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The behavioural learning classroom: making schools more effective and compassionate

by Graham Mallard, London, Routledge, 2023, 178 pp., 39 B/W Illustrations., £18.39 (Paperback), £96.00 (Hardback), £18.39 (E-book), ISBN 9781003198505

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BOOK REVIEW

2 **The behavioural learning classroom: making schools more effective and compassionate**, by Graham Mallard, London, Routledge, 2023, 178 pp., 39 B/W Illustrations., £18.39 (Paperback), £96.00 (Hardback), £18.39 (E-book), ISBN 9781003198505

The book *The Behavioural Learning Classroom*, written by Graham Mallard, aims to examine in depth the use of our cognition and that of our students so that we can make learning at school more effective, which can be done by interacting with students wherever students study and can be productively involved. Through the results of social research under different conditions in each section, this book provides a factual description of how our cognitive processes work, in addition to other significant informants about educational psychology that has made extraordinary strides in focusing on the cognitive traits we have, especially teachers who can change situations to improve student learning so that they become successful learners. In particular, this book consists of 3 sections, each consisting of sub-sections that are well explained in depth.

I started the first section of this book with 'Learning', consisting of 5 subsections. The subsection 'Lesson design' invites readers to understand learning design that can provide positive benefits to students through student-focused lesson plans that teachers can carry out. The author explains it systematically through several research results and personal experiences focused on planning tasks that are more challenging and active for students at the beginning of learning. In the learning process, teachers can provide opportunities for students to focus, provide opportunities for students to develop themselves without giving a lot of distractions and provide rewards in the form of praise, as well as feedback that can strengthen the relationship between students and teachers to increase student's knowledge and skills.

In the 'effective (home) work' subsection, the author again provides an overview of the research results and personal experience as a benchmark for readers in understanding the meaning of homework for students, which is part of cognitive development. The author explains that giving assignments to students must have a purpose so that students are more productive in completing homework and meaningful for students. This condition is known as the Sisyphus effect. Students will also be motivated to do work when the efforts made are visible, challenging and complete on time so that it is more effective for students to carry out. On the other hand, the author also explains that based on behavioural science, students who have inner encouragement find it easier to complete work that has been started before, even though at first it is challenging and tiring for students if students set the commitment to complete the job, then it will be easier for students. This condition is called the Rubicon effect. According to the author, the essential thing in completing homework is time management, which teachers can do by guiding students to allocate time specifically and focus on becoming more effective in achieving goals.


The author explains assessment and feedback in the 'Marking and feedback' subsection. In this subsection, the author invites the reader to be more effective in tagging students by ensuring we know what we are looking for in a job before we start marking it. The author also explains feedback that greatly influences student academic performance and suggests that positive and negative feedback should be balanced by considering student psychological and emotional factors that can affect student work. The subsection 'Reward and sanction' explains how the two rewards and sanctions are like two sides of a coin that can bring each other down. The author explains, very emphatically that rewards and sanctions must be adapted to the needs of students and in line with school policies. In



addition, rewards and sanctions must be consistent with the goals to foster internal motivation rather than excessive external motivation so students can behave better independently. Meanwhile, in the subsection 'The psychological environment', the author explains class distractions that can interfere with student focus in learning. Disturbances such as from students who disturb their friends can be done using the most conducive seating plan for all students.

I continue the second section of this book, 'Behaviour', which consists of 3 subsections. The author explains each subsection in great detail. In the 'Our two selves' subsection, readers are invited to understand controlling student behaviour related to students' emotions and mentality. The author explains the research results on student mental fatigue, which can affect student behaviour control. Hence, it is necessary to use a precommitment strategy to tame student behaviour and cognitive traits. In addition, the following explanation is related to how we teach students to focus on tasks, events and situations by compiling, recording and detailing essential tasks that must be done first to prevent students from the tunnelling effect. In the subsection 'Vicious cycles', the author explains how to help students get the most out of learning assignments to avoid vicious circles, such as how to overcome academic failure with student motivation, provide feedback on assignments, including praise, rewards, create a learning environment, and foster commitment task completion. In the 'nudges' subsection, the authors emphasise behavioural and performance aspects that teachers can do by setting and formulating class goals and ways to achieve them, making the desired behaviour fun, and involving parents in describing their children's positive and negative behaviour.

The last section, the third section, 'Wider issues' consists of three subsections comprehensively explained in detail. The subsection 'Wider issues' invites readers to understand creating effective and compassionate schools in various ways, such as creating activities so students can be actively involved, especially when students are mentally tired, consuming more glucose when stressed, and avoiding the stereotyped performance of boys -male and female, provide constructive feedback to students. Furthermore, the 'Themes' subsection offers an explanation of 7 key themes, including: how to plan and sequence activities, including giving constructive praise to students; behaving to help students meet assignment deadlines, a flexible approach when students are mentally exhausted; assisting students to recognise students' thoughts, emotions and feelings; help students appreciate the disadvantages, advantages by utilising the cognitive nature of students; as well as assisting students in understanding how the brain works, and helping students learn to avoid unintended consequences. Finally, in the subsection 'The teacher-researchers behavioural science toolkit', the authors provide suggestions for conducting our behavioural experiments involving students, as well as parents by designing experiments in a study effectively, but without risking endangering students, including in the selection of students who are fair according to type. Research that can be compared between groups and can be analysed scientifically.

So, what does this book offer educators, parents or school members? This book is excellent for exploring ideas, theory and practice. After reading the book's contents, I found that the whole section consists of subsections. The subsection 1 more than subsections 2 and 3 because it emphasises the essential aspects of behaviour and learning. I like that each subsection and sub-sub-section are accompanied by examples, illustrations, case studies, discussions and activities which are the results of research that describe theory and practice explained in detail. However, some research examples must be understood in depth due to differences in educational contexts, but they can illustrate the relevant topic to be explained. This book is handy for teachers and educators, especially in elementary schools, to understand student behaviour because it offers an innovative, creative approach to active classroom learning by combining practice and a solid theoretical foundation. Many examples and research results can be used to develop classroom learning, including carrying out independent research for teachers and educators.

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