

BETTER LEARNING – BETTER BEHAVIOUR¹

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ABSTRACT

In our efforts to address the problem of pupil behaviour in Scottish schools, perhaps the least effectively supported members of the school community have been teachers. A range of programmes has been used to support pupils, principally through strategies aimed at behaviour modification. Moreover, policy guidelines have also suggested that, in order to minimise disruption to their own and others' learning, the starting point to dealing with the learning of young people experiencing social, emotional or behavioural difficulties (SEBD) is to deal with their behaviour. In particular, the Report of the Discipline Task Group, *Better Learning – Better Behaviour* (SEED, 2001) might be seen as prioritising behaviour over learning. This paper argues that behaviour and learning are inextricably linked and that dealing with behaviour as a prerequisite to addressing learning, therefore, may be the wrong starting point, thereby placing unfair expectations on both pupils and teachers. Additionally, if there is such a thing as 'inappropriate' behaviour, then the 'appropriate' behaviour with which it should be replaced is learning behaviour. A pedagogical focus on learning allows a conceptualisation of SEBD as a learning difficulty, thereby reconsidering the rights of young people who may be experiencing SEBD as co-terminus with, rather than in competition with, the rights of other learners (Visser and Stokes, 2003). Finally, the paper examines one possible pedagogical approach, namely metacognition and a mediational style of teaching, as a way of supporting teachers to deal with SEBD as a learning difficulty.

BACKGROUND: EDUCATIONAL INCLUSION

In the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, Scottish schools, in common with the rest of the western world, have been driven, by legislation and policy, towards educational inclusion. The Standards in Scotland's Schools Etc. Act (2000) saw a presumption of mainstreaming for all young people, including those with learning difficulties and physical disabilities. At the same time, the Act recognised that some pupils, especially those whose behaviour is likely to be a barrier to their own and others' learning, would still require to be educated outwith the mainstream system. Within an overall context of social justice and inclusion subsequent moves have sought to redress this situation, suggesting that behavioural difficulties might be considered in the same way as any other learning difficulty thus resulting in a reduction in the number of disciplinary exclusions from school (Scottish Executive, 1999; SEED, 2001; SEED, 2002; SEED, 2003).

Recent research indicates that measures to promote educational inclusion through the reduction of exclusions has led schools to look for new and innovative ways of working with young people who are experiencing SEBD (Head, *et al.*, 2003; Lloyd, *et al.*, 2003). In addition, this initiative has seen schools and teachers consider different ways of addressing behaviour and providing support for pupils who are difficult to teach (Kane, *et al.*, 2004). However, there remain concerns that levels of pupil indiscipline are high and that any support has been gained negatively. That is to say that as the result of being badly behaved, difficult pupils are dealt with as part of the school discipline system rather than as part of a pastoral care programme for all pupils targeted at the most vulnerable young learners (Lloyd, *et al.*, 2003). Consequently, the impact of inclusion has been to replicate 'special' provision within our mainstream schools in the form of bases, units and other out-of-class teaching favoured over approaches and strategies perceived as more effective but that entail

‘difficult’ young people being in class with their well-behaved peers (Head, *et al.*, 2003; Lloyd, *et al.*, 2003).

This has been the case particularly in what might be described as ‘traditional’ locations for behavioural difficulties, namely with boys, especially those from poorer families living in areas of deprivation. Young people looked after and accommodated in local authority homes and those with other disabilities e.g. autism and ADHD also feature highly among students considered to have behavioural difficulties (Lloyd, *et al.*, 2003; Watson, 2000).

The difficulties with this situation are twofold. Firstly, the desired developments in pedagogies leading to an improved educational experience for all pupils have not yet materialised. Hanco (2003) argues that this is a direct consequence of teachers’ focus being directed towards dealing with behaviour rather than having to reassess how they teach. Secondly, the hoped-for reduction in exclusions was never achieved. Indeed, the Scottish Executive’s own figures indicate that inclusion initiatives have not led to any reduction in exclusions for discipline and teachers themselves report a perceived increase in classroom indiscipline (Munn, *et al.*, 2004). In some ways, these outcomes were predictable. Dealing with difficult behaviour as a matter of discipline may appear to be the obvious approach but it has disadvantages as well as benefits. Typically, methods of dealing with behaviour perceived as disruptive are couched in terms of ‘assertive discipline’ (Canter and Canter, 1992) or ‘positive behaviour’ in its many forms (e.g. Drifte, 2004). These approaches are popular in schools as they recognise the teacher’s right to establish order on students and the use of rewards and sanctions allows undesirable behaviour to be targeted and replaced by more acceptable behaviour (Ayers, *et al.*, 2000; Porter, 2000). Moreover, by having a clear focus on behaviour, it is easier for both teacher and pupil to understand which behaviours are being addressed and the rewards or sanctions they will attract. However, the major difficulty with such approaches is that whilst they can have an immediate impact on behaviour, their effectiveness is likely to diminish in the long term, usually as the reward loses its sense of novelty or the sanction becomes perceived by the pupil as ineffective. It has been suggested that a positive behaviour approach addresses behaviour rather than the causes of behaviour and, therefore, is less likely to have any long-term effect (Garner and Gains, 1996).

Other approaches argue that unacceptable behaviour is the result of events and interactions in a complex matrix of relationships that involve pupils, teachers, schools and parents and that ‘...disruptions occur when students’ emotional or relationship needs are not being met’ (Porter, 2000: 11). The principal attractiveness of what might be called democratic approaches to behaviour is that they suggest that we should tackle the causes of behaviour rather than simply the behaviour itself. Problems with such approaches are that they may involve teachers undertaking additional training (e.g. in solution-focused approaches) and they require a sharing of control over what takes place in the classroom. Moreover, and more importantly, many of the developments suggested are allied to the introduction of novelty programmes and may entail teachers becoming involved in activities beyond what might be considered as teaching and learning e.g. developing a pupil profile as part of a nurture group process. Other approaches that focus on what teachers already do (e.g. Gray, 2000; Porter, 2000) tend to explore the relationships among pupils, parents and teachers and the implications of these relationships for learning and teaching. Even here, though, there is an underlying assumption that once the relationship is sorted, ‘appropriate’ behaviour will ensue and, consequently, learning will take place. In other words, there are two propositions inherent in the argument; firstly, the initial step is to deal with the behaviour; and secondly, that thereafter, learning will, quite naturally, take place. Moreover, there is little or no explicit exploration of what constitutes appropriate behaviour nor what the class teacher in everyday lessons in ordinary classes in Primary and Secondary schools might do as part of

their standard teaching practice to address the causes of difficult behaviour in a way that ensures that learning is taking place.

Whilst the foregoing applied to England, a similar situation exists in the policy context in Scotland. In response to teachers' earlier concerns about a perceived increase in indiscipline in schools, the then education minister, Jack McConnell, set up the Discipline Task Group (DTG). Following consultation with a wide range of stakeholders and interested parties, the DTG issued their report, *Better Behaviour - Better Learning* in June 2001. From the outset, the report established a focus on 'the inescapable links between good discipline and effective learning and teaching' (SEED, 2001: 7). Moreover, recent initiatives in Scottish education such as *Assessing our children's needs: the way forward?* (SEED 2002), *Moving Forward. Additional Support for Learning* (SEED, 2003) and the *Education (Additional Support for Learning)(Scotland) Bill* (SEED 2004) imply a shift in focus from viewing the requirement of additional support for some pupils as a matter of disability and pupil deficit towards one of students' ability and students' learning. Within this general context, there has been a move to recognise social, emotional and behavioural difficulties as a learning difficulty. The recommendations in SEED (2001) are that pupils requiring additional support on the grounds of SEBD might be offered the same systems of support as any other young person requiring additional support for learning.

...pupils experiencing social, emotional and behavioural difficulties ... clearly have special educational needs, and as such, should receive support strategies similar to those commonly employed for learning difficulties... (SEED, 2001: 13)

This places SEBD within the context of social justice and the rights agenda and *Better Behaviour - Better Learning* indicates this in its recommendations for the empowerment of students and teachers:

All members of the school community are of equal worth and are entitled to respect. There is no place for discrimination based on race, ethnic origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability, social group or any other grounds. Schools must ensure equality of opportunity and access to education for all children and young people with particular regard being paid to those learners with disabilities and special needs. (SEED, 2001: 8)

These documents recognise that dealing with additional support needs and SEBD, in particular, is a complex and difficult business and one that should not necessarily be left to teachers alone. The nature of some of these difficulties is given a degree of prominence in *Better Behaviour - Better Learning*, especially the need to work with pupils, parents and other adults and professionals in an holistic approach to support young people with SEBD. Once more, however, the areas given less coverage are those of teacher practice and the specific nature of the pupil behaviour we would like to see replace inappropriate behaviour. These matters are the focus of the remainder of this paper.

LEARNING OR BEHAVIOUR: WHICH COMES FIRST?

Head, *et al.* (2003) noted that the schools in which their study was carried out were highly flexible in their approach to dealing with students felt to be difficult, and that the range of responses developed reflected the diversity of difficulties experienced by students. Schools in which behaviour was clearly considered to be a matter of discipline (Kane, *et al.*, 2004) relied more heavily on strategies such as punishment exercises and the setting up of 'sin-bins'. However, and within the context of social justice, the researchers identified a desire to create 'supportive relationships amongst children, staff and parents' (Head, *et al.*, 2003: 39) in those

schools where inappropriate behaviour was dealt with as a learning difficulty. Flexibility, collaboration and tenacity emerge as key themes in the wider literature on inclusion and the education of young people with SEBD (Ainscow, *et al.*, 2000; Lloyd, *et al.*, 2003).

As a result, schools have adopted a range of approaches and programmes aimed at supporting young people. These have resulted in the development of an affective curriculum (Hanko, 2003): that is, ways of interacting with students that recognise the importance of feelings and emotions in the learning process (Gray, 2002; Watkins and Wagner, 2000). Implicit in these approaches is the recognition that behavioural difficulties are a social construct: that they emerge as the result of interactions between teachers and pupils or among pupils and that they are linked, therefore, 'to the quality of the day-to-day educational experience of pupils and their teachers' (Hanko, 2003: 126). Some behaviours are constructed as inappropriate within society as a whole e.g. violent, aggressive and threatening conduct. Other behaviours, particularly those incidences of low level classroom indiscipline that teachers find disruptive, are 'highly context dependent' (Munn, *et al.*, 2004: 66). How threatened or annoyed a teacher and pupils feel one day, may well be different from any other day given that there can be so many emotional and contextual variables impacting on the course of events. Similarly, one teacher's perception of what constitutes unacceptable behaviour and how it should be dealt with, may well be at variance with another teacher's attitude and practice. McLeod and Munn (2004) debate in detail the validity of the various medical and sociological explanations of SEBD and the philosophies that underpin them. They conclude that whatever the difficulties with the label, it is nevertheless worthwhile retaining as it signals something of the nature of the difficulties that the young person might be experiencing and, therefore, suggests a pedagogical response: what Visser (2002) might call the 'eternal verities'. However, the core to the improvement of such experiences for teachers and young people alike is the recognition that all participants have an important role to play, that each feels valued and that they all belong. Further, it is important that the expectations and goals of education authorities and schools match those of their students and teachers (Cooper, *et al.*, 2000; Head, 2003).

In our schools an inherent difficulty with developing a curriculum that addresses the affective domain of the mind, based as it is on equity, is the possibility that it may conflict with the subject or cognitive curriculum, particularly in how it is taught. Hanko (2003), Lloyd *et al.* (2003) and Maclellan and Soden (2003) all recognise that teachers' own experiences of school and learning might be quite different from those within which they are being asked to operate. Most teachers' learnings will have been through a didactic, transmission modality in which learning is teacher-directed: content and pace are decided by the teacher and the majority of learning is deemed to take place as the result of teacher exposition and student listening. This context closely resembles the six observations made by Watson (2000) that lead to difficulties within the learning environment. Consequently, when asked to address the learning of young people whom they perceive as unable or unwilling to participate in the learning process as described, teachers find that it takes up an inordinate amount of their time to the detriment of their other pupils and that they lack the training and expertise to deal with some young learners (Hanko, 2003). Where support has been provided in the form of a behaviour support colleague, there can be a sense in which the effectiveness of the support is felt to be limited by the inability of the support teacher to provide teaching informed by subject knowledge, skills and understanding (Head, *et al.*, 2003).

The relationship between learning, teaching and behaviour is given prominence in several sections of the early part of the DTG report and the nature of that relationship can be gleaned from the discourse used:

Effective learning and teaching is much easier to achieve where a positive

ethos and good discipline prevail. Discipline policy cannot, and should not, be separated from policy on learning and teaching – the two are inextricably linked. Children and young people are more likely to engage positively with education when careful consideration is given to the factors which affect their learning and teaching. (SEED, 2001: 8)

This paragraph reveals the thinking behind the report. It recognises that, for teachers, students' behaviour has to be seen in a context of their learning. However, the first sentence indicates a particular approach to dealing with the learning of young people with SEBD that may be quite different from that used to deal with the learning of other young people. The thrust of this first sentence can be understood to indicate that the establishment of a 'positive ethos and good discipline' is a prerequisite condition for 'effective learning and teaching'. Indeed, this thinking can also be seen in the title of the report where the word order indicates that in order for learning to take place, behaviour has first of all to be addressed. This is essentially different to how teachers would approach the learning of pupils with other learning difficulties. Most obviously, teachers would not attempt to 'fix' the sight or hearing of a pupil with a visual or hearing impairment; rather they would start by asking 'how do I address the learning of this student?'

Furthermore, the report suggests that pupil behaviour be dealt with through a process of 'positive discipline' and 'positive behaviour', terms that appear to be used synonymously throughout the document. These terms are redolent of the work of Canter and Canter (1992) in America. Indeed, recommendation 6 makes this connection clear where it states that 'particular attention should be paid to expectation, rules, rewards and sanctions' (SEED, 2001: 2). Moreover, the report goes on to echo a behaviourist approach in dealing with young people who have attracted the SEBD label (Garner and Gains, 1996). Indeed, it is noticeable here that not one of the seventeen statements that describe rules, rewards and sanctions contains an explicit reference to learning. The behaviourist — positive behaviour and discipline — approaches has long been criticised as being contrary to the rights agenda and, indeed, reinforces the kind of behaviour that it sets out to eliminate (Watkins and Wagner, 2000). In schools this is complicated by the fact, recognised in the report, that 'there is no agreement on what counts as a social, emotional or behavioural difficulty' (SEED, 2001: 13).

Therefore, there are two problems with the approach suggested by DTG. Firstly, the recommendation of positive discipline may, in fact, operate against the achievement of other recommendations concerning pupil and teacher empowerment. Secondly, once again, there is no clear or agreed idea of the behaviour that being eliminated or, more significantly, the behaviour with which we would like it replaced. Furthermore, it could be argued that analysing and addressing children's behaviour is more properly the domain of psychology and social work. The report itself does recognise this in its sections on working with parents, supporting pupils in schools, and multi-disciplinary working. That is not to say that teachers can abrogate their responsibilities in this area and, indeed, it has been shown that whilst not therapists, nevertheless teachers' actions in class can have a highly therapeutic effect for students (Munn, *et al.*, 2000). The answer may be to do as the report itself recommends; to treat SEBD like any other learning difficulty. The priority for the teacher then becomes the child's learning. The report recognises this when discussing the need for local solutions to the problems that arise:

It is clear that 'solutions' to indiscipline cannot be grafted from elsewhere onto a school's own context and culture. (SEED, 2001: 7)

Whilst it is right and proper that the disciplines of psychology and social work inform what teachers do, they cannot take priority over or replace the teacher's prime function: to deal with the learning of all young people. The 'culture and

context' of schools is teaching and learning. Therefore, teachers and students expect to experience teaching and learning in schools. Where these expectations are shared and agreed, it is possible to develop a sense of community based on them. In dealing with behaviour, the concept of community is important because:

...community is aimed not just at improving student behavior but at creating the kinds of ties that bond students together and students and teachers together and that bind them to shared ideas and ideals. (Sergiovanni, 1994: 120)

It appears obvious that the 'ties that bond' and the 'shared ideas' will have to do with teaching and learning and the suggestion is that where these are the basis of the relationship between teacher and pupil, there is an improvement in behaviour. In addition, recent research has shown that there is a 'need for a wider discussion of the curriculum and pedagogy of schools...' (Lloyd, *et al.*, 2003: 89) in supporting children experiencing SEBD. Furthermore, schools that consider themselves successful in supporting young people, '...were committed to keeping pupils 'on track' and engaged in learning' (Turner and Waterhouse, 2003: 25).

The DTG is again aware of the efficacy of this approach in eliminating some behavioural difficulties:

It seems clear that where appropriate consideration is given to learning and teaching approaches and where the quality of learning and teaching is consistently high, with the appropriate balance of challenge and support enshrined within an atmosphere of high expectation, discipline problems can be reduced significantly. (SEED, 2001: 18)

In order to do this, the starting point has to be pupils' learning and not their behaviour. Beginning with students' learning also suggests the kind of behaviour that is most appropriate for our students, namely, learning behaviour. However, the concept of 'learning behaviour' and the process of how we go about developing it require some illumination.

Approaches to dealing with the learning of young people who are underachieving, including those experiencing SEBD, tend to fall into three categories. The first of these is at the individual level. Typical strategies include the use of commercially produced programmes such as Successmaker, Individualised Education Plans or therapeutic approaches such as solution-focused therapy. The second category aims to deal with learning through strategies to address particular areas of the school's curriculum such as reading (Topping, 1995) and mathematics (Topping and Bamford, 1998), sometimes supported by peers or parents (Topping, 1986; Topping and Ehly, 1998). The third category entails exploring more generalised theories of learning and adapting them to the context of the learning of young people experiencing SEBD. Examples of approaches in this category would include activity theory (Daniels, 2001) and Feuerstein's Instrumental Enrichment programme (Head and O'Neill, 1999). Whilst approaches in the first two categories might be considered to be currently part of schools' and teachers' repertoire, perhaps strategies in the third category are less commonly found. Where they do exist, they tend to be embedded within programmes and subjects such as Cognitive Acceleration through Science in Education (Adey and Shayer, 1994). In this form, the emphasis appears to be on what pupils do within the metacognitive process, whilst the underlying pedagogies receive less attention.

One potential source of enlightenment on how teachers can develop learning behaviour for young people experiencing SEBD, therefore, may lie in the concept of metacognition and a mediational style of teaching. The next section considers the possibilities offered by this approach.

LEARNING, BEHAVIOUR AND METACOGNITION

The efficacy of metacognition in learning has been recognised (Adey and Shayer, 1994; Ashman and Conway, 1997; Shayer and Adey, 2002) and its introduction into school been the subject of research (McGuinness, 1999; Wilson, 2000.). There is debate about whether or not it should be taught as a discrete programme or infused into particular subject areas. Thus we have seen the appearance in schools of programmes based on the work of Reuven Feuerstein's Instrumental Enrichment (IE) (Feuerstien, *et al.*, 1980), Mathew Lipman's philosophy and thinking for children (Lipman, 1988, 1993, 2003), and Robert Fisher's use of literature for children's thinking (Fisher, 1999, 2000), each of which provides a context in which learning can be addressed as a metacognitive process which is then bridged into other contexts.

At the same time, 'infused' programmes aimed at cognitive acceleration have arisen most notably in science and maths but accompanied by a slow expansion into a range of curricular areas.

The benefits of each of these programmes has been researched to greater or lesser degrees (icelp research reports available at www.icelp.org/asp/main.asp) and their effectiveness discussed in the literature (Adey and Shayer 1994; Ashman and Conway, 1997; Head and O'Neill, 1999). However, while programmes for learners have been produced, the implications for teachers of adopting a metacognitive approach to learning have not received the same attention. The one notable exception is Carl Haywood's mediational style of teaching – which he incorporates as part of Bright Start, his metacognitive programme for young learners (Haywood, 1993). What may be helpful for teachers to look at is how the pedagogy inherent in a metacognitive approach to learning can be transferred into teaching in any context, thereby allowing teachers to address SEBD as a learning difficulty rather than a behavioural difficulty. In doing this, the rights of all children to learn and the right of the teacher to teach become enmeshed as part of the one process and are not seen in terms of competing rights.

Before examining what one mediates for, it might be helpful to consider what is meant by mediation and how it differs from instruction, transmission or other modes of teaching. The idea of a mediational style of teaching was developed from the work of Reuven Feuerstein and his Instrumental Enrichment (IE) programme (Feuerstein, *et al.*, 1980). IE is posited on two main concepts: one of cognitive modifiability; and another of mediated learning. Feuerstein argues that the difference between a mediation and an interaction lies in how the adult intervenes between the child and the world in a way that allows the child to understand the world better. For example, an interaction might be a request such as 'Could you close the door, please'. The child can choose to grant or refuse the request on as little grounds as she or he felt like doing it or not doing it. A mediation, makes this less likely by offering some grounds for carrying out the request eg 'Could you close the door please, there's a draught and we'll all catch cold.' Here, the teacher has introduced the notion of cause and effect and supplied a reason why the child might want to carry out the request. Children can, of course, still refuse but in doing so they are having to justify (even inwardly) why they do not hold the reason given by the teacher to be important enough or why they hold some reason for not closing the door to be more important. Even if they refuse, the teacher can take the discussion forward on the basis of the reason rather than any perceived instance of misbehaviour, thereby challenging the child's thinking process rather than their behaviour. Again, how this would be done would entail mediation within a metacognitive context so that the 'conflict' is used as a learning opportunity.

Much of what Haywood describes as mediation (Haywood, 1993) would appear familiar to us already as 'good practice' and this is one benefit of choosing this approach; it takes what teachers are already good at and builds on it. Indeed, the DTG report itself offers an example of teacher mediation in sections 3.17–3.20 in

its suggestions for routine class management (SEED, 2001: 22). Haywood (1993) argues that, 'a teaching style is concerned not only with *what* one teaches but primarily *how* one teaches it' (p32). He then goes on to list the six most important criteria of a mediated learning experience. These are mediation for intentionality, transcendence, communication of meaning and purpose, feelings of competence, regulation of behaviour and shared participation. He then describes the most useful mediating mechanisms of process questioning, bridging, challenging or requiring justification, teaching about rules and emphasising order, predictability, system, sequence and strategies. Exactly how these are realised in the classroom is entirely down to the teacher, thereby empowering the teacher to address the learning of all the children in her class. Haywood recognises that, 'There are as many specific ways to mediate... to children as there are good mediators.' (Haywood, 1993: 36). However, it may be advantageous to take one of his criteria and consider how it might play out in a class.

The most obvious example in the context of behaviour and learning is mediation for regulation of behaviour. This calls into question two aspects: firstly the kind of behaviour we want to mediate for, and secondly how we might create the context which not only encourages it but actively allows for it.

When faced with questions of what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable or appropriate and inappropriate behaviour, colleagues usually describe something that looks like polite and impolite behaviour, respectively. This may well be the kind of behaviour that, traditionally, we have come to argue needs to be prevalent for learning to take place. However, it does not guarantee that learning is taking place; a child might be quiet enough and busy but such behaviour may only indicate that the student is performing well and may not actually be learning (Dweck, 2000). Perhaps, therefore, the kind of behaviour that we might like to regulate for could be termed as learning behaviour. Again, Haywood's own criteria and the metacognitive process provide some answers.

The first sign that learning is taking place might be that the students are involved in planning behaviour. They will map out and define what they have to do and develop a strategy and tactics for doing it. The plan, strategy and tactics will be justified in terms of previous learning or a hypothesis on something as yet unknown that will be tested in the course of carrying out the task. Whilst carrying out their task, students will be reviewing their work, comparing it with the criteria for success and thereby generating the information they need to know whether or not their work is good work and what to do about it if it is not. Post task, there will be reflection on what has been learned and how it can help the student in future contexts in class, in the school and beyond. Throughout this process, the students will have been active in their own learning, generating the knowledge they need to accomplish their task, analysing success, creating strategies for dealing with difficulties and reflecting on what they have learned and its usefulness in the world at large. As well as creating the wherewithal to perform the immediate task, the students are also developing the insight and understanding that is required to justify being in school in the first place.

A mediational style of teaching allows the teacher to adopt the clear focus on learning that research literature suggests successful dealing with SEBD in the classroom. In doing this the teacher can address any emergent behaviour as part of the learning context without mention of any behavioural incident. For example, when asked to do classroom work, some young people might react by declaring that they find the task 'boring' or by insisting that they cannot do it. An interactive response might entail the teacher insisting or persuading the pupil that the work is valuable and should be done. A teacher using a mediational approach, on the other hand, might want to explore what is meant by 'boring' or 'difficult' and what can be done to challenge and overcome apprehension, apathy or just plain reluctance.

Every learner will experience these feelings at some time and investigating how we motivate ourselves and generate the information and knowledge we need to perform a task are elements of good learning behaviour. Of course, within a difficult class, it is likely that this would not be a one-off experience but dealing with inappropriate behaviour as a learning issue means that the teacher is mediating for the development of learning behaviour for the whole class rather than spending an inordinate amount of time attending to the poor behaviour of one pupil to the detriment of the learning of the others in the class.

As a consequence of focusing on learning, the teacher creates the opportunity to turn a potentially disruptive situation into a learning experience for everyone in the class. Over time, as learning behaviour becomes the predominant feature of classroom interactions, pupils begin to experience success, become more spontaneous and active learners and the requirement to remove previously difficult pupils becomes less of a priority (Head and O'Neill, 1999).

CONCLUSION

If *Better Behaviour - Better Learning* is to be built upon, behaviour as part of the learning process needs to be delineated. The process of achieving this is not simply one of addressing the behaviour of young people perceived to be experiencing difficulties, but a much more complex matter of supporting all pupils, teachers and other adults through the development of pedagogies in nurture learning behaviour for all. Whatever measures this may entail, whether or not they be about metacognition and a mediational style of teaching, they should have a clear focus on the learning of young people with SEBD.

NOTES

- 1 An earlier version of this paper was presented at the SERA conference, November 2003.

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