



Positive behavioural support at schools via designing supportive learning environments¹

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The following paper examines assumptions, application and efficacy of positive behavioural interventions and supports (PBIS) which have been widely used in the United States over the past two-decades. The author addresses a significant area of activities carried out within the framework of PBIS, which concerns engineering supportive learning environments. The author also aims to indicate the most important elements of the model that could be applied in the educational activities of the Polish school.

KEY WORDS: positive behavioural interventions and supports (PBIS), challenging behaviour, students with SEN, Polish school

¹ The following article is an expanded discussion on the PBIS subject, based on the text titled: *Zastosowanie Modelu Pozytywnej Interwencji i Wspierania Zachowań w pracy edukacyjnej i wychowawczej z uczniami ze specjalnymi potrzebami edukacyjnymi*, M. Skura, J.J. Wheeler, published in: *Niepełnosprawność. Dyskursy Pedagogiki Specjalnej*.

Introduction

Numerous teachers describe dealing with improper behaviour of students as very difficult. The majority of them, on a daily basis, faces situations which disrupt their lessons, threaten the safety of the students and teachers themselves, and are related to peer violence.² Teachers have fears and doubts regarding the correctness of own reactions against a student's aggressive behaviour, whether it is caused by a neurological disorder or is simply an effect of a provocation. Unfortunately, it often occurs that the portion of teachers' reactions is ineffective, or even perpetuates undesired behaviour. Moreover, teachers indicate that studies which prepare them for their profession, fail to provide them with practical knowledge on how to deal with similar situations.³ Part of them is suggesting the need for training at their place of work, with the support of a supervisor, in a particular educational situation in class.⁴

Challenging student behaviour is the factor, which discourages teachers from working. Schools display an increasing phenomenon of aggression, violence and students bullying their peers at schools, which is demonstrated by international data. The UNESCO Global Education 2030 Agenda states that almost one in three students (32%) was harassed by his peers at school at least once during the last month, more than one in three students (36%) took part in a fight with another student, and almost one in three students

² J. Pyżalski (2012), *Agresja elektroniczna i cyberbullying jako nowe ryzykowne zachowania młodzieży*. Kraków: Oficyna Wydawnicza „Impuls”.

³ J. Prucha (2006), *Pedeutologia*. In: B. Śliwerski (ed.), *Pedagogika*. T. 2: *Pedagogika wobec edukacji, polityki oświatowej i badań naukowych*. Gdańsk, Wyd. GWP; Gajdzica Z. (2011), *Sytuacje trudne w opinii nauczyciela klas integracyjnych*, Oficyna Wydawnicza „Impuls”, Kraków; Gajdzica Z. (2020), *Uczeń z lekką niepełnosprawnością intelektualną w szkole ogólnodostępnej*. Nauczyciele o (nie)zmienianej sytuacji w kontekście kultury szkoły inkluzyjnej, PWN, Warszawa.

⁴ M. Skura (2018). *Relacje nauczyciela wspomagającego i nauczyciela wiodącego – temat wciąż otwarty*, [in:] *Niepełnosprawność*. Dyskursy Pedagogiki Specjalnej, no. 1(29), pp. 66-86.

(32,4%) was physically attacked at least during last year.⁵ School societies, are increasingly facing threats against the security of students and teachers, therefore it is important for schools to have a preventive system of reacting to problematic student behaviour. The example of such action is applying the Positive Behavioural Interventions and Supports Model (PBIS), which has been universally applied in the United States for twenty years.

One of the advantages of the Positive Behavioural Interventions and Supports⁶ model is that it can be applied as a general strategy of preventing difficulties in the entire school, in classes for students that are at risk of displaying problematic situations, and those who require support, but also at the level of particular students, who require more specialist intervention⁷. The aim of the article is to briefly present the origins, the structure, and the premises of the model that is not very well known in Poland. Moreover, the text is an attempt to highlight a significant area of activities conducted within the framework of PBIS, which is related to designing learning supportive environment and indicate its most important elements that would find application in the educational activities of the Polish school.

However, the analysis of the model should be preceded by the adopted definition of the “challenging behaviour” term. In Polish literature we may find different definitions regarding a student who causes educational challenges: “student with difficult behaviour”, “student with behavioural disorders”, “student violating discipline”. The adopted definitions also possess internally diversified categories and depend on the scientific area in which they are applied. In the following article, in accordance with the source litera-

⁵ M. Eck, J. Naidoo, M. Sachs-Israel (2016), *The New Global Education Agenda: Education 2030: Developing the New Education agenda: An Inclusive, Comprehensive and Country-owned Process*. *Gloabalikasvatuksen ilmiöitä luokahuoneessa Suomessa ja maailmalla*, p. 33.

⁶ Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), <https://www.pbis.org> (2020).

⁷ Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), <https://www.pbis.org> (2020).

ture,⁸ it has been assumed that challenging behaviour is “any repeated pattern of behavior (...) that interferes with or is at risk of interfering with optimal learning or engagement in pro-social interactions with peers and adults”.⁹ It is worth highlighting that the definition of PBIS adopted in the source literature is related to a difficulty, which is understood as a challenge for the environment of the child/youth, and not with a limitation or a student’s disorder.

Origins, components and the principles of the Positive Behavioural Interventions and Supports Model (PBIS)

The field of the applied behaviour analysis (ABA) came from works by Burrhus F. Skinner, and was a science dedicated to the study of human behaviour in the conditions of practical action. As noted by Baer, Wolf and Risely¹⁰, the basis of ABA includes the study on essential and socially significant behaviour occurring in natural environment. Additionally, the scholars highlighted, that the procedures applied should be observable and measurable, as well as, faithfully applied in such a way, so that they could be repeated. At the end of the process, the effort is focused on intervention causing perpetual and generalised behavioural change, which in time perpetuates in the behaviour of a given person, and becomes the “behaviour generalisation”, regardless of the place of stay.

ABA had significant impact on improving work with persons with developmental disorders, by developing efficient therapy methods that would improve the ability to learn and changed

⁸ Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), <https://www.pbis.org> (2020).

⁹ B. Smith, L. Fox (2003), *Systems of service delivery: A synthesis of evidence relevant to young children at risk of or who have challenging behavior*. Center for Evidence-based Practice: Young Children with Challenging Behavior. Available: www.challengingbehavior.org (Smith & Fox, 2003, p. 6).

¹⁰ D.M. Baer, M.M. Wolf, T.R. Risley (1968), Some current dimensions of applied behavior analysis. *Journal of applied behavior analysis*, 1(1), pp. 91-97.

the lifestyle of these persons¹¹. Additionally, ABA efficiency was acknowledge in reference to the persons with autism therapy based on credible evidence.¹² Also, application of this approach progresses beyond the area of education, and is universally applied in interdisciplinary studies combining behavioural sciences with other disciplines of medicine.¹³

Evolution of ABA led to the appearance of the Positive Behaviour Support model (PBS). PBS was created due to the works of Horner and accomplices¹⁴, who advocated for applying non-invasive procedures, aiming at supporting the behaviour of individuals with more severe disabilities. Dunlap, Kincaid, Horner, Knoster and Bradshaw¹⁵ described the process of the change in terminology and in action, which places emphasis on training procedures highlighting respect and dignity of an individual. The most important aim of proceeding is to support significant social behaviour, with particular highlight towards improving the life quality of the pupil.

The Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) name was changed to Positive Behavioural Interventions and Supports (PBIS), when in 1997, USA introduced an amendment to the act regarding persons with disabilities, and there, parts referring to the need of supporting the behaviour of students at school. Dunlap and accomplices¹⁶ indi-

¹¹ C.M. Anderson, K.A. Freeman (2000), Positive behavior support: Expanding the application of applied behavior analysis. *The Behavior Analyst*, 23(1), pp. 85-94.

¹² H.S. Roane, W.W. Fisher, J.E. Carr (2016), Applied behavior analysis as treatment for autism spectrum disorder. *The Journal of pediatrics*, 175, pp. 27-32.

¹³ A. Rich, K. Brandes, B. Mullan, M.S. Hagger (2015), Theory of planned behavior and adherence in chronic illness: a meta-analysis. *Journal of behavioral medicine*, 38(4), pp. 673-688.

¹⁴ R.H. Horner, G. Dunlap, R.L. Koegel, E.G. Carr, W. Sailor, J. Anderson, E.E. O'Neill (1990), Toward a technology of "non-aversive" behavioral support. *Journal of the Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps*, 15, pp. 125-132.

¹⁵ G. Dunlap, D. Kincaid, R.H. Horner, T. Knoster, C.P. Bradshaw (2014), A comment on the term "positive behavior support". *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*, 16(3), pp. 133-136.

¹⁶ G. Dunlap, D. Kincaid, R.H. Horner, T. Knoster, C.P. Bradshaw (2014), A comment on the term "positive behavior support". *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*, 16(3), pp. 133-136.

cate that the change in name reflects the belief that PBIS is a multi-level system that can be applied individually to students depending on their specific needs.

Three-tiered structure of behavioural support

PBIS is a three-tiered structure of behavioural support, aiming at preventing challenges in behaviour and to level their results regarding school, classroom and particular students, or at all three tiers. Tier I, called *Universal Prevention* or *Basic Prevention* aims at preventing the threat of challenging behaviour and/or challenging behaviours and is related to the entire school, and all students in a given school society. Most often, 85–90% of the students population realise it with success. The example of such activity is the procedure code applied in schools, obligatory for all students, which contains expectations regarding their behaviour. The role of school and its staff is to create a favourable atmosphere, which reflects the promoted values and strengthens the students in obeying the rules in motion.

The aim of the school-wide positive behavioural interventions and supports (SWPBIS) is not to establish what the student should not do in particular, but to indicate and teach actions which are expected. Therefore, in educational institutions, there are 3–5 positive, simple expectations defined, which support the positive atmosphere promoted by the school. The aforementioned encompassed desired behaviour for the entire school, which is clearly defined and easily remembered by any student. The example of such defined expectations for the Rippleside Elementary School in Minnesota is: “We are respectful”, “We are very safe”, “We have an excellent attitude”. The PBIS tier I team decides, how students learn behaviours, that are related to acquiring knowledge and social skills.

The coherence of priorities supports the behaviour of all students. Teachers explain, what the expectations of the school society are, in classrooms during particular lessons. All principles that discipline students include definitions of behaviour that negatively affect the success of student within the scope of acquiring knowledge

and social development. The tier I team defines, how to evaluate students positively in regard to appropriate behaviour. Schools adapt a token system, to praise and give rewards to students who behave in accordance with expectations.¹⁷

The information gathered regarding the challenges at PBIS tier I and practical applications of the model affect all remaining tiers. Before a school begins to take actions from tier II and III, they must create the premises of promoted behaviour at tier I. Therefore, the universality of the tier is the basis providing regular, proactive support aiming at preventing unwanted behaviour. Tier I places emphasis on pro-social skills and expectations via indicating and promoting the appropriate behaviour of students.

Tier II is referred to as *Targeted Prevention* and is related to the more specialised group interventions aimed at children that do not react to basic prevention. In general, it is 15% of the school populace. The activities are directed towards students who experience difficulties within the scope of behaviour related to social and educational skills, and are accomplished in group during school activities.

According to the SWPBIS model, at tier II, the school staff is subject to activities that aim at training their professional skills. Acquiring competencies should be coherent, continuous, in accordance with needs, diversified and based on scientific research. Teachers and school staff are provided with access to practical activities, feedback and coaching. Acquiring knowledge regarding the latest research results and methods of working with students is made possible due to the collaboration with universities. Support at tier I is still applied in the case of students delegated for support at tier II. However, activities at tier II are based on directed intervention towards those who do not achieve success at tier I, despite the applied measures promoting desirable behaviour. At tier II, the emphasis is placed on aiding students threatened with the appearance of more severe issues, before they actually occur. Moreover, the team respon-

¹⁷ Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), <https://www.pbis.org> (2020).

sible for classifying students for additional support, provides aid not only to students but is also responsible for conducting training for school staff, as well as, supports the parents' activities at home.¹⁸

Regardless of providing support on the basic tier, actions at the *Targeted Prevention* tier encompass providing students with additional instruction regarding key social, emotional and/or behavioural skills. The result of tier II intervention is a situation where students may independently decide on when, where and under what circumstances they may apply particular skills. Positive reaction to intervention means, that students know how to control own actions and manage own behaviour. Additionally, tier II support encompasses intensified, active control (super-revision) accomplished in a positive and pro-active way. Adults may be asked to shift more, engaging in interactions with some students if required. The ability to monitor the situation during classes may be planned by applying simple changes in the classroom environment organisation.

It is very important to understand why students engage in particular behaviour. Without determining the cause of challenging behaviour, tier II interventions will not be adjusted adequately to the needs of pupils. After determining what motivates students for particular behaviour, teachers may aid them in finding an alternative for the undesired behaviour. Some students who receive behavioural support at tier II, may also need additional help at studying. Often, the challenging behaviour of a student is a result of his difficulties in learning the material provided within a particular phase of education. Therefore, teachers focus on supplementing knowledge or repetition of the material with which the student has difficulties. They attempt to apply strategies that support desired behaviour by introducing various educational games that support proper behavior.¹⁹

¹⁸ Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), <https://www.pbis.org> (2020).

¹⁹ H.H. Barrish, M. Saunders, M.M. Wolf (1969), Good behavior game: effects of individual contingencies for group consequences on disruptive behavior in a classroom, *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*, (2), pp. 119-124.

Tier III, or *Intensive, Individual Prevention (Third Level Therapy)*, is applying individual intervention for approximately 5% of students who require long-term and specialist support in cases of *chronic and severe forms of challenging behavior*.²⁰ Activities within the PBIS structure are addressed particularly to this group of students, whose behaviour within the school space is hazardous or destructive, and severely impede their continued learning process, and exclude them from the social environment. At tier III, students receive very intensive, individualised support, aiming at improving their behaviour and learning results. Tier III strategies usually encompass working with students with developmental disabilities, autism, emotional and behavioural disorders, as well as, those who were not diagnosed.

Tier III activities result from the proper support at tiers I and II. After applying the principles of both tiers, schools organise interdisciplinary teams, in order to support students with more intensive needs. Apart from actions taken earlier, the key task at this level is to perform a *Functional Behaviour Assessment (FBA)*, to answer, what the causes of the student's behaviour are. Additionally, FBA allows to indicate the proper selection of the school staff team, the interventions of whom will respond the best to the needs of the student. Further actions resulting from the FBA process include such strategies as: preventing undesirable behaviour, teaching proper behaviour, positive supports of proper behaviour, taking away privileges for undesirable behaviour, providing safety to students. The aim of the team is always to support the possibility of "transferring" the student on to tier I or II, which are characterised by a lower intensity of support.²¹

Understanding the causes of the student's challenging behaviour is the basis for providing aid. Within the FBA process, an important strategy is to provide holistic support including the cooperation of the student with adults important in their life, that may

²⁰ J.J. Wheeler, D.D. Richey (2019). Behavior management: Principles and practices of positive behavior supports (4th ed.). Pearson.

²¹ Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), <https://www.pbis.org> (2020).

influence the improvement of their behaviour. Additionally, activities of the tier III team, aim at organising a non-formal supportive system, which, through knowing about the weaknesses and needs of the student, will be able to affect his results. Therefore, the plan encompasses both formal aid, based on a diagnosis, as well as, support provided by friends, family, and other persons from the student's environment.

The possibilities of promoting positive behaviour via designing supportive learning environments

During the last 20 years, a change has appeared in special education in the United States, towards the efficient way of preventing challenging behaviour of students. Emphasis was made then, on the better understanding of causal relations that affect behaviour. Since the creation of the PBIS model, the conducted research have contributed to raising awareness among specialists, regarding the relations between events mostly related to *setting events* that cause challenging behaviour (i.e. physical, social and environmental variables), and the preceding stimulus - the *antecedent* which is its direct cause.²²

Understanding and managing antecedents of challenging behaviour is a departure from classic practices, when the specialists would often place larger emphasis on events that occurred after the appearance of improper behaviour, as well as, applied punishment and drew consequences in order to prevent them. Along with the appearance of PBIS, specialists began to deal with challenging behaviours pro-actively, with the consideration of management strategy as a mechanism of preventing challenging behaviour. These possibilities of intervention include the way in which the teacher

²² R. Iovannone, C. Anderson, T. Scott (2017), Understanding Setting Events: What They Are and How to Identify Them, *Beyond Behavior*, Vol. 26(3), pp. 105-112; J.J. Wheeler, D.D. Richey (2019), *Behavior management: Principles and practices of positive behavior supports* (4th ed.). Pearson.

presents the student with tasks to be done during the lesson, i.e. a type of hints which he applies when presenting tasks, the ability of the student to make choices, and the provided level of support, allowing to maximise the student's result and use his individual strong points of learning better.²³

Sugai and accomplices²⁴ noted that schools which successfully promote such learning environment reflect the model of interaction between adults and students, with four times more positive than negative feedback being provided. This model of behaviour between the teachers and the students at schools reflects the statement, that positive perception of a child's behaviour will increase or decrease to the level of expectations set before the student, and the amount of support provided in order to accomplish the aim being the change in behaviour.

Jolivette, Scott and Nelson²⁵ prescribed using two primary strategies that aim at designing school environment that would promote the desirable behaviour among students: changing the environment in the direction of increasing the probability of success, and minimising the probability of failure. These strategies are best achieved by monitoring the external factors of the educational process, the presence and particular actions of participants and planning tasks for students. Minimising the probability of failure is the primary aim of the actions, and may be achieved best by removing barriers that prevent the appearance of an expected behaviour in a particular situation in the classroom and at school.

²³ J.J. Wheeler, D.D. Richey (2019), *Behavior management: Principles and practices of positive behavior supports* (4th ed.). Pearson; R.H. Horner, G. Sugai, C.M. Anderson (2010), *Examining the evidence base for school-wide positive behavior support*. *Focus on Exceptional Children*, 42, pp. 1-15.

²⁴ G. Sugai, R.H. Horner, G. Dunlap, M. Hieneman, T.J. Lewis, C.M, Nelson, B. Wilcox (2000), *Applying positive behavioral support and functional behavioral assessment in schools*. *Journal of Positive Behavioral Interventions*, 2, pp. 131-143.

²⁵ K. Jolivette, S. Barton-Arwood, T.M. Scott (2001), *Functional behavior assessment as a collaborative process among professionals*. *Education and Treatment of Children*, 24, pp. 298-313.

The appearance of challenging behaviours is often related to the lack of lesson structure and of organisation of classroom work. It may be caused by factors that appear in the classroom environment: overcrowded class, noise, temperature (too hot or too cold), as well as, lack of clear principles in presenting tasks of precise requirements regarding the students. For a portion of children, these circumstances may pose a serious challenge, which results in the appearance of challenging behaviours that disrupt learning, and in relation to their undesirable actions – situations that impede the work of other students.²⁶ It is worth highlighting that such behaviour is often caused by simultaneous occurrence of limitations in psychosocial competencies of the student, and releasers that are present in the school environment. Studies show that in the case of students with autism the structure of the learning environment may compensate for some of their difficulties. Therefore, the following is essential: established organisational structure, behaviour models in assigned tasks, and support in progressing from one activity to the other.²⁷

Considering the significance of the learning and behaviour environment, teachers should understand how the classroom space may affect the shaping and social functioning of children and youth. One observable and measurable indicator, that should be significant to the school administration is the estimation of the level of the environment stimulating the behaviour of students. Each teacher who organises the learning of his students should reflect on two issues: are the students engaged in their work or their assigned actions, and, whether they like their classroom, and what they do in it. It is

²⁶ T.M. Scott, K. Lee Park, J. Swain-Bradway, E. Landers (2007) Positive Behavior Support in the Classroom: Facilitating Behaviorally Inclusive Learning Environments, *International Journal of Behavioral Consultation and Therapy*, 3 (20), pp. 223–235; J.J. Wheeler, D.D. Richey (2019), *Behavior management: Principles and practices of positive behavior supports* (4th ed.). Pearson.

²⁷ C. Lord, E. Schopler (1994), TEACCH services for preschool children. In S. Harris, J. Handleman (Eds.), *Preschool education programs for children with autism* (pp. 87–106). Austin, TX: PRO ED.

important for the layout and design of the student's work place to stimulate his learning efforts. One must consider the level of noise, temperature, number of students in class, desk and chair layout, the ability to navigate the classroom and establishing an optimal work place for the child. It is also imperative to turn attention to social interactions between students and the teacher, and visual pointers that help the student regulate his behaviour.

Challenging student behaviour in the school environment may be directly tied to the curriculum and prescriptions regarding knowledge absorption and desired behaviour, which the student receives from the pedagogical staff. Studies have demonstrated a correlation between variables such as issuing instructions by the teachers and their influence on the students' behaviour in the educational environment.²⁸ Challenging behaviours that occur during lessons are often caused by issuing inappropriate instructions to the performed tasks, the way of formulating instruction, the quality of the teacher-student interaction, as well as, the general atmosphere at school. The cause of challenging behaviour may lie in the way the teacher is instructing the student during lesson, as well as, in the quantity and difficulty of tasks given, and the lack of coherence between instructions and the learning style, and student's abilities.

There are also areas which must be considered before the teacher issues pointers to the student regarding learning and behaviour, and which create the student profil. It is his weak points and ways of absorbing knowledge, and issuing instruction, which were successfully applied in the previous work with the child. Moreover, one must know on the child's identified challenges in learning or disability, and learn, what the child likes to do, what are the child's interests, what are the child's favourite subjects and activities. Practice demonstrates, that challenges related to learning and student behaviour are often undertaken from the viewpoint of the necessity

²⁸ G. Dunlap, L. Kern (1996), Modifying instructional activities to promote desirable behavior: A conceptual and practical framework. *School Psychology Quarterly*, 11, pp. 297-312.

of “fixing” educational problems of the student, without considering his strengths. Each student has skills and attributes, which after being identified, may aid in teaching and giving him hints for work, therefore may be used in supporting the student to achieve success at school.²⁹

Conversations with previous teachers of the child, as well as, parents are necessary, as they may help identify the style of learning, searching pointers regarding efficient ways of dealing with the child, communication models, i.e. ability to process such signals as gesture, image and sound, preferred types of answers, verbal or by gesture. Undeniably, one must also consider age, occurring difficulties in learning, or disability and other individual student’s needs. In designing actions supportive for desirable behaviour, information regarding what subjects the child likes and what activities in school (e.g. exercises, instructions, support, forms of navigating and absorbing the surroundings) are most and least preferred by the student, are helpful. Additionally, it is important to learn activities, which the student prefers during play and rest beyond the classroom, i.e. fun and games, and sports and art activities.³⁰

The curriculum and the method of teaching may play a significant role in the behaviour of students during lesson and their involvement in tasks suggested by the teacher. They may also constitute a releaser of problematic behaviour. The PBIS model proposes research-based³¹ strategies of modifying instructions that precede the task as a method of minimising the frequency of challenging

²⁹ A.P. Hershfeldt, K. Pell, R. Sechrest, E.T. Pas, C.P. Bradshaw (2012), Lessons Learned Coaching Teachers in Behavior Management: The PBIS plus Coaching Model, *Journal of Educational and Psychological Consultation*, 22: 4, pp. 280-299; J.J. Wheeler, D.D. Richey (2019), *Behavior management: Principles and practices of positive behavior supports* (4th ed.). Pearson.

³⁰ J.J. Wheeler, D.D. Richey (2019), *Behavior management: Principles and practices of positive behavior supports* (4th ed.). Pearson.

³¹ J.P. Stichter, G.M. Sasso, K. Jolivet (2004), Structural analysis and intervention in a school setting: Effects on problem behavior for a student with an emotional/behavioral disorder. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*, 6(3), pp. 166-177.

behaviours. They are presented in two major categories: designing tasks, and presentation. Strategies may be applied for children of different age and different learning environments.

When designing tasks for students, one must adjust them to age, level of development, as well as, ensure that they are socially significant and functionally related to the needs or interests of the student. Planned lesson activities should also be adjusted to the level of skill of the student. Practice shows, that in other cases, they often cause frustration and associated challenging behaviours. Additionally, it is very important to ensure the ability to select tasks, as it gives the student the feeling of co-creating the lesson, therefore, nullifying challenging behaviours. Therefore, we are talking about achieving the aim of the task and giving a choice, e.g. three out of five tasks from the proposed list. The length of activities is also of much significance and it should be adjusted to the age group and skill level. Particular tasks in the classroom should have a defined structure and predictability, as well as, be diversified and alternate, so that it is possible to manage the boredom and tiredness of the students.³²

Also, the model indicates the significance of employing a task schedule and a student's individual curriculum as important elements of the learning environment. Studies confirm the efficiency of such intervention instruments as means of promoting positive behaviours.³³ Schedules can be set up for the entire class or be dedicated to the work of an individual student. They should contain estimated time for accomplishment of a task, and written, as well as image hints regarding tasks planned for the day. Such visual refer-

³² E.T. Pasa, A.H. Cashb, L. O'Brennana, K.J. Debnama, C.P. Bradshaw (2015), Profiles of classroom behavior in high schools: Associations with teacher behavior management strategies and classroom composition. *Journal of School Psychology*, 53(2), pp. 137-148; J.J. Wheeler, D.D. Richey (2019), *Behavior management: Principles and practices of positive behavior supports* (4th ed.). Pearson.

³³ N. Gayle Massey and John J. Wheeler *Education and Training in Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities* Vol. 35, No. 3 (September 2000), pp. 326-335.

ence serves both the teacher and the student. Individualised work plans may also be helpful in promoting independent work management of the student during class, and for the purpose of strengthening his engagement in assigned tasks.

The way in which tasks are presented to students may also trigger their challenging behaviour. The teacher, when presenting a subject, should use clear and coherent instructions, particularly while teaching new content. The aforementioned should also be adjusted to the needs of a particular student. It is worth remembering to combine verbal instructions, gesture and examples of actions, that support the explicitness of the message. Within the PBIS model is also indicated, that applied instructions for working with a student, that contain reference to desired behaviour, were “built in” within the proposed tasks. Therefore, the teacher may teach recognising information contained in a performed task, that will serve as a visual model for proper behaviour of the student.³⁴

PBIS model premises are also supported by factors that improve life quality, often omitted in designing interventions aiming at preventing challenging behaviour of students. The teacher has less impact on the process, but the area is important for the functioning of a child during class. During the last thirty years, many studies have appeared in the United States, highlighting the significance of life quality factors in the life of persons with disabilities. Schalock³⁵ was one of the first authors, who initiated such studies. In his analysis he proposed eight indicators of life quality, which are still up to date: emotional welfare, interpersonal relations, material situation, personal development, physical comfort, self-determination, social inclusion, individual’s rights. The PBIS model supports designing the learning environment as a key success factor for the students, and an element of preventing undesirable behaviour. Therefore, in

³⁴ J.J. Wheeler, D.D. Richey (2019), *Behavior management: Principles and practices of positive behavior supports* (4th ed.). Pearson.

³⁵ R.L. Schalock (2000), Three decades of quality of life. In: *Mental Retardation in the 21st Century* (eds M.L. Wehm-eyer, J.R. Patton), pp. 335–356. Pro-ed, Austin, TX.

their educational activities, teachers should monitor the attitudes of students oriented towards functions related to the quality of life in the family environment and closest surroundings.³⁶

Student with challenging behaviour in a country of „multiple educational paths”

Three educational paths present in Poland, display a slightly different approach towards student's difficulties, and different ways of accomplishing educational tasks. Special education is based on specialist instructions and primarily compensates, corrects and improves the disordered psychological and physical processes of the student.³⁷ The integration model aims at maximum inclusion of children and youth with difficulties in functioning, into the group of able peers.³⁸ In principle, inclusive education supports a diversified classroom and intends to remove all obstacles and barriers which stand in the way, to a situation where children learn together at school, which is closest to their place of residence.³⁹ Teachers working within a particular educational model display different competencies, qualifications and tasks. In source literature, one may find particularly much about predisposition, and even a desired person-

³⁶ J.J. Wheeler, D.D. Richey (2019), *Behavior management: Principles and practices of positive behavior supports* (4th ed.). Pearson; A. Biglan (2015), *The nurture effect: How the science of human behavior can improve our lives and our world*. Oakland, CA: New Harbinger.

³⁷ H. Borzyszkowska (1985), *Oligofrenopedagogika*. Warszawa: PWN; I. Stawowy-Wojnarowska (1989), *Podstawy kształcenia specjalnego*. Warszawa: WSPS; S.J. Salend (2016), *Creating Inclusive Classrooms: effective, differentiated and reflective practices*. Boston: Pearson.

³⁸ Z. Gajdzica (2011), *Sytuacje trudne w opinii nauczyciela klas integracyjnych*, Oficyna Wydawnicza „Impuls”, Kraków.

³⁹ G. Lindsay (2007), *Educational psychology and the effectiveness of inclusive education/mainstreaming*. *British Journal of Educational Psychology* Vol. 77, pp. 1-24; S.J. Salend (2016), *Creating Inclusive Classrooms: effective, differentiated and reflective practices*. Boston: Pearson.

ality of a special pedagogue.⁴⁰ Additionally, we may familiarise ourselves with sources referring to the work of a supportive teacher⁴¹, as well as, tasks and necessary competencies of a mainstream school teacher for working with children with SEN.⁴² Regardless of the type of school, all teachers undertake tasks related to their teaching, class integration activities, diagnostic, educational and supportive activities for all participants of the integration process.

In the case of working with SEN children, the responsibilities of teachers primarily include undertaking increased activities related to supporting their educational, emotional and social difficulties, but also, creating comprehensive documentation and undertaking activities with institutions that collaborate with the school. Students under the need of special education in Poland may accomplish tasks in a way that is adjusted to their needs, based on the individual educational and therapeutic curriculum, which is realised in the classroom, within groups up to five individuals, or individually at

⁴⁰ M. Grzegorzewska (1996), *Listy do młodego nauczyciela*. Vol. I-III. Warszawa: WSPS; R.B. Lewis, D.H. Doorlag (2003). *Teaching Special Students in General Education Classrooms*. New Jersey: Merrill Prentice Hall; Z. Palak A. Bujnowska (2008), *Kompetencje pedagoga specjalnego. Aktualne wyzwania teorii i praktyki*. Lublin: UMCS.

⁴¹ J. Bąbka (2001), *Edukacja integracyjna dzieci pełnosprawnych i niepełnosprawnych*. Założenia i rzeczywistość. Poznań: Fundacja 'Humaniora'; J. Kędzierska (2010), *Planowanie pracy rewalidacyjnej z dziećmi niewidomym i słabowidzącymi w szkołach ogólnodostępnych*. In: T. Żółkowska (ed.), *Dajmy szansę niewidomym i niedowidzącym*. Poradnik metodyczny dla nauczycieli. Szczecin: OR TWP; Z. Gajdzica (2011), *Sytuacje trudne w opinii nauczycieli klas integracyjnych*. Karków: Oficyna Wydawnicza 'Impuls'; D. Apanel (2014), *Teoria i praktyka kształcenia integracyjnego osób z niepełnosprawnością w Polsce w latach 1989–2014*. Toruń, Adam Marszałek.

⁴² B.B. Lewis, R.B., Doorlag (2003), *Teaching Special Students in General Education Classrooms*. New Jersey: Merrill Prentice Hall; B. Malm (2009), *Towards a new professionalism: enhancing personal and professional development in teacher education*. *Journal of Education for Teaching: International research and pedagogy*, 35(1), pp. 77–91; A. De Juanas Oliva i in. (2009). *Comparative study of the evaluation of professional competencies by experienced and trainee Spanish primary teachers*. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, Vol. 32, Issue 4, pp. 437–454.

school premises. In mainstream schools with integration units, and integration schools, teachers are employed who possess qualification within the special pedagogy area, who help organise the educational process with the consideration of prescriptions included in the ruling on the need for special education. Among students with special educational needs, i.e. behavioural and emotional disorder, autism and intellectual disabilities, often appear actions and attitudes, which through their strength and frequency, or prolonged lasting may threaten their safety, or the safety of other individuals. School practice shows, that even one child with behavioural disorders in the classroom, regardless of the cause, may lead to severe limitations in conducting a lesson.

Polish school, similar to schools in other countries, aims at creating proper educational conditions, shaping attitudes that benefit the individual and social development of the student. In principle, the school takes educational and preventive actions, aiming at eliminating threats and strengthening appropriate behaviour. Schools design trainings, educational curricula or/and procedures for difficult and crisis situations, school grading systems, and the principles of evaluating student behaviour. Most often, the documents contain records regarding: requirements, grade mode, grade scale: exemplary, very good, good, satisfactory, unsatisfactory, failed, and criteria of promoting to next class. Therefore, they define the principles of grading students regarding behaviour, and applying procedures against occurring threats, while they contribute little to the active promotion of attitudes and behavioural models of students.

School should model desirable student behaviour not only be executing principles, reprimand and punishment, but by using a clear and student-friendly system of rewarding e.g. by acknowledgement or praise. Moreover, the pool of rewards should be relatively the same, as the pool of drawn consequences. Polish students often do not know school systems of supporting desired behaviour, as well as, of their rights and obligations which are not included in the statute or the rulebook of the school which they attend. To the majority of students, they are only unclear tasks which were written down on one of

the boards in the school corridor. The standards established by schools, and striving to guarantee the best conditions for work and security, both in classroom, and in the corridor during breaks to the students, rarely offer elements of promoting their positive behaviour, in comparison to clearly specified expectations included in the PBIS model premises, that support the positive school atmosphere.

In Poland, students who, due to disability, social maladjustment or the threat of social maladjustment, as well as, those who require special work organisation and work methods, may choose a the special, integration and inclusive paths. The suggested form of special education is indicated in a report by a the constative team, however the final decision belongs to parents. Public psychological and pedagogical clinics offer aid to children, their parents and teachers. Specialists employed there, form a report or opinion that initiate the process of offering support in an educational institution, as well as, provide help in form of counsel, consultation, workshops. It is worth noting, that these documents are created often without the sufficient evaluation of the situation of challenging behaviour of the student, as they appear in the educational institution. Furthermore, In the case of all SEN students, not only those who possess a document issued by the clinic, the support received takes place outside of school. A group of students with behavioural and emotional disorders, autism and intellectual disabilities participate in individual and group therapies outside of the place where the difficulties in behaviour, and difficulties in learning (which are often associated), occur at most.

Students under the need for special education may take classes in a way adjusted to their needs on the basis of the individual educational and therapeutic programme (IEaTP). IEaTP is created based on the opinion/report by specialists from psychological and pedagogical clinics, and is assorted of an educational and therapeutic part. Unfortunately, the latter is often realised narrowly and only by individuals who work with the student. Moreover, the specialists who write the opinion/report does not come in contact with the student at school on a daily basis, causing his prescriptions included in the document to not encompass social relations of the student at

school and are separated from the therapies in which the child participates outside of school, and have no continuation in the family home. One must also mention a group of students who have no opinion/report on the need for special education, however, they require intensive support due to their behavioural challenges. These include children and youth with attention deficits, emotional, psychological disorders, as well as, students who were neglected due to family pathology, received improper behavioural models, are harmed, or were victim to psychological trauma.

Teachers who work at Polish schools, have varying qualifications, competencies and task, in regard to what type of school they work at. Studies graduated by a special pedagogue are related to a multi-profile knowledge regarding the problem of persons with a particular type of disability. Supportive teachers possess qualifications regarding special pedagogy, and are employed in order to help organise integrated education. Leading teacher graduates higher education with a given profile, or higher education in primary education. While the standards of education preparing to perform the profession of a teacher are related to contents such as psychology, pedagogy, they do not encompass the specifics of teaching SEN students. New regulation (Ministry of Science and Higher Education of 3 August 2019), expands the competencies and knowledge of the candidate with methodological background for working with SEN students, however, it is worth asking, whether the curriculum premises for educational standards, can prepare the future teachers to manage class effectively, and model the behaviour of students in the school and classroom environment. As shown by studies⁴³ difficulties at work caused by student behaviour are one of the primary factors that leads teachers to quit work, particularly among the younger staff.

It seems, that understanding the causes of challenging behaviour among students and the ability to model their actions are cru-

⁴³ S. Brill, A. McCartney (2008), Stopping the revolving door: Increasing teacher retention. *Politics & Policy*, 36(5), pp. 750-774.

cial in the work of every teacher.⁴⁴ The knowledge regarding designing the student's environment should include the skill to acquire information regarding child's attributes and difficulties, creating infrastructure and lesson schedule, including preparation and presentation of tasks. Therefore, primarily, the teacher should be equipped with competencies that will allow him to foresee circumstances that trigger challenging behaviour and the skills of selecting the most optimal form of issuing instruction and presenting the planned material for working with a student.

Summary

PBIS is a practical model based on research, the main aim of which is intervention and prevention against challenging behaviour. Applying this trilevel systemic approach turned out to be an efficient model, universally applied in US schools, aiming at satisfying the needs within the scope of supporting the behaviour of children and youth.⁴⁵

PBIS model expanded the concept of designing learning environment which would yield positive results, and may assume a broad (school) perspective or a more concentrated one (individual classroom), depending on the aim. The most visible areas of the school environment, that encompass the philosophy of positive behaviour and support, are the school culture and school atmosphere.⁴⁶ Schools with effective culture and atmosphere yield better

⁴⁴ S.W. Bijou (1970), What psychology has to offer education-now, *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*, 3(1), pp. 65-71.

⁴⁵ R.H. Horner, G. Sugai (2015), School-wide PBIS: An Example of Applied Behavior Analysis Implemented at a Scale of Social Importance, *Behavior Analysis in Practice*, 8, pp. 80-85; S.E. Pinkelman, R.H. Horner (2019), Applying Lessons from the Teaching-Family Model: Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, *Behavior Analysis in Practice*, 42(2), pp. 233-240.

⁴⁶ L. Darling-Hammond, Ch.M. Cook-Harvey (2018), *Educating the Whole Child: Improving School Climate to Support Student Success*. Palo Alto, CA: Learning Policy Institute.

effects of preventing problematic student behaviour, and school teams for promotion and pro-active interventions have a larger impact on the increased learning results and the quality of life of all children. These circles also place emphasis on team approach to problem solving, have active and engaged administration support, as well as, direct their effort towards multi-systemic solutions, which include the following environments: school, classroom, outside of school, family, and student's surroundings.

The positive results of the implementation of PBIS premises in the United States and the increasing popularity of the model in Europe (Great Britain, Germany) indicate the need for a broader learning of the proposed strategies in Poland as well. There is a lack of research regarding the ability to learn the experiences of examined teachers in work with difficulties in student behaviour, within the area of a systemic structure of schools operations, classroom environment, and particularly, those striving for answers regarding support sources, being instructions that support educational institutions and parents. The theoretical premises and practical instructions of the PBIS model could support the Polish school in activities encompassing active teaching of socially important and significant behaviours, directed at improving the educational experiences of students, as well as, affect the improvement of the life quality of students and their parents. The conducted research dedicated to the PBIS premises on three levels of support could expand the capabilities of schools in satisfying the needs of all students in terms of supporting their behaviour.

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