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Faculté de Psychologie et des Sciences de l'Education

Evaluation of Positive Behavior Support implementation in French-speaking Belgium: a case study

16 nov 5th Research Symposium of the PBS-Europe Network
📍 Zwolle 🕘 9.00 uur - 17.00 uur   Gratis

Faculté de Psychologie et des Sciences de l'Education

INAS

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Introduction

- Implementing measures to promote a positive school climate = a major challenge for both students and teachers.

  ✓ Behavior management = a prerequisite for effective teaching and thus learning for the greatest number of students (Dufour, 2010; Wang, Haertel and Walberg, 1993)

  ✓ A good behavior management system helps reduce misbehavior, including violence (Bissonnette, Bouchard, Saint-Georges, Gauthier & Bocquillon, 2020; Irvin et al., 2004)

Introduction

- Implementing measures to promote a positive school climate = a major challenge for both students and teachers.

«Lack of preparation in classroom management, particularly in the face of disruptive behavior, is one of the main causes of the "shock" new teachers can feel when confronted with reality. Adequate training in classroom management is essential, not only to develop teachers' knowledge and expertise, but also to boost their confidence and well-being at the start of their careers (Dicke et al., 2015). Given the high drop-out rates observed among new teachers in many OECD countries, this finding could prove useful for policymakers» (OECD, 2018, p. 3).

→ Behavior management = also a challenge for more experienced teachers (Dicke et al., 2015 ; Dufour, 2010 ; Nault & Fijalkow, 1999).

Introduction

- French-speaking Belgium is no exception to these findings (see TALIS 2018 survey):

- ✓ Teachers in French-speaking Belgium are "around 40% to mention the presence of elements unfavorable to a serene classroom climate [...]. This percentage is significantly higher than that observed on average in the six countries or regions taken for comparison" (Quittre, Dupont & Lafontaine, 2019, p. 19)

Context

- Difficulty in managing behavior (see TALIS survey, 2018) leads to difficulties for students and teachers (e.g. drop out)

- Lack of preparation for classroom management (OECD, 2018)

- Few evidence-based practices such as PBS

→ **3 potential explanations**

- Lack of awareness of evidence-based practices
- Difficulty in harmonizing practices
- Great deal of pedagogical freedom written in the Belgian Constitution (1831)

→ This means that each teacher and school chooses the teaching and behavior management practices they implement to achieve the objectives highlighted in the curricula.

Context

•   Current reform :

Implementing results-based management: each school is required to write a management plan including objectives and the means to achieve them.

To write this management plan, the school must identify which of several themes require priority action.

One such theme is "preventing and dealing with discrimination and violence within the school [...]" (Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles, 2019).

Context

- To achieve the objectives of their management plan, some educational teams are turning to behavior management systems whose effectiveness (for example, in reducing the number of student misbehaviors) has been demonstrated by scientific research.

- This is the case, for example, of an educational team that called on our team to be trained in Positive Behavior Support ("Soutien au Comportement Positif" in French)
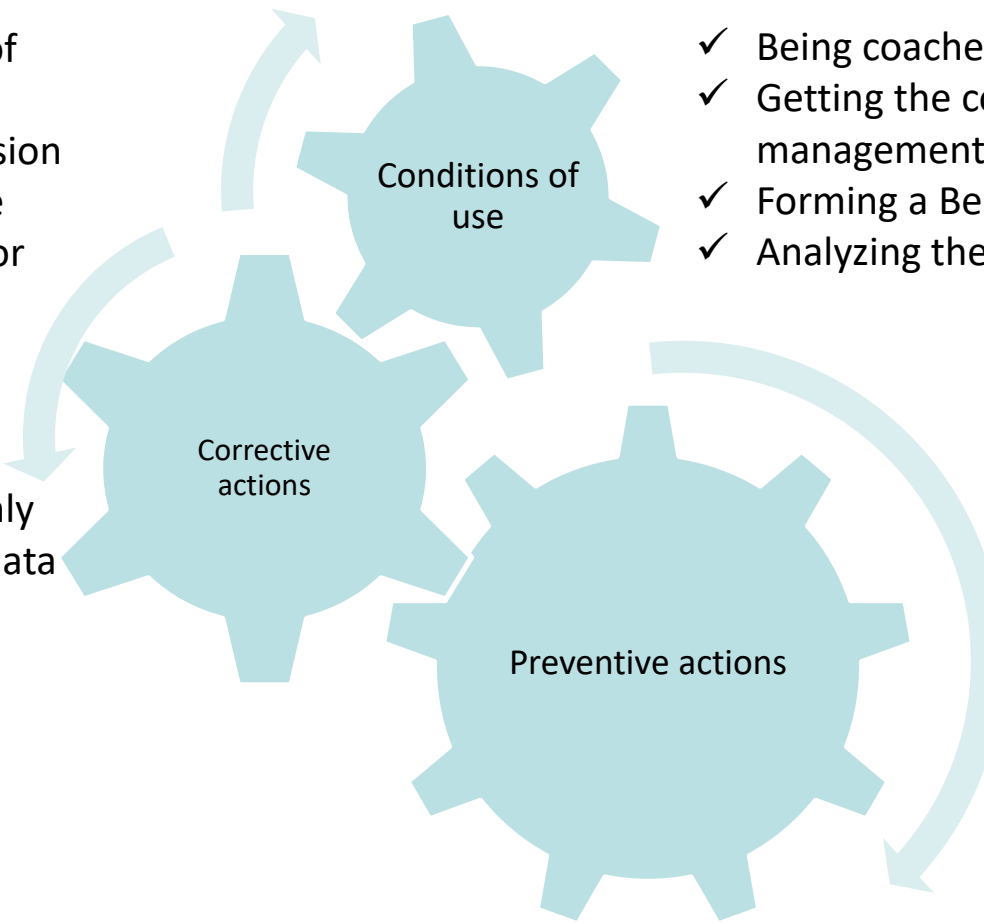
Theoretical framework : PBS

- ✓ Creating a classifications of behaviors
- ✓ Creating a decision plan to manage minor and major misbehaviors
- ✓ Collecting and compiling behavioral data
- ✓ Meeting monthly and analyzing data
- ✓ Training school staff

Conditions of use

Corrective actions
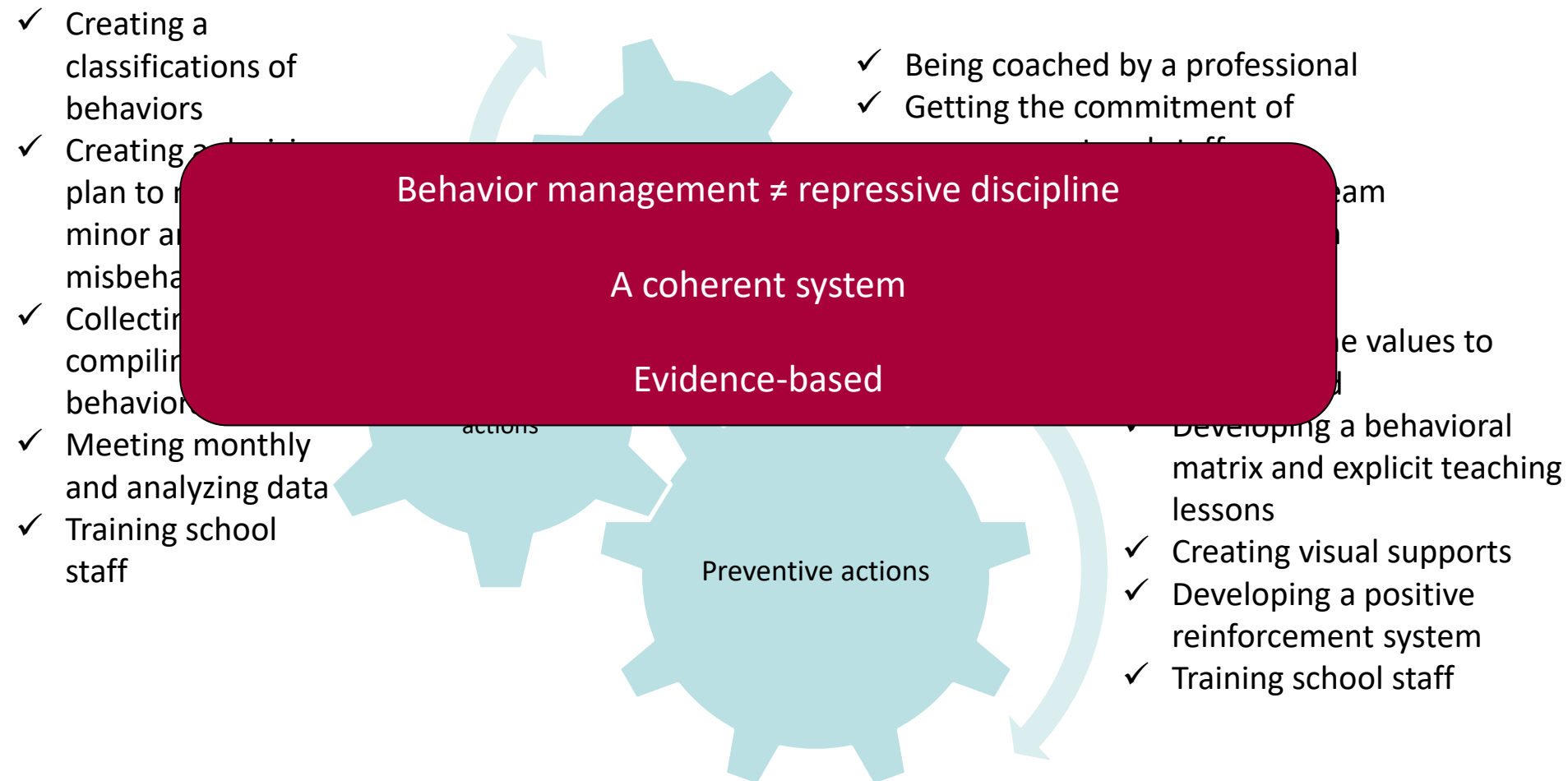
Preventive actions

- ✓ Being coached by a professional
- ✓ Getting the commitment of management and staff
- ✓ Forming a Behavior Support Team
- ✓ Analyzing the current situation

- ✓ Choosing the values to recommend
- ✓ Developing a behavioral matrix and explicit teaching lessons
- ✓ Creating visual supports
- ✓ Developing a positive reinforcement system
- ✓ Training school staff

Bissonnette et al., 2016; 2020; Sugai & Horner, 2009

Theoretical framework : PBS

- ✓ Creating a classifications of behaviors
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Preventive actions

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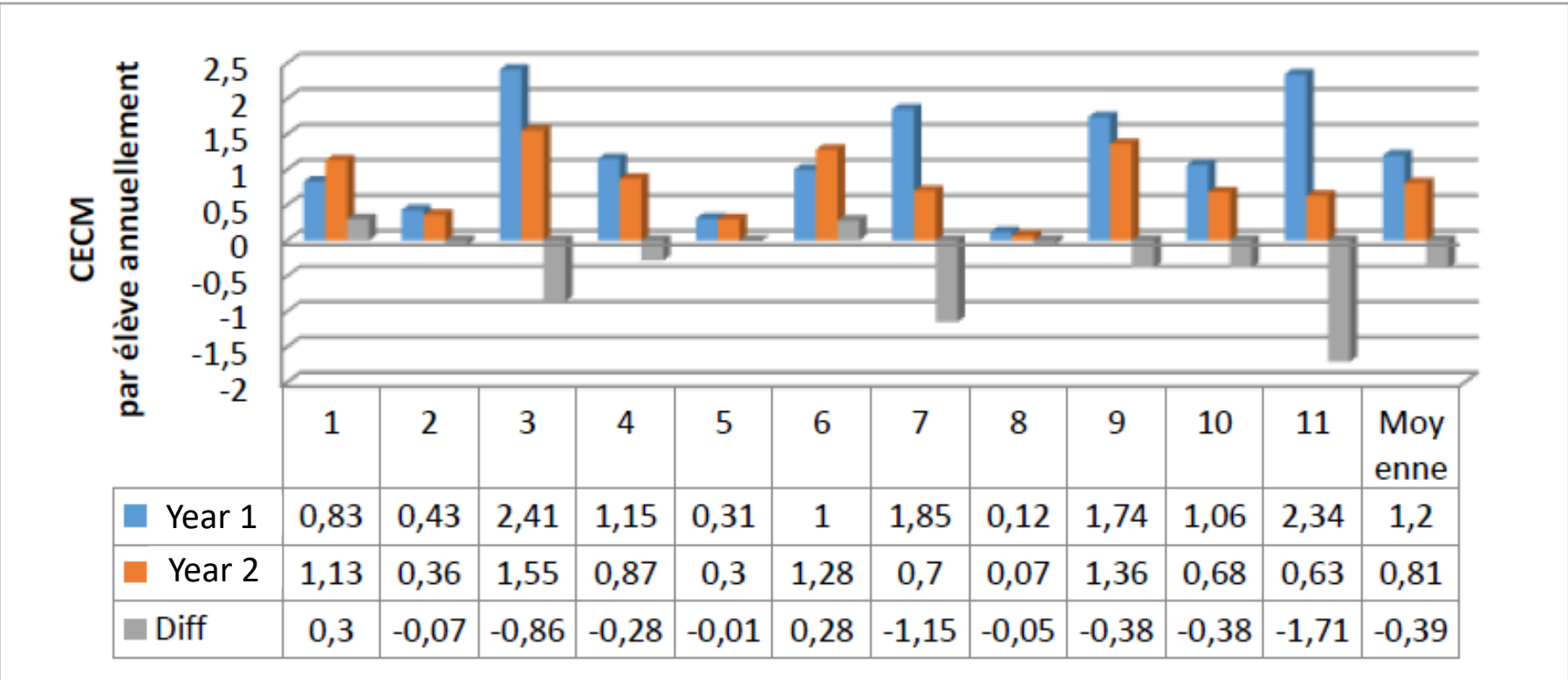- ✓ Developing a positive reinforcement system
- ✓ Training school staff

Behavior management ≠ repressive discipline

A coherent system

Evidence-based

Bissonnette et al., 2016; 2020; Sugai & Horner, 2009

average annual coefficient of major misbehavior per student for each school in the first two years of PBS implementation

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	Moyenne
■ Year 1	0,83	0,43	2,41	1,15	0,31	1	1,85	0,12	1,74	1,06	2,34	1,2
■ Year 2	1,13	0,36	1,55	0,87	0,3	1,28	0,7	0,07	1,36	0,68	0,63	0,81
■ Diff	0,3	-0,07	-0,86	-0,28	-0,01	0,28	-1,15	-0,05	-0,38	-0,38	-1,71	-0,39

The research synthesis produced by Irvin et al. (2004) showed that the use of major misbehavior represents a valid measure for assessing the school climate and behavioral portrait of the school.

Bissonnette, S., Bouchard, C., St-Georges, N., Gauthier, C, & Bocquillon, M. (2020). Un modèle de réponse à l'intervention (RAI) comportementale :   Le Soutien au Comportement Positif (SCP). *Enfance en difficulté*

Methodology

- **Research question:** Does the educational team succeed in implementing the various components of PBS?

- **The educational team**

✓ An elementary school wishing to implement PBS in classrooms and playgrounds (before extending it to other areas of the school).

✓ 400 students and 32 teachers

- **Implementation conditions met:** adhesion of the principal, adhesion of at least 80% of staff, support from an SCP coach trained in Quebec.

Methodology

- **The training programme**

✓ Aims to train staff to implement tier 1 interventions of PBS

✓ 2021-2022 :

  ✓ 3 days of Behavior Support Team training (team representing all staff): theoretical and practical activities + creation of all tools (including explicit teaching lessons)

  ✓ 2 days of training for the entire team (theoretical foundations, presentation of tools created with the Behavior Support Team, role-playing, etc.).

✓ 2022-2023: implementation of PBS in the school + Behavior Support team meeting every 5 to 6 weeks in the presence of the PBS coach to analyze and regulate the PBS initiative in the school

Methodology

- **Data collection tool:**

SET: School-Wide Evaluation Tool (Horner, Todd, Lewis-Palmer, Irvin, Sugai & Boland, 2004)

→ Allows the researcher to measure the implementation of PBS through observations in the school and interviews with the principal, teachers and students.

Methodology

Data collection:

Interviews with:

- 11 randomly selected students (in all teaching levels : 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 6th)
- 11 randomly selected teachers;
- the principal.

+ Observations made in the school

Results

Subscale	Results
A. Expectations defined	4/4 = 100%
B. Expectations taught	8/10 = 80%
C. Reward system	6/6 = 100%
D. Violation system	4/8 = 50%
E. Monitoring and evaluation	4/8 = 50%
F. Management	12/16 = 75%
G. Support	4/4 = 100%
Global index (mean)	**79%**

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F. Management	12/16 = 75%
G. Support	4/4 = 100%
Global index (mean)	**79%**

Schools achieving 80% on subscale A and Global index are implementing PBS within their school at a level deemed adequate to meet the minimum PBS requirements.

Results A. et B. Expectations defined and taught

Positive points
- ✓ Teaching materials (values, behavioral matrix, explicit instruction lessons, posters) present behavioral expectations in a POSITIVE way.
- ✓ Values and behavioral expectations publicly displayed in a POSITIVE manner in various classrooms and playgrounds
- ✓ 100% of staff report that explicit teaching of values and behavioral expectations has taken place
- ✓ 4 out of 5 Behavior Support Team members report that the PBS initiative was reviewed with staff at the beginning of the year
- ✓ 90% of staff surveyed are able to name at least 2 out of 3 values

Areas for improvement
- ✓ 2 out of 11 students are able to name 2 out of 3 values

Results C. Reward system

Positive points
- ✓ 81% of students surveyed say they have received at least one tangible positive reinforcement in the past two months
- ✓ 91% of staff surveyed say they have given tangible positive reinforcement in the last two months
- ✓ 67% of students reporting having received tokens, including younger students, are able to explain why they received a token

Results D. Violation system

Positive points
- ✓ 100% of staff interviewed agreed with the principal on which problems should be handled in the classroom and which should be handled by principal,

Areas for improvement
- ✓ No procedure for dealing with extremely dangerous situations (e.g. strangers with firearms)
- ✓ Staff interviewed do not know what to do in the event of an extremely dangerous situation

Results E. Monitoring and evaluation

Positive points
- ✓ Behavioral data collection and centralization system

Areas for improvement
- ✓ Behavioral data analysis not shared with staff members
- ✓ Not used to make decisions

Results F. Management

Positive points
- ✓ Improving school climate = one of the 3 priorities of the school improvement plan
- ✓ 91% of staff surveyed state that a Behavior Support Team is present in the school
- ✓ Behavior Support Team representative of all staff
- ✓ Principal = active member of the Behavior Support Team
- ✓ Behavior Support Team has an action plan with specific goals dating back less than a year

Areas for improvement
- ✓ No Behavior Support Team leader identified
- ✓ Behavior Support Team meetings every 5-6 weeks (instead of monthly)
- ✓ Less than 4 Behavior Support Team reports per year to all staff

Results G. Support

Positive points
- ✓ The school has a budget for PBS
- ✓ The school is supported by an external PBS coach

Discussion and conclusion

- Overall positive and encouraging results for an initial implementation of the training program

→ Joins the positive results of other studies (e.g. Bocquillon & Baco, 2023; Gauthier, Bissonnette & Bocquillon, 2022)

Discussion and conclusion

- Certain components of the system seem to represent a greater challenge for the team

✓ Establishment "Behavior Support Team" (Terrance et al., 2009) with the role of ensuring a form of harmonization of practices + identification of a project leader

→ Result due in part to the great pedagogical freedom in French-speaking Belgium?

✓ Collecting and using behavioral data to make decisions

→ Also not widespread in our context (to date)

→ Results in line with those of an initial study carried out by our team in another French-speaking Belgian school (with an earlier version of the training program) (Bocquillon & Baco, 2023)

Ways to improve the training programme

- Emphasize even more... the values = the foundation of PBS
- Train more the teachers in collecting and analyzing behavioral data by giving more meaning to these operations (e.g.: use behavioral data to re-teach expected behaviors to certain students in difficulty → towards the implementation of tier 2 interventions)

Ways to improve the training programme

- Highlight the importance of the Behavior Support Team, and in particular :

✓ The importance of designating a leader

✓ Its mission to analyze behavioral data

✓ Its role in training and providing feedback to all staff

Limitations and future research

- Study carried out in one school → to be replicated with other schools

- Study focused solely on PBS implementation.

→ Need for further studies to evaluate both the implementation and the effects of the system

→ See other paper by our team: Coen, Bocquillon, Baco, Delbart and Demeuse (this afternoon).

- More precise observations could be made in classrooms

→ See poster by our team : Delbart, Bocquillon, Baco and Derobertmasure (poster session)

Thank you for your attention

Questions ?

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