As with most topics in this book, there is no quick fix. You will not become assertive overnight. It requires practice to learn new assertive behaviours, such as negotiation, conflict resolution and persuasion. Be prepared for setbacks along the way; not everyone will respond as you might hope to your new behaviours, as it will upset established routines. Deal with difficulties in a problem-solving way, rehearse more and learn to cope with failure rather than giving up. Not all difficulties can be dealt with directly, so think about possible consequences (intended and unintended) before taking action.

Schimmel (1976) identified a number of behaviours central to expressing assertiveness:

- feeling able to say what you believe and being comfortable asking for help from others.
- insisting that you are respected as an equal who has rights; including the right to refuse to do things.
- to be able to express negative and positive emotions and feel comfortable declaring your feelings.
- to be happy giving and receiving compliments.
- to question and challenge routine and authority which affects control of your life, in order to improve your situation.

- to feel comfortable engaging, sustaining and concluding social interactions.
- to deal with problems quickly before you become angry and resentful.

Assertive behaviour can be developed using a combination of methods including feedback from friends and colleagues, exploration of the problem and observing others dealing with similar situations (see Figure 3.6). Talking through problems and testing ways of coping is best done with a trained professional; however, good results can also be achieved using informed colleagues and friends or through self-based methods (reading, mirrors, audio-visual aids).

The following are examples of assertive responses.

1 A colleague spends every break time complaining to you about problems with colleagues in their team.

Assertive response: 'Every day this week we have spent all break time talking about the conflicts in your team. I enjoy talking with you, but I get fed up hearing about the pettiness, as I see it, of the people in your team. I miss talking about the news, my work, and going to play golf.'

Non-assertive response: you suppress your anger and say nothing or pretend to be really interested.

Aggressive response: you blow your top and tell your colleague how boring and petty he is.

2 The deputy head repeatedly asks you to take assembly and then often cancels at the last minute.

Assertive response: 'When you ask me to organise an assembly and then change your mind at the last minute—you've done that three out of the last four times—I feel irritated because I've wasted time preparing for a non-event. I also start to think that I am unappreciated and being used as a mug. In the future, I'd like for you to give me more notice, the day before if possible, if I am not required. Would you do that?'

Non-assertive response: you just let it go, fearing the deputy head will get angry.

Aggressive response: you might tell the deputy head how inconsiderate she is and how it is amazing that any staff are prepared to put themselves out for her at all.
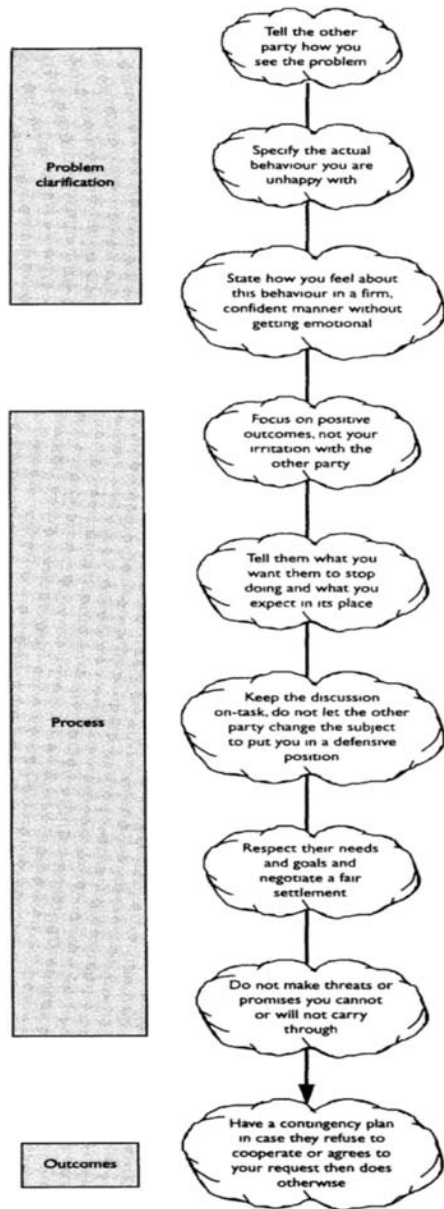
Figure 3.6 **A model for developing assertive** behaviour.

Developing your social skills to enhance social competence

Ellis and Whittington (1981) identified three different types of social skills training, each with a different target audience.

1 *Remedial social skills training*—primarily intended for people whose general social skills interfere with their everyday life. For example, teaching aggression management or conversation skills to pupils with behaviour problems.
2 *Developmental social skills*—refining and enhancing existing everyday social skills, which are ineffective and inappropriate in some situations. For example, job interview training or managing difficult classes.
3 *Specialised social skills training*—developing high level and complex skills for use in particular situations by professionals, forming part of continuing professional development. For example, counselling skills.

Whilst some social skills training is available for teachers, it is usually provided in response to specific initiatives rather than as part of an individual developmental programme. They can also be introduced as part of CPD in schools and worked through with a colleague, group of colleagues or entire staff group. Most specialised skills are usually taught to small groups by specialised trainers. A qualified trainer is preferable (funds permitting) but, failing that, good results can be achieved with someone who has familiarised his or herself with an acceptable method. The role of the 'trainer' is to develop a helping relationship in a safe but challenging environment, provide accurate feedback and encourage the development of effective skills that relate specifically to their needs. Social skills teaching involves the use of modelling, role play, homework, video and audio. The object is not to teach a set of fixed skills but rather to tailor them to the specific needs of an individual or group, taking into account their personal dispositions and the context in which they are required to work.

There are a number of established methods for teaching social skills. Behavioural methods (see also Chapter 8) are perhaps the best-known approach and have a successful record in assertiveness training. Here, the individual practises, or overlearns, a particular micro skill or groups of micro skills in a series of stages. These are practised in different surroundings before being used in the target scenario.

Other examples are more cognitive in their method. Experiential methods focus on the uniqueness of the individual, emphasising definition and development of personal skills though role play and drama. The object

being to get the individual to challenge their own thinking and internal (unrealistic) rules about a situation, redefine it and rehearse actions so as to cope more effectively. For example, if a teacher feels anxious teaching a particular class, they might be encouraged to describe the worst lesson they could possibly imagine and to enact it in the form of role play (perhaps using colleagues as surrogate pupils). The helper then presents even more terrible possibilities at the point when the teacher feels unable to continue. Then the teacher would describe and enact a *normal* encounter with this 'class' which is less painful than the worst case scenario previously described. During this enactment the helper highlights how much easier the 'normal' situation is in comparison to the previous one, complimenting her when she makes positive decisions. Afterwards, the helper works through the experiences, challenging her thoughts, beliefs and behaviour to enable her to discover ways of coping with the group more effectively, through changing the way she thinks about it and reducing anxiety. From this an action plan can be developed which may well include the helper, team teaching or working with individual pupils to support the teacher and provide feedback and reinforce successful coping.

A third alternative is a systems approach, which seeks to encourage individuals to think about their coping skills and evaluate how they appraise information about their own and other people's behaviour, which is causing them difficulty. For example, if a pupil disrupted a lesson and the teacher became upset about it. He may ask himself: 'What right has this pupil to insult me in this way?' and 'Was this a threat to my professional self?' The helper seeks to encourage the teacher to consider alternative appraisals of what happened and to explore alternative coping strategies. So, for instance, considering whether the behaviour was a threat or a challenge, whether it reflects personal and interpersonal coping, whether other structural or organisational factors are relevant or to examine his own behaviours towards the pupil. The process starts with presenting a rationale for the behaviour; then, identifying and disputing irrational beliefs and, finally, formulating and testing more realistic rules.

These approaches to social skills training can help teachers to improve their coping skills. However, it is important not to lose sight of the influence that other parts of the system have on these behaviours. It would be naïve to suggest individual skills can overcome all behaviour management issues. Factors beyond the control of individual teachers or even the school system itself are more than capable of disrupting or undermining individual performance.

Suggested further reading

Adler, R.B., Rosenfeld, B.L. and Towne, N. (1995) *Interplay:The Process of Inter-personal Communication,* 6th edn. Florida: Harcourt Brace.

Ellis, R. and Whittington, D. (1981) *A Guide to Social Skill Training.* London: Croom Helm.

Neil, S. and Caswell, C. (1993) *Body Language for Competent Teachers.* London: Routledge.

Part II

The school as an organisation

Chapter 4
Whole-school influences on behaviour management

Behaviour policies, ethos and school effectiveness

A school's behaviour policy is the formal representation of its vision of how behaviour will be managed. It should reflect expectations, inform practice and contribute to the school's organisational climate. The importance of behaviour policies in developing effective schools has been acknowledged (Elton Report, 1989) and their necessity is now firmly housed in legislation (Education Act, No. 2, 1986; Education Act, 1996; Education Act, 1997; and School Standards and Framework Act, 1998). In sum, the message is that behaviour policies should specify expectations for the conduct of pupils, the rewards given for good behaviour and sanctions for unacceptable behaviour.

The 1998 School Standards and Framework Act requires governors to produce and review

> policies designed to promote good behaviour and discipline on the part of its pupils intended to guide the headteacher in decision making regarding action in respect of:
>
> a promoting, among pupils, self-discipline and proper regard for authority;
> b encouraging good behaviour and respect for others on the part of pupils and, in particular, preventing all forms of bullying among pupils;
> c securing that the standard of behaviour of pupils is acceptable; and
> d otherwise regulating the conduct of pupils.
>
> (HMSO, 1998:61:4)

A behaviour policy contributes to a school's overall climate, and the importance of getting it right to maximise the use of whole-school strategies in managing behaviour cannot be over-emphasised. This is not to suggest that activity at the organisational level is superior to, or should replace, teacher control, but that they should be mutually supportive.

When the behaviour policy is well thought out, understood and generally accepted by all, it can eliminate or alleviate many minor disruptive behaviours almost 'automatically'. School-wide routines (for example, assemblies, dress, timetable, movement, lining up, reporting, sanctions and rewards) all serve to make visible the expectations, ethos and values of the school. The policy should provide the structure for behaviour management at the whole-school level, in the classroom and for the type of intervention strategies used for pupils with behaviour difficulties. The principles contained in the behaviour policy must then inform all three levels of activity and be supported by consistent application of what the school community (including teachers, SMT, governors and pupils) have agreed are appropriate and expected levels of behaviour. Thus, whilst encouraging teachers to have their own style—how they project themselves as individuals or interact at an interpersonal level—the agreed principles of the behaviour policy should be apparent in the classroom management techniques adopted to ensure consistency across all aspects of school life.

Schools which have a significant discrepancy between the expectations of the behaviour policy and how classrooms are managed, or in how difficult pupils are supported, are unlikely to function well. Those that share a common negotiated agreement, regularly monitor what is happening and are able to respond quickly to changing demands, are likely to function well. Monitoring includes evaluating both operational activity (what people do) and conceptual shift (movement from agreed principles). Policy development should be informed through evaluation of feedback from the chalkface as well as changes imposed by external bodies.

What is a behaviour policy?

For the purposes of this book, a behaviour policy is a statement of aims, values and principles and provides operational guidance on putting these aims into action. It should:

- have respect for persons and human rights and responsibilities, as its central tenet;
- facilitate effective learning;
- make the school community feel safe and secure;

- specify behavioural expectations;
- encourage contributions from all members of the school community;
- make explicit the rewards for acceptable behaviour;
- make explicit the consequences of unacceptable behaviour;
- include feedback systems to monitor effectiveness and change.

To translate these requirements into a workable document, a number of issues must be addressed.

Shared meaning—ensuring that all parties are aware of what is meant by the policy. Do most people in your school agree on what constitutes disruptive behaviour and its causes? Are the behavioural expectations generally considered appropriate and realistic? Are rewards and sanctions generally considered appropriate and hierarchical?

Ownership—behaviour policies belong to the whole school including governors, professional and ancillary staff, pupils and parents, all of whom should be encouraged to contribute and share ownership and responsibility. Who contributed to the behaviour policy in your school? How were they consulted?

Succinctness—long-winded and complicated policy statements are usually counterproductive and can be the result of weak group decision-making. Where possible, keep the content punchy and to the point to aid clarity. How accessible and easy to follow is your school's policy?

Communication—unless communicated throughout the school community, the policy will not be worth the paper it is written on. Making the policy explicit through a range of media (for example, in the school handbook, on the back of all official documents, publicly posted and through assemblies) on an ongoing basis keeps it in the 'public' eye. How is your behaviour policy communicated? Do you consider the methods used to be effective? If not, why not?

Does your behaviour policy work?

Whilst all schools are required to have a behaviour policy, its effectiveness relies on staff being committed to applying it consistently. Disagreements about its aims and expectations, if it is ill-conceived, out of date or there is uncertainty about its usefulness, the policy will not be effective. Try to complete the following exercise to gain some impression of your existing policy and its application.

- Can you write down four aims or values of your school's behaviour policy?

- List four school rules or routines concerned with pupil behaviour that already exist in the school and which reinforce what the school values.
- List three ways in which pupils are rewarded for behaving appropriately.
- List three levels of sanctions currently available to deal with a pupil whose behaviour is getting progressively worse.
- Who has the authority to administer the sanctions you have listed?
- Do you think management of behaviour in your school generally reflects the aims of the behaviour policy?
- How would a new teacher be made formally aware of the school's behavioural expectations?
- Do you think it is important to be able to answer any of the above without having to refer to the document?
- What is your school best at?
- What needs improvement?

School effectiveness, school improvement and pupil voice

School effectiveness and school improvement have taken centre stage in educational debates over the last twenty years. Much energy is being directed towards increasing school accountability and finding ways to enhance quality control and economic efficiency in the statutory education of children and young people. This desire for greater school accountability originates from a number of quarters including government, parents and, indeed, the schools themselves. The primary focus is on identifying characteristics of effective schools and developing strategies to improve ineffective ones. It is nothing new for schools to differ in their ability to empower young people to succeed. Over two decades ago, Rutter *et al.* (1979) demonstrated that schools produced differential effects in terms of behaviour despite sharing similar catchment areas, staffing and funding. How much difference a school alone can make, and in what areas of pupil development, is less clear (Gray and Wilcox, 1994).

Although the primary emphasis of much school effectiveness research is on academic performance, a number have demonstrated significant differences in social behaviour (Mortimore *et al.,* 1988; Reynolds, 1976; Rutter *et al.,* 1979). In a study entitled *Improving the Urban High School,* Louis and Miles (1992) examined the long-term outcomes of the 'effective school' programme (introduced in the 1980s). The objectives of these programmes were a focus on strong leadership; the creation of a safe and orderly climate; an emphasis on acquiring basic academic skills; high

teacher expectations and constant monitoring of pupils' performance. However, whilst almost half of the schools involved reported improved pupil attitudes and behaviour, less than one-quarter said there had been similar levels of improvement in pupil achievement.

The strategy most commonly used to identify school effectiveness is to isolate measurable internal characteristics (e.g. management style, pupil behaviour, atmosphere, teaching styles, academic performance) and external characteristics (e.g. socio-economic status, funding) as the basis for comparison.

Identifying those characteristics associated with effective schools and superimposing them onto less effective ones would be an attractive approach to school improvement In practice, this is not as easy as it sounds since, as Gray and Wilcox argued, 'How an "ineffective" school improves may well differ from the ways in which more effective schools maintain their effectiveness' (Gray and Wilcox, 1994:2). The factors required to *change* systems are different from those required to *maintain* them.

School effectiveness and school improvement research, although often discussed together, have different methodological roots. In school effectiveness research, the most common approach is quantitative, where comparison is often made using sophisticated statistical analysis of value added to previous academic performance, measured between different Key Stages (see Goldstein, 1995).

School improvement studies tend to be more action-focused, utilising qualitative approaches. Emphasis here is on developing strategies for change which are grounded in the perspectives of the people involved. A common strategy to studying improvement is to utilise case studies where the emphasis is on detail and 'thick' description. Details of what is actually happening in a school are usually best understood in this way. More recently, there have been encouraging signs of a linking of school effectiveness and school improvement approaches (Hopkins, 1996) and towards working with schools to produce a more in-depth understanding of the research and its implications for practice (Stoll, 1996). However, this generates further difficulties in expanding the number of variations possible between schools and cannot be limited to simple responses. As Gray *et al.* (1996) point out, there is a need to obtain a better grasp of each institution's strengths and weaknesses as well as their starting position.

Lists of the characteristics which distinguish successful from less successful ones are not in short supply and many (unsurprisingly) share similar content. Sammons *et al.* (1994) offer one such list, with a strong common sense content that provides a baseline for those wishing to investigate their school's functioning under identifiable categories. Wayson

et al. (1982) produced a list of characteristics of well-disciplined schools, highlighting the need for whole-school-based proactive and supportive structures. What these and others lack is an indication of how the various categories might be functionally defined, interlinked and quantified.

The role of pupil voice in school improvement

Gaining a pupil-based perspective on school effectiveness and improvement has increasingly been recognised as a potentially valuable contribution. Gray (1990) identified two key indicators, in addition to academic performance, which require attention:

- **pupil satisfaction**—what proportion of pupils in the school are satisfied with the education they receive?
- **pupil-teacher relationships**—what proportion of pupils in the school have a good or vital relationship with one or more teachers?

I would add a third: what proportion of pupils feel that the school helps them to cope emotionally and socially? This is an area of considerable importance to many pupils. My work on pupil stress, for example, highlighted the potential negative effects of school structures and organisation on pupils' attitude to work and performance (Chaplain, 1996b, 2000a).

In *School Improvement: What Can Pupils Tell Us?,* Rudduck *et al.* (1996b) argued that, too often, pupil voice is absent from the literature on school improvement. Those pupils usually invited to contribute are the most academically or socially competent, whereas other groups who are seen as problematic or difficult, but who often have a valuable contribution to make, are marginalised. However, as the authors point out:

> if teachers have a view that pupils are adversaries, then it is unlikely that they can unravel the power relationship and convince pupils that they genuinely want to enter into dialogue with them about learning, to hear and take their views seriously, and to become as Phelan and her colleagues put it, 'co-conspirators in creating optimal learning situations'.
>
> (Rudduck et al., 1996b: 2)

Pupils' perspectives offer an essential dimension to the development of behaviour policies—this is not to suggest some romantic notion that they have all the answers but they can make an important contribution.

In attempting to understand and utilise research on school improvement, it is imperative not to lose sight of the diversity and interrelatedness of factors involved. Concentrating on one or two initiatives may result in short-term gains, but make little real overall or sustainable difference. Change requires attention to what Fullan called 'deeper organisational conditions' (1988:29). Whilst initiatives such as anger control for aggressive individuals, 'circle time' to support withdrawn pupils or pupil referral units may be effective for those immediately involved, unless the activity is owned, valued and committed to by the whole school, it may stagnate in the hearts, minds and actions of a chosen few. Focusing on behaviour management issues can often be appraised negatively by teachers who really want to teach rather than spend large amounts of time thinking about coping with disruptive behaviour.

Ethos, organisational climate and culture

Research findings have consistently demonstrated a relationship between effective schools, positive climates and 'good' discipline (Sammons, 1999). In describing the qualities of a positive climate or ethos, Mortimore *et al.* (1988) concluded:

> an effective school has a positive ethos. Overall the atmosphere was more pleasant in the effective schools, for a variety of reasons.
> Both around the school and within the classroom, less emphasis on punishment and critical control, and a greater emphasis on praise and rewarding pupils had a positive impact. Where teachers actively encouraged self-control on the part of the pupils, rather than emphasising the negative aspects of their behaviour, progress and development increased. What appeared to be important was firm but fair classroom management.
>   Outside the classroom evidence of a positive climate included: the organisation of lunchtime and afternoon clubs for pupils; teachers eating their lunch at the same tables as the pupils; organisation of trips and visits and the utilisation of the local environment as a learning resource…
>   The working conditions of teachers contributed to the creation of a positive school climate. Where teachers had non-teaching periods, the impact on pupil progress and development was positive. Thus the climate created by the teachers for the pupils and by the head for the teachers, was an important aspect of the schools effectiveness. This further appeared to be reflected in effective schools by happy, well-

behaved pupils who were friendly towards each other and outsiders, and by the absence of graffiti around the school.

(Mortimore *et al.,* 1988:122)

Ethos is a popular term within the education community and, whilst there are a number of definitions, most refer to the overall atmosphere of the school (see Mortimore *et al.,* 1988; Jones, 1988) or how a school 'feels'. For Rutter *et al.* (1979), successful schools had pleasant working environments, with an emphasis on learning and encouragement of personal responsibility in pupils. But beyond artefacts and interpersonal relationships, ethos also includes tacit assumptions about values and purpose.

Ethos, or organisational climate, differs from 'organisational culture' and is considered more analogous to morale or the quality of the internal environment of the organisation as experienced by its members and which influences their behaviour (Taguiri, 1968). It is 'a relatively enduring quality of the school environment that is experienced by participants, affects their behaviour, and is based on their collective perceptions of behaviour in schools' (Hoy and Miskel, 1991).

Organisational culture, on the other hand, has anthropological roots and concerns 'shared orientations that hold the unit together and give it a distinct identity' (Hoy and Miskel, 1991:212). However, not everyone agrees that the two concepts are distinct (Furnham, 1997).

Much early work on organisational climate was carried out in educational institutions by Stern (1970) who went on to apply his findings to industrial contexts, looking at the relationship between personality and perceptions of the organisational climate.

It is commonly accepted that an effective school needs a positive organisational climate. However, if one takes the trouble to consider in more detail what precisely is meant by positive ethos, a number of questions emerge. Against what criteria should we measure school climate? Should we look at what is put into a school, what they do with it, or what the school achieves? On what measurable basis should one school be distinguished from another?

Scales have been developed to measure organisational climate (Brookover *et al.,* 1979; Halpin and Croft, 1963) from which the concept of loose and tight-coupled school climates was developed. Tight-coupled schools are highly centralised and formal (Hoy *et al.,* 1991), a tightly knit and closely related environment focused on organisational goals. In loosecoupled schools, there is more independence and less central control, with upper and lower phases and classrooms preserving their own identity
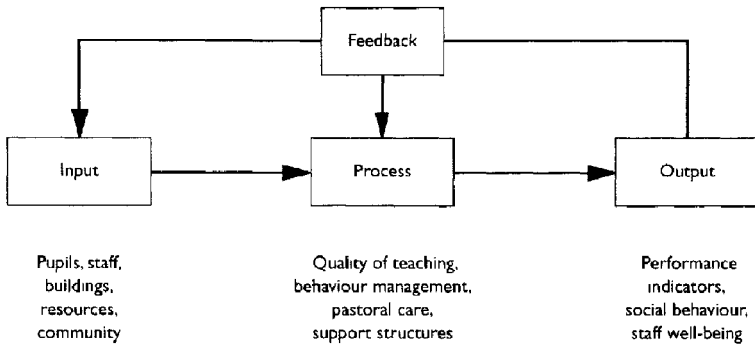
Figure 4.1 **A simple systems model.**

(Weick, 1976). Murphy (1992) argued that effective schools are more tightly linked, operating as an organic whole with greater consistency than ineffective schools. Creemers and Reezigt (1996) endorsed this view by identifying four criteria present in effective schools (consistency, cohesion, constancy and control); these are features associated with tight-coupled schools.

The Occupational Climate Description Questionnaire (OCDQ) (Hoy *et al.,* 1991) distinguishes between open and closed climates by rating levels of: supportive headteacher behaviour (helpful, concerned); directive headteacher behaviour (rigid and domineering); engaged teacher behaviour (proud of school, support each other); frustrated teacher behaviour (overrun with routine and administration). In open climates, issues such as managing behaviour and teacher stress will be discussed, whereas in closed climates they are likely to be ignored. The questionnaire is designed for school self-assessment and for organisational development.

Open systems approaches (Open Systems Group, 1981) to organisational behaviour advocate a tight and focused environment, committed to the overall purpose of the organisation. They provide a model for analysing the different sub-components of an organisation that contribute to its overall structure. The organisation interacts with its environment, taking in information and resources as inputs and transforming by various processes into outputs into the environment (Nadler and Tushman, 1980). In school, *inputs* include pupils, staff and the building; *processes* involve the teaching and learning and the *outputs* are educated pupils (see Figure 4.1) Applying a systems approach to schools raises important questions regarding the purpose of schooling, achievement targets and criteria which indicate success.

Table 4.1 shows in more detail the various types of data which can be collected and used to gain an understanding of strengths and weaknesses of the school generally, and in respect of social behaviour in particular.

Breaking down systems in this way enables identification of areas for development and an appreciation of the interrelatedness and interdependency of the various component parts of the organisation. Whilst systems thinking presents schools as rational and predictable organisations, consistency, harmony and cohesion are not always evident between and within various different areas of the school, or in classrooms. Furthermore, measuring some of the different variables can be difficult, so individual schools need to decide how to quantify the quality of relationships or what constitutes acceptable behaviour.

Stern (1970) suggested that climate could be measured by asking what proportion of the organisation agree or disagree with a particular description of a climate to justify describing it in that way, known as the 'aggregation issue'. Obviously, the more people that agree (or disagree), the more accurate the estimate of the climate is likely to be. He argued that 66 per cent was an appropriate level of agreement; others have suggested it should be significantly more. Clearly, this approach personalises the measurement, grounding it in the population it serves. Irrespective of its critics, recording and analysing the data in this way forces discussion and critical thinking about what the school means to those who work there and, in that way, can be very positive.

How would you describe the climate of your school? How many people would agree with you?

A further issue in measuring climate arises from differences in perceptions at different levels of the hierarchy. Within schools there are likely to be different micro climates (foundation, infant, junior), which may differ from the overall climate. For example, do teachers in the foundation and junior phases share a similar view of the school climate? Do non-teaching staff share the same view as teachers? Do parents and pupils and subgroups of both share similar views? Payne (1990) argued that subgroup agreement was only likely where a 'group' shared a common social identity and, hence, where agreement was likely to help an individual to be supported by that group. Since subgroups are competing for limited resources in school, there is always a potential for intergroup conflict that may undermine consistency in managing behaviour.

A positive climate is also represented through staff having a sense of community in which they enjoy social support and a diffuse role which brings them into contact with other adults in settings outside the classroom (Bryk and Driscoll, 1988). A shared commitment to organisational goals,

Table 4.1 A simple systems analysis of inputs, processes and outcomes

Level of analysis	Focus	General example	Behaviour-related example
Inputs	Staff, pupils, buildings, curriculum.	Personal qualities of the staff and management (qualifications, personality, training, experience); levels of compatibility and person–environment fit; qualities of the pupils; quality and care of the buildings.	Pupils' backgrounds; community stability or change (e.g. large-scale redundancy; SEN provision; industrial/commercial growth; a major influx of socially excluded groups); staff specialist training (e.g. behaviour difficulties); staff cohesiveness; previous successes of the school in managing behaviour; behaviour policy.
Processes	What happens in school.	Teaching methods; classroom organisation; sanctions; teacher and pupil support systems; extra curricular activity.	Rewards, sanctions; quality of interpersonal relationships between staff and pupils; level of parental support; discipline measures, rewards; in-school support systems; SEN provision, pastoral system.
Outputs	Short- and long-term effects on the behaviour and development of members of the school.	League tables; social behaviour; value added inspection ratings; exam performance;	Numbers excluded; parental satisfaction; complaints from the local community; number of police visits; school appearance; pupils' satisfaction and motivation; staff turnover; job satisfaction and well-being.

Note
Column three shows general outcomes; column four show those concerned with behaviour. However, many of the behaviour-related and general outcomes overlap, the above are merely offered as illustrative examples.

staff well-being and recognition of personal goals and development can be supported through:

- making the work environment stimulating and engaging;
- opportunities for staff to make their own decisions and show initiative;
- encouraging new ideas and suggestions for improving the organisation;
- mutual trust;
- a dynamic but secure atmosphere;
- a sense of humour;
- encouraging different perspectives on behaviour;
- providing differentiated and appropriate social support;
- delegating responsibility and a preparedness to take risks;
- recognition of effort;
- open and adequate communications between all levels of staff, pupils and their carers.

Organisational climate and effective communication

The quality of communication in a school and its organisational climate have been described as mutually reinforcing. As Wilkinson and Cave proposed:

> The effectiveness of communication depends to a considerable extent on a favourable climate in the school Conversely, the climate of the school depends largely on the quality of communication. Good morale, a feeling of confidence and a spirit of cooperation are unlikely to exist if there are continuing and frequent communication barriers and breakdowns. Thus communication both creates and is influenced by the prevailing climate of the school.
>
> (1987:139)

Too little or too much communication has been shown to be a source of conflict in organisations (Furnham, 1997). The method of communicating in a school is an indicator of the quality of interpersonal relationships. 'Death by a thousand memos' usually suggests relationships are not good—#8212;people have stopped discussing issues, for whatever reason. We now live in a world where continual bombardment by a range of instant communication is the norm (email, mobile phones, fax machines), all of which discourage talking and listening and seem to demand instant responses. It is probably true to say that, if anything, we receive too much information. Whilst we don't necessarily want to be distracted from

whatever we are doing, some forms of communication suggest we should. Being interrupted when you are teaching by a note-wielding pupil, when you have just managed to get your class settled, is not relished, and means valuable teaching time is disrupted or lost. Within a school, communication is multi-faceted and it is important to match the type of communication to the issue in focus. In most schools, information moves from top-down and (less often) bottom-up within the hierarchy, and sideways among colleagues as well as within and between phases.

Communication is a repeated concern in this book because of its role in:

- conveying information;
- persuasion, negotiation and conflict resolution;
- ensuring the smooth running of the system;
- learning;
- managing behaviour.

With regard to behaviour management, there are three essential considerations related to the issue of communication: speed, type and audience.

Speed—some information needs to be communicated rapidly—a serious incident such as a physical assault, for instance. Others, such as calling a meeting to review behaviour policy, are less urgent, but in some schools levels of urgency seem undifferentiated. Being continually interrupted by pupils sent by colleagues to announce an event or changed agenda can unwittingly create unnecessary management problems for teachers.

Type—what means of communication to use should be determined by the context. In the event of a serious incident, verbal, face-to-face (sending someone to get help) or some electronic form (bell, telephone) is probably the most appropriate.

Audience—who needs to know and when and how does the communication need to be recorded? In dealing with behaviour—not necessarily extreme behaviour—it is useful to think about ways of communicating potential problems, or tense situations, as well as what to do when things have gone seriously wrong.

Some years ago I was in a school for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties which had alarm buttons fitted in each classroom. No-one seemed to know who had decided to have them fitted or was clear about when they should be used. New staff were merely told, 'This is the alarm button which you can use if you have problems controlling the pupils.' However, a number of staff were keen to tell me the story of a

young teacher who, during his first week, was having problems with a group of pupils and had pressed the button. To his horror, his actions triggered off a series of alarms, following which an army of teachers and a cook, complete with utensils, arrived at his classroom door. The humiliation of the poor, unsuspecting teacher, who thought pressing the bell merely alerted the senior teacher, was complete when he had to explain to the assembled rescue battalion that the emergency was little more than a group of pupils being cheeky and refusing to work.

As a system of communication, it was quick and effective in getting attention. Whether it was appropriate is more questionable and the audience was certainly not who he had expected and slightly larger than he intended! The main problem arose from an initial lack of information during induction where staff should have been made aware of under what circumstances it should be used, and how it would be responded to if activated. It later emerged that, far from being a planned response, staff had merely followed each other.

Getting the message across—communication networks

Cole (1996) described different types of communication networks (Figure 4.2) which may exist in organisations, indicating which are likely to be most effective under different conditions. Which method of communication is used in a school often reflects management style and the size of the organisation.

In many schools, communication is hierarchical; for example, the chain or Y arrangement that permits downward, and, although less common, upward communication. The chain and Y networks along with the wheel are all evident in organisations with mechanistic approaches (ibid.) (with the wheel allowing some sideways or lateral communication but which has a clear leader in the centre). Information from governors and the SMT usually has an ordered sequence as it moves through departments but this is not the most effective way of communicating *all* information. The chain reduces time demands on senior managers. It may not be the most efficient way to deal with serious incidents requiring immediate responses. Under such circumstances, either a circle or a completely connected network within designated areas of the school, is likely to be most efficient, since both allow for multidirectional communication.

A teacher dealing with a difficult individual, who knows they can communicate a worsening situation quickly to any one of a number of primed individuals, is likely to cope more effectively than someone who feels they have to communicate to a specific member of staff who may not
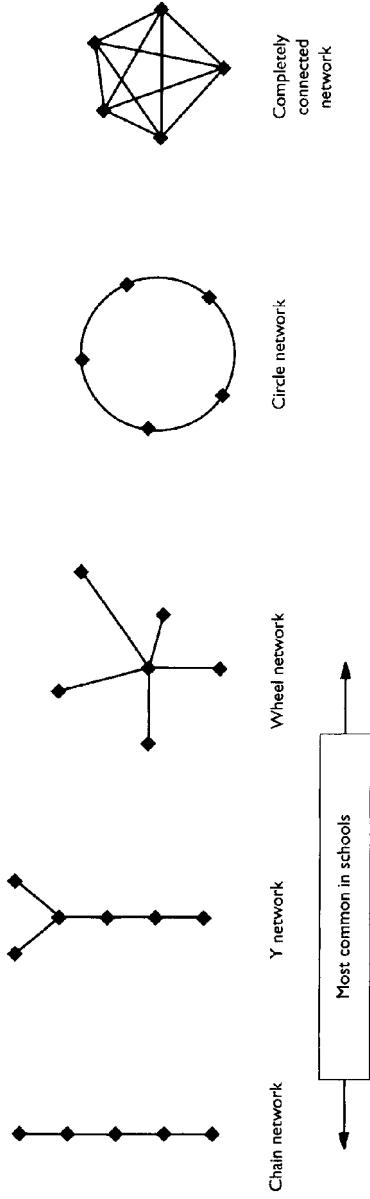
Figure 4.2 Communication networks.

be available at that time. Whilst a senior manager may have overall operational responsibility for behaviour management in a large school, supporting the interests of everybody simultaneously is not possible. Delegating responsibility to individuals within teams who are available to support directly, but who meet as a group with the senior manager to provide feedback on concerns and needs, is one way of overcoming this problem.

- What type of communication network do you have in your organisation?
- Is it effective?
- What are its strengths and weaknesses?
- Is it consistent across the whole school?
- Do you have established systems for raising issues concerned with behaviour management and for getting help quickly should you need it?
- Do they work?

Communication under pressure: coping with difficult situations

When dealing with difficult pupils and unpleasant events, it is easy to react too quickly and say or write things, when emotions are running high, without due consideration of all the facts. Similarly, managers asking staff to deal with a problem whilst they are off-guard or already under pressure is unreasonable. The emotional nature of the encounter tends to override problem-solving, sometimes with disastrous results as the situation spirals out of control. Organisations expecting their staff to make decisions whilst off-guard are not well managed and the result is often poor decision-making and dissatisfied or browbeaten staff.

Much communication in schools is by word of mouth or informal notes. Although both are quick, they are prone to distortion and misinterpretation. I learnt early in my managerial career that recording difficult situations in a written form during or immediately after an event and sending a copy to the person or people involved as verification of what we both understood to have happened was a useful safeguard against misinterpretation. Similarly, incidents involving pupils or their families should always be recorded in writing at the time or as near as possible afterwards in case further problems arise. Anyone who has worked with vulnerable young people will be aware of the value of doing so.

When reporting problem encounters, keep the language simple, nonjudgmental and to the point. State the facts as you understand them and immediately record the observations of any witnesses to what happened. Where relevant, note any antecedents to the incident, the incident itself and what happened afterwards. It is likely you will want to share your observations with your manager but, whatever you do, always keep a copy along with details of what you sent to others and when. Keeping such accurate records is time consuming and may seem a little dramatic, but is an intelligent way of protecting yourself and your school should there be a problem at a later date.

Meetings with parents of difficult children can be quite harrowing. They are often (understandably) defensive if called into school to account for their child's misbehaviour. Part of the defensive reaction results from feeling embarrassed or angry. Parents in this position often feel like naughty children themselves and may start acting like one, shouting, refusing to listen to the complaint, offering excuses and displacing responsibility for the problem elsewhere (other pupils or staff). Deflecting attention to other issues allows them to take control of the situation. Only being invited to the school to be told how badly behaved your child is does not make school a community to which you seek to belong—certainly not in the same way as those parents whose children are behaving well.

Dealing with hostile and angry adults is something few people relish. To be successful in such encounters requires the use of complex social skills and maintaining emotional control. Many such encounters are one-on-one; however, the people involved can be supported in a number of ways by using organisational and structural support.

Angry parents should not have direct access to teaching areas and teachers. Removing the opportunity for such access requires looking at procedures for receiving people into the school. Obviously, where staff are expecting a parent under difficult circumstances, advance arrangements can be made; however, some inevitably arrive unexpectedly. The sensible use of time delays can start the diffusion process, allowing people to calm down but not forgetting that keeping people waiting too long can exacerbate the situation. Whilst a good, well-briefed and prepared receptionist can usually achieve this, there should be a back-up system which involves a designated member of the teaching/management staff who can be alerted stealthily that their help is required. For instance, if the receptionist feels that the waiting parent is getting more agitated, they can call the designated member of staff and say, 'Mr Hawk called earlier, could you ring back?'—'Hawk' being used as the trigger that their presence is

needed at reception. Having space in school for dealing with visitors away from pupils and other distractions helps avoid public embarrassment.

Designing feedforward or anticipatory strategies, where a best estimate of what ought to be expected and how to respond when it does not occur, is the most effective way of dealing with difficult behaviour. However, reactive methods are inevitable where things are not going as they should. Being organised in advance for difficult events by developing and rehearsing structures and strategies when not under pressure is the most effective way of being prepared.

Balancing individual and organisational needs

> Every organisation is different. Each school is different from every other school, and schools, as a group, are different from other kinds of organisations. There is something natural and right about that, for organisations are living things, each with its own history and traditions and environment and its own ability to shape its destiny. Nevertheless …#8230;there are some truths and theories that apply to all organisations, be they schools or hospitals or banks.
>
> (Handy, 1988:107)

In recent years there has been a growing acceptance of the need to pay attention to the contribution that organisation and structures, as opposed to classroom relationships, can make to effective behaviour management. As Duke pointed out: 'more recently educators have begun to acknowledge the crucial role that organisational factors [in schools] play in shaping behaviour' (1986:122).

Explanations of behaviour in organisations have traditionally drawn on three groups of theories. The first argue that individual personality traits (for example, aggressiveness, impulsiveness or anxiety) are relatively stable across all situations. If someone is an extravert, then they are likely to be outgoing in all situations. An organisation represents the combined effects of the qualities of the individuals in it.

The second group place their emphasis on how the situation determines an individual's behaviour. A school's unique nature creates a distinct culture and climate prescribing how staff and pupils should behave. Readers will be familiar with how a school 'feels' when you visit for the first time. This feeling results from a combination of what those in the

school most value and is conveyed through the physical environment, interpersonal behaviour and a sense of what the school values.

A third group of theories argue that organisational behaviour results from a continuous multidirectional interaction between the individual and their situation. Individuals have idiosyncratic qualities which affect the situation and, at the same time, the situation influences the behaviour of the individual. The situation includes the overall social structure (the whole staff group) and various subgroups (e.g. curriculum groups, friendship groups) plus other influences. An individual joining a school will interact with each at different levels, in various ways and with different outcomes, eventually becoming organisationally socialised.

Several attempts have been made to identify individual and enduring qualities most valued in particular occupations. Teachers, presumably, enjoy human interaction significantly more than, say, a lighthouse keeper. It is not uncommon in commerce and industry to find personality measures being administered during personnel selection—it is a rather less common activity in the teaching profession. Although not without their critics, some personality tests (such as Cattell, 1971; Eysenck and Eysenck, 1985) have been found to yield reliable measures of particular traits considered relevant to particular occupations. As Furnham points out:

> Review studies done in the 90's which have considered the results of a vast amount of research in the area show that personality traits (particularly the Big 5) do significantly predict a wide range of behaviours in the work place. The size of the relationship suggest between 10 and 40 per cent of variance can be accounted for in terms of these traits alone. However, none dispute that other factors such as ability, as well as organisational constraints and method, inevitably affect performance.
>
> (1997:193)

Another popular explanation of organisational behaviour is in terms of person-organisation fit (Chatman, 1989) or the degree to which dispositions, abilities, expectations and performance of an individual match the demands and expectations of the school. Each individual teacher has a set of dispositional characteristics, expectations, skills and experiences which he or she brings to a job. At the same time, the school (including governors, SMT, teachers and support staff, pupils and their parents) will also have expectations and demands of that teacher. The degree to which there is synonymy between what a teacher provides to, and expects from, their school and what the school expects from, and provides
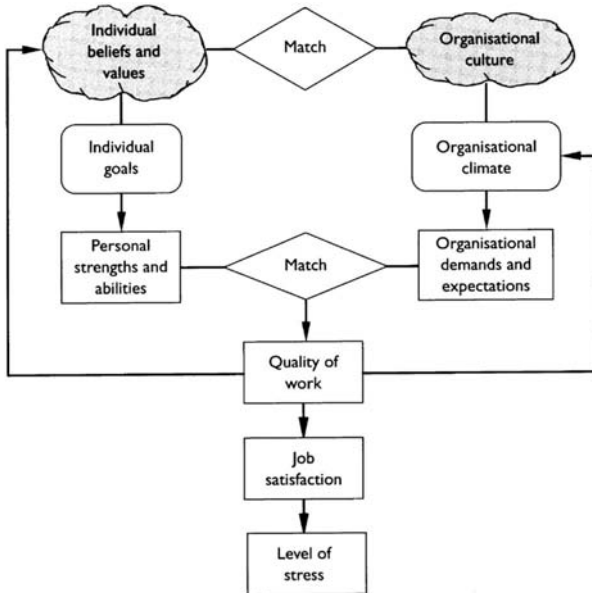
Figure 4.3 **Person-environment fit.**

to, the teacher, the higher the degree of person-organisation fit (see Figure 4.3). In situations where person-job fit has been identified as poor, a number of negative outcomes have been measured, including stress, job dissatisfaction and lower job performance. For instance, a teacher who feels the school's expectations regarding behaviour management are not compatible with his or her own values and beliefs is unlikely to function well. In contrast, where the person-organisation fit is good, the individual is likely to be more motivated and experience higher levels of job satisfaction.

Moving to another school with a different modus operandi may significantly change how the teacher feels about themselves and how they relate to others.

Think about your current job or placement and write down the qualities you bring to it (for example, enthusiasm, bright personality, energy, youth or experience, skills or specific abilities, balance to the curriculum or staff group) plus what you expect from the organisation.

Next, list what you believe the organisation expects from you in terms of knowledge and skills, commitment, responsibility, managing difficult

pupils and what it actually provides you with (good working conditions or atmosphere, for instance).

Compare the two lists: would you say you are enjoying a good person-job fit? If not, where is the imbalance and how changeable are the discrepancies?

Furthermore, whilst you may 'fit well' at one point in time, organisational changes to management (new head); structure (new legislative requirements); the pupil population (amalgamation of two schools) or you (marriage, divorce, training) can create imbalance at the individual, group or organisational level, creating disruption. A new head will inevitably differ from his or her predecessor, with different expectations; and different ways of working with staff, which may enhance or inhibit your performance. He or she may want to change the ethos of the school or may have been recruited specifically for that purpose.

Individual and group differences: personal and social identity

Changing a single individual in an organisation can have quite a substantial impact on relationships and group dynamics. A number of competing theories exist to explain the relationship between groups and individuals. One group of theories (individualist) argues that groups represent the sum of the parts—that is, a group can be viewed as an amalgamation of the characteristics of its members. A second group of theories (collectivist) argue that a group has an identity of its own or a social identity, which differs from the individual qualities (Tajfel and Turner, 1986). It is not uncommon for people to comment on how differently others behave when in a group compared to when they are alone. For example, a pupil who works quietly in one class but becomes extremely noisy when with pupils in another class, or teachers who, when alone, profess one set of beliefs but respond very differently in staff meetings or when with groups of colleagues. Individuals shift from personal to group identity depending on the salience of a particular context in order to maintain a positive image. Monitoring individual pupil behaviour, alongside how they behave in different groups, provides the best way of understanding the changing nature of interpersonal dynamics over time and between situations.

The relationship between individuals, groups and the organisation becomes a psychological contract whereby each takes, gives and gradually formulates mutual understanding. Individuals at all levels in a school are 'organisationally socialised', moving through these different stages:

- initial *entry* into the organisation;
- becoming *socialised* to the context (coping with the organisational climate);
- achieving *mutual acceptance* and commitment to the organisation.

(Schein, 1978)

Understanding organisational behaviour requires consideration of the interactions and interconnections between the thinking, feeling and behaviour of individuals and groups and considering how their different goals and aspirations are empowered or constrained by organisational structures. It also requires attention to how these factors change and develop over time.

Many advertisements for teachers ask for 'a good team player' but what constitutes being 'a good team player' is not universal. Some teams require innovation and management of change whilst others need to maintain or stabilise existing school climates and each require different qualities. Furthermore, as schools develop, different qualities are required to cope with change from new initiatives and demands, which can threaten established group dynamics and expose weaknesses.

- What strengths do you bring to your team?
- Which areas do you feel need developing?
- Is there a mechanism in school for facilitating this development?
- Try doing a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis in your school to ascertain the balance between the four qualities.

Suggested further reading

Chaplain, R. (1996) *Pupil Behaviour.* Cambridge: Pearson Publishing.

Chapter 5
The role of senior management in facilitating positive behaviour

There is a growing literature regarding the roles of headteachers and senior managers in schools, which connects to an even larger collection concerned with management and organisational behaviour in general. Inevitably, this single, short chapter is not a review of that literature. Instead, a discussion is offered which seeks to consider the role of the senior management team (SMT) in respect of producing and maintaining an environment where staff feel supported in the management of pupils' behaviour. This discussion will be informed by elements of research into the perceptions that headteachers and teachers have of each other, and my own experience as teacher, deputy, headteacher and researcher.

The central role of the headteacher in the professional leadership of effective schools is well established (Sammons, 1999). As Gray highlights: 'the importance of the headteacher's leadership is one of the clearest of the messages in school effectiveness research' (1990:214). The head, along with the SMT, are charged with strategic planning, including determining the direction of the school (leadership) as well as organising the day-to-day running of the school (management). Both dimensions make important contributions to creating and maintaining a well-behaved school. Being proactive in the development of an effective behaviour policy and ensuring staff have appropriate professional development, support and resources to support the policy at all levels, forms part of the leadership component. Monitoring and maintaining the behaviour policy and classroom activity, having a presence around the school (in teaching and recreational areas), being sensitive to the concerns and difficulties of staff, and being able to step up a gear when things are not going too well or at critical points in the school's development, are all part of the management function.

At the hub of the SMT is usually the head, who is perceived as being responsible for: providing leadership; strategic planning; setting priorities and the tone of the school; safety and security; motivating the staff; as well as overall responsibility for pupils' behaviour. A belief still persists that, in

order to achieve these expectations, a head must have particular individual qualities; however, the suggestion that they, or indeed the management team, must share some common, individual trait-like characteristics is over simplistic.

Individual differences and management style

Anyone who has experience of working with different headteachers will realise that, whilst individual characteristics are important, different contexts call for different leadership styles and personal qualities, no simple style of management being appropriate for all schools (Bossert *et al.,* 1982). Whilst some leaders may be powerfully charismatic or extrovert, not all are. Headteachers differ substantially at the personal and interpersonal level, as well as in terms of how they organise and lead their schools — #8212;characteristics which work well in one situation are not guaranteed to do likewise in another. Behaviour welcomed at one stage of a school's development would be extremely unpopular at a different stage of development. My own experiences, as a manager, and in more recent years working with heads as consultant and researcher, has reinforced these beliefs.

Which particular qualities might be needed by a manager to secure a successful school and which, if any, are common to all effective managers? Sammons (1999) suggests three characteristics frequently cited in the research literature: strength of purpose; involving other staff in decision-making and professional authority over teaching and learning. Identifying and developing these qualities is a *raison d'être* for organisational psychology and related disciplines and there is substantial literature examining this area, some of which will be referred to later in this chapter.

Blame it on the boss

What should the headteacher and senior management team (SMT) do in relation to behaviour management and how might this differ from other managerial roles? The simple, and most obvious, answer is 'manage the school' but this raises further questions. When I ask groups of teachers what they expect of a headteacher, I usually end up with long lists which include: senior teacher; leading professional; manager; leader; supervisor; accountant; troubleshooter; chief executive; politician; ultimate behaviour sanction; facilitator. This diversity is not unlike the list one obtains when asking what is expected of a teacher—educator, social worker, counsellor, and so on. It seems that we expect a great deal from those working in

education. In practice, any one or all of them could apply at any one time, depending on a range of variables including: the climate of the school, its values, stage of development, the perceptions and skills of the staff and the relationships between them—as well as external pressures.

As one head recently said to me: 'They expect me to be all things, at all times, when it suits them! Like me to take the flack and lead the way when things aren't so good, but want me out of the way when they are—it's a bit like being a dad really' (Jim, nine years' experience as a head). Jim went on to say that he sometimes felt put out when, having dealt with something complex and often unpleasant, there seemed few words of praise for him and yet 'it seems staff expect to be told how well they are doing all the time'.

It is not uncommon for employees in any organisation to question the role of and criticise their managers, and schools are no exception.

The process of claiming credit for all things good and externalising failure is known in social psychology as 'attributional bias' (see Chapter 2). Blaming management when things go wrong can be an effective expedient coping strategy, whether or not it is true. Not being seen as responsible for failing to cope limits damage to your (professional) self-esteem—providing the explanation 'appears' credible. Whilst such a coping strategy may be ego-protecting, it is likely to be short-lived. Furthermore, it does not help you to deal directly with the problem, since externalising responsibility puts the problem outside of your control (you probably cannot change this 'inefficient manager') and, in situations such as managing pupil behaviour, it is highly improbable that blame can be ascribed solely to one individual —however convenient that may appear. The head, the pupil(s), other colleagues and parents will also be looking for an explanation which will probably include you! Such misunderstandings and distorted perspectives can create negative cycles of blame which work against developing positive relationships and solving the difficulty.

Low and high profile management: keeping everybody happy

A former headteacher colleague of mine, a man not renowned for sugarcoating his comments, once said: 'A good head should be part of the furniture when things are going well—almost invisible—just tweaking the knobs to keep things running smoothly. But when—as it's bound to at some point in this game—the shit hits the fan, capable of rising to the challenge and grasping the nettle' (John, twenty years' experience as a head). Bouncing between being 'almost invisible' and 'grasping the nettle' is not

an unusual experience for many heads and is often expected by staff. Getting the balance right between the two ways of operating is difficult and, if not achieved, can be stressful for both the head and the staff.

What are your expectations of the headteacher and SMT (or if you are a headteacher, what do you think is reasonable to expect) in:

- deciding the overall philosophy of the school?
- deciding the content of the behaviour policy?
- deciding the sanctions and rewards for pupil behaviour?
- supporting staff dealing with disruptive behaviour?
- demonstrating their ability to manage individuals, groups and classes of pupils?
- providing a screening function for external influences (politicians, inspectors, parents, etc.)?
- providing the final sanction for disruptive pupils?
- how involved in the management of your classroom should the head be?
- how much teaching should the head be involved in?

Jones argued that, historically, the role of the head was perceived as 'simultaneously loved and hated, revered and ridiculed, powerful and naïve' (1988:42). She went on to ask whether much had changed following the redefinition of the head as manager and chief executive. It has been long established by the government that leadership is a central component of school management and the new leadership group announced in the Green Paper on Leadership made this clear (DfEE, 1998). However, the degree to which a good manager also makes a good leader and vice versa is not always as clear.

In recent years, the move towards increased local management of schools and additional responsibilities for the controlled spending of large amounts of money have brought about changes to the general understanding and operation of the head's role. Headteachers sometimes feel that staff do not appreciate the demands being made upon them, as the following quotes illustrate:

> The staff do not appreciate all the other demands on my time. Sure I would like to have more time for informal and professional talk, but there are not enough hours in the day especially with the [new] building problems. They just don't appreciate what I am going through. (Female headteacher)

> I can't understand why they [the staff] can't or won't accept my job
> is to manage and this can involve making unpleasant decisions. I can
> rise above it but I would rather have a more pleasant atmosphere.
> (Male headteacher)
>
> (Chaplain, 2001)

Differences in the size of schools invariably means wide discrepancies
between them in terms of the nature of the relationship between head,
SMT, teachers and other staff. It is clearly not possible for a head to
spend as much time with staff or pupils in a school with more than 500
pupils compared to one with less than 50, and expectations on the part of
head and staff should reflect this. In reality, this is not always the case
(Chaplain, 1995a). Heads often claim that the best part of their job is
being with pupils, what Jones referred to as the 'wistful nostalgia…about
when they knew how to teach well, and make good relationships with
pupils' (1988: 94) but in practice have limited amounts of time to do so.
The belief that the head should be a super teacher and demonstrate his or
her classroom craft to other teachers seems somewhat strange, particularly
in larger settings, given the number and diversity of other demands (not
forgetting the substantive teaching role of heads in smaller primary
schools). Nevertheless, heads recognise the popular belief that they must be
viewed as experienced teachers: 'governing bodies and especially parents on
those bodies…will want a head who has had a lot of experience as a
teacher' (Hustler *et al.,* 1995:127). However, there are limits to the amount
of time they can spare. 'Headteachers have been increasingly taken out of
the classroom' (ibid.: 139). With the best will in the world, the head of a
large or medium-sized school is going to be limited in the amount of time
he or she can spend working directly with pupils. Invariably, heads step in
and fill the gap when there are shortages; however, whilst such activity offers
a short-term solution for teachers, it is questionable whether it makes best
use of a manager's time.

How might managers contribute to discipline around the school? When
things are running well in a school, with pupils behaving appropriately,
working on legitimate tasks and causing minimal disruption, low-profile
monitoring is probably the most useful response. If the going gets tough, or
the school is undergoing significant change, then a more visible presence
and 'hands-on' approach is more usually needed. However, this is clearly
an oversimplification for, if the head is spending more time at the
chalkface, troubleshooting and making his or her presence felt, then it
should not be at the expense of other vital leadership duties. Heads are
often likened to the captain of a ship, but, as Gray and Freeman (1988)

pointed out, the captain of a ship does a very different job to the sailors—#8212;and, furthermore, the ship would not get very far if they did not.

People differ quite markedly, and are often diametrically opposed in their perceptions of what constitutes an effective and supportive head and SMT. Nias (1986) offered multiple, and contrasting, accounts from similarly experienced teachers in different schools regarding their positive and negative perceptions of their heads. In many circumstances, these contrasts reflected either loose-coupled or tight-coupled organisational management (see Chapter 4). Some expressed dissatisfaction with 'passive' heads who seemed to respond too quickly to change. Three teachers described their feelings about such headteachers: 'He always seemed to be changing his ideas…there was no sense or aim in the school, no philo sophy'; The general attitude in the school is "you do what you think", and that's not very helpful when you have problems'; There was no ultimate purpose in what we did… As long as we didn't annoy the parents or let the kids get too noisy, the head didn't seem interested.'

In contrast, those labelled as 'positive' headteachers were often revered for 'setting the direction of the school and leading the way…an old fashioned patriarch *who put them under* quite strong pressure to conform in certain ways *made* the place full of certainties *and* a good place to start in.' Nevertheless there were drawbacks. For example, whilst many wanted the head to lead on formulating aims and policies, 'he should not take this entirely upon himself nor 'deny staff a part in decision-making.' Where this was not happening, it could lead to major job dissatisfaction and disaffection, as one teacher said: 'All she [the headteacher] really wants from the staff and children is obedience. That's really why I'm giving up. I don't feel I have anything to contribute.' Another teacher spoke of 'smouldering in silence' at staff meetings and of the head 'not being interested in anything they had to say'. Many talked of 'mock democracy' and of staff meetings which were 'disguised dictatorships'.

A dilemma for heads, when deciding to extend power sharing and control with others, is the fear of letting go or delegating responsibility. As one head in a recent study confided: 'I need to become more comfortable about delegating tasks to other people… I am aware that I will burn myself out if I don't share out the burden' (Chaplain, 2001:208). This can be especially true when a school has gone through a period of difficulty—#8212;managing a group of difficult pupils or a major change, for example. A head who has maintained a visible presence during a difficult period may find it hard to hand back the reigns if he or she perceives doing so might result in a return to the problem situation. The staff will often feel otherwise, wanting autonomy and to regain control of areas of the school

they consider theirs. This ongoing conflict between ownership of decisionmaking and control is common to any organisation.

The dynamics of relationships between headteachers and staff are multiple and varied. Interpersonal and inter-group relationships vary, contingent on both the individual identities (personal characteristics) of those involved on the one hand, and the social identities of the groups (SMT, foundation, infant, junior phases) on the other. These variations can be in terms of the quality and/or the nature of relationships, irrespective of the size of a school. People categorise themselves as members of groups or as individuals dependent on the demands and what is seen as rewarding in the situation. For instance, a head may identify herself as part of the SMT with overall responsibility for pupil behaviour in one context but as a competent early years' teacher in another, and other people should respect that they are different roles with very different meaning for the headteacher involved.

What makes a good leader?

Prior to 1945, theories about traits focused on identifying the exceptional qualities of leaders, based on the assumption that the people fell into one of two groups—leaders and followers—each having distinctly different qualities. For instance, it was believed that leaders had limitless energy, insight, foresight, persuasiveness and creativity. Unfortunately, these studies failed to identify any universal traits that would guarantee success as a leader. Other approaches attempted to identify particular skills of leadership. Katz (1955), for instance, identified three developable skills for effective management: conceptual skills (ability to see the organisation as a whole); technical skill (such as teaching) and human skill (ability to work as a team member). More recently, changes to research methods have enabled researchers to identify relationships between effective leadership, leader behaviour and individual characteristics—most notably motivation and skills. However, whilst there is an impressive amount of empirical evidence to inform our understanding of the practice of effective leadership, there are still significant omissions.

Zaleznik (1977) suggested leaders determined major objectives and strategic courses, and brought about major change, whereas managers enforced rules and policies or implemented goals and changes initiated at a higher level. Historically, headteachers have enjoyed varying amounts of each role. On the one hand, more 'power' or responsibility has been given to schools; on the other hand, government directives have reduced autonomy by controlling key areas such as curriculum content and

policies. Leaders engage in behaviour which inspires followers, generate high levels of motivation, beyond what might reasonably be expected, in order to accomplish a collective vision—even if that means foregoing self-interest. In other words, they are able to generate conditions in which individuals categorise themselves in terms of their social identity (the organisation) as opposed to their individual identity, and are committed to a common shared vision or aim. Managers, on the other hand, are in a position of formal authority and are responsible for the coordination and implementation of strategies and policies and establishing administrative systems. Managers provide the rational-analytic content necessary for the smooth operation of the organisation. One essential difference between the two is that managers are in a position of formal authority, whereas a leader might not be, influencing change because of personal characteristics rather than formal status.

The behaviour pattern, or style, of leadership was first described by Lewin *et al.* (1939) who referred to three styles: 'autocratic', 'laissez-faire' and 'democratic'. Since then, dozens of different models have been developed, with the number of styles ranging from two to eight. However, there is something of a consensus in support of two styles of leadership — one is person-focused (or person-centred) and based on providing support and participating; whilst the other is task-focused and based on goal setting, direction, and appraisal. These two factors were seen as being independent of each other (orthogonal) but could be present at different times and in different amounts, depending on need. Other writers suggested intermediate states between the two extremes. Tannenbaum-Schmidt (1958) identified four subcategories between the managers concerned with results (task) at one end and relationships (person) at the other. 'Autocratic' and 'democratic' represent the two extreme positions, whilst 'paternalistic' and 'consultative' occupy the middle ground of the model. Later research demonstrated the need for both extremes to be present. For example, Cox and Cooper (1988) in their study of managerial 'high-flyers', produced group profiles within which they identified key areas—including: problem-solving/decision-making ability, vision and people skills—which relate to both 'managerial types'.

Nevertheless there is a popular, if mistaken, belief that one style is invariably better than another in generating a positive organisational climate, which facilitates effective behaviour management. The general consensus among the many teachers I have worked with over the years has been that, if given the choice, most would prefer the 'person-focused' headteacher. They think that such individuals would be more prepared to listen to what they have to say, be more understanding, caring, take an

interest in what their staff are doing and be generally supportive. However, help with problem-solving does not necessarily follow from listening and being sympathetic. The preference for person-centred managers reflects social motivation. People are attracted to others who are prepared to listen to them and, in addition, infer other qualities about them. The person-focused head is viewed as being 'warm', whereas the business-like, 'task-oriented' manager is seen as being 'cold'. The power of assumptions about people based on beliefs about traits such as 'warm' or 'cold' is discussed elsewhere (see Chapter 2).

Whilst the person-centred head may offer support, it is important toremember that social support is multifaceted and people require differenttypes of support to cope with different pressures (Sarason *et al.,* 1990). Whilst the person-centred head might more readily be perceived as providing emotional and self-esteem support, they may be less effective in providing instrumental support or help with problem-solving or direction during crises. Different combinations and sequences of support are likely to be needed as a situation develops, which are unlikely to all come from the same source. For example, let's consider an unusual but extreme event —#8212;a pupil becoming physically violent. During and immediately after the event, you are likely to feel shocked and drained and probably need someone to talk to and help you calm down *(emotional support).* Later, there are decisions to be made about what action to take with the pupil *(instrumental support).* Planning how to deal with future encounters with the pupil and other pupils who witnessed the event may need reassurance of one's competence *(self-esteem support).* Each type of support is likely to come from different people, and take a different form; some will be administrative, some instrumental and others emotional. The head is unlikely to provide all of these, irrespective of their leadership style.

Using the head and SMT inappropriately for support can be indicative of structural difficulties and negative routines in a school. As OFSTED pointed out in their report on exclusion:

> In high excluding schools (but not exclusively) year heads and heads of house worked hard but were often overwhelmed by numbers of pupils referred to them for indiscipline by classroom teachers. Frequently such referrals short-circuited established systems and merely reflected the unwillingness of some staff to deal with problems at source. As a result such problems escalated and, although pastoral heads spent much time with difficult pupils, often that time achieved little other than to register concern and pass sentence.
>
> (OFSTED, 1996:19)

The behaviour policy is intended to represent what a school values and to specify hierarchically ordered procedures and sanctions. If these procedures are being short-circuited to pass on the problem to a manager, it suggests that they are weak, inappropriate or being ignored. Such behaviour could result from managers intervening too quickly or staff who are too eager to pass over control of the situation. Managers who intervene too quickly or who regularly get involved with minor behaviours are in danger of undermining both the teacher's status and their own authority should major problems occur in the future. Empowering teachers by encouraging them to believe they have the power to control difficult behaviour is more likely to encourage practices that result in positive outcomes.

Supporting staff with behaviour management

It is very difficult to put oneself in another individual's role unless you have experienced it. As a classroom teacher dealing with the daily hassles of keeping pupils on-task, completing pupil records, preparing lessons, administration and keeping track with developments in your subject, you may feel that the head or SMT have an easy time—particularly in large schools where the head only has a small teaching role. There is a sense of reductionism in some schools—that everything is about teaching—when clearly that is not so. In order for a teacher to get on with the job of teaching, the development of various systems is required. For example, if pupils are able to wander around a school unchecked, or fail to turn up to lessons without some school-wide response, then classroom management will be affected negatively. Responding to such problems is difficult when you are trying to teach a class of thirty pupils. This is not to say the SMT should spend all day as 'sweepers', picking up all wanderers and strays—but they may well do so at certain strategic points in the day, such as break time, lunchtime, lesson changeovers, and so on.

Heads and SMT are under pressure from multiple sources both internal and external. They have to cope with managing a number of areas: the school, the curriculum, finance, change and themselves. Interestingly, it is usually managing other people which creates the most stress for head-teachers (Chaplain, 1995a) as is the case in other organisations where managers are responsible for largely autonomous professionals.

What constitutes a 'difficult to teach' class will inevitably vary—what is usually common is that pupils are not on-task and the teacher is not using appropriate coping strategies to deal with them. This can occur because the teacher:

- has not learned the appropriate strategies;
- finds difficulty applying them;
- lacks confidence or is anxious, or both;
- finds that the systems available to support him or her are ineffective.

In some schools, what is perceived to be supportive by those offering it, is not received as such by those needing it. Perceiving social support as available involves more than it simply *being* available; it has to be perceived as appropriate. The following case study is one example of how a struggling teacher was offered inappropriate support by the SMT. Following the case study is some analysis of what went wrong.

Phil joined a junior mixed infant school in the Manchester area and was given a lively Year 5 class. This was his first teaching post, having previously worked for ten years as a civil servant. He came across as very confident at interview and had excellent reports from the schools in which he had trained. The head and the deputy had both been impressed and felt he would fit in well with the existing strong staff group. Induction was minimal with introduction to staff, details of timetables and safety rules being explained, but little else.

For the first three weeks everything seemed to be going well, he appeared relaxed with pupils around the school and quickly developed a rapport with his class. The deputy head visited him occasionally in class, during the first few weeks. He soon settled into the staffroom, was friendly, chatty and humorous. After about a month he began having difficulties with a small group of boys in his class. They became increasingly cheeky and disruptive in class. Phil initially responded to this by making them sit right in front of his desk, but this made no difference. Later he had one or two standing outside his classroom for part of the lesson, where they engaged in face pulling, dancing and other amusing (to pupils at least) activities. These distractions eventually had an effect on classrooms nearby, which resulted in other teachers having to go outside to speak to the 'entertainers'. It seemed nothing Phil did made any difference to the behaviour. Eventually, one of the other teachers informed the deputy about what was happening. As it turned out, pupils had already made the deputy aware of the situation. The deputy felt, however, that what was happening reflected Phil adjusting to the school and she did not want to undermine his authority by intervening; however, she agreed to have a word with him. She later spoke with Phil and suggested he spend some time with the 'problem' pupils at lunch or after school, to try to address the difficulties. She also suggested

organising the seating differently perhaps mixing girls and boys around the tables, rather than having all the boys together. She also added that if he had any further problems to let her know.

Phil did have further problems. Following his lunchtime discussions with the boys there was an initial improvement in their behaviour, then others started being disruptive. Phil became visibly less happy and chatty around school and a less frequent visitor to the staffroom. The deputy again spoke with Phil (who was becoming more negative about the situation), advising him that 'things weren't that bad' and she had known teachers have 'much more difficult first terms'. She offered to come into class and help re-organise the children and work together to deal with the 'problem group'. Phil felt more reassured. The following day the deputy joined him for the first lesson. She spoke to the class and rearranged where pupils were to sit and then handed over to Phil to start the lesson before leaving the room to deal with a visiting parent. Later that morning the difficulties began again. A further meeting with the deputy resulted in her suggesting some of the pupils be exchanged with another Year 5 class. After negotiation with another teacher, this was agreed. The situation following the changes started quite positively, but soon deteriorated. Phil left the school at the end of his first year and took up a post in a village primary school.

Before reading further, what do you think should have been done to support Phil? What role should management and teaching colleagues have had in helping him to cope?

Whilst we can never be certain of exactly what led to the problems described above, the following points highlight some contributory factors.

- Whilst the school had an induction programme, little attention was paid to teaching or familiarisation with the school and its pupils. It was generally assumed that a qualified teacher would cope.
- The deputy head, who was Phil's 'mentor', was largely preoccupied with the many other difficulties around the school, trying to overcome lack of resources and staff absence, which meant there was less time to spend supporting Phil. What was offered was little more than a token gesture.
- At no time was a planned coordinated response worked out. It appeared that the deputy relied upon whatever she thought up at the time. None of Phil's attempts to follow the advice were evaluated, to try to identify where the difficulties were occurring.
- Whilst a behaviour policy existed, it was not well thought out and seen as 'unnecessary administration' by some teachers, notably those who

had been there for sometime. The existing staff were undoubtedly 'strong' individuals who were used to coping more or less independently. The school had not recruited a newly qualified teacher for many years, so were unused to supporting individuals at that stage of their professional development. Those who thought more should have been done to help tended to externalise blame to the SMT ignoring how their potential contributions may have made a positive difference.
- Whilst the deputy saw herself as a person-centred manager, many of the staff felt that whilst this was what she said, it was not really so in practice. Other staff thought that, whilst she was an excellent administrator, she was not a particularly good teacher, so perhaps should not have been the one supporting Phil.
- Phil felt uncomfortable asking for help, since he felt he should have been able to manage this group.

Thanks, but no thanks: when is support not support?

Whilst all teachers want to feel secure and supported in their work, and all managers want to facilitate working environments that produce competent teachers and successful pupils, what constitutes appropriate support is not always agreed. The following illustrate some behaviours that teachers do not appreciate—each accompanied with suggested alternative ways of dealing with the problem.

- Being told publicly that their class is the worst behaved in school.

Talk to the member of staff in private and develop an action plan for that individual which may include specific management strategies, structural changes to the class or sending them on a course as part of professional development. Make all staff responsible for change.

- Managers walking into their classrooms, disciplining pupils, then walking out.

The problem with this strategy is two-fold. First, if it is effective (i.e. the pupils make less noise) it usually only works whilst the manager is there, and shortly after they leave, the noise levels rise again. Second, it can make the teacher appear to be sharing the identity of the group being disciplined, since control has clearly been taken away from him or her because they were seen as unable to control the group themselves.

Whilst walking into a noisy classroom may be a welcome intrusion, an example of the management taking an interest, care should be taken to make sure the teacher is seen to be in control. Offering to look after the class and allowing the teacher to remove individuals or small groups to deal with the problem is one way of doing this. Alternatively, having spoken with the teacher first, the manager could act as an advocate at a later meeting between the teacher and the pupils concerned, thereby maintaining teacher control. These strategies clearly benefit from proactive planning, mutual understanding and consistent application.

• Offering simple or 'quick fix' solutions to complex problems.

The case of Phil (pp. 113–114) exemplified this. The deputy, on that occasion, was aware that the situation was complicated and that a number of structural, interpersonal and personal issues required attention. Given other pressures, there was insufficient time available to deal with the situation properly, but she felt she had to offer Phil something. Unfortunately, it was inadequate, inappropriate and resulted in further difficulties for both the school and the teachers.

• Letting struggling teachers get on with it.

Unfortunately the 'throw them in the deep end' philosophy is nothing new. As Wallace pointed out, 'there is still a tendency to leave teachers to "sink or swim" in the time-honoured professional fashion!' (1996:83). She goes on to identify the personal qualities of those who manage to 'swim to calmer waters'. These included building effective relationships with pupils and having clear and consistent expectations. Being too busy or having other difficulties is a poor excuse for not supporting colleagues. It also has a payback for the whole staff group. The degree to which staff pull together is an indicator of the school's organisational climate.

• Taking control of the class without first discussing it with the teacher.

A colleague of mine was recently reminiscing about his first experiences as a deputy head, saying how, on reflection, his enthusiasm in the early days was counterproductive. Whenever he heard staff having difficulty with a pupil or group he would intervene and 'support' the teacher, or so he thought, by engaging difficult pupils, perhaps removing them from class or reprimanding them. Over time he became aware that staff relied on him for increasingly trivial issues, either sending pupils directly to him or sending a

pupil to get him to come to the class to help. He eventually realised that, far from supporting the staff, he was generating a culture of dependency where staff used him as a first-level response to discipline problems. He had unwittingly made them externalise control. Furthermore, involving himself at this level undermined any notion of hierarchical responses to disruptive behaviour. If pupils were seeing the deputy for minor issues, what happened if things got worse?

On the surface, the process appeared to be workable except, of course, if he was absent, something that occurred increasingly as his duties changed over time. Moreover, and ironically, whilst staff were happy to regularly refer pupils to him, they would often complain afterwards that his reprimands were not severe enough!

He gradually withdrew from this approach, making staff take responsibility for coping with the behaviour themselves. He began supporting them in other ways, including covering a class whilst a teacher dealt with an individual, being available to discuss difficulties and setting up professional development sessions on behaviour management. This was done through a series of school-based problem-solving workshops which were supported with inputs from outside trainers.

The job of managing schools is complex and often difficult. It requires quite exceptional qualities and skills to keep abreast of a rapidly changing, often loose-coupled organisation. It can be equally difficult for others working in the organisation to realise this, given the pressures and demands on professionals who have to work largely autonomously. Making time to listen and take on board each other's perspective, being aware of limitations and responsibilities, and having reasonable expectations is a starting point for developing more effective ways of working.

Suggested further reading

Ainscow, M., Hopkins, D., Southworth, G. and West, M. (1999) *Creating the Conditions for School Improvement: A Handbook of Staff Development Activities.* London: Fulton.

Part III

Classroom management

Chapter 6
Classroom environment and climate

Teachers expect pupils to make what Wehlage *et al.* called a 'psychological investment', measured by how pupils 'demonstrate attention to and involvement with their schoolwork' (Wehlage *et al.,* 1989:177). This investment is facilitated by teachers producing a positive atmosphere in their classrooms, through making lessons interesting and stimulating, providing a safe and stimulating environment and appropriate support for learning. Classrooms are represented in a number of ways, including social, psychological and physical dimensions. What constitutes an appropriate learning atmosphere will be different from teacher to teacher and subject to subject and influenced by layout, seating, temperature and smell as well as the quality of pupil-teacher interaction. This chapter examines the influence of selected physical, social and psychological aspects of classroom environment and climate on the thinking and behaviour of pupils.

Chapter 4 highlighted the role of school organisation in managing pupil behaviour. In this chapter, the emphasis moves to analysis at the classroom level. Whilst we are continually reminded of how the quality of interpersonal relationships between pupil and teacher is at the heart of managing behaviour, the physical environment can also exert significant influence. The combined effects of the physical and social environment are perhaps the strongest forces in shaping the thoughts, feelings, motivation and behaviour of pupils (see Figure 6.1).

The physical environment: organising the behavioural setting

Classrooms come in a wide range of shapes and sizes. Some are purpose built, whilst others can seem like converted broom cupboards—neither is a guarantee of quality teaching, good behaviour or high standards of

learning. Physical characteristics such as heating, ventilation, insulation and lighting contribute to the level of physical comfort experienced by pupils and teachers; however, these are health and safety issues and, if problematic, often require structural changes to the building. Teachers can change   other aspects of the physical environment more regularly and readily. Paying attention to and manipulating layout, decor and other physical factors can make teaching and learning enjoyable and profitable. I have observed badly managed lessons in purpose built, newly equipped rooms and some excellent ones take place in corridors and offices. It is the climate generated by the setting and its occupants that matters and, in this respect, the teacher holds centre stage. So what is the best way of laying out a classroom?

Clearly the room's function should be reflected in its decor and organisation, and should transmit what you expect to be going on in there and what is most valued. Posters or three-dimensional objects on display are useful in getting across good examples of what is expected. Piles of paper and junk do not suggest an organised and efficient workplace.

Next time you walk into your classroom, have a good look around and ask yourself:

- how does it look and feel?
- is it an inviting and stimulating environment?
- what do you think of the decor, the materials on show, your desk, pupils' desks and other furniture?
- do you think it is well laid out?
- could it be improved?
- what is good about it?
- what is lacking?

Do you think a stranger would agree with your assessment?

Make a drawing of the room and how furniture and pupils are organised during a lesson. Identify where there are any bottlenecks, restricting the movement of pupils around the room. Make a note of your movements around the class and record them on the diagram. Are changes needed?

Industry and commerce devote large amounts of time and energy to making sure the correct image is presented to consumers and ensuring the layout of equipment maximises efficiency. Schools should think likewise. However, a learning environment that looks good is no substitute for good teaching—a familiar rather than novel observation. Teachers vary in their levels of 'tidiness' and that is invariably reflected in how they present and operate their classrooms. Whilst it is not necessary, nor desirable, for a
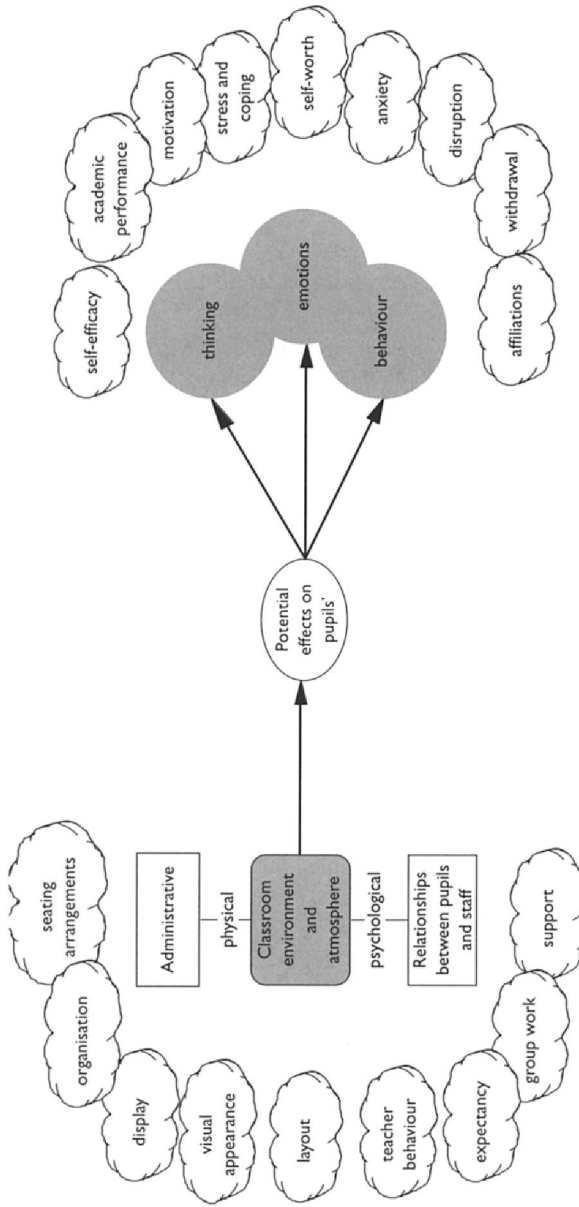
Figure 6.1 Potential influences of classroom environment and atmosphere on the thinking, emotions and behaviour of students.

classroom to be a showroom and look 'unlived in', there are obvious benefits to keeping control of classroom layout and location of equipment —there's nothing worse than planning a lesson, only to arrive and find your overhead projector or the batteries for your equipment have 'migrated'!

You may be a competent, inspired and highly motivated teacher, but also untidy; so you need to develop systems to keep things in check. Having a layout map for the rooms you use and the different subjects you teach is one way of helping to overcome this problem. Without one, trying to remember how you previously organised seating arrangements and the location of resources is likely to create problems. Keeping a written record of equipment needs and who sat where takes a few minutes but is a valuable and accurate reminder of what you did previously and why. It helps to avoid the problem of: 'John, sit where you were last time, over there' followed by, 'But I didn't sit here last time, Sir—I was over here next to Clive …#8230;wasn't I Clive?'…'Yes, he was, Sir' and so on. Annotating the diagram, pointing out difficulties, is additionally useful.

Anyone who has attended a teaching training course will no doubt have been informed of the need to prepare well for their lessons, to be there in plenty of time, to have necessary and sufficient equipment ready and waiting for their pupils to maximise their time on-task. Ensuring sufficient time to complete the lesson and put equipment away safely and correctly is similarly important. Timing in a lesson is everything, be it related to the speed at which you speak, when equipment is given out or when pupils are asked to start work on their own. Not knowing where equipment is in the classroom or not taking the time to make sure materials are there and working is not acceptable—assume nothing! Not having the right—or sufficient—equipment available is a potential recipe for management difficulties; waiting for a pupil to go and get the textbooks you *assumed* were still in your classroom creates a vacuum—'Just read the notes again whilst Gloria gets the textbooks from Mr Muntz!' does not inspire confidence in your audience.

Furthermore, teachers are often less than tolerant of pupils who forget their equipment and should lead by example.

Supporting professional social skills

In Chapter 3 I talked at some length about the value of developing professional social skills. Whilst social skills are human qualities, there are a number of ways that the physical environment can be manipulated to enhance them. Key components of effective communication (eye contact,

social distance, posture and gesture) can all be enhanced by attention to layout. Talking to the back of someone's head does little to aid communication. In large, spacious classrooms, with sufficient distance between desks allowing easy movement, teachers are probably *best placed* to spend equal, or similar, amounts of time with all of their pupils—provided that they monitor that they are doing so. However, many classrooms are smaller and class sizes larger than ideal. Even when this is the case, there are various options available to improve the learning environment: paying attention to where pupils are sitting, how they are grouped, their proxim ity to the teaching 'hub', how often you interact with them, the nature of the interaction and so on. Placing pupils permanently at a point furthest from your desk, whiteboard or where you tend to stand most when teaching implies that they are not valued members of your group. Reflecting on who you are sitting where, and the reason for doing so, can provide the basis for thinking of how to develop positive relationships with pupils who are at risk of social exclusion.

How you organise your classroom, or 'behavioural setting' (as psychologists call it), will directly influence both the nature of the interaction and your style of teaching and, furthermore, should match your behavioural goals. Changing layouts seems to present a problem for some teachers. For example, I am always amazed at how difficult many trainee teachers find asking their mentors if they can rearrange classroom furniture. It is almost as if the desks are welded to the floor, or moving them might release the Golem! The issue of being a visitor in the school is perhaps understandable, but I have yet to find a teacher who objected to student teachers rearranging the furniture. In fact, most are just as surprised as I am at their reluctance to do so.

The two key questions in deciding what type of seating arrangement to use are: how much interaction do you want pupils to have, and how big is your audience? Let us assume, for the sake of illustration, that the room is big enough for the group, and the furniture available is adequate. The usual arrangement for maximum interaction between pupils is to have groups around a table, whilst the more classical row arrangement minimises group interaction. However, these two options represent a continuum with various other arrangements between and within the two extremes, the following are some examples of variations on the two themes.

Organising pupils in rows

'The traditional classroom' allows for more interaction between audience and teacher but not between pupils (see Figure 6.2). For presenting
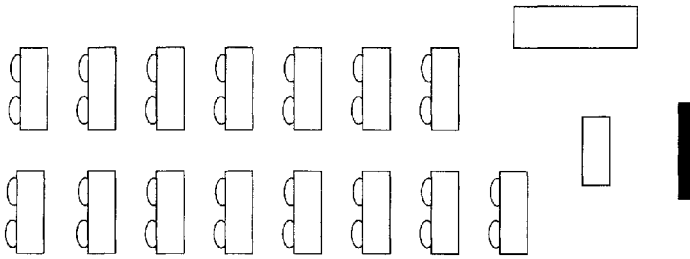
Figure 6.2 'Traditional classroom'.

information, facts and rules to the whole class where textbooks represent the key-learning tool (Phillips, 1983) this arrangement is appropriate. This layout can also prove intimidating to some pupils, since they are required to respond to teachers' questions or ask questions with the whole class as witness—as opposed to the more private possibilities of group settings. Pupils who lack confidence, or who are self-worth protecting, are less inclined to ask questions under such conditions, since it can pose a threat to them. Should you wish for pupils to be engaged in collaborative activity and find yourself in a room organised in this manner, and it cannot be easily changed, putting the desks into pairs or groups of four helps facilitate working with immediate neighbours.

'The lecture theatre' offers unilateral communication to large groups, but does not usually facilitate interaction with the audience—except those in the front row (see Figure 6.3). It is an efficient way of communicating a framework (perhaps if team-teaching more than one class) for use in further discussion with smaller groups. The lack of a two-way channel means paying particular attention to acoustics, voice projection and quality of visual displays to sustain audience attention when delivering material to large groups.

Small group work

In recent years, it has been widely accepted that group work inevitably enhances pupil learning. However, as with many other areas of education, whilst empirical evidence has shown that group-based activity, in some circumstances, is educationally sound (Rogers and Kutnick, 1992), it is not established that it is always so. Merely placing pupils in small groups is no guarantee that (a) their performance will be any more enhanced than if they were to work alone, nor (b) that all pupils are capable of working collaboratively in groups. Some classrooms, where pupils are arranged in
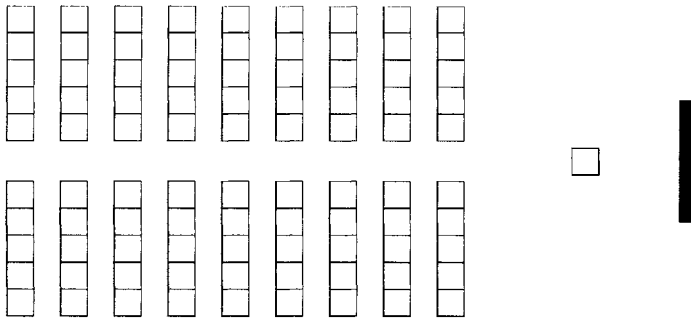
Figure 6.3 'Lecture theatre'.

groups, occur more by default than design. Physical limitations, room availability or making the best use of space or existing furniture, rather than sound educational or classroom management principles, may be the real reason for pupils being organised in this way. Sometimes group work is dictated by the amount of books or equipment available and does not represent the optimum conditions for learning or collaboration. There is also evidence to demonstrate that the level of academic work increases when pupils are arranged in rows, as opposed to groups (Wheldall and Lam, 1987).

Think of a classroom you currently use and ask yourself:

- why is it organised in this way?
- is it the best way to teach this subject or this particular topic?
- how do I know (trial and error, read it somewhere, etc.)?
- do I feel comfortable teaching a class organised this way?
- have I tried teaching this subject any other way?
- could I gain anything by changing the groups or from repositioning or re-organising the tables?
- how do I decide where pupils will sit?

You might try monitoring output and behaviour with the same class organised in different ways.

- What works best for you?

You should also pay attention to the size of the groups, considering the optimum numbers of pupils to engage in particular activities such as

sharing a computer, solving a complex problem or making a collage, for instance.

Decisions about group membership should be guided by objective information (Dean, 1992). Who you are putting with whom and why, for which topics and for how long, are important not just for making behaviour management easier but also for academic and social reasons. Making sure that pupils are *able* to collaborate with each other—that is, ensuring that they have the appropriate level of social competence, as well as academic competence—should be a fundamental consideration. Organising classes where all SEN pupils are in a single group may ease resource use and administration, but may also reduce the positive effects of peer-supported learning (Vygotsky, 1987).

What systems exist in your school to support pupils who have difficulty relating to each other in learning and social situations? Do they merely focus on those with behaviour difficulties or is there an active programme across all pupil groups?

Organising pupils in groups

Although there are numerous ways of organising groups in the classroom, I will discuss three arrangements and highlight their suitability for different types of teaching and learning scenarios.

1 'The coffee bar'—pupils are arranged in small groups around tables facing each other, and is a familiar sight in most primary schools (see Figure 6.4). This arrangement maximises interaction and encourages talk, sharing and spontaneity. It also facilitates group problem-solving activity or project work, and invites interpersonal communication. Such an arrangement also enables the teacher to circulate and talk with each group. Whilst this layout allows the teacher to lead the session, it is not the best way to make a presentation to the class, since not all pupils are able to see the teacher. Furthermore, whilst whole-class discussion is possible, it is not the best way of achieving this, as some pupils will have their lines of communication obstructed.

2 'The nightclub' allows more multidirectional communication than some arrangements, but is also more 'untidy' than any of the other arrangements discussed so far (see Figure 6.5). It represents a halfway-house between the 'traditional classroom' and group arrangement and enables more varied small group interaction, but is more hectic because pupils are not facing each other. However, it also offers a better setting for teacher input to the whole class because none of the
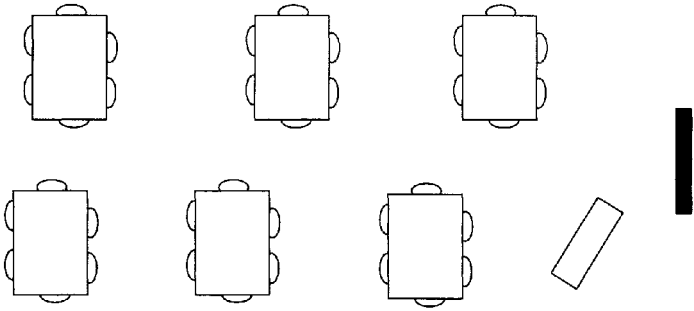
Figure 6.4 'Coffee bar'.
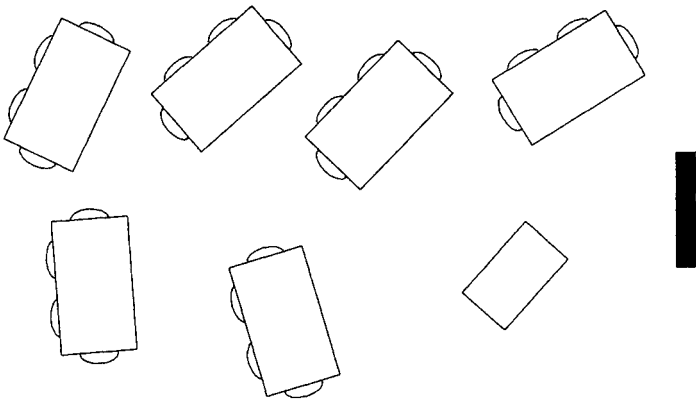
Figure 6.5 'Nightclub' arrangement.

pupils have their back to the teacher. In this arrangement, tables tend to be bigger or put together to make a larger surface area than in the 'coffee bar' setting, thus enabling pupils to move themselves and their work around more freely. It also makes adjustment of group sizes easier during a lesson. However, changing group composition in this way requires caution to avoid creating behaviour management problems and off-task activity. A variation on this theme is to organise the tables so that the overall pattern of the pupils is semi-circular, which helps the teacher present to the whole class.

3. 'The committee table' allows for discussion with groups of between fifteen and thirty sitting around a large single table or group of smaller tables (see Figure 6.6). It is the standard setting for seminars, business meetings and case conferences, since it allows interaction between all members, and enables written material or objects to be shared among,
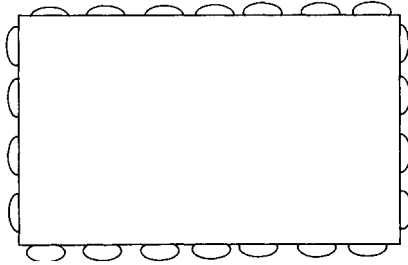
Figure 6.6 'Committee table'.
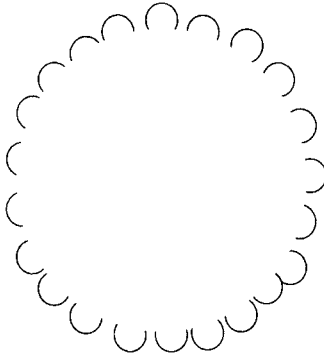
Figure 6.7 The 'open circle'.

or viewed by, the group. Addressing a large group in this way can be intimidating for some pupils and it can be helpful to note who contributes and who is a wallflower and needs support—you can do this using sociogram or flow chart techniques (Hobart and Frankel, 1994).

4 'The open circle' allows for most interaction between group members, and the teacher usually forms part of the circle as a group member (see Figure 6.7). It is a useful format for discussion, provided paper-work or writing is not required, as there are no tables or desks—it is the usual format for 'circle time' activities. As group members do not have a table or barrier between them and other pupils, this arrangement can be very threatening, since those involved are fully exposed and visible to each other.

The psychological environment: influencing pupils' self-perception and motivation

In Chapter 2, I discussed a range of factors which influence the way in which we perceive and form expectations of pupils, and how these might affect our behaviour towards them both positively and negatively. The teacher expectancy cycle has the potential to enhance or impair the performance, motivation and social behaviour of pupils and has been demonstrated, with varying levels of success, on many occasions. The expression or mediation of expectancy comes from interpersonal behaviours plus structural and organisational aspects of the school and class-rooms: where individuals are invited or told to sit; the nature of the work they are asked to undertake; the degree to which they feel empowered to ask a question in class; and the emotional warmth of the classroom environment—these are all potential influences on how pupils think, learn and feel about their selves and how they subsequently behave. It is not easy to demonstrate which factors are most important at any one time, since they are subject to individual evaluation and interpretation.

Attribution theory and pupil motivation

Attribution theory (see also Chapter 2) concerns the explanations people (individuals and groups) hold or manufacture about the causes of behaviour—both their own and those of other people. We seldom know, for sure, the real causes, so we base our decisions on what we *perceive* to be the causes. The process is common to everybody, since it is the means by which people make sense of their worlds and affects the way they behave and how they feel. People can be biased in their judgements, distorting reality to maintain consistency and predictability, making fundamental errors in their explanations. Making judgements and causal analyses can occur at two levels. At the first level, they are 'automatic', rely on rapid cognitive processing and are usually based on experience and routine. At the second level, they are deliberate and time-consuming activities, implying that one might expect more accurate and fair judgements to be made, but this is not always the case—for instance, when making case conference decisions about placements for students with difficulties (Chaplain and Freeman, 1994).

People carry out analyses about the causes of other people's behaviour, as well as about their own, seeking to understand events occurring in their own lives. Pupils, for example, may seek to explain their successes and failures (academic and social). Their conclusions will affect their

subsequent behaviour. A number of factors can influence this process, one of which is the classroom environment.

A number of contemporary theories of pupil motivation have been influenced by attribution theories. Weiner's theory, in particular, as set out in *Human Motivation* (1992), has provided the impetus for the development of explanations as to why some pupils, when faced with new or difficult tasks, engage and persist, whilst others give up at the first sign of difficulty. Weiner argued that thought processes, as opposed to emotional anticipation, were the principal agents in guiding achievement. A central premise of modern theories of motivation is that individual differences are qualitative and not quantitative, as suggested by earlier drive theories. In other words, people don't just have more or less motivation, they differ in the way they think about their successes and failures. These differences reflect different motivational styles, some of which are adaptive and functional, while others are maladaptive and lead to disaffection and disengagement with learning. It follows that appropriate interventions can only be identified by differentiating between the different types of motivational style for failing pupils and those at risk of failing. Since these theories argue that it is *how* pupils think about themselves and their learning that is significant, then the potential for teacher behaviour effects becomes immediately apparent.

How pupils think about themselves and their abilities, and what they *think* teachers think about their ability and motivation, influences whether or not they choose to engage or disengage with academic learning or become involved in disruptive activities. Messages that are unsuccessful in motivating pupils to engage in academic work include:

- when messages from significant others are interpreted as suggesting you are stupid;
- when you find yourself spoken to by the teacher less frequently than others;
- when the questions you are asked appear more simple than everybody else's;
- when you get printed worksheets and others have textbooks;
- when you are seated right at the back, out of the way, or inches away from the teacher, so he or she can 'keep an eye on you';
- when the teacher visits your desk less frequently than others or does so to give you what you consider negative feedback;
- receiving inappropriate help with simple tasks.

Over time, these behaviours can become routine or ritualised and, as a result, some pupils will assume they are:

- unable to succeed;
- helpless;
- resent their treatment and respond negatively towards the teacher;
- work to protect their self-worth, often at the cost of academic learning.

Weiner's model of achievement motivation provides several significant insights into the consequences of pupils attributing particular causes to their successes and failures in learning or social contexts. He does this with reference to three dimensions—locus, stability and controllability. The first of these—locus of control—relates to whether you attribute your success or failure to factors within yourself (such as ability) or factors external to you (such as the situation, other people or good/bad teaching). Thus, if a pupil fails on a test, he might conclude that he lacks ability (internal locus) or, alternatively, that he had a bad teacher (external locus).

However, according to Weiner, this single dimension is insufficient explanation because, although some causes are *internal* and others *external,* they also differ in terms of their permanence or stability. Ability and effort are both seen as internal qualities, but the former is a fairly stable quality compared with effort, which is changeable and hence unstable. Similar comparisons can be made for external factors, with luck being unstable and level of task difficulty being stable. To these two dimensions Wiener then added a third, controllability. He argued that, whilst a factor could have an internal or external locus of control, some could be controlled whilst others could not. For example, ability is usually viewed as uncontrollable, whereas effort is controllable.

Table 6.1 gives examples of some possible attributional explanations to success and failure in relation to the three dimensions. Attributing failure to not having made enough effort (internal, controllable, unstable) will have different consequences than attributing failure to teacher bias (external, stable, controllable). Concluding that your teacher has it in for you and will negatively affect your future, and that you have no control over it, is not the recipe for positive teacher-pupil relationships, nor an incentive to be well-behaved. Why would you want to respond positively to someone who you felt was treating you unjustly? Furthermore, the emotional consequences are also likely to be different—feeling guilty or ashamed if you feel you haven't made enough effort, or feeling hopeless or angry if you feel you are the victim of a teacher's bias.

Adaptive and maladaptive motivational styles

Attributing causes in one direction or another leads, over time, to the development of motivational styles distinguished on the basis of whether an individual's goals are directed towards performance or mastery. Performance-oriented pupils are concerned with image, whereas mastery-oriented pupils are concerned with gaining knowledge and understanding. As Dweck argues: 'with performance goals, an individual aims to look smart, whereas with learning goals the individual aims at becoming smarter' (Dweck, 1985:91).

Beliefs about ability are central to understanding differences between adaptive and maladaptive motivational styles. Pupils who attribute their success to internal, stable factors (such as ability) and their failures to lack of effort (internal, unstable and controllable) are likely to develop a mastery-orientated style (Dweck, 1991). In contrast, pupils who attribute their successes to luck and their failures to lack of ability are likely to develop maladaptive motivational styles. Beliefs about intelligence and ability also discriminate between the two behaviour patterns. Some individuals believe that ability is fixed and unchangeable, whereas others believe it is malleable, as a result of the level of effort applied. Teaching pupils how to think develops in them a view that ability is expandable through experience and practice. Dweck (1990) called this an 'incremental' view of intelligence, which is adaptive.

The individual who is performance-oriented, and who perceives others as making positive judgements of their ability, is likely to persevere. If, on the other hand, they perceive that they are negatively judged by others, their self-efficacy will lower and they are likely to experience helplessness. In contrast, the learning-oriented pupil considers ability to be changeable. Should he or she fail, it is likely to be seen as a challenge or an incentive to solve the problem or search for alternative approaches. The key difference between the two is the degree to which individuals acknowledge the role of effort above ability. If being smart or having ability is what really counts above all else, and a pupil believes they lack ability, what is the point of making an effort since he or she is likely to fail anyway? If, on the other hand, a pupil believes that success is more to do with effort then he or she is more likely to engage and persevere with a task. This is not to suggest that ability is not important; nonetheless, even if a pupil is not gifted, effort can make a big difference. Although it is improbable that any teacher tells pupils that they are 'thick', a pupil may interpret their teacher's behaviour towards them as implying that is what they are thinking, based on how they read verbal, non-verbal and organisational

Table 6.1 Explaining success and failure

	Internal		*External*	
	Stable	**Unstable**	**Stable**	**Unstable**
Controllability				
Controllable	Usual effort level	Temporary effort level	Teacher doesn't like me	Unusual help from others
Uncontrollable	Ability	Mood	Task difficulty	Luck

Note
Example of possible explanations a pupil might use to explain success or failure, based on three dimensions: controllability, locus and stability.

messages from the teacher (where they are told to sit, how the teacher talks to them and their body language). If this behaviour also occurs outside the classroom—at home, for instance—then the pupil is more likely to accept it as accurate.

People also make attributions about their social successes and failures. Imagine a pupil invites someone to go out with her but is rejected, she may well look for a causal explanation. Again, the three dimensions we discussed earlier, come into effect. She may believe she was rejected because she is ugly (an internal, stable, uncontrollable factor) or, alternatively, may conclude it was because the person she asked had to attend a family function (external, unstable, uncontrollable).

The two different explanations have the potential to influence what the pupil thinks about herself and her emotional reaction in different ways. According to Weiner's theory, this experience occurs at two levels. First, she is likely to feel sad or disappointed at being rejected, at not having achieved her goal. Second, if the goal was an important one (she really liked this person and thought they liked her) then she is likely to seek to further explain why she *believes* she was rejected and, as a result, feel either hopeless or hopeful about future success. If she thinks she was rejected because she is ugly—something beyond her volitional control— #8212;she is likely to experience hopelessness, because the cause is down to her (internal locus), it is not likely to change over time (stable) and is something she cannot control (uncontrollable). Alternatively, if she puts rejection down to the other person being busy with a family reunion (external locus), which is not likely to happen continually (unstable), she will be more hopeful of success in the future.

Thus, making attributions to explain events can influence how you think about yourself, how you feel about yourself and how you behave—affecting both your self and social identity. The likelihood of being motivated to repeat a behaviour depends on the direction of the causal explanation. A pupil who concludes, from their interpretation of teacher behaviour, that they do not fit into a class or the teacher does not like them, eventually incorporates this thinking into his or her self-schema. Changing such negative self-perceptions is difficult.

Maladaptive styles: coping with threatened identities

Those who repeatedly attribute their failures to internal-stable-uncontrollable factors (e.g. ability) and successes to external-unstable-uncontrollable factors (e.g. luck) develop maladaptive motivational styles.

Two types of maladaptive style have been identified—self-worth protection and learned helplessness. Whilst, on the surface, the behaviour of pupils with maladaptive motivational styles may appear similar—both make minimal effort or give up prematurely, or cannot be bothered to complete work—the two styles are qualitatively different. It is to these differences I now turn.

Self-worth protection

Ability is a highly valued personal quality in the educational system; perceiving you lack it affects various aspects of the self including selfregulation, self-efficacy and self-esteem. As Covington put it:

> It is not surprising that the pupil's sense of esteem often becomes equated with ability—to be able is to be valued as a human being but to do poorly is evidence of inability, and reason to despair of one's worth.
>
> (1992:6)

The individual who develops a self-worth protecting style is unsure of their own ability, believing they may have sufficient competence to be successful. However, they also recognise that ability is negatively correlated with effort (high ability=low effort) consequently, those seen to make more effort in order to gain success must lack ability—an observation which presents them with a dilemma. Success with minimum effort is an indicator of having ability, which is far more important than being successful. Making more effort than your peers means you will be perceived as lacking ability, and particularly so if the additional effort results in failure (Kun, 1977). The emotional consequences are feelings of shame and humiliation and lowered self-worth (Covington, 1998). Whilst being seen as competent is the best way to protect one's self-worth, the risks involved in trying to do so may be too great, making it better not to try than to try and fail. To suggest these pupils are not motivated would be wrong—they are highly motivated—to avoid the implications of failure. They are also motivated to protect their self-worth and will risk everything rather than being seen as lacking ability, employing various tactics to avoid being exposed—refusing to complete school work, for instance. By not bothering to try, or trying with excuses, pupils can minimise information about their ability. Tactics include procrastination, task avoidance and refusal to complete work, the lasting consequence of which is underachievement (Thompson, 1994). Whilst, in the short term, such

strategies may be effective, their lifespan is usually short since other people eventually see through the veneer, making any doubt a pupil has about their competence a certainty.

This negative thinking can also pervade the emotional experiences of the pupil, changing hope to hopelessness. After all, what is the point of 'working hard' if failure is the inevitable outcome? Despairing of one's worth can lead to acquiescence or resentment towards those who are perceived to have contributed to the difficulty—teachers, for example.

In a study of engaged and disengaged pupils in three Derbyshire schools (Chaplain, 1996a), this feeling was made clear. Disengaged pupils were represented by teachers in terms of pupils' personal qualities and disposition such as: having anti-social tendencies; lacking ability and not making an effort; personality or developmental problems. The disengaged pupils admitted to behaving in ways not conducive with success in school, such as: giving up easily with their school work; impulsiveness; difficulties understanding their work and feeling embarrassed if asked questions in front of classmates or singled out for special attention. Being seen to fail so publicly reinforces a perception the individual lacks ability and lowers self-worth. Hence, the well-meaning teacher, who believes they are being supportive, is in fact perceived by the pupils as doing the opposite.

Teachers attempting to support pupils by offering uncalled-for help or unwarranted praise serve as cues to their low ability, especially with older pupils (Barker and Graham, 1987; Graham and Barker, 1990) contributing to the development of maladaptive motivational styles. The disengaged pupils in Derbyshire also considered teachers: to be unfair, especially to them; felt they expressed negativity towards them both verbally and nonverbally; and considered teachers to be largely responsible for their failure at school.

Determining who is responsible for the problem is far from straight-forward and perhaps, in some ways, of little value since it detracts from thinking about how to provide an environment which is positive and helps to establish motivational equity for all pupils, regardless of ability. Sadly, pupils who float on the border of failure, disengagement and disaffection—#8212;those at risk—are perhaps the least well attended to in terms of resources.

This is in contrast to pupils who are receiving special measures or those considered able. The prognosis for the borderline group becomes increasingly poor when moving into and through secondary school, since access to credentialed examinations becomes increasingly unlikely.

Learned helplessness

Learned helplessness (Smiley and Dweck, 1994) is a maladaptive style characterised by a general belief, by pupils, that they lack ability and without doubt will fail, no matter how hard they try. So, if faced with a difficult task they give up rather than make extra effort because they believe changes to ability are beyond their control and they do not recognise a link between effort and success. Pupils who are 'learned helpless' feel a global lack of control over their lives and tend to externalise responsibility for important events, including their successes, to others. As a result, their success is not rewarding, nor does it increase their pride and confidence because they do not feel responsible. Help from teachers reinforces their beliefs in their own lack of competence. Once this motivational style is established, it is difficult to change. In some cases, beliefs about the inevitability of failure are so strong that attempting to convince them of the value of making more effort, of encouraging learned industriousness, is like telling someone who is clinically depressed to pull themselves together. Indeed, there is a relationship between learned helplessness and acute depression.

Thinking about ways in which pupils' motivation differs is a useful starting point for developing ways of nurturing a positive psychological climate in the classroom. Classroom environments are teachers' territory, within which pupils' learning is on teachers' terms, placing them in probably the best position to positively influence pupils' beliefs about success and failure. Unfortunately, as Thompson points out, 'there is evidence that the potential is either largely unexploited or (more seriously) distorted in its application' (1994:266). Helping pupils to break maladaptive behaviour patterns requires getting them to rethink their reasons for failure and offering direction to bring about changes.

Successes have been recorded with 'learned helpless' pupils by encouraging them to gain control of their outcomes through changing their attributions from external, uncontrollable (luck) to internal, controllable (effort) (Craske, 1988; Perry and Struthers, 1994; Wilson and Linville, 1985). Whilst there have been positive results from this approach, not everyone agrees that merely providing effort feedback for success and failure is inevitably successful. Praising pupils for working hard can produce positive results, but telling them that they are not working hard enough or need to work harder is, according to Nicholls (1989), almost as useless as doing nothing. The relationship between effort and ability is complex. Whilst teachers might praise and reward effort in teaching situations, the prediction of future success relies heavily on estimates of

ability (Kaplan and Swant, 1973). According to Schunk (1987), awareness of both is important; success is achieved by encouraging pupils to attribute success to effort relating to new tasks, but with a move to attributing success to ability as they develop their skills and understanding. One approach to changing the behaviour of pupils who are self-worth motivated is to make them challenge their own self-deception and fears by, first, getting them to identify goals and, second, to face up to the reasons behind their excuses for not achieving them (Mandel and Marcus, 1995). Having an excuse for not having achieved anything or being able to organise your life, because it's not your fault that other people have not done as they should, or taught you the wrong syllabus, removes the need to take responsibility for your own actions.

The focus throughout this book is on designing multilevel approaches to behaviour management and this continues here. The behaviour management of pupils with maladaptive motivational styles, by helping them to overcome their difficulties, is best facilitated by incorporating different approaches at different levels, ranging from the whole-school level to the pupil level. Covington (1998) advocates a rethinking of educational systems, moving from an obsession with ability to one orientated to pupils' future survival, developing a set of marketable skills, a willingness to become engaged and preparation for the inevitability of change. Likewise, rethinking at the pupil level can be through teachers developing cooperative learning environments in which motivation, strategic thinking skills and learning from failure are developed and positively valued. The current pressures on improving performance in British schools are largely based on quantitative models of motivation. Government demands for more exams, more hours and more passes reflect a drive theory approach to education which lacks imagination, particularly when laid alongside other concerns about pupil behaviour, school attendance and stress, especially for the failure prone pupil.

Suggested further reading

Covington, M.V. (1998) *The Will to Learn: A Guide for Motivating Young People.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Chapter 7
Classroom structures
The role of rules, routines and rituals in behaviour management

All aspects of our lives require us to operate within rules or boundaries of some sort, whether self-imposed or determined by others. Some rules seem clear, rational and reasonable—others seem petty and irritating. It is not uncommon to hear people grumbling about not being allowed to do what they want, even though it is (to them) perfectly fair and reasonable.

Rules can be interpreted literally or in spirit, so care has to be taken with wording to avoid unintended consequences. Readers of this book will probably be aware of the minute attention to detail some pupils have when it comes to the interpretation of school rules, in respect of what constitutes 'appropriate footwear' and 'jewellery'; how 'long' a skirt really is and how an unwary teacher can be drawn into a protracted discussion of these details. Such discussions are excellent tactics for avoiding school-work, provide the class with light entertainment and stop you from doing your job.

The functions of rules

In the classroom, it is the teacher who should be in control. Disruptive behaviour, refusing to work, insults, backchat and other attention-seeking tactics are attempts by pupils to take control. Intelligently constructed rules can help establish teacher control and facilitate learning, provided that their meaning is clear, they are supported by relevant rewards and sanctions, and the teacher behaves assertively. The main function of classroom rules is to set limits to pupils' behaviour and to make them aware of the conditions required for success (Charles, 1999). They operate in a preventative or feed forward way to establish and maintain order and momentum. This does not mean pupils are not treated warmly or that humour, developing relationships and mutual respect are also not important. Indeed, a principal objective of having rules is to create a safe and warm environment through making clear what the teacher values as

important to ensure pupils' success and to develop positive working relationships.

One common mistake when making rules is to focus on telling pupils what they cannot do, rather than telling them what they can. Telling pupils where they are *not* permitted to go creates more difficulties than telling them where they *are* allowed to go, since the former arouses curiosity: 'why can't we go there?' 'What are they trying to hide?' A cupboard or storeroom designated 'staff use only' often fires pupils' imagination. Perhaps it contains some dark secret, something tasty or embarrassing, holiday snaps, love letters from the head, exam papers, chocolate (when, in reality, it contains terribly exciting photocopy paper and worn trainers!).

Rules can promote appropriate behaviour in three different ways: first, by helping individuals (teachers and pupils) to cope; second, by framing interpersonal relationships; and, third, supporting whole-school behaviour policies. Effective rules, linked to specific and appropriate consequences, establish the boundaries of behaviour. Where rules are effective, they provide a safe environment in which teacher and pupils can get on with their work.

Rules operate at both the classroom level and whole-school level, the latter representing the core behavioural expectations for the school to provide consistency and predictability for both staff and pupils. Classroom rules, whilst guided by the school rules, will differ and reflect the personal aims, concerns and expectations of the teacher in charge of the class. What one teacher considers 'quiet', will be considered noisy by another, and what constitutes acceptable levels of pupil movement during a lesson is unlikely to be universally accepted. Provided classroom variations are not in conflict with the core school rules, they personalise the context, offering a slightly different angle on things and, in this way, are healthy. The object of having, and publicising, core rules is not to produce a group of robots, but to make overall shared expectations clear, providing consistency, predictability and a solid framework, from which the school can achieve its aims. Balancing whole-school and classroom-based rules provides the school community with both consistency and distinctiveness.

Where the behaviour of a teacher, or group of teachers, differs significantly from the overall agreed policy, it leads to ambiguity for both pupils and colleagues. When discussing school placements with trainee teachers I always direct them to obtain copies of the school's behaviour policy and suggest that they read it in detail, before they commence their practice. I also suggest that, on their initial visits, they try to match what they have read with what they observe, to determine how the rules are

being interpreted and applied, and how sanctions and rewards are used. It is not uncommon for trainees to return and say that a teacher seems to do their own thing, something that the trainees, who are being assessed on their placements, can find hard to cope with.

In schools experiencing difficulty, perhaps as a result of change, or those in which colleagues do not work together, there can be a tendency for individual teachers to rely solely on their own strengths. If the school behaviour plan is not agreed by all, or is perceived as having become weak and ineffectual, teachers may feel the need to defend their own domain more than usual. After all, even if there are problems around the school, provided you can hold your class together things will be OK—won't they? The answer is, 'highly unlikely'. If there are problems around the school, an individual teacher will eventually feel the effects, no matter how competent he or she is.

Rules are hierarchical and have different levels of permanency. At the 'highest' level, there is government legislation, which usually takes time to change. At the opposite extreme are the rules a supply teacher might use if covering a class they do not know for a single lesson. In the latter case the teacher will try to establish order quickly, in a context he or she is not familiar with. How an individual achieves this will vary somewhat and should be guided by three basic principles: that they are legally, professionally and morally acceptable.

Classroom rules have various functions. In practice, they should all focus on making a classroom safe, keeping pupils on legitimate tasks and promoting appropriate social behaviour. One obvious reason for having rules relates to safety. Rules to avoid the dangers of running in class, wandering around or messing about in science lessons whilst others are working, not checking gym equipment before it is used, not warming up before vigorous exercise are clearly necessary and need little, if any, qualification.

In addition to physical safety, rules provide psychological safety at both cognitive and emotional levels. If pupils and teachers do not feel safe and secure in school or classroom, they will be unable to think about learning. Disruption in class interferes with the learning process in various ways; cognitively by disturbing concentration, attention and remembering information (Dalgleish, 1995) and emotionally, making people feel anxious or worried (Ellis and Ashbrook, 1989). Learning becomes impaired when excessive demands result in limited cognitive resources being redirected to control emotions (Ellis *et al.,* 1995). Classrooms with unruly pupils who other pupils *perceive* their teacher cannot control provide ideal conditions for generating anxiety among other pupils who, in turn, will use whatever

behaviour they feel necessary in order to cope; some by acting out, others by withdrawing.

Rules and psychological safety

Maslow (1954) developed a model that provides a useful basis for understanding the relationship between perceived safety and learning. The starting point for Maslow and others such as Rogers (1951), is that human beings are basically good and strive to achieve all that they wish to be (self-actualisation). For Maslow, self-actualisation sits at the pinnacle of a hierarchy of needs, where upward movement requires satisfaction of lower level needs, at least in part. As one level is satisfied, the next highest level need then becomes the target of our energies. Maslow identified seven levels to this hierarchy of needs. Cognitive needs (e.g. learning) appear at the fifth level and are preceded by physiological, safety, belongingness and esteem needs. One implication of this is that, before pupils can devote their energies towards their cognitive needs (learning) or belongingness needs (feeling part of the class) or their self-esteem needs, they will have first to satisfy some of their physiological and safety needs.

At the lowest level of the hierarchy, the needs are physiological. The most basic needs required for survival include eating, drinking, keeping warm and resting. Although considered basic, not all pupils arrive at school having eaten or rested, so it is hardly surprising that they find it difficult to move on to a higher motivational target. The relatively recent practice of providing breakfast in some schools stands as testament to the concerns of some teachers in this respect.

Immediately above physiological needs are safety needs, and this is where rules and routines have a particular significance. It is worth noting here that feeling safe and secure is an individual perception. Telling and demonstrating to someone that they are safe and have nothing to worry about counts for nothing if the individual does not perceive the situation is safe. Anyone who has taught mountain climbing will know that informing someone that an abseiling rope meets safety standards and could support the weight of a large elephant does not necessarily convince the anxious participant that it will not snap when they use it. Whilst it may be scientifically proven and statistically improbable that the worst might happen, some individuals remain unconvinced. Safety and security is not just about physical factors; for pupils in a classroom it can come from:

- knowing what behaviour is expected of them and other pupils, coupled with what will happen if they do not meet those expectations;

- believing that their teacher and other responsible adults are capable of protecting them from harm (physical or psychological) and, if necessary, will do so;
- that their teachers have their best interests at heart and will do their utmost to ensure they succeed.

I reiterate my point, that it is the pupil's *perception* that matters, not necessarily the actuality. The law might insist that a teacher has a duty of care to provide, a safe and secure environment, but that means nothing to pupils if they suspect their teacher might not be capable of doing so if under pressure.

When this uncertainty is sensed, pupils are likely to move from attending to their learning needs and turning their energies towards satisfying their safety needs. It is when, for instance, they observe other pupils refusing to conform to behavioural expectations and teachers are perceived as reluctant, or unable, to stop them, that a lack of belongingness and insecurity become apparent. When I worked with pupils who had behaviour difficulties and who had often made their teachers' lives hell, very few ever said they had enjoyed doing so (although many of their teachers disagreed). During interviews with these pupils, many talked of reacting to not feeling part of the class, to being made to feel different or given 'baby' work, or teachers not making them work or just having a laugh with their mates. For many normally attentive pupils, not considered to have behaviour difficulties, observing other pupils failing to conform, challenging authority and getting away with it, can make them question the teacher's ability to do his or her job and control the situation, making them feel unsafe and anxious as the following quotation illustrates: 'He never shouts at the green table—but he does at everybody else' (Kelly, Year 5).

Pupils also feel unfairly treated and angry when they are subjected to inappropriate block sanctions because teachers cannot control individuals who are misbehaving:

> It's not fair when Miss makes everyone line up at the door, and you have to wait for ages before you can go out to play because it's only Carl who won't do what he is told—so why do we [have to] miss playtime?
>
> (Sean, Year 4)

Under such circumstances, sharing a social identity with the group perceived as 'weak' (in this case those getting on with their work) is less appealing than being seen as on the side of the 'strong' (deviant group), so

there may be a temptation to join in—not because they dislike the teacher as such, but because the alternative provides either a more effective way of coping at the time or because they are swept along with the group:

> Miss was very upset with James and Dean for running off and hiding. We all kept laughing when they were making funny noises and Miss looked like she was nearly crying. But me and Kate really like her.
>
> <div align="right">(Fay, Year 3)</div>

According to Maslow's formulation, it is only when pupils feel safe and secure that they can move on to satisfying their belongingness or affiliation needs. Forming a cohesive class or group is central to teaching in schools but unlikely to happen if pupils feel unsafe and insecure. Furthermore, if the 'legitimate' group does not provide these necessary components, then an alternative is likely to be sought, an option which may be less desirable from a classroom management point of view.

When pupils feel their physiological safety and belongingness are addressed—partially at least—then they can focus on their esteem needs; that is, in liking themselves and feeling they are liked and respected by others. Maslow's hierarchy offers a different slant on trying to understand why some pupils have low self-esteem and under perform. If satisfying their esteem needs requires first taking care of lower-level needs such as feeling safe, secure and part of a group (class) that cares about them, and pupils perceive this is not happening, then it is hardly surprising that they have low self-esteem. This may then contribute to underachievement. Clearly, this is an over-simplification, as there are a range of other reasons why people may have difficulty liking themselves or feeling others like them, or why they fail, but paying attention to these subordinate needs is one way of eliminating some of them.

Maslow's theory has been questioned as to its worth in offering a complete explanation of human motivation. One criticism relates to the fact that some people appear to focus on higher-level needs, ignoring needs at lower levels. For instance, this could include sacrificing personal safety to protect a loved one or comrade, or doing without food and rest to complete a painting or book. Nevertheless, the model provides an explanation of how most people operate in most conditions. From a behaviour management perspective, it offers: a sequential framework on which to build a discipline strategy; illustrates what to concentrate on and in what order; and encourages teachers to monitor that all basic elements have been addressed before moving to higher-level aims.

Figure 7.1 also shows how a teacher's behaviour towards a class might support pupils' needs, moving from early encounters to later in the school year. Early stages focus on defining expectations and boundaries and high levels of direction, whereas in later stages, pupils are given differentiated levels of responsibility and diversity in learning, informed by performance feedback. Thus, in addition to signalling the rights and responsibilities of pupils, rules are also an essential component of the conditions for learning (Rudduck et al.,1996a).

- Can you identify how pupils causing you concern might not be satisfying lower-order needs?
- How might you help them to move on to higher-level needs?
- How do you ensure that your pupils feel safe?

Determining the basis for your rules

So far, I have discussed the role and function of rules, without saying much about the rules themselves. There are a number of questions to consider in this respect, including:

- How many rules should there be?
- How should they be worded?
- How do you go about setting rules?
- Who should be involved in deciding which rules to have?

Essentially, there are rules agreed upon for the whole-school behaviour plan, those specific to particular subjects and those used by teachers as part of their individual discipline plans, all of which must reflect context. There are some obvious 'core rules' which might be found in any school behaviour policy (treating others with respect, not putting others down and responsibility for the community, for instance) which provide the baseline for classroom rules. Think about core rules or behavioural expectations in your school:

- Are they listed in your school literature?
- Do they reflect your personal beliefs about the most important and universal expectations?
- If not what would you include?
- When were the school rules last discussed?
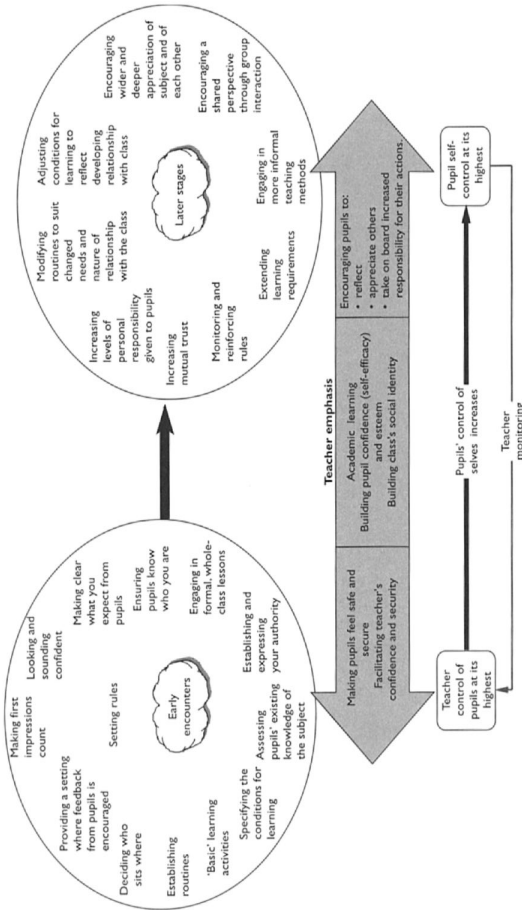
Figure 7.1 **Developmental perspective on classroom management comparing early and later encounters.**

Note
In early encounters emphasis is on satisfying lower-order needs, making pupils feel safe, extending this to developing a class identity and affiliation. As relationships develop further moving to higher-level needs, such as appreciation of other people and of themselves. Teacher emphasis is shown as a two-headed arrow since he/she may need to shift emphasis over a period of time and return to lower-order needs, e.g. re-establishing authority and making pupils feel safe following disruption to routines.

Merely writing down rules does not mean they will be communicated to those for whom they are intended, so attention needs to be given to how the community is made aware of expectations. To do this requires answers to questions such as:

- Who needs to be told (pupils, teaching and ancillary staff, parents, governors, visitors)?
- How often do they need reminding?
- Should core rules be publicly displayed and, if so, where and in what form?
- How do you monitor their effectiveness and relevance?

There are a number of ways of setting rules, and which is used depends, to a large extent, on your beliefs about human behaviour. For instance, do you believe that your pupils:

- should be treated with respect and, hence, rules should be negotiated with them from the start?
- know how to behave so should not need rules to be spelled out?
- are strongly influenced by context and group dynamics, so it is important to let them find boundaries which are acceptable to you and the school and then respond if they cross those boundaries?
- will always try to push the boundaries, so need rules spelled out clearly at the beginning and reminding along the way?

Which approach you favour will reflect a combination of your previous experience, personality, how you feel about the individuals or groups you work with, what you consider acceptable behaviour, along with what the school expects. There is no single correct approach because none fit all individuals and contexts. Your confidence in your ability (self-efficacy) to deliver and enforce a particular approach, along with your knowledge and experience of the school and class, will be important determinants.

It would be unwise, for instance, to opt for negotiating rules with a new class if you were not sure of your ability to negotiate with that particular group, at that stage—however much you subscribe to democratic principles. New teachers dealing with new classes are unlikely to know the dynamics of the group, nor individual personalities. If the pupils are not used to dealing with that level of responsibility and, given they do not know you, suggesting negotiation at that stage may be problematic.

Whilst young people are aware of standards and rules from an early age (Stipek *et al.,* 1992) assuming they 'know' how to behave in your class can

be unwise, since each teacher has his or her personal expectations. Similarly, getting on with teaching and waiting for pupils to do something wrong before correcting them is not advisable, since case law approaches rely too much on being reactive as opposed to proactive.

This leaves us with the final 'limit setting' approach—that is, the teacher spelling out boundaries in advance. This approach has several advantages, particularly when establishing authority with a new group, assuming that the rules have been well thought out, are appropriate and achievable by the group. A limit setting approach is an effective method because it:

- provides pupils with a predictable and safe environment;
- gives a relatively fixed point of reference for the teacher, unlike case law or negotiated approaches, since the rules will have been considered and rehearsed in advance rather than having to think on your feet;
- quickly projects the teacher's control of the situation;
- enables the teacher to consider the content and likely consequences of making specific rules before going into action, thereby being proactive.

However, this does not mean that, inevitably, pupils will not be involved in updating or renegotiating rules, as classroom relationships develop. The objective in setting limits, in the early stages, is to establish control and provide a usable and predictable structure reflecting the safety and security needs identified by Maslow. Over time, the teacher can engage in negotiating new rules, should existing ones become redundant and he or she feels the pupils are sufficiently responsible and able to do so.

Early in their careers, or often when starting a new job, a teacher's primary concerns are likely to be self-oriented and focused on survival and adjustment to the school. Prescribing rules at this stage is more likely to minimise threat to self and satisfy these concerns. As time progresses, a teacher's self-efficacy, relationships with pupils, knowledge of the group, its dynamics and individual pupils develop. Thus, concerns shift from survival towards wider developmental issues. Attention moves to increasing pupil autonomy and preparing them for the transition to the next stage of their development and producing the conditions under which negotiation about expectations is more appropriate.

Making rules work for you

Relying solely on word-of-mouth to communicate behavioural expectations is likely to be problematic and lead to unwanted modifications (we are all

familiar with the game 'Chinese whispers'). Likewise, merely recording them on a document that is given out on the first day of school, half read then put away, is also not a good idea. The most efficient way of communicating rules is to have them posted in your classroom, but this does not mean they have to resemble fire regulations or be lacklustre. I have seen a wide range of different approaches to publicising rules, some of the best being illustrated or in the form of cartoons. A light hearted and nicely presented list of classroom (or school) rules grabs pupils' attention, makes learning them more fun and, hence, easier to recall.

To have a set of rules to cover all possible situations would result in a rather long unmemorable and unmanageable list, so the number of rules should be kept to a minimum. I recommend a maximum of five simply worded and easy to remember rules. Hargreaves *et al.* (1975) recommend five types of rules which relate to: movement; talking; time; teacher-pupil relationships; and pupil-pupil relationships. There are clear overlaps between the different types. Canter and Canter (1992) suggest four generally applicable rules: follow directions; keep hands, feet and objects to yourself; no teasing or name-calling; no swearing. Glasser (1998) also recommends a minimum number of rules but suggests they be negotiated with pupils and based on what constitutes courteous behaviour.

When designing rules, consideration must be given to consequences (rewards and sanctions) for pupils who behave appropriately or inappropriately. Making it pay to be good, as well indicating what happens to those who misbehave, needs careful consideration, must be organised hierarchically and be transparent and fair. Rules supported by rewards and sanctions which demonstrate a clear cause and effect relationship removes ambiguity for staff and pupils. When deciding on which rewards and sanctions to use, it pays to carry out a consequence analysis to help clarify the likely value of rewards and sanctions to pupils. This allows you to consider the possible unintended consequences; for instance, selecting a sanction you would not be able to enforce.

Rewards for completing tasks might range from the abstract (praise) to the concrete (a pen). Behavioural approaches (see Chapter 8) inform us that, without some form of contingency reinforcement (a reward) for behaving in a particular way, the behaviour is not likely to continue. This is not to suggest that rewards must be tangible—for many people the personal satisfaction of competing or persevering with a task is sufficient reward in itself. For others, some form of concrete reinforcer is necessary but only usually in the early stages.

Sanctions should be predictable and hierarchical. 'Fuzzy' sanctions or threats, those broadcasted with an accompanying note of uncertainty and

those which are threatened and not carried through, are a waste of time. Being clear about what sanctions are available in school and which are appropriate for particular types of misdemeanour, how they are organised and who has the authority to issue and carry them through, helps to remove ambiguity and allows both teacher and class to focus on the task in hand—that is, teaching and learning.

A progressive sequence of sanctions for ongoing misbehaviour *might* be:

1 reminding a pupil what is expected;
2 an informal reprimand;
3 more formal reprimand and/or a letter home;
4 separation from other pupils in class;
5 restricting privileges;
6 time out of class;
7 removal from class;
8 removal from school.

The higher the level of sanction, the more likely it is to undermine relationships. Once you have reached the stage of involving other parties (parents or police, for example) consideration has to be given to how relationships can be repaired afterwards.

When threatening a sanction, where possible offer an alternative course of action at each stage of the hierarchy. Offering an alternative gives pupils the opportunity to engage in their own consequence analysis, to reexamine causes and outcomes (usually prompted by a teacher) and consider vicariously the potential outcomes of their behaviour. In doing so, they are likely to make a more rational decision, assuming there is sufficient space and time for those who are angry and feel unjustly treated to regain emotional control. Forcing them into a corner is less likely to achieve this. However, this does not mean failing to carry out the proposed course of action, but offering pupil an alternative course of action is more likely to help when rebuilding relationships at a later time. Don't lose sight of the object of the exercise—managing pupils' behaviour to keep them on legitimate learning tasks and maintaining positive relationships between teacher and pupil. Offering pupils a choice helps save face for both sides, a win-win situation; it also provides space for damage limitation in teacher-pupil relationships.

Should rules be enforced all the time? In principle, yes. If you have taken time to produce a small number of important expectations that you believe are necessary to ensure the smooth running of the lesson or school day, then not enforcing them is usually unwise. However, breaking the

flow of the lesson to deal with a clear, but not serious, breach of the rules is not always the best strategy. Depending on how well you know the class or the individual involved, or whether you are dealing with other more serious behaviour at the time, you may choose not to respond immediately, preferring to use deflection strategies. There are several techniques that can be used to deal with such problems. You might choose to defer your response until later, deliberately ignoring the behaviour or defusing the situation with humour.

Rules about rules

Whilst people differ in their beliefs about how to introduce and sustain rules there are five basic principles which I advise people to consider when deciding how to develop them. These are:

1 *keep 'em positive.* The wording of a rule can make or break it. Rules should reflect what you value and want to encourage in your classroom. Negative rules encourage a negative climate for both pupils and teacher. Negative rules such as 'don't talk' or 'stop wandering around', although sometimes successful in terminating behaviour briefly, do not tend to have lasting effects, nor do they encourage positive behaviours. Becker *et al.* (1975) argued that although such rules might be successful in the short term, they are likely to increase the frequency of the misbehaviour over time.

2 *keep 'em brief.* Rules should include only key concerns. Make sure they are kept brief and snappy as this makes them easier to remember.

3 *keep 'em realistic.* Set rules which reflect expectations that are appropriate and achievable by you or the class.

4 *keep 'em focused.* The overall objective for having rules is self-regulation, which is enabled through helping pupils to internalise those qualities necessary to facilitate their development. Qualities such as rights, responsibilities, safety and respect for self and others help to create the conditions for learning. Rules should therefore concentrate on key issues, including being aware of personal safety and the safety of others; consideration of others; cooperation; honesty; friendliness; as well as attending to legitimate classroom activity and maintaining appropriate noise levels for specific contexts.

5 *keep 'em.* If the rule is worth having in the first place, then it needs to be regularly reinforced. If you find it is not working or has lost its relevance, then either modify it or drop it. Do not make rules ineffective by applying them one minute and letting them slide the

next. If they are necessary they need to be applied consistently. If you cannot make your rules work for you, ask why. Are you unable to enforce them? Are they inappropriate or unreasonable?

- What rules do you currently have in your classroom?
- How do they promote positive behaviour?
- What concerns are they designed to address?
- How did you communicate them?
- Were they negotiated with pupils or presented to them by you?
- What are the rewards for behaving well?
- Do your sanctions work?

Routines and rituals—adding meat to the bone

The primary function of school rules is to develop harmonious relationships among the school community, whereas, in the classroom, their primary purpose is to maximise engaged learning time (Savage, 1991). To be successful, rules must be few in number and reflect general concerns— #8212;for example, being polite to others. But how does a teacher regulate the multitude of activities taking place in a classroom with four or five rules? Rules do not take into account the many ways one might demonstrate politeness, for instance. Being polite in the school dining hall is likely to have a different meaning to sharing a takeaway in front of the television. In order to match the rule to the diverse range of situations in school, and ensure its safe and efficient operation, an additional system to translate expectations into actions is needed. This is achieved by developing an array of routines and rituals which add detail to the rule and are responsive to culture and context.

Routines are procedural supports, used to manage everyday social behaviour around school and in class, as well as supporting teaching and learning. They are often organised around a particular time (such as the start of a lesson, for example), a place (classroom) or context (group work). Their object is to add meaning to rules and to translate their spirit into action. If being polite is an important rule, then the routines established for greeting pupils and staff when they arrive in school or class, how equipment is shared and empowering people to have their thoughts and feelings heard should reflect this. If not disturbing other pupils while working is a rule, then a routine for checking or marking pupils' work, distributing materials and moving around the classroom should ensure that disruption to pupils is minimalised. Well thought-out and communicated routines facilitate the smooth running of lessons, keeping

pupils on-task and maintaining the efficient and well-ordered operation of your classroom.

Some routines operate at the school level (lunchtime, assemblies), others at the classroom level (getting work out, changing activities). There are a great many routines roughly similar to all schools, whilst others vary significantly between schools to reflect different cultures and contexts, as well as the values and beliefs of those responsible for running the schools. Common routines include those used to control movement around school, entering classrooms, getting work out, issuing materials, asking questions, putting things away and so on.

Different teachers and subjects require different routines. There are some common examples such as:

- entering the classroom;
- getting the attention of the class;
- getting out materials;
- marking work;
- changing activities;
- going to the toilet;
- dealing with interruptions;
- dealing with late comers;
- keeping pupils on-task;
- finishing the lesson.

Non-teaching activities such as getting pupils ready to learn, distributing materials and marking work, whilst necessary, can take up substantial amounts of teaching time—up to 50 per cent of some lessons (Jones and Jones, 1990), but well thought-out routines can streamline these activities, increasing the time available for learning. Routines are usually more flexible than rules, so are more receptive to changing needs. Whilst the expectation for pupils to be polite in social encounters is an ongoing expectation, the way in which politeness is represented (routine and ritual) changes over time. Routines usually incorporate a number of rules.

Efficient routines provide teachers with more time to teach, and pupils with more time to learn. Spending time planning and reviewing routines beforehand pays dividends, since it provides pupils with a sense of organisation and order. Emmer *et al.* (1994) found that competent and effective teachers spend considerable time in their early encounters with pupils teaching them routines. This is not to suggest that routines are only important in early encounters; spending time establishing and practising routines results in them becoming automatic and triggered by simple

ritualised behaviours—clapping hands, a stare or folding arms, for example.

Routines and rituals offer a very powerful form of demonstrating authority to all members of the school community. They give shape to, and facilitate, the smooth running of the school day. A ritual, such as assembly, requires participants to behave in a formalised way and includes particular actions, words and movements. It involves a series of routines occurring in a particular sequence. How pupils enter assembly often reflects how they are expected to enter other formal areas, such as classrooms. There may be modifications to give the assembly more status, such as playing music when people enter. The rules about who is expected, or permitted, to speak, and in what order, is usually fairly easily understood. These routines and procedures are usually learnt, at first by instruction and prompting, and later by internalising the various routines involved. The formality of the occasion encourages conformity and those who fail to conform are often masked in large gatherings by the contributions of others. Singing 'alternative' words to hymns and sniggering is usually localised. The 'power' of such rituals is so great that, even when people feel unwell, they are reluctant to leave, even if the result is suffering the embarrassment and teasing from being sick where they sit. Rituals reinforce the status of the members of the community, often represented by who sits on chairs and who sits on the floor (or who has the comfy chairs and who does not), who stands up for whom as a mark of respect and so on.

However, rituals also provide a sense of community and social identity, incorporating feelings of belonging and security which can be emotionally uplifting and within which personal development can take place. In doing so, they help satisfy what Maslow identified as second-level and third-level needs. These thoughts and feelings are experienced by both staff and pupils since such rituals publicly reinforce their position in the organisation and help them to psychologically accept that position. Assemblies are events which promote the social identity of the school and are used as a vehicle for reminding pupils of what is valued—for example, giving prizes for positive behaviour or publicly admonishing unacceptable behaviour. Similar processes operate in the classroom, but with less formality.

In the classroom, a rule (respecting others, for example) will be supported with routines (in this example, pupils raising their hands before asking questions) and is often triggered by a teacher's ritual of moving to a particular place or through the use of gesture (such as a raised finger to forewarn an individual eager to shout out an answer). Other rituals include

standing or sitting in particular places in the classroom and clapping hands or folding arms in order to elicit particular behaviour such as gaining attention.

> Miss Jones gets this really grumpy face, you want to laugh, but you daren't.
>
> (Charlotte, Year 5)

> When Mr Askey thinks you are not listening he makes a cough sound.
>
> (Corbin, Year 3)

So what's the problem if these rituals are well known in school and all teachers use them? Problems can occur when teachers fail to evaluate the effectiveness of their rituals or do not develop new ones to respond to changing contexts. One example of this is what I call the *'ssh'* and *'erm'* ritual. These two sounds are commonly associated with expecting people to be quiet ('ssh') and indicating disapproval ('erm') and are not uncommon generally (e.g. at the library and cinema). If they act as a trigger or reminder of a rule (that you are expected to complete written work without talking, for example) they are acceptable. Unfortunately, I have witnessed many teachers over the years using these two sounds repeatedly but having no effect. They have become automaticised—an employee strategy which has been overlearned (see Chapter 1) but is no longer effective nor contextually appropriate. Whilst the teacher is busy *'sshing'* and *'erming'* the noise level remains unchanged and, worse, he or she is seldom aware of doing it and that it is ineffective—it has become ritualised and beyond his or her conscious awareness. I have videotaped lessons as examples of this, and it is only when these teachers see the video that they realise what is happening. However, acknowledging the ineffectiveness of the behaviour is the easy part; breaking the habit is usually harder since it has become so automatic. Changing to a new strategy requires deliberate conscious effort and practice over a sustained period. Because it is so automatic, when we are under pressure we are more likely to use it than the new, improved version, initially at least. As pointed out in Chapter 1, identifying and overlearning a replacement strategy is sensible, economic and to be encouraged—the continued use of redundant or ineffective ritualised behaviour is not.

Ineffective rituals often begin when new or trainee teachers attempt to replicate the behaviour of a teacher they observed and considered competent—a teacher who, perhaps by merely coughing or folding her

arms, tapping a pencil or using a similar behavioural cue, might well trigger instant silence, gain the attention of the class or bring a halt to a squabble over who has the next turn on a computer. Unfortunately, as seductive as copying the behaviour might be, a new teacher is in no way guaranteed the same response if *they* do so. Whilst modelling behaviour is a powerful learning technique, appreciation of the personal qualities of the teacher and the situation is needed. Merely copying one seemingly 'magical' aspect of behaviour, without reference to the personalised nature of the encounter, is rarely sufficient. In Chapter 3 I discussed how being socially competent requires the selection, use and integration of appropriate social skills (posture, gesture) with personal idiosyncratic features (physical appearance, age, sex). One person's effective use of *'ssh'* or arm folding is another's potential disaster. In addition to social skills, other factors that influence the authority of rituals include time, control of space, objects and setting, power and leadership.

How effective are your rules and routines?

To determine the effectiveness of your rules and routines requires monitoring and evaluation. You can do this using a form similar to that shown in Table 7.1. Self-evaluation in this way will give you some insight as to whether or not particular routines are working, need updating or replacing. If they are working, well that's fine; as the old saying goes, 'if it ain't broke don't fix it!' Nevertheless, it is worth remembering my earlier comments (Chapters 1 and 3) regarding the difficulties of self-evaluation, and   how they can be overcome with the assistance of a trusted colleague or use of audiovisual equipment. Feedback from these sources can be used to identify any automatic behaviours, of which you may not be consciously aware, but which may be undermining the effectiveness of your routines.

Evaluate your routines

Table 7.1 gives an example of the routines which might be used to introduce a lesson. Alongside each is a grid for evaluating their effectiveness in achieving the required objective. This can be used to highlight what is working well and what is not, as well as to identify priorities for change.

- Have you established what routines you need?
- How might they be adapted for different groups or classes?
- Do your routines reinforce the rules and generate the climate you want to promote in your classroom?

Table 7.1 Evaluating classroom routines

Routine	Behaviour	Works well	Usually works	Not working	Action
Getting the class ready for work	Pupils walk quietly into the room		x		
	They go to their desks	x			
	I check pupils are sitting where I want them to be			x	Will produce a seating plan and direct pupils on arrival at class
	I ask them to get out the appropriate equipment	x			
	I get their attention		x		
Exchange greetings	I say hello	x			
	They respond		x		
Commencing the lesson	I introduce the topic	x			
	They are invited to ask questions	x			
	I reinforce what they have to do	x			

- Which of your routines work well?
- Why is that?
- Which of your routines are problematic?
- Can you identify a reason why that might be the case?

Rules and routines are not an alternative to good teaching; they will not be successful if they are not well thought out, or if a teacher is not sufficiently assertive to enforce them. Along with other mechanisms discussed in this book, they do have the potential to ensure a smooth-running classroom, providing a key component of a teacher's classroom management plan. When carefully considered, planned and monitored, rules, routines and rituals are useful tools for a teacher managing pupil behaviour.

Suggested further reading

Chaplain, R. (1996) *Pupil Behaviour*.Cambridge: Pearson.

Part IV

Working with difficult pupils

Chapter 8
Managing pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties
When the going gets tough

Of all pupils in school, those with emotional and behavioural difficulties (EBD) are probably responsible for the highest levels of stress among teachers (Travers and Cooper, 1996). Pupils with EBD are a heterogeneous group which includes those who internalise their behaviour and are withdrawn, as well as those who externalise their behaviour and act in confrontational ways. The latter tend to receive the most attention, both in terms of teacher time and in the literature, since they are very difficult, if not impossible, to avoid.

In this chapter I will focus on three areas:

- what are behaviour difficulties?
- assessment issues;
- intervention.

If not already aware, the reader should be in no doubt that the long-term effective management of these pupils is hard work. Whilst bringing about change can be very rewarding, it is often frustrating, unpredictable and draining both emotionally and physically. Various intervention techniques have been developed to support pupils with EBD, based on different psychological perspectives on human behaviour. I will discuss three popular and contrasting approaches: behavioural, cognitive-behavioural and humanistic, all of which have proved effective in changing the behaviour of pupils with EBD. Deciding which technique to use depends on:

- your beliefs about the causes of behavioural difficulties;
- your school's ethos and behaviour policy;
- the nature of the behaviour difficulty causing concern;
- resources available to you.

List what you consider to be the main causes of EBD. How many of the causes on your list are located within the child and how many the result of the environment (for example, schooling, parenting, low socio-economic status)? What are the possible teaching implications of attributing causes to the child as opposed to the environment?

What are behavioural difficulties?

Emotional and behavioural difficulties are wide ranging and are, at one level, classified as a special educational need. Teachers 'know' what they mean by the term, but their pupil with behavioural difficulties may be very different when with other teachers, and it is seldom the case that pupils exhibit behavioural difficulties with all teachers. The definition of EBD has a long and complicated history. Various terms have been used to refer to this group (including 'maladjusted, disturbed', 'disturbing') and an unhealthy relationship has often been assumed to exist between EBD in school and anti-social behaviour in the wider community. Many of the terms used to describe these pupils are used in a way which implies a common unproblematic understanding when, in practice, this is not the case. Images of pupils with EBD can stir strong emotions among teachers and other professionals, negatively affecting the expectations and social behaviours of those involved, destabilising relationships. So what is it about EBD that creates such concern? Difficulties can be identified in terms of the kind of challenges (whether personal and interpersonal or organisational and structural) they present.

Personal and interpersonal challenges

Teaching pupils with EBD can be complicated because:

- they present a challenge to teachers' perceived competence—because some pupils with behavioural difficulties relentlessly test teachers' ability to manage them and wear them down in the process;
- where the difficulty is held to be caused by something within the pupil, for example, he or she is psychologically dysfunctional or genetically different, then the prognosis is poor and will probably need intervention by specialists outside school;
- if the difficulty in school is seen as emerging from dysfunctional relationships in the family home, then there is little, if anything, that can be done by teachers to bring about change;

- many pupils with behavioural difficulties are unpredictable, and there are various reasons for this. One is that many lack social competence, which can make social encounters difficult for them to interpret and, thus, stressful. As a result, the pupil uses inappropriate strategies in order to cope, including angry outbursts, sulking or destructive behaviour, making matters worse;
- pupils who externalise their difficulties (acting out, aggression or viol ence) can be frightening, making it difficult to build positive teacher-pupil relationships;
- many pupils with behavioural difficulties under-perform academically, which can be frustrating when a teacher is convinced that the pupil has ability. Some deliberately destroy good pieces of work, just to gain attention, albeit negative;
- it is commonly held that behavioural difficulties in young children (tantrums, aggression, defiance) are predictive of bigger problems to come (such as criminality)—something which is, in fact, not necessarily the case. Chazan *et al.* (1994) also argued that aggressive behaviour in young children is often a precursor to developing assertiveness;
- interpretations of other behaviours can be contradictory. For example, one pupil's 'behavioural difficulty' is another's 'high spirits'. Many predictions and explanations draw on information which is way beyond the behaviour itself. Social class, context, dress, sex and ethnicity are all factors which can affect the interpretation put on behaviour and subsequent beliefs about future outcomes for a pupil.

> We have all borne witness to the screaming four year old in the supermarket, demanding a new toy or chocolate bar, and have probably heard comments from 'spectators' such as, 'What she needs is…' or 'lf he's like that now he will be a right one when he gets older' or… The poor woman, having to put up with that…' and so on.
>
> Ask yourself to what extent context is important: is this type of behaviour more acceptable in the supermarket than in a restaurant? Is the age of the adult in charge of the child important? Would you think differently if the woman with the child appeared to be seventeen or thirty-three years of age? What does this tell you about interpreting behaviour?

Supporting children with behavioural difficulties earlier, rather than later, is usually preferable since the behaviours will be less well-established and therefore require less intrusive interventions. However, care must be taken

not to overreact and misinterpret normal developmental behaviour as predictive of a future catastrophe.

Organisational and structural challenges

Not all concerns about pupils with behavioural difficulties are related to personal and interpersonal issues; equally, there are issues which are inherent in the structure and organisation of education, because:

- there is a wide range of differing definitions and understandings of what constitutes behavioural difficulties, both within education and other services. These occur because of different beliefs about the causes of human behaviour and about how to intervene;
- behavioural difficulties, unlike other learning difficulties, suffer from a lack of normative data. Measuring reading or maths competence is far 'easier' than trying to measure the degree to which someone's behaviour deviates from the 'norm';
- whilst there are a number of different interventions available (everything from anger management classes to the use of a therapeutic milieu), one enduring problem is how, and when, to measure outcomes. Unlike interventions focused on academic skills, where improved performance is readily measured using *largely* trusted tests, similar confidence is often not shared with social behaviour. Whereas 9×9=81 anywhere, improved behaviour in one class may not be repeated in others. Nor is there any guarantee that it will be sustained over time. The problem of reliably measuring behavioural outcomes has been discussed in detail elsewhere (Chaplain and Freeman, 1994);
- many pupils experiencing behavioural difficulties are involved with more than one human service agency, such as social services, medical professionals and the police. Whilst, on the surface, multi-agency involvement may sound like a good idea, since it involves the mobilisation of more resources, the opposite can frequently be the case. Lack of a shared philosophy, professional ethics and practice can unwittingly work against the interests of pupils and their families. Of all the professionals involved, it is usually teachers who have the most contact with the pupil, but that is no guarantee that they will be kept informed of what professionals outside education are doing because of regulations governing practice and access to information (Chaplain and Freeman, 1994).

Defining behavioural difficulties

So what exactly are behavioural difficulties? The DfE (1994) offered an official catch-all definition in *Circular 9/94—Pupils with Problems: The Education of Children with Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties:*

> Children with EBD are on a continuum. Their problems are clearer and greater than sporadic naughtiness or moodiness and yet not so great as to be classed as mental illness …#8230; Emotional and behavioural difficulties range from social maladaptation to abnormal emotional stresses. They are persistent (if not necessarily permanent) and constitute learning difficulties.
>
> (DfE: 7)

When a pupil's behaviour is close to the 'mental illness' end of the continuum, identification can be made with some confidence. However, being specific about at what point 'sporadic naughtiness' or 'moodiness' translate into EBD can be somewhat more difficult. Determining the cut-off point depends on a number of issues, ranging from individual beliefs through whole-school policy to legislation. The tolerance level of a school and its staff will influence the point at which outside support is invited to become involved, or when the statementing process is started. This variation can result in the different treatment of pupils exhibiting very similar behaviour between schools only a short distance away from each other.

> EBD may show through withdrawn, depressive, aggressive or selfinjurious tendencies. There may be one or several causes. Family environments or physical or sensory impairments may be associated.
>
> (DfE: 4)

This part of the definition raises another issue: the extended complexity of the difficulties. Family environments may contribute to the difficulties, to a lesser or greater extent, but these are contexts over which teachers have no control. In some cases, where there are family difficulties, other agencies such as social services, may well be involved, which may be helpful if they are prepared to support the school and provide an extended support system for the pupil.

> Whether the child is judged to have EBD will depend on the nature, frequency and persistence, severity, abnormality or cumulative effect

of the behaviour compared with normal expectations of a child of the age concerned.

There is no absolute definition.

<div align="right">(DfE: 4)</div>

References to 'normal' and 'abnormal' are problematic—the age-old question of what is 'normal' generally and what is 'normal' in the particular context persists. Being labelled as having 'abnormal' behavioural difficulties is unlikely to make you popular.

The statement that 'EBD is often engendered or worsened by the environment including schools' or teachers' responses' (DfE: 4) recognises the potential of teachers to influence behaviour difficulties in either direction—improvement or exacerbation.

Assessing behavioural difficulties

Assessment is the keystone to teaching; without it, teaching could not occur. Teachers are continually engaged in making assessments about the social and academic behaviour of their pupils. These assessments include formal and informal components, as well as making judgements about existing and predicted behaviour of pupils.

There are a number of instruments available to measure social behaviour and behaviour causing concern. Coping with pupils who have EBD can be a very emotional experience. Feeling anxious, angry, humiliated and even hopeless are not uncommon, particularly in circumstances where there are public challenges to professional competence. Such encounters can lead staff to seek solutions which may include using measures to confirm that the pupil is different and, hence, in need of special attention. Directing attention to the 'pupil's problem' takes the pressure away from the teacher. It can, however, result in a desperate search for 'quick fix' solutions, to ease the pressure and lower the temperature in a fraught situation. It may also result in the pupil being removed from school, which, whilst offering a short-term solution for staff, is not always a true solution for the pupil—or even for the staff in the long term. Unfortunately, some assessment tools serve to make matters worse, uncovering more complex problems, and resorting to such strategies when under pressure can be counterproducti ve.

It is all too easy to become prematurely focused on which measure to use, just because one exists, rather than first determining how much information already exists. Will the results of a short inventory really tell you any more than what is already known and recorded? To avoid rushing into assessing a pupil, I recommend first seeking answers to six questions:

- why are we assessing this pupil?
- what should we be assessing?
- how can we best assess this behaviour?
- who should carry out the assessment?
- where should the assessment be carried out?
- when should the assessment be carried out?

Why are we assessing this pupil?

Asking why a pupil needs additional assessment is an important first stage and should be considered together with 'who is seeking the data and for what purpose?' Another issue is whether the assessment is to explore the pupil's difficulties in more depth or to confirm what you already know. The two questions can mean very different things—the former appearing more diagnostic, a search for the causes of a difficulty or to perhaps obtain baseline data, on which to base future observations. The second is often used to seek 'formal' evidence to support existing knowledge, insight or intuitive beliefs about an individual. Test results are often perceived as more official and scientific than data collected by other means, even if they are not. However, it is salient to ask, particularly where there are gaps in existing records. It is also used to query what, if any, additional or useful knowledge can be acquired through engaging in further data collection. In other words, do not get drawn into the process of collecting data just because it can be collected; ask why it is needed.

What behaviour do we need to assess?

Having determined why we need to assess, the next question is what do we need to know and how might this influence how we collect the information? The identification of gaps or inconsistencies in existing information helps decide what additional information is required.

Select a pupil's file at random. Read through it. What do you think about the quality of information recorded? How much is factual information and how much is inference? Is your recording of pupil behaviour informative, and in what way?

You should not set out to collect information which merely confirms what you already think. I discussed bias in teacher expectancy in Chapter 2, a process to be especially aware of when assessing young people with EBD. If data gathering is to be valid, it should be done in as detached a manner as possible, to minimise bias. Keeping an open mind about what is happening offers a greater chance to redefine the situation and change

our perceptions of what is, in fact, happening—a process familiar to those involved in counselling.

So what might be asked, and are all key players agreed? There are a number of possibilities, some relate to the pupil, others to the situation. Questions might focus on all, or some of the following:

- what are the pupil's qualities (disposition, learning or motivational style, social skills)?
- what are his or her interpersonal relationships (with peers, with teachers, in and out of class, ancillary staff)?
- organisational factors such as classroom environment, teaching styles, curriculum focus, learning resources, staffing?
- social behaviour, academic competence, or both (levels of academic performance, social competence)?
- information from outside the school (family, other agencies).

How should we assess this behaviour?

Having established there is a need to assess, and agreed what you want to assess, there follows the more commonly asked question: how do you set about doing so? Possibilities include:

- has the pupil been assessed previously? When did it take place? What was discovered? What can we gain from the findings of previous attempts?
- where is the shortfall in our knowledge of this pupil?
- if more information is needed, what is the most effective and relevant way to do so (bearing in mind costs, staff availability and training in assessment techniques)?

There are two different ways to approach data gathering.

Scales and checklists. There are a number of measures on the market, some, but not all of which, are available to teachers (e.g. Elander and Rutter, 1996); others require specialist knowledge or training. You could design your own, but need to be aware of reliability and validity issues (Kershner and Chaplain, 2001).

Open recording. This approach includes a range of methods ranging from recording everything that goes on to focusing on specific events (such as temper tantrums or refusal to work). You might, for example, employ audio or visual recording techniques or a colleague to observe what is going on. Alternatively, a diary approach might be useful in recording behaviour from lesson to lesson, over a fixed period, to map changes in different

situations. This approach usually requires more time to collect data than closed scales, but the data are usually more detailed.

The two approaches differ principally in the type of data recorded. In the first example, the lists used determine what behaviour is recorded, which may mean 'fitting' an observation to a particular category. In the second approach, data are recorded in a more open-ended manner, which has implications for how it is analysed. With the checklist, there is often a scoring key that provides a numeric score, which is usually linked to a category, or level of behaviour, and often comes with details of how the general population is distributed on the scale. Open data are more qualitative and interpretation is down to the individual or group carrying out the analysis.

Who should carry out the assessment?

Those directly involved with the pupil are usually a good source of data. However, it is not always wise for those working directly with a pupil to be involved in all aspects of the assessment, because the relationship may undermine objectivity or provoke ritualised responses.

Someone who knows the pupil may help them feel comfortable but, because they are part of the same system, the pupil may view them as having a vested interest, or feel that their knowledge of the situation might unduly influence the outcome. Alternatively, a stranger might be perceived as being less likely to have a vested interest, but then the pupil may find someone they do not know more difficult to talk to. Who should interview or observe a pupil depends on what data are being collected, and under what circumstances. There is no simple answer.

Where should the assessment be carried out?

In order to understand behaviour, it should be contextualised. Shouting in a mathematics class may sound abhorrent, but less so in a drama production. The administration of scales or observation of behaviour should be carried out in the least inappropriate environment. If a pupil is exhibiting behavioural difficulties in science lessons, then recording their behaviour in a geography lesson may provide an interesting comparison, but is unlikely to offer much to the understanding of what happens in science. However, the science context may be considered too dangerous.

There may be other safety concerns and observing some behavioural difficulties may be ethically unsound. For example, recording the behaviour of a pupil who is physically aggressive, in a busy classroom, can put other

pupils and the teacher at risk. There are a number of things to consider in deciding where to assess a pupil. Has the behavioural difficulty only occurred in one subject or classroom or area of the school, or has location not appeared to matter? And, in support of this, have all staff, including ancillary staff, been asked for their observations? Does the behaviour change when you manipulate the environment (changing teacher, group or room for example)?

If it is considered inappropriate or unsafe to observe particular behaviour in certain contexts, you could do so in a more controlled environment, perhaps with fewer pupils present. However, under such conditions, account needs to be taken of how this 'alien' environment might influence the pupil's behaviour when analysing the results. Similarly, taking account of the potential influence of observer's presence, especially in areas pupils consider their own (e.g. the playground), is important.

When should the assessment be carried out?

If you are planning to carry out specific data collection, you will need to decide when is the most appropriate time to do so (during lessons, after school, in recreation periods) and over what period of time the behaviour should be observed. This decision depends on what you have identified to observe. How long or how often to observe particular behaviour, and how many observations are necessary to provide a representative sample, needs careful consideration. Staff time and training, the needs of other pupils and reliability are all important considerations in this respect.

Helping pupils overcome their behavioural difficulties

There are a large number of different approaches available designed to help pupils overcome EBD. Some are designed for use in special environments, whereas others can be used with success in the mainstream classroom. Whilst there are a variety of approaches, all are based on psychological theories of human behaviour and development. To apply them effectively requires some knowledge of these theories.

While these methods focus on the pupils, the difficulties may be occurring because of environmental influences. It is assumed, therefore, that possible organisational and structural factors (curriculum, timetable, teaching styles) and interpersonal factors have first been explored and eliminated as major causes, before embarking on these more extreme courses of action with pupils. These intensive strategies should, therefore,

be considered a last resort However, it is also important to note that many of the approaches include techniques and ways of working which are useful for behaviour management and teaching in general. For example, developing helping relationships (humanist approaches), the value of positive reinforcement (behavioural approaches) and developing problem solving strategies (cognitive behavioural approaches) are all useful to everyday teaching. The explanations and examples offered are necessarily brief in this volume; however, additional references are provided and you are strongly recommended to read widely before attempting to put these methods into action. Whilst the approaches are different in their understanding of human behaviour, they all share the same goal—to empower the pupil to control his or her own behaviour—but differ in the ways they achieve this aim. None of these, or any other approaches, are magical; each requires attention to detail for them to be effective.

I will discuss examples of:

- behavioural approaches;
- humanistic approaches;
- cognitive behavioural approaches.

The three approaches differ in terms of focus, in their premise about the causes of EBD and the role of the helper (teacher) in addressing those difficulties. Table 8.1 contrasts the main features of each approach.

Behavioural approaches

Behaviourists (unsurprisingly) are concerned with overt behaviour. Whilst thinking or covert behaviours are recognised (Skinner, 1989), because they cannot be observed, they are seen as less relevant. The central principle of behaviourism is that all behaviour is learned and so can be unlearned and replaced with alternative behaviour, by offering the right reward. Behavioural approaches represent a family of approaches, not just one. Historically these approaches owe much to the work of Watson (1913), Pavlov (1927) and Skinner (1953). Behaviourists argue that we are born with a blank sheet, except for some instinctive behaviour. The fundamental difference between a child and an adult's knowledge is quantitative and relates to the amount of learning each has been exposed to. We tend to learn (repeat) things for which we receive a reward.

Learning is explained in terms of the relationship between stimulus, response and reinforcement. If a child smiles (stimulus) and her mother responds by smiling back and giving him or her a hug (reward), the child

is likely to repeat the behaviour. Praising (reward) a pupil for their effort in class (stimulus) may motivate that pupil to work harder, in order to gain more praise. However, of equal importance is the degree to which a pupil considers the reward as appropriate. Being praised publicly may not be seen as rewarding to some pupils, who would rather just have a note in their exercise book. Some pupils need more tangible rewards, a prize or gift for their efforts. Others are self-reinforcing; they, in effect, reward themselves for their successes. Behavioural difficulties result from pupils being inappropriately rewarded for their behaviour or rewarded for unacceptable behaviour, as in the case study on p. 173.

Case study

From an early age, Billy had never enjoyed maths nor had he experienced much success in the subject. In maths lessons he would disturb other pupils and did not pay attention to Miss Jones, his teacher. When his disruptive behaviour became unacceptable to Miss Jones, she would send him to Mr Wills, the headteacher where he would stay until the end of the lesson. As Mr Wills was invariably busy, he would give Billy jobs such as tidying an equipment cupboard, which, for Billy, was much more fun than maths. The misbehaving in maths and sending to the head became ritualised behaviour for all involved and proved hard to break.

There are four points to make about the case study. First, it is not acceptable for a pupil to be spending time off legitimate learning tasks (however important the equipment cupboard might be). Second, what constituted an appropriate reinforcer in this case (the store cupboard) was preferable to having to spend time wrestling with maths, despite teachers informing Billy of the importance of maths to his future. Third, the ritual provided a coping strategy for all three individuals, since each was operating away from the other. Fourth, the habitual nature of the process made it difficult for people to stand back and think out alternative ways of dealing with the problem.

Negative cycles can be self-reinforcing, destructive and pupils locked into them can feel helpless. Many rituals develop by chance and, often, none of the parties involved are aware of it. A class observing a negative cycle developing between a teacher and a pupil frequently collude to focus attention away from their own misbehaviour. Pupils regularly in trouble are blamed automatically, sometimes even in their absence.

Table 8.1 Comparison of the key differences between three approaches to intervening with behavioural difficulties

Approach	Role of helper	Object	Assumptions	Method
Behavioural	Directive	To make pupil self-reinforcing	Behaviour is the result of stimulus–response chains	Behaviour analysis and modification
Cognitive–behavioural	Directive	To get pupil to self-regulate and think rationally	Behaviour results from internal causes – thinking and emotions	Cognitive restructuring
Humanistic	Non-directive	To help the pupil move towards self-actualisation	Behaviour results from balance between self-regard and regard from others	Warm and genuine relationships

Think of a class or an individual with whom you may have fallen into ritualised negative behaviour:

- how do you greet them?
- what sort of conversations do you have with them?
- do you feel tense when you are with them?

Making a conscious effort to change what has become a negative ritual can have significant effects. Making a conscious effort to be more polite when you think the group is rude and ignorant, or using humour when you would routinely use a reprimand, can produce positive effects. Changing the ritual is, in effect, changing part of the chain between stimulus and reinforcer.

It is clear that applying behavioural approaches to the classroom places the teacher in control of behaviour change. Many behaviourists believe that this is the only way to maintain control over pupils' learning (Alberto and Troutman, 1999). It is the teacher who manipulates the environment to bring about behaviour change in the pupil (Wheldall and Merrett, 1984). However, it is now more common for pupils to be consulted and involved in the process, making for a more even distribution of power and control. As a technique, it is most relevant for individual pupils, but many of the processes involved are used for managing groups.

Phase 1: behaviour analysis

The behavioural approach has two phases (see Figure 8.1). The first is behaviour analysis and the second is behaviour change—both are essential components and require users to apply them systematically. Behaviour analysis is the systematic collection of data about three areas of activity: defining the behaviour giving concern, identifying what initiates this behaviour (antecedent) and, finally, determining what keeps it going (reinforcer) (see Figure 8.2).

The first step in the process is to define the behaviour. This usually requires observation over a period of time to establish what is happening, who is involved, when it occurs and under what conditions. This information provides the baseline against which any changes in behaviour can be compared. Data regarding the frequency (number of times it occurs); rate (frequency within a fixed time period); or intensity (duration) of the behaviour are often summarised in the form of a graph (see Figure 8.3).

Table 8.2 Relative seriousness of anti-social behaviours

Priority	Example
High	Physical assault on pupils or staff; self-injurious behaviour; dangerous or reckless behaviour (setting fires, being irresponsible in high-risk areas such as the gym).
Intermediate	Verbal abuse; refusing to attend class; disrupting other classrooms and refusing to leave; refusing to leave school premises when told to do so; damaging property; foul language.
Low	Refusing to work in class; out of seat without permission, continually failing to bring equipment or complete work; shouting out in class; refusing to obey class rules.

Many pupils with behavioural difficulties have a number of behaviours giving concern; the problem is deciding in what order to tackle them. Decisions about which behaviours to focus on first should be influenced by the degree to which it proves a threat to the health and welfare of the pupil, his and her peers and the staff. Highest priority should be given to behaviours which threaten the safety of pupils or staff (e.g. physical violence), whereas lower priority should be given to behaviours such as refusal to work (see Table 8.2 for other examples).

These examples of priorities are notional. Whilst physical violence is usually the top of most people's list of most extreme behaviour difficulties, it may never occur in your school. It could be that what I have described as intermediate priority would be considered high priority in your school. In responding to these behaviours, where pupils pose a danger to themselves or others, immediate action is required, which may necessitate removal from school and the involvement of outside agencies.

Dealing with extreme behaviour, such as aggression, takes time. Do not expect quick results. In the early stages of intervention, when people are teaching a pupil how to cope in a more socially valued way, contingency arrangements to deal with outbursts (staff being available to restrain a pupil if necessary or a time-out room) are required. Such arrangements need to reflect procedures agreed by all staff and usually other pupils and based on the principles contained in the school's behaviour policy, legislation and official guidance.

Using behavioural methods competently requires attention to detail and practice. Whilst high priority behaviour warrants a speedy response, it is perhaps not a good starting point for the inexperienced. I would suggest concentrating initially on low priority behaviours, until you feel sufficiently confident to move up a gear.

Define the
unwanted behaviour

Form
hypotheses

Why do you think it
is occurring?

Review your
hypotheses

Specify
required
behaviour

What do you want
to achieve and by
when?

Change the
antecedent

What
strategies do
you want to try?

Decide on a system of
recording observations

Concrete

Abstract

Ask pupil

What
reinforcers
will you use?

Produce
reinforcement
schedule

How will you
know if you
have been
successful?

Review
progress

Has the
behaviour
improved?

No

Expect more improvement for the
same amount of reward or give
less reward for maintaining the
same level of improved behaviour

Yes

Move on to
another
behaviour

Reduce size or
rate of
reinforcement

Be prepared for a 'honeymoon'
period where behaviour improves,
then gets worse before improving
again

Review

New behaviour
becomes the
norm

Figure 8.1 Behaviour change cycle.
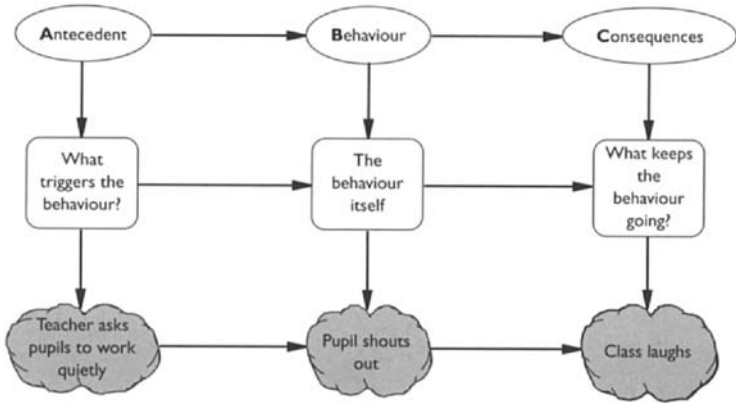
Figure 8.2 **An A-B-C model of behaviour.**
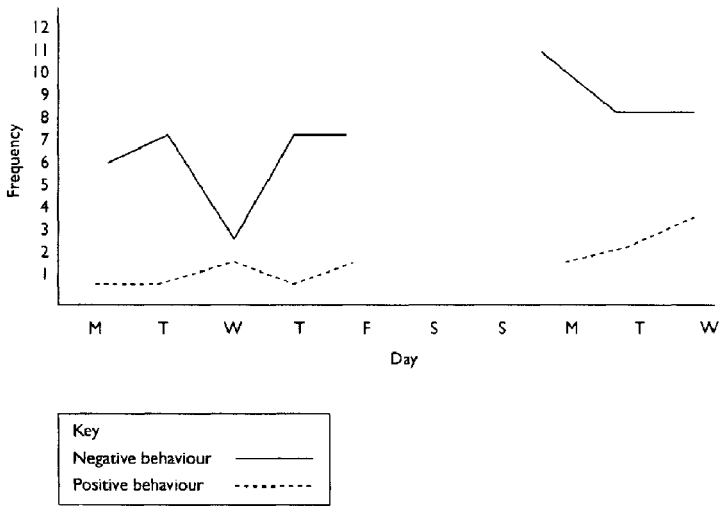
Figure 8.3 **Frequency graph showing number of occurrences of negative and positive behaviours recorded by day of the week.**

The second step in behaviour analysis is to determine what initiates the behaviour (antecedent). This requires observation of what occurs before the unwanted behaviour that may be the trigger. This may be the start of a particular lesson or activity; the presence of certain staff or pupils; a time of day or day of the week and so on. However, it may also be that what you think is responsible is not so. In other words, you make hypotheses

(intelligent guesses) about what might be the trigger—hypotheses which you will later test with your programme.

Step three is to identify what keeps the behaviour going—what is reinforcing it. The reinforcer may be the actions of the teacher (attention), other pupils (laughing) or factors outside the classroom (being sent to a time-out room or other staff).

Fourth, you must decide what behaviour you wish to replace, that which is unwanted. It is not possible to merely extinguish unwanted behaviour; it needs to be replaced with a more desirable alternative. Attention needs to be directed to precisely what appropriate behaviour you want the pupil to be doing instead, the conditions under which they should be doing it and how much has to be completed successfully to be acceptable (Wolery *et al.,* 1988). For instance, 'Getting on with their work' is insufficient, whereas 'Successfully completing all questions in Exercise 4.3 in *English For Today Level 4"* is more appropriate.

There is a danger in becoming preoccupied with negative behaviour and ignoring any positive behaviour on the part of the pupil. Taking time to record and encourage positive behaviour is worthwhile at all stages andcan contribute to constructive change.

Finally, you should set a time-frame against which you will measure the effectiveness of your behaviour programme.

Phase 2: modifying behaviour

Having carried out an analysis of the unwanted behaviour, its antecedents and consequences, and what you wish to replace it with, you can move on to considering how to change it and how to make the changes permanent. The two main considerations are:

1 How to teach what replacement behaviour is required,
2 How to reward the wanted behaviour.

1 There are a number of different methods to convey what behaviour is required. These include methods where the whole behaviour is modelled on another pupil or a teacher. Modelling is a form of vicarious reinforcement, whereby watching someone else behave in a particular way, and seeing them being rewarded for it, is likely to make the observer copy it. Where the behaviour is very complex, it may have to be broken down into elements, which are arranged sequentially and learned separately. The required behaviour is shaped through a series of small developmental stages, gradually increasing in

size and complexity, until the final required behaviour is achieved. Contracts between a pupil and teachers involved in a programme are a useful means of clarifying precisely what is expected, over what time period and the rewards and sanctions to be used in order to minimise ambiguity and stress.

2 Rewarding or reinforcing behaviour appropriately leads to its repetition, so choosing the most appropriate reinforcer needs careful thought. Reinforcers vary widely and include concrete rewards (food, pens, magazines), access to alternative activities (sports or computer), or self-concept enhancing (praise, positive climate and feedback). Selecting the right reinforcer for a particular pupil depends on your knowledge of what interests them, what is appropriate for the situation and school policy. The use of external rewards is to engage pupils in the required behaviour just long enough for it to become valued for its own sake—or self-rewarded. When a reward is given for *completing* a task, it is said to be *positive reinforcement* (for example, allowing someone to join a football team for having completed a task). In contrast, the *removal* of something attractive to increase required behaviour is called *negative reinforcement* (for example, telling pupils they will have to stay in the classroom at playtime unless they complete their work).

Reinforcement must be dependent (contingent) on completing the required behaviour and not given if the behaviour is not completed. However, in the early days of reshaping the behaviour of a pupil, you may reward attempts at task completion which are not quite up to scratch. Whilst *reinforcement* increases the likelihood of a behaviour being carried out, *punishment* reduces it. For example, failure to complete a task may be punished by keeping pupils inside during break or preventing a pupil from attending a football match. Often different forms of reinforcement and punishment are used to establish and strengthen wanted behaviour whilst, at the same time, decreasing unwanted behaviour.

How do you know if the programme was successful? The programme should be reviewed by recording the behaviour after a predetermined period of time and comparing it with the baseline data (see Figure 8.1). If the programme has been successful, that is, the behaviour has improved, you should next plan to reduce the size or frequency of reward given (for example, shorter periods of time on the computer for having completed a written task) or expect more for the same level of reinforcement (for example, increasing the expected time spent on-task or disturbing other pupils less frequently). Remember, the object of the exercise is for the

pupil to become self-reinforcing as soon as possible and not to be giving out concrete awards (above what is given to all pupils) *ad infinitum.*

What if it does not work? Either your hypothesis was incorrect or you chose the wrong reinforcer. You should revisit your original hypotheses about why the behaviour is occurring or what is keeping it going—and ask, what alternative stimuli or reinforcers are there? Are your contingent reinforcers the right ones? Are you sure what you are offering is seen as valuable to the pupil?

In short, behavioural approaches offer a practical and usable solution for use in the classroom. They do, however, require you to follow the procedures carefully and pay attention to detail, systematically recording data and evaluation.

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Cognitive behavioural approaches

Cognitive-behavioural approaches are on a continuum, with methods close to behaviourism at one end and cognitive approaches at the other. In many ways, they represent an extension of behavioural approaches, treating thoughts as behaviours which will respond to restructuring using behavioural principles.

Cognitivists argue that people construct mental models about their worlds, which they use to decide how, or how *not,* to interact with others. They also recognise the important influence that emotions (such as anxiety, anger and self-esteem) can have on thinking. You will, no doubt, be able to recall occasions when you had to complain about something, or had to attend a difficult meeting. In preparation, you probably rehearsed in your mind what you would say and how others would respond, which may have been very different to what happened in reality. Emotions often intervene with carefully rehearsed plans to stand up for yourself. The pupil who does not trust teachers, because of previous experiences, expects future encounters to be similarly unpleasant. This can influence his or her thinking, motivation, emotions and behaviour, and result in the pupil being defensive and putting up a barrier.

The following examples highlight the four processes involved in cognition.

1 The basic thinking processes: perception, memory, appraisal and reasoning.
2 Imagery—when you think about somebody, you can usually generate a picture of them in your head.
3 Rehearsing what you plan to say to the shopkeeper in your head is an example of the third component—inner speech—some of which takes place below the level of conscious awareness.
4 The process of *thinking* about your *thinking,* or regulating your thoughts, referred to as 'metacognition', which allows us to review our effectiveness at coping or problem solving.

Cognitive-behaviourists argue that thinking, emotions and behaviour are interlinked and that our thoughts and feelings about events, even events that have not occurred, can have a profound influence upon our functioning, more so than the event itself. Whilst a behaviourist would manipulate the environment to effect change in a pupil's behaviour, cognitivists seek to change the way in which pupils perceive or interpret events which, subsequently, influences their behaviour.

As with all the approaches discussed in this chapter, cognitive behaviourism represents a family of methods that share a fundamental premise: changing an individual's behaviour involves changing the way they think and feel about their worlds. Albert Ellis (1962) developed a procedure known as 'rational emotive therapy', which is based on a few simple principles:

- people are responsible for their own emotions and actions;
- harmful emotions and dysfunctional behaviours are the product of irrational thinking;
- people can learn more realistic views and, with practice, make them a part of their everyday behaviour;
- people will experience a deeper acceptance of themselves and greater satisfactions in life if they develop a reality-based perspective.

Ellis emphasised the relationship between the degree to which we are 'rational' or 'irrational' in our thinking about an event, and the resultant positive or negative emotional experience. Where the thinking is irrational, not only will it trigger unwanted negative emotion, but it is often overly dramatic—what he referred to as catastrophising. This reaction may lead to pathological anxiety. Irrational thinking for Ellis concerns beliefs that things 'must', 'ought' or 'should' be so, otherwise life will be awful. There are three categories of these 'must' statements—personal, interpersonal and

situational—any or all of which can cause dysfunctional thinking. To contextualise 'must' statements, in this next section I will use an example based on a teacher's experience.

Personal

1 *Demands on yourself:* 'I must be able to control any class at any time, if I cannot it is awful and means I am a worthless teacher.' This demand causes anxiety, depression, lack of assertiveness and feelings of incompetence.

Interpersonal

2 *Demands on others:* 'I must be liked and respected by all of my pupils. If they don't, they are horrible and do not deserve to be taught by me.' This 'must' leads to resentment, hostility and disaffection.

Situational

3 *Demands on situations:* life must be fair and hassle free, if not it would be awful—'I must have all the necessary resources in order to teach properly and if I haven't it is unfair and dreadful.' This thinking is associated with hopelessness, procrastination and addictions.

If a teacher thinks that all of his or her pupils must behave impeccably at all times, or that they all must like him or her, then this is irrational. A rational thinker may wish or would prefer the class to always be well behaved, and while preferring to be liked by all their pupils all the time, is more flexible and tolerant of the likelihood of this not always being the case. A teacher who thinks that *all* members of a class 'must' like him or her and 'must' behave well because that is fair and just, is likely to be disappointed.

The emphasis in cognitive behavioural approaches is getting pupils to self-regulate by restructuring their thinking, moving from irrational to more rational alternatives. To do this, a helper challenges irrational thinking by asking:

• what evidence is there to support your (irrational) thoughts?
• what is another way of looking at the situation?

- so what if this terrible thing does happen?

There are various ways of responding to the answers to these questions, each tending to follow a sequence. When working with a pupil, the sequence might be:

- information gathering from existing sources;
- identifying areas of difficulty, for example, getting angry and lashing out when provoked;
- getting the pupil and others close to him or her, to list the pupil's strengths and weaknesses—emphasising her or his abilities and challenging self-deprecating thoughts such as, 'I have always been useless at school so what's the point?'
- making clear those areas of the pupil's life where he or she can take control;
- guiding the pupil towards rational explanations for his or her thinking and emotions;
- setting a baseline and agreeing new specific targets and a time-frame.

There are also several strategies that can be employed to help pupils identify, challenge and restructure the sources of their difficulties:

- challenging irrational beliefs by pinpointing their source and questioning established negative statements—'I cannot control my anger';
- putting things into perspective by challenging attributions which result in self-blame for things over which they have no control—'I only get things right when I am lucky';
- looking for evidence of negative self-talk and put downs—'I can't do it'or 'I'll never be able to cope';
- getting the pupil to challenge the evidence and validity of his or her negative beliefs—'Teachers never give me a chance to put things right'

To make these strategies work requires a positive relationship between helper and pupil, made possible by having the 'core conditions' of warmth, genuineness, empathy and unconditional regard described in more detail later in this chapter. However, cognitive behavioural approaches are structured and the helper adopts a strongly directive approach, which distinguishes them from humanistic approaches. A teacher using this or behavioural approaches, which are similarly structured

and directive, would need to feel comfortable with these requirements in order to achieve success.

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Humanistic approaches

In contrast to behavioural and cognitive-behavioural approaches, humanistic approaches are anti-technique. Humanists consider the most effective means of overcoming behavioural difficulties lies in attention to attitudes and providing a psychological growth-promoting climate. The central tenet is that humans are: basically good, rational in the things they do, capable of directing their own lives and destinies, strive to achieve their self-perceived potential to become all they might wish to be (self-actualisation). These strivings are best facilitated in a climate of positive self-regard and positive regard from others, and it is maintaining a balance between these two objectives that ensures functionality. Some people sacrifice their own needs and self-regard in their efforts to be socially accepted, whereas other individuals are preoccupied with themselves to the exclusion and ignoring of others—both extremes lead to dysfunctional behaviour. Behavioural difficulties arise when movement towards self-actualisation is prevented or thwarted, or an individual has low self-esteem, as a result of not valuing him or herself, or not feeling valued by others.

Carl Rogers (1951) developed a form of counselling known as the 'person-centred approach', which is the type of counselling most commonly encountered in schools. The role of the helper (a teacher, for example) in this approach is to build a positive relationship with the client (pupil). This relationship is used to facilitate the pupil's understanding of him or herself, to enable exploration of his or her difficulties and access parts of the self which are usually kept hidden away from others. To do this requires the teacher to possess four 'core' qualities:

1 to have *unconditional positive regard* for the pupil, with no strings attached. Accepting the pupil as a worthwhile child who is capable of changing the way they act. This does not mean that the

teacher approves of their previous behaviour. This can be difficult to do with pupils who have exhibited extreme behaviour.

2 to be able to express a genuine *warmth* towards the pupil—again despite whatever he or she may have done; warmth fosters the conditions for development without stifling him or her.

3 to be comfortable in their dealings with the pupil, to enjoy a *congruence* which permits the teacher to be genuine when with the pupil, rather than putting on an act.

4 to work towards seeing the world how the pupil sees it (not how the teacher sees it) and what it means to them, more commonly known as 'empathy'.

Unlike the two previously described approaches, humanistic approaches are non-directive and do not have structured procedures. The teacher acts as a mirror, helping the pupil to frame and reframe his or her life so as to cope more effectively with his or her difficulties. The relationship between teacher and pupil is characterised by warmth—behaviour likely to be criticised by some cognitive-behaviourists if it encourages dependency.

Central to humanistic approaches is the self-concept, which is a multifaceted construct, influenced by both how an individual perceives him or herself and how they believe others view them. The self has both global (overall) and domain-specific components (physical, social and academic, for example) whose salience varies over time and context.

The self-concept is commonly described with reference to three components:

1 ideal self—how you would like to be,
2 self-image—how you see yourself,
3 self-esteem—the difference between 1 and 2.

Hence, where the self-image is significantly short of the ideal self then self-esteem is likely to be low. Where self-image matches the ideal self, it is likely to be high—you are what you are striving to be. Levels of self-esteem will vary from one aspect of the self to another, again dependent on the balance between self-image and ideal self measured against different components. Self-esteem, or the degree to which you like yourself, is fed by both your own thoughts about yourself plus feedback from others.

Humanistic approaches have been popular with many teachers because of the emphasis on warmth and enhancing self-esteem. However, merely enhancing self-esteem alone, without reference to competence, is no guarantee that pupils will have a higher self-efficacy and feel capable of

success. As Mruk (1999) has highlighted, the problems connected with self-esteem education in the USA arose from an emphasis on raising perceived worthiness, without recognising its interdependence with com petence. Understanding the complex nature of the self, along with the interrelatedness of self-esteem and perceived competence, is a prerequisite for the effective support of an individual's development. However, as Bandura (1997) points out, whilst certain specific categories of self-esteem may be more influential on global self-esteem than others, inability in one domain may have little, if any effect on overall (global) self-esteem. Overall self-esteem is maintained despite fluctuations in the different aspects of the self (social self, academic self and so on).

Those working with pupils who experience behavioural difficulties that opt to use this approach should remember, it is the pupil who has control of the encounter and not them. Meetings should be dedicated to exploring what the pupils think about themselves and their environment, to the exclusion of all else. The importance of being non-directive cannot be overemphasised, since this approach rejects the desire for power and control over others. Thus, meetings should not be used as a front for telling the pupil what he or she should do, nor what the school wants. Whilst people do mix and match approaches (sometimes disastrously), if the intention is to direct a pupil to a particular course of action, then other approaches are more suitable.

Given the absence of technique, how might a teacher use a humanistic approach effectively to deal with a pupil with behavioural difficulties? The primary consideration is the personal qualities of the teacher. He or she should be aware of his or her attitudes, strengths, weaknesses, quirks, needs, feelings, predispositions. Humanists emphasise the power that individuals have to resolve their own difficulties inside themselves, so a teacher planning to use this method should first attend to their own thinking—something which I have been emphasising throughout this text. Whilst self-analysis is often alien in circumstances where we feel we are coping admirably, reflection can provide some useful insights as to what we are taking as read, but which would benefit from attention. The ritualised behaviour referred to above (p. 173) is one example of this.

The cornerstone of this approach is building relationships, which, in turn, relies upon having a positive attitude about the process partnered with a high level of social competence. This includes the ability to: read social cues, to be sensitive to motivational intent, interpret verbal and non-verbal signs in a pupil beyond what is actually being said. These skills are discussed in more detail in Chapter 3, so are not developed here.

Further reading

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