Read through this story and see what you notice in this student-teacher's story.

My year 8 nightmare!

The issue:

One of my year 8 classes became quite difficult. They proceeded from chatting off task to rudely answering back and disrupting the lesson. Five pupils became so disruptive that I had to stop teaching and deal with them regularly. I had been using the school behaviour system and giving behaviour points, but that hadn't been effective. The regular teacher of the class observed these lessons and stated that I had not made progress and that the reason they were acting in this manner was because I had allowed them to. I felt fed up, and frustrated. What should I do?

What happened?

I spoke with my teacher mentor, and I decided that I would adjust my behaviour management style to be more like that of my year 8 observing teacher. I became quite strict and was raising my voice a lot more. This didn't sit well with me because I prefer to foster positive relationships with the pupils.

I requested a meeting with my professional mentor and my teacher mentor, and explained how this wasn't working for me, and that I did not feel comfortable behaving like this.

As a result, the teacher mentor scheduled a lesson observation for me with a physics teacher who has a calm behaviour management technique that I can relate to. I found this very useful and could see some different approaches that felt more like a style I could adopt.

I also asked to observe the year 8 teacher with this same class, to see her own behaviour management strategies. Unfortunately, that didn't happen, because of her absences.

What was learnt?

I have readjusted my teaching style to be more positive, and I have put into practice some of the techniques that I observed in the physics lesson, for example, positioning myself alongside pupils who are being challenging and talking to them quietly but firmly. I feel that these approaches are working in most of my classes except my year 8 class, which I still find challenging. However, my teacher mentor assures me that the children I struggle with are the same children that all the other teachers struggle with, and we are working together to find the best way to address this issue.

Perspective taking

- 1. What do you see as the issue or issues?

- 2. As a centre-based teacher educator, can you see a role for you regarding this situation? What would you advise this student-teacher if she asked you what she should do about the issue, after a session? Can you help her to link theory and practice for dealing with behaviour management? Are there resources that you could direct her to?

- 3. As a teacher mentor, what do you think you would have suggested or done about this issue? Can you help this student-teacher to link theory and practice for dealing with behaviour management? Are there resources that you could direct her to?

- 4. As a partnership, does this story raise any useful learning opportunities regarding collaboration?

- 5. From the student-teacher's perspective – what learning is there to take from this situation regarding:

  a. behaviour management.

  b. finding appropriate support for school-based issues.

  c. linking theory and practice.

Taking it further: linking theory and practice around behaviour management

- 1. Recent research in Scottish schools has revealed that a range of behaviour management strategies are employed, most being restorative, nurturing and solution focused. Proactive approaches that are longer term and prevention focused are considered to be most effective. This paper might be shared with your student-teachers for discussion around effective practices in their context.
  Mouroutsou, S. (2020) 'Beyond Disruption: identifying effective behaviour support in schools', British Academy/Leverhulme Report pp. 1–8.

- 2. Pupils need to develop an awareness of their own behaviours and be responsible for themselves and considerate of the rights of others. This underpins the creation of a positive and effective teaching and learning environment. The inclusive model of behaviour management and discipline designed by Bill Rogers is helpfully expanded to provide accessible guidance for student-teachers to develop their behaviour management approaches. The model covers minimising and preventing poor behaviour, encouraging good behaviour by correcting and negotiable and non-negotiable consequences.
  Rogers, B. (2020) 'An introduction to an inclusive framework model for behaviour leadership, management and discipline', RicercAzione 12(2), pp. 239–253.