

Young Social Beings: An Investigation into the Social Interactions and Relationships of a Year Five Class

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Abstract : The paper reports a research project which investigated the social interactions of nine to ten-year-olds in a mainstream primary school. The project implemented an adaption of a whole class, behavioural intervention known as 'The Good Behaviour Game (TGBG)'. TGBG is an evidence-based intervention traditionally used to reduce low-level disruptive behaviours in a classroom setting. TGBG was adapted to encourage pupil's engagement in pro-social behaviour during lessons. A mixed methods research design was employed to evaluate intervention effects and pupil's perceptions of their social interactions and relationships with others. Single-case research design was used to evaluate behaviour change, and Personal Construct Psychology (PCP) repertory grids were used to explore pupil's perceptions. The findings demonstrated that TGBG could be successfully adapted to positively influence pupil's engagement in pro-social behaviours. The findings from the PCP repertory grid interviews revealed the complexities of how children construct their social interactions and relationships with others, and how an understanding of these could be used to design better social skills interventions. It is concluded that TGBG is a cost-effective, simple to implement intervention for promoting positive social interactions and relationships at the whole class level. The paper presents the aims, design, findings, and conclusions of the study in further detail and relates limitations and potential future extensions of the research. The outcomes have direct application and relevance for practitioners interested in children's social development and how to promote positive outcomes in this critical aspect of childhood.

Keywords : social skills, social development, social competency, the good behaviour game

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