

## **Beliefs and attitudes regarding classroom management**

Antoni Castelló, Concepción Gotzens, M. del Mar Badia and Cándid Genovard  
Autonomous University of Barcelona (Spain)

The aim of this work is to obtain a description of teachers' and students' beliefs about classroom misbehaviour and evaluate to what extent these beliefs guide their decisions and judgements. 1.389 students (13 to 16 years old) and 170 teachers of ESO (Compulsory Secondary Education) from northeast Spain have been evaluated by means of a questionnaire designed for this purpose. Results show that behaviour considered socially undesirable is valued as more deserving of penalty than misbehaviour with a less negative social evaluation, even though having a great impact on teaching and learning activities. The students' responses also showed that almost half of them do not recognise classroom-discipline actions carried out by teachers when those actions do not match their expectations.

*Key words:* Beliefs, attitudes, classroom management, discipline, teachers, students.

*Creencias y actitudes respecto a la gestión en el aula.* El objetivo de este trabajo es obtener una descripción de las percepciones de los profesores y estudiantes acerca del comportamiento disruptivo y evaluar como estas creencias guían sus decisiones y juicios. 1.389 estudiantes (entre 13 y 16 años) y 170 profesores de ESO (Educación Secundaria Obligatoria) del nordeste de España fueron evaluados con un cuestionario creado para este propósito. Los resultados muestran que el comportamiento considerado socialmente indeseable es evaluado como más susceptible de ser castigado que comportamientos considerados como no antisociales, aunque tengan un gran impacto en las actividades de enseñanza aprendizaje.

*Palabras clave:* Creencias, actitudes, gestión del aula, disciplina, profesores, alumnos.

Educational contexts might be considered as an extension of the social world, but also present special rules and conditions that are different from the social world (English, Hargreaves & Hislam, 2002). Instructional activities can only be carried out if certain conditions are guaranteed. Good planning of classroom discipline must therefore emphasise what is essential for achieving a good working environment for teaching and learning (Gotzens, 1997; Winter & Yackel, 2000). Whether the context is social or instructional, misbehaviours are the kind of conducts that disturb the necessary conditions to achieve the proposed goals, whatever they are. In that sense, social misbehaviours cannot be neglected, but they usually have a lesser effect on instructional working conditions (Gage and Berliner, 1988). That will make possible for students to have a clear and stable framework that will enable them to learn about discipline and order in school, whatever they have learned in their familiar or social environments.

School discipline is, without any doubt, a different type of "discipline" and "order" to those that operate in other social environments. The opposite situation - teachers trying to change behaviour that is not relevant to the school environment, despite it being so in other social environments - will not only be inadequate but also confusing for students' learning (Meunier, 2000). Of course, consistency between what students consider to be generally permitted or forbidden and the consequences arising from infractions will be easily found (Badia, 2001). But, if only general rules are considered, it will frequently be necessary to improvise penalties for misbehaviour that is only related to instructional processes, and such penalties will not match students' expectations of what is punishable.

In the last decades, most works in that subject have experienced the same theoretical shifts than Educational Psychology has had (Calderhead, 1996; Castelló, 2001; Mumby, Russell & Martin, 2001; Sugai & Horner, 2002; Pajares, 1992). The progressive hegemony of cognitive approaches has stressed teachers' thinking processes instead of former theoretical frameworks (fundamentally the process-product paradigm) that focused on teachers' behaviour as a response to pupils' conducts. The works of Bijou, Kiosseoglou and Stogiannidou (2000); Volkman and McMahon (1999); Woolfolf, Rarosoff and Hoy (1998); or Zanting, Verloop and Vermunt (2001) are significant examples of such a shift.

From that standing point, the interest for the perceptions and beliefs –both from teachers and students, as stated by Lewis (2001); Morin, Milito and Costlow (2001) or Tulley and Chiu (1998)–replaces the former concern on the analysis of classroom behaviours. As Molins and Clopton (2002) notice, this new approach has consequently modified data gathering as well as the intervention directives focusing on the representations managed by teachers and students, instead of their behaviour. For instance, in a former paper (Gotzens, Castelló, Genovard and Badia, 2003) we could verify that many actions performed by teachers were not perceived as a penalty by

students, even though it was the professors' aim, what showed an important communication mismatch and compromised the classroom climate. This situation might partly arise because of the lack of specific directives about punishment in Spanish schooling. General directives, like banning physical punishment, obviously exist but no concrete guidelines are provided by educational policy-makers, so teachers decide by their own criteria how to act when misbehaviour appears.

May be the most difficult point is putting perceptions and beliefs in the appropriate context. As noted before, school discipline has its own characteristics and they cannot be generalized from or to different settings, where other processes are carried out and other purposes are held (Ohlund and Nelson, 2001). If threads to school discipline are not correctly perceived or are confused with wider social situations, instructional interactions lose their specific character vanishing in general social situations. An example of the double nature of school discipline could be the response to general social problems-as stealing-but also to those disruptive behaviours-as making noises during the class. While the former needs to be responded, as in any other social setting, the later is specifically inconvenient in the classroom, where attention is a requisite for any kind of learning (even giving up stealing) although making noises has a lower social impact (Friedl, 2000; Gotzens, 1997; Hardman and Smith, 2003). In that sense, school discipline is a necessary condition to achieve learning, whether social or academic.

Our research aims to establish teachers' and students' perceptions about seriousness of certain behaviours that take place in the classroom and whether they should be penalised. Particularly, consistency between behaviour that is considered worthy of penalty and that which is perceived as penalised will be investigated among teachers and students. In that sense, we expect that behaviours rated as punishable by both teachers and students will be what society, in general, considers disruptive and undesirable. On the contrary, behaviour that is also disruptive, but only in the instructional context, is expected to be considered as less significant, especially by pupils.

These objectives and expectations entail the following hypotheses:

*Hypothesis 1:* Teachers' planning of discipline in their classes will focus much more on anti-social behaviour (such as "stealing") than on behaviours which are more relevant to school-learning situations ("not paying attention", "leaving teaching material at home", etc).

*Hypothesis 2:* Behaviours that will be considered as worthy of penalty by students are those of a general social nature, over those of instructional nature.

*Hypothesis 3:* Teachers are expected to state that they take action to control discipline in all cases of disruptive behaviour, whatever the gravity they have declared.

*Hypothesis 4:* Students will only perceive those actions taken against behaviour that they feel deserves to be penalised (e.g. behaviour considered as socially incorrect).

## METHOD

This research is framed within an empirical-analytical quantitative approach. It is a descriptive study which compares declarative data obtained from two independent groups - teachers and students in Compulsory Secondary Education (ESO) in the Spanish Education System.

The information analysed from both groups represents, on one hand, their ideas about the appropriateness of penalising certain disruptive behaviours that may arise in the classroom and, on the other hand, their perceptions regarding the actual penalties applied to those behaviours. This information allows intra-group tests (ideas against perceptions) to be carried out and also inter-group tests (teachers' ideas and perceptions against students' ideas and perceptions).

### *Participants*

1.389 students in the first ( $N=781$ ) and second ( $N=608$ ) stages of Compulsory Secondary Education (13-14 and 15-16 years old, respectively), resident in central Catalonia (northeast Spain), constituted a stratified sample of different social classes and sociological situations in current western society (emigration, unemployment, etc.). Their 170 teachers composed the professors' sample. Stratification was based on the geographical distribution of the population, sampling schools proportionally to the sociological parameters of the area. 18 schools were selected.

Spanish Compulsory Secondary Education has a common steam of subjects (Grammar, Maths, Social and Experimental Sciences, Foreign Languages, Sports and Arts) and allows the schools to introduce a few optional subjects (e.g. Religion in catholic schools). Classroom size ranges from 20 to 30 students. Classroom mates are kept constant along the school-year while different professors teach the subjects of their speciality.

### *Instruments*

In order to obtain the necessary information for carrying out the tests, a questionnaire was constructed (one version for teachers and another for students) including the following parts:

1. A table presenting 22 behaviours randomly ordered.
2. One column, addressed to both teachers and students, asking to answer which of those behaviours deserved to be penalised.

3. In a second column, teachers were asked about which behaviours were actually penalised by them, and students were requested to state whether or not their teacher penalised the behaviours.

Hence, the collected data was binary (yes/no) and the responses were transformed to the proportion of “yes” answers to each of the behaviours, group of respondents (teachers and students) and situation (penalty deserving and actual penalization declared).

The questionnaire included a selection of the disruptive behaviours that significantly represents what happens in classes, according to previous studies (Añaños & Gotzens, 1990; Martin, Linfoot & Stepheson, 1999). Such literature led us to decide upon 22 misbehaviours (see the first two columns of table 2, in the following pages). The opinion of ten international education experts was requested in order to determine which of the behaviours could be considered as instructional discipline problems and which of them were social discipline problems (table 2 shows the formers in white rows and the lasts in greyed rows). As mentioned above, the distinction between these two categories is based on the specific weight that each behaviour contributes to the functional destabilisation of the class - when this weight is high, it is considered that the behaviour has instructional effects (whether It has social relevance or not).

The validity of the instrument was submitted to the *judge's test*. Criteria related to comprehensiveness, educational relevance and the importance of the items were considered. The reliability of the questionnaire was verified with a sub-sample of 20 teachers and 500 students, using test-retest techniques (with a difference of a month) and Cronbach's alpha. The results obtained are shown in table 1.

Table 1. Reliability indexes for teachers' and students' responses

|          | Test-retest | Cronbach's Alpha |
|----------|-------------|------------------|
| Teachers | 0.85        | 0.87             |
| Students | 0.89        | 0.91             |

### *Procedure*

Students completed the questionnaire in their classrooms, under the supervision of one of the researchers. The teachers answered them in private and delivered them to the principal's office, where they were eventually collected by the research team. Due to the sensitive nature of questions linked to school discipline, we decided that participation would be voluntary and anonymous. An anonymous response undoubtedly prevented us from obtaining some information that could have been of interest (e.g. a comparison of the responses given by a teacher and his/her specific group of students). Nevertheless, it ensured a higher number of answers and more importantly, that they were less stereotyped.

## RESULTS

Chi-square tests were applied - both intra-group and inter-group - in order to obtain contrasts and the statistical significance (using the SPSS 12.0 statistical package). The amount of positive responses (e.g. their percentage) may be considered an indirect index of how generalised is the idea that a given behaviour deserves penalty. The same proportion of positive responses can be used to evaluate - in this case, directly - the regular use of penalties in the classroom declared by teachers and the perception of these sanctions by the students.

For example, if a particular behaviour accumulates 96% of "yes" responses when the question of whether it deserves penalty is asked, this clearly shows an almost unanimous agreement among respondents. Further, it can be assumed that there is a generalised belief concerning the seriousness of this behaviour. On the other hand, a behaviour for which only 34 percent of the answers are positive shows that most people do not consider it to be punishable. So it cannot be considered as a penalty deserving behaviour (misbehaviour, indeed) for the respondents.

Table 2 shows the proportions of positive responses obtained for any single behaviour, converted linearly into percentages, as well as the level of significance of the contrasts. The first three columns (under the heading "Deserves penalty") show the percentages of the "yes" responses from teachers and students regarding whether a given behaviour deserves to be penalised, and the signification of the inter-group contrast. The following three columns (labelled "Penalty exists") have a similar structure, but show the use of penalties declared by teachers as well as the students' perception of these penalties, and the statistical significance. The last two columns show the intra-group levels of significance when contrasting "Deserves penalty" and "Penalty exists" responses for both teachers and students.

Table 3 renders the same kind of percentages, grouping behaviours by type ("Social behaviour" vs. "Instructional behaviour"). Percentages for all behaviours are also shown in order to describe the general opinions concerning penalties.

Table 3 shows significant differences ( $p < 0.001$ ) between the proportions of teachers who consider social behaviour and instructional behaviour worthy of penalty. The difference observed, in absolute values, is greater than one quartile (93.24% for social behaviour; 66.70% for instructional behaviour). Both the statistical significance of the differences and their magnitude meet the expectations of the first hypotheses.

Teachers' specific responses (see table 2) indicate that all behaviours were considered to be worthy of penalty by at least a third of the group, but there is almost total agreement (over 85%) for those behaviours considered as social. So it can be stated that although teachers consider that all the behaviours evaluated deserve some degree of penalisation, they lay special emphasis on those of a social nature. In contrast, those of a

genuinely instructional nature are considered to be less serious. Therefore it reasonable to assume that they are going to devote more efforts on controlling the former than the latter.

Table 2. Percentage of affirmative responses for each behaviour pattern and significance of inter- and intra-group contrasts

| Behaviour                                | Deserves penalty |       |          | Penalty exists |       |          | Intra-group p |       |
|--|------------------|-------|----------|----------------|-------|----------|---------------|-------|
|  | Teach.           | Stu.  | <i>p</i> | Teach.         | Stu.  | <i>p</i> | Teach.        | Stu.  |
| B01 Being out of his/her seat            | 50.60            | 42.14 | 0.028    | 89.33          | 53.48 | 0.000    | 0.000         | 0.000 |
| B02 Walking around classroom             | 78.70            | 78.17 | 0.876    | 92.81          | 77.58 | 0.000    | 0.000         | 0.641 |
| B03 Damage to furniture or equipment     | 97.88            | 92.62 | 0.000    | 90.37          | 90.95 | 0.771    | 0.001         | 0.021 |
| B04 Destruction of teaching material     | 90.96            | 68.49 | 0.000    | 91.30          | 61.90 | 0.000    | 0.794         | 0.000 |
| B05 Making noises                        | 72.88            | 62.31 | 0.000    | 90.68          | 66.40 | 0.000    | 0.000         | 0.000 |
| B06 Talking with classmates              | 57.65            | 41.92 | 0.000    | 91.76          | 64.60 | 0.000    | 0.000         | 0.000 |
| B07 Foolish behaviour                    | 71.43            | 64.10 | 0.051    | 94.58          | 72.12 | 0.000    | 0.000         | 0.000 |
| B08 Violently audible anger              | 87.13            | 78.70 | 0.000    | 94.17          | 82.42 | 0.000    | 0.008         | 0.000 |
| B09 Use of mobile phone in the classroom | 92.73            | 77.55 | 0.000    | 95.09          | 86.13 | 0.000    | 0.373         | 0.000 |
| B10 Disobeying commands or authority     | 94.88            | 79.29 | 0.000    | 96.65          | 82.08 | 0.000    | 0.222         | 0.002 |
| B11 Mocking the teacher                  | 90.42            | 81.60 | 0.001    | 93.94          | 82.31 | 0.000    | 0.202         | 0.557 |
| B12 Reluctance to do school tasks        | 73.48            | 60.07 | 0.000    | 91.14          | 63.75 | 0.000    | 0.000         | 0.002 |
| B13 Interrupting classmates' work        | 78.57            | 68.89 | 0.005    | 94.55          | 62.42 | 0.000    | 0.000         | 0.000 |
| B14 Stealing                             | 99.40            | 97.08 | 0.002    | 91.41          | 87.94 | 0.145    | 0.000         | 0.000 |
| B15 Truancy                              | 88.02            | 71.93 | 0.000    | 87.73          | 75.58 | 0.000    | 0.999         | 0.011 |
| B16 Vulgar verbal expression or gesture  | 88.02            | 72.37 | 0.000    | 96.32          | 75.20 | 0.000    | 0.006         | 0.044 |
| B17 Distraction                          | 34.52            | 20.52 | 0.000    | 81.93          | 40.75 | 0.000    | 0.000         | 0.000 |
| B18 Interrupting teacher                 | 45.51            | 50.18 | 0.212    | 85.89          | 60.56 | 0.000    | 0.000         | 0.000 |
| B19 Leaving the classroom                | 98.21            | 87.72 | 0.000    | 93.25          | 90.24 | 0.158    | 0.032         | 0.018 |
| B20 Fighting and physical aggression     | 95.18            | 82.73 | 0.000    | 93.87          | 88.47 | 0.010    | 0.639         | 0.000 |
| B21 Leaving learning materials at home   | 73.65            | 44.00 | 0.000    | 90.91          | 65.38 | 0.000    | 0.000         | 0.000 |
| B22 Chewing gum                          | 46.43            | 31.16 | 0.000    | 85.03          | 65.07 | 0.000    | 0.000         | 0.000 |

Note: The rows with a grey background represent social behaviour; while rows with a white background refer to instructional behaviour. Significance levels of less than 0.01 are shown in bold; significance levels of less than 0.05 in normal type, and non-significant values in grey

Table 3. Percentage of affirmative responses for grouped behaviour patterns and significance of inter- and intra-group contrasts

| Behaviour type                          | Deserves penalty |       |          | Penalty exists |       |          | Intra-group p |       |
|---|------------------|-------|----------|----------------|-------|----------|---------------|-------|
|   | Teach.           | Stu.  | <i>p</i> | Teach.         | Stu.  | <i>p</i> | Teach.        | Stu.  |
| SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR                        | 93.24            | 82.67 | 0.000    | 93.08          | 83.91 | 0.000    | 0.958         | 0.652 |
| INSTRUCTIONAL BEHAVIOUR                 | 66.70            | 54.58 | 0.000    | 90.38          | 64.63 | 0.000    | 0.000         | 0.000 |
| SIGNIF. OF SOCIAL VS. INSTRUCT CONTRAST | 0.000            | 0.000 |          | 0.256          | 0.000 |          |               |       |
| ALL BEHAVIOUR                           | 77.56            | 66.07 | 0.000    | 91.49          | 72.52 | 0.000    | 0.000         | 0.001 |

Note: Significances of less than 0.01 are shown in bold; significances of less than 0.05 in normal type, and insignificant values in grey

A similar situation can be assumed for students' responses, although the magnitude of the difference is even greater than one quartile (82.67% in the case of social behaviour and 54.58% for instructional behaviour). Consequently, the

expectations of the second hypothesis are partially met: social misbehaviour is clearly considered as penalty deserving, but instructional misbehaviour is also considered by, at least, the half of the students. In general, they are less likely to consider any type of behaviour as penalty deserving (on average, 11% less than teachers). In any case, both teachers and students have a similar profile regarding the attribution of *importance* to each type of behaviours (social or instructional).

Behaviours are ranked by the percentage of agreement in table 4. It can be seen that social behaviours are situated in the upper half of the table, both for students and teachers. Some more subtle differences can be detected when behaviours shown in bold print (those having a distance greater than or equal to three positions) are considered. For instance, teachers have a more professional outlook with regard to educational materials, evaluating the graveness of their destruction or being forgotten at home much more highly than students do. However, disruption of the teacher's work is considered more highly by students, despite this behaviour being situated in the lower fringe in both cases. More attention will be paid to these discrepancies below.

*Table 4.* Ranking of behaviour, according to agreement in its worthiness of penalty, declared by teachers and students

| Teachers' ranking                         |       | Students' ranking                         |       |
|---|-------|---|-------|
| Behaviour                                 | Perc. | Behaviour                                 | Perc. |
| B14. Stealing                             | 99.40 | B14. Stealing                             | 97.08 |
| B19. Leaving the classroom                | 98.21 | B03. Damage to furniture or equipment     | 92.62 |
| B03. Damage to furniture or equipment     | 97.88 | B19. Leaving the classroom                | 87.72 |
| B20. Fighting and physical aggression     | 95.18 | B20. Fighting and physical aggression     | 82.73 |
| B10. Disobeying commands or authority     | 94.88 | B11. Mocking the teacher                  | 81.60 |
| B09. Use of mobile phone in the classroom | 92.73 | B10. Disobeying commands or authority     | 79.29 |
| B04. Destruction of teaching material     | 90.96 | B08. Violently audible anger              | 78.70 |
| B11. Mocking the teacher                  | 90.42 | B02. Walking around classroom             | 78.17 |
| B15. Truancy                              | 88.02 | B09. Use of mobile phone in the classroom | 77.55 |
| B16. Vulgar language or gesture           | 88.02 | B16. Vulgar language or gesture           | 72.37 |
| B08. Violently audible anger              | 87.13 | B15. Truancy                              | 71.93 |
| B02. Walking around classroom             | 78.70 | B13. Interrupting classmates' work        | 68.89 |
| B13. Interrupting classmates' work        | 78.57 | B04. Destruction of teaching material     | 68.49 |
| B21. Leaving teaching material at home    | 73.65 | B07. Foolish behaviour                    | 64.10 |
| B12. Reluctance to carry out tasks        | 73.48 | B05. Making noises                        | 62.31 |
| B05. Making noises                        | 72.88 | B12. Failure to carry out tasks           | 60.07 |
| B07. Foolish behaviour                    | 71.43 | B18. Interrupting the teacher             | 50.18 |
| B06. Talking with classmates              | 57.65 | B21. Leaving teaching material at home    | 44.00 |
| B01. Being out of his/her seat            | 50.60 | B01. Being out of his/her seat            | 42.14 |
| B22. Chewing gum                          | 46.43 | B06. Talking with classmates              | 41.92 |
| B18. Interrupting the teacher             | 45.51 | B22. Chewing gum                          | 31.16 |
| B17. Distraction                          | 34.52 | B17. Distraction                          | 20.52 |

Note: Identical behaviours located at a distance higher than 2 positions are shown in bold

Despite teachers statement that disruptive behaviour of an instructional character is less worthy of penalty, they respond to it in the same way as they do to



social behaviours, which confirms the third hypothesis. In fact, when reacting to both social and instructional behaviours teachers show very similar values (in average, 93.08% of agreement for social behaviour and 90.38% for instructional behaviour, which do not differ in a statistically significant manner:  $p=0.256$ ).

Finally, considering the proportion of penalties declared to be applied by teachers and those perceived by students, it can be said that the perception of penalties for social behaviour is around 10 points less (93.08% declared by teachers and 83.91% perceived by students) which, despite being statistically significant ( $p<0.001$ ), shows that most students (over 80%) are sensitive to this type of teaching action. But the difference between declared and perceived penalties for instructional behaviours drastically increases by over 25 points (90.38% of penalties declared by teachers; 64.63% perceived by students). This means that at least one third of the students are not aware of the teacher's actions aimed at controlling instructional conditions. So that mainly confirms hypothesis 4.

## DISCUSSION

The behaviour which teachers consider *a priori* to be punishable - taking into account those that have been declared by at least 80% of the teachers - mainly correspond to socially problematic situations and not to genuinely instructional situations. These behaviours are "behaviour problems" from the general social point of view. Actions that have a lesser effect on the school environment receive a high level of consensus among teachers. In contrast, behaviours that directly affect learning activities in the classroom are scarcely considered. This might be illustrated by the item "Stealing" (which fortunately has a limited effect in the classroom) considered to be worthy of penalty by 99% of teachers, while behaviour that disturbs classroom work such as "Interrupting the teacher", "Talking to classmates" or "Leaving school material at home" receive ratings of 46%, 58% and 74% respectively. In this concern, teachers' ideas of what is disruptive in the classroom do not significantly differ from what is considered disruptive in any other environment and the term "classroom discipline" loses its instructional essence and becomes part of a concept linked to the category of "antisocial behaviour" in general, within which behaviour that leads to disorder in the class is barely relevant.

May be the most striking result, considering its consequences for the teaching-learning process, is the major discrepancy observed between teachers' opinions regarding what behaviour should be penalised and what *they actually penalise*. This suggests that teachers' prior decisions regarding behaviours that could be disruptive to the instructional process -which presumably should be associated with some sort of control- are not congruent with those behaviours that they indeed perceive as problematic in

class. The most obvious case is the "Distraction" behaviour, which is only considered punishable by 34.52% of teachers but is however penalised in some way by 81.93%.

This pattern of action performed by teachers illustrates that their decision making is founded on the moral gravity of students' misbehaviour. Anyway, their actions are oriented to cop with any kind of behaviour that might compromise an effective class development. In that sense, the educational part of teachers' activity (which is socially shared with family and other social instances) is backed up by a conscious decision making setting, while instructional discipline actions are just improvised when misbehaviour emerges.

There are also some cognitive consequences of this pattern of action: on the one hand, when a response is a product of sound consideration it will probably be more adjusted and efficient than an improvised one. On the other, expectations and perceptual filters only arise from cognitively elaborated materials. Thus, it is very plausible that social misbehaviour is immediately detected and stopped, whereas instructional misbehaviour is detected too late, when its effects are more difficult to control. The way to improve effective response to instructional misbehaviour, whatever its moral gravity, should be grounded in a larger conscious analysis of their effects on classroom activities.

At this point, a reference to some of the teachers' implicit theories is quite explanatory, as it brings us closer to a generic representation of antisocial behaviour, instead of providing a more classroom-contextualised model. That may lead to a wrong attribution of classroom misbehaviour mechanics. Hence, it is probable that the implicit theories considered by the teachers make some disruptive behaviour positive. For example, "Interrupting the teacher" may become "Use of freedom of expression". If that is the case no reply can be expected from the teacher.

The accumulation of information and explanations that enable them to deal with mental models that are closer to classroom conditions will provide them with a suitable basis for decision-making and acting in an effective manner. It should not be forgotten that belief-based knowledge is highly immune to change, meaning that it must be reconstructed carefully, with its inconsistencies made explicit and analysed in depth.

A second discussion block refers to the discrepancy between behaviour that teachers say they control in some way and the perception of these actions by students. Table 2, showed that any behaviour was responded to by at least 80% of the teachers, but this 80% agreement is only reached in 8 of the 22 students' perceptions. This is a good explanation for the high frequency of some disciplinary problems—many students, roughly a half of them, do not perceive the disapproval or rejection shown by the teacher when some disruptive behaviour takes place. Further, this half of the students do not therefore obtain any feedback which enables them to recognise this behaviour as disruptive, and as a consequence, they cannot deduce that it should be avoided in the future.

Discrepancies are stressed in the case of instructional misbehaviour. Students' expectations seem to cause this type of bias, perceiving teachers' actions filtered by their moral valuation of the behaviour instead of the actual presence of the corrective action. It should also be noted that in any event, and due to social conformity, teachers usually declare less penalties than they really apply and students exaggerate the penalties that they perceive, because of its emotional impact. But in fact, the situation is precisely the opposite, which means that the interpretation of the results can be considered as fully reliable.

Analysis focusing on the student's perceptions therefore leads us to a general conclusion – a considerable group of secondary education students do not seem to learn, or to have learned in previous years, which behaviour really disturbs classes and that this behaviour should be penalised. It is true that they identify bad behaviour, but they are unaware of the interactions between "bad behaviour" and the "context of occurrence", so they apply a single model similar to the general social model. Once again, as it has been suggested for the teachers, explicit learning of these contradictory situations seems to be an effective means of solving problems of discipline in the classroom.

#### *Acknowledgements*

This research has been carried out in the framework of the Project SEJ2005-02688 financed by the Ministerio de Educacion y Ciencia (MEC).

### REFERENCIAS

- Añanos, E. & Gotzens, C. (1990). Análisis de algunos de los elementos que intervienen en la conducta del profesor. Estudio a partir de la resolución de problemas de disciplina. *Boletín de Psicología*, 26, 77-93.
- Badia, M. (2001). *Las percepciones de profesores y alumnos de E.S.O. sobre la intervención en el comportamiento disruptivo: un estudio comparativo*. Tesis Doctoral. Bellaterra (Barcelona): Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona.
- Bibou, N.I., Kiosseoglou, G. & Stogiannidou, A. (2000). Elementary teachers' perceptions regarding school behavior problems: Implications for school psychological services. *Psychology in the Schools*, 37(2), 123-134.
- Calderhead, J. (1996). Teachers: beliefs and knowledge. In D.C. Berliner & R. Calfee (Eds.) *Handbook of Educational Psychology*. (pp. 709-725). New York: Macmillan.
- Castelló, A. (2001). Procesos cognitivos en el profesor. In A. Sipán (Coord.) *Educación para la diversidad en el Siglo XXI*. Zaragoza: Mira Editores.
- English, E., Hargreaves, L. & Hisslam, J. (2002). Pedagogical dilemmas in the National Literacy Strategy: Primary teachers' perceptions, reflections and classroom behaviour. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 32(1), 9-26.
- Friedl, J. (2000). Punishing Students for Non-Academic Misconduct. *Journal of College and University Law*, 26(4), 701-726.

- Gázquez, J.J., Pérez, M.C., Lucas, F. y Palenzuela, M.M. (2008). Percepción del alumnado universitario sobre el origen de la violencia escolar. *European Journal of Education and Psychology*, 1(1), 68-80.
- Gotzens, C. (1997). *La disciplina escolar*. Barcelona: Horsori.
- Gotzens, C., Castelló, A., Genovard, C. & Badia, M. (2003). Percepciones de profesores y alumnos de E.S.O. sobre la disciplina en el aula. *Psicothema*, 15(3), 362-368.
- Hardman, E.L. & Smith, S. (2003). Analysis of Classroom Discipline-Related Content in Elementary Education Journals. *Behavioral Disorders*, 28(2), 173-186.
- Lewis, R. (2001). Classroom Discipline and Student Responsibility: The Students' View. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 17(3), 307-319.
- Martin, A., Linfoot, K. & Stepheson, J. (1999). How teachers respond to concerns about misbehavior in their classroom. *Psychology in the Schools*, 36, 347-357.
- Meunier, J.M. (2000). Sondage dans une école primaire: Des conduites pacifiques et des comportements violents. *Apprentissage et Socialisation*, 20(1), 35-49.
- Molins, N.C. & Clopton, J.R. (2002). Teachers' reports of the problem behavior of children in their classrooms. *Psychological Reports*, 90(1), 157-164.
- Morin, S.M., Milito, C. & Costlow, N. (2001). Adolescents' Perceptions of Discipline within Intact Families and Stepfamilies. *Adolescence*, 36(142), 281-288.
- Mumby, H., Russell, T. & Martin, A.K. (2001). Teachers' knowledge and how it develops. In V. Richardson (Ed.). *Handbook of Research on Teaching*. (4th ed.). Washington: American Educational Research Association.
- Ohlund, B.J. & Nelson, J.R. (2001). *Effective Academic and Behavioral Intervention and Supports: A Professional Development Program To Maximize Student Learning*.
- Ruiz, J.A., Llor, L., Puebla, T. y Llor, B. (2009). Evaluación de las creencias actitudinales hacia la violencia en centros educativos: el CAHV-25. *European Journal of Education and Psychology*, 2(1), 25-35.
- Shin, S. & Koh, M.S. (2007). A Cross-Cultural Study of Teachers' Beliefs and Strategies on Classroom Behavior Management in Urban American and Korean School Systems. *Education and Urban Society*, 39(2), 286-309.
- Sugai, G. & Horner, R. (2002). The Evolution of Discipline Practices: School-Wide Positive. *Child & Family Behavior Therapy*, 24(1-2), 23-50.
- Tulley, M. & Chiu, L.H. (1998). Children's perceptions of the effectiveness of classroom discipline techniques. *Journal of Instructional Psychology*, 25(3), 189-197.
- Van der Schaaf, M.F., Stokking, K.M. & Verloop, N. (2008) Teacher beliefs and teacher behaviour in portfolio assessment. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 24(7), 1691-1704.
- Volkman, B.K. & McMahon, R. (1999). Future teachers' perceptions of discipline. *Clearing House*, 143, 15-23.
- Winter, D. & Yackel, C.A. (2000). Novice Instructors and Student-Centered Instruction: Understanding Perceptions and Responses to Challenges of Classroom Authority. *Primus*, 10(4), 289-318.
- Woolfolk, A., Rarosoff, R. & Hoy, W. (1998). Teacher's sense of efficacy and their beliefs about managing students. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 6(2), 46-54.
- Zanting, A., Verloop, N. & Vermunt, J.D. (2001). Student teachers eliciting mentors' practical knowledge and comparing it to their own beliefs. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 17(6), 725-740.

Received May, 4, 2009

Revision received November, 28, 2009

Accepted December, 15, 2009