

Researching practice

Towards an understanding of how a year 9 Chemistry teacher fosters an atmosphere of engagement through behaviour management

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Research question

Main research question – In what ways does a year 9 Chemistry teacher foster an atmosphere of engagement through behaviour management strategies.

RQ1 – What behaviour management strategies does a year 9 Chemistry teacher use to foster engagement?

RQ2 - How do students respond to these strategies?

Research question number	Method 1	Method 2	Metod 3
1	Observation student	Interview Teacher	Interview student
2	Observation student	Interview Teacher	Interview student

Research design

Epistemology

Interpretive / pragmatic

Theoretical perspectives

Interpretive, 'naturalistic enquiry'

Methodology

Ethnographic methodology

Approach

Single case study(teacher)

An **interpretive** researcher aims to explore perspectives and shared meanings and to develop insights and deeper understanding of phenomena occurring in the social world by means of collecting predominantly qualitative data. Reality is perceived as a human construct.

What is a “**case study**”?

“A strategy for doing research which involves an empirical investigation of a particular **contemporary phenomenon within its real life context** using multiple sources of evidence” (Robson, 1993, p.146)

Generally **ethnographic approaches** are attempt to reveal, describe and explain a culture that the intended audience of the research is unlikely to be familiar with in these terms. As an approach it is highly susceptible to the interpretations placed upon the evidence by the researcher. These interpretations will usually be revealed by the way that the evidence is selected or presented

Literature review

- **Positive Correction:** the basic premise that teachers and **teacher-student relationships**, respect for the dignity and rights of individuals, choices about consequences of behaviour and encouragement for student schools should adopt a non-confrontational approach to discipline, based **on positive** self-discipline.
- **Prevention:** planning for good behaviour; teaching the routines and the rules.
- **Consequences:** have a clear structure that students understand and use to inform the choices they make.
- **Repair & Rebuild:** the imperative to work hard to build and repair the damage that is done when things don't work out. **(Bill Rogers)**

FINDINGS

Exp: How do you manage students? What kind of behaviour management strategies do you usually use?

- **Teacher :** I think It starts before even in your classroom. I want them to understand two things: one is that I am **absolutely focused on their making progress**, OK, and to that end the expectation of their behaviour a classroom is the same everybody else in I would use the behaviour policy framework that we have. OK. So, it is predictable, like it is yesterday with A is after had his two warnings he was put on Level1, next start to making think didn't very long. So I moved to level 2 to come out to the classroom that much bigger impact on his behaviour on engagement. That's the first thing. The second thing is I want them to understand in this next time that **I am really interested in them as an individual.**

EXP: How can a chemistry teacher help you to learn very best your ability?

- **Student A:** I am not really sure, because it is not the teacher, it is not teaching one individual person, he has got to teach the like 30 people in the class. And to be fair most of the people in our set are the same ability. But he still got to give individual students attention. **He is got to make sure that individual pupils are improving**
- **Comments:** The teacher and student A have a similar important concept, i.e., to make sure that individual pupils are improving and making progress. The student put it on the teacher to ensure this progress.

Table 2: Use of positive language in class

This is so simple but packs a punch. Instead of “will you stop talking’ you say “I’d like everyone listening, please”. Instead of “John, stop turning around and distracting Mike” you say “John, I’d like you facing this way and getting on with your work... thanks.”

What language strategies does teacher use?	How do students respond to these strategies?		
	<i>Student A</i>	<i>Student B</i>	<i>Student C</i>
Teacher says to A “Look forward. Good!”	Follows this instruction	Look around	Keep silent
Teacher says: “Please write the outcome. Thank you!” Good start!	Why I should write outcome?	Wrote something	On task
Teacher answered A: “Because an outcome is a judgment of your work.”	He wrote.		
Teacher walks up to A and F, talked about polymers and properties. Students asked questions “Good A, keep going!”	Is an absorption of water a property of hydrogels? He wrote notes	Copied only diagram without clear explanations	Continued writing something.

Prevention

What does the teacher say about engagement and routine?

- **Teacher:** “We start the process of engagement at the door. The next step is I want them to have no doubt about what procedures are at the start of the lesson which is why we always have the “**it’s afresh page, it’s a title**, you know;**underline your title, always little routines.** ... That is technique and mechanism to them to get settled and in this class and get heads in the zone a bit.
- **Comments:**The teacher engages students at the beginning of the lesson, asks them how they are. He creates the positive atmosphere in the class. However, I observed that it takes 10 minutes to prepare for lessons. Students took a lot of time to write title, goals and underline it. The teacher assistant always checks students’ notes. The routine procedurestook avery long time.

Using rewards

- Rewards are very motivating for children – they boost self-esteem, give a great deal of satisfaction and raise engagement and commitment levels towards learning in the classroom (Simon Brownhill... etc 2006)
- The teacher gave **sweets** to students. Most of students kept working, however Student A did not write anything after receiving his sweets. **He lost his attention.**
- **Comments:** Although using rewards is a good strategy as research indicated, this strategy didn't work for student A, who lost his attention and did not do anything in the second half of the lesson.

Using sounds

- According to Rogers (2013) children can be so overwhelmed by noise and voices in the classroom that they soon ‘stop listening’. But using sounds allows the teacher to manage behavior without having to say a word. The teacher **knocked** rhythmically **at the table with a stick** when students became noisy. Students looked at the teacher and became quiet. The teacher **whistled**, and students paid attention.
- **Comments:** I found this strategy was useful for all the class. It appeared that the students responded to the “new” noise with attention. It was not clear if this was something the teacher used frequently and the students had become conditioned to this cue.

Summary of differences in behavior management strategies in Kazakhstan and in the UK.

<i>In my practice in Kazakhstan</i>	<i>In the UK</i>
If I say ‘Well done’, ‘Good job’ it means I praise the quality of work. It is more about academic achievement.	In the UK it is not only about achievement. The teacher praises for their efforts too. Even for a little progress the teacher uses positive language.
If I ask a student to look at the board, I do not say ‘Thanks’ or ‘Good’ for following instructions.	The teacher often gives praise soon after the instruction.
Usually I give instructions and wait. If students follow instructions I give praise.	The teacher immediately says ‘Thanks’ after giving instructions.
When the students are noisy, I hush and just look at them. They notice it and try to behave more quietly.	The teacher rhythmically knocked the table with a stick when students became noisy. Students looked at the teacher and became quiet. The teacher whistled, and students paid attention.

Recommendations to the chemistry teacher of the UK school

- Students took a lot of time to write down the theme and aims. Keep time.
- Students need to develop quick handwriting.
- Do not use sweets as rewards in the middle of the lesson. Give sweets at the end of the lesson. Also it is not allowed to eat in the chemistry classroom.
- It will be better if the school's time-table manager create a new time-table for the disruptive class. The science lessons should be in the morning rather than in the last period.

Conclusion

Trying to foster an atmosphere of engagement in the classroom when should we react to student's disruptive behavior; or when should we ignore it?

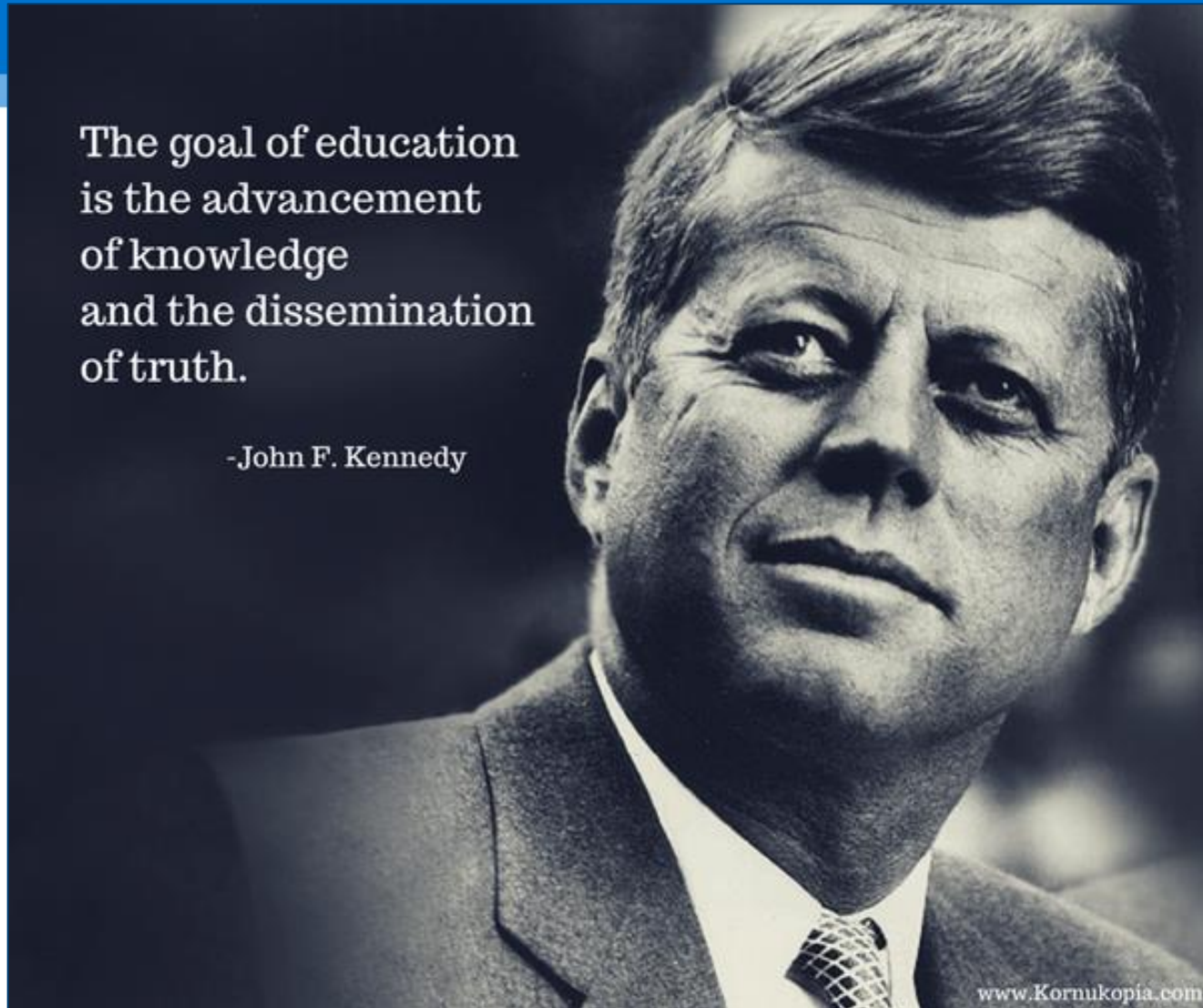
- The chemistry teacher fosters an atmosphere of engagement through positive relationships between him and his students. The positive environment I observed was that each child felt relaxed and accepted, and the teacher showed an interest in them as individuals. The teacher involved the children in making decisions regarding rules. The teacher used routines, rewards, positive language, praise and sounds as behavior management strategies. However, the teacher ignored or did not pay attention to naughty boys, when they “sniffed drugs”.
- The chemistry teacher often used positive language: “Good”, “Keep going”, “Good start”, “Thanks”. My study supports the theories and evidence that I have read about creating ‘positive relationships’ and using ‘positive language’ and ‘praise’ as behavior management strategies .
- After my experiences and observations, coupled with reviewing and analyzing the literature, my thoughts have been changed. I think that ignoring the low level of disruption is an effective strategy. Teachers have to use positive language, praise, sound, and other techniques, as the chemistry teacher did.
- During the assignment the teacher handed out candy to the students. However, some students lost concentration. In this regard, I suggest the need for further research; do sweets impact as a negative factor for attention seekers or naughty boys? I think rewards (sweets) should be given at the end of the lesson.
- The strategies that the chemistry teacher used in year 9 worked for students and promoted students taking of responsibility for their behavior and academic achievements.

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The goal of education
is the advancement
of knowledge
and the dissemination
of truth.

-John F. Kennedy



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