

Book title: Getting The Buggers To Behave

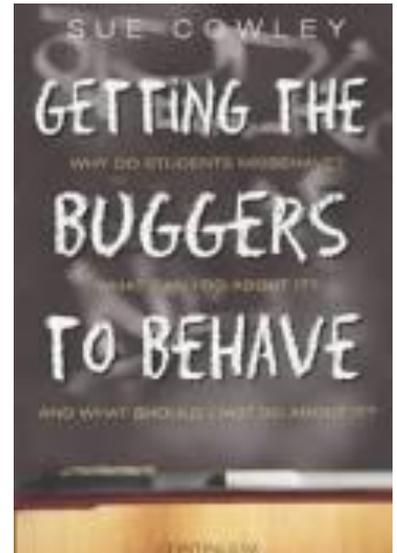
Author: Sue Cowley

Publication date: 2001

The review

1. What is your overall impression of the book?

Sue Cowley is an experienced teacher who has worked within both primary and secondary sectors worldwide. The title itself portrays the relaxed style of her writing whilst providing the reader with valuable advice on behaviour management and strategies. It has a truly accessible style that incorporates humour and sharp wit; a refreshing change to the jargon and complex theory that we have to digest in academic literature. Cowley draws upon her own experiences thus providing realistic scenarios, coupled with strategies which are easy to apply. I found the book an empowering tool that encourages teachers to use their own judgement and common sense to ultimately build positive relationships with their students. Ultimately, it is a teacher training textbook full of sensible advice about managing children of differing levels of ability in the classroom. I think that it is a book that I will find to be a useful point of reference throughout my teaching career not just in the initial training stages.



2. Who do you think would benefit most from reading the book? What will they learn?

It is particularly well suited to trainee teachers looking for advice and guidance on how to successfully manage challenging behaviour and promote a more positive learning environment within the classroom. However, I think that the relatability of Cowley's examples and scenarios would make it a valuable resource for a broad range of teachers at different career levels. Many of the situations discussed are secondary school based however I do feel that primary school teacher would also find it useful; there's even a Part called '*Managing behaviour: early years and primary (3-11)*' which includes a useful list of key strategies and techniques. The book provides a great deal of advice for dealing with different levels of disruptive behaviour, setting ground rules and following sanctions.

3. What did you think about the quality of the writing? Please consider the tone, structure and ideas. Does it suit the audience?

The tone uses light-hearted humour and wit which made it a funny and engaging read. Cowley's illustrative scenarios are very honest and realistic; it made it easy for me to relate to my own personal experiences and helped me to reflect on how I could have handled situations differently and more effectively. The language used is succinct and concise; the structure is logical. It covers six specific areas/parts that are then separated into smaller sub-chapters. Cowley begins by outlining the basics, the fundamental ground rules of behaviour management through to exploring the influential wider environment and physical aspects of the classroom:

Part 1: In the Beginning...

Part 2: The Teacher and the Teaching

Part 3: The Students

Part 4: The Wider Environment

Part 5: For Example...

Part 6: If All Else Fails...

I believe it to be very suited to its target audience (teachers!) as it could form a valuable resource for everyday teaching. It details tried and tested strategies used by the author herself so it could empower the reader with the confidence to apply these strategies themselves.

4. Please discuss the research used to underpin the ideas. What evidence does the author use? Is it robust and up-to-date?

The book does not use academic theory and this is clearly emphasised by the author in the introduction. Cowley provides her own tips, advice and examples of her own ideas that she has put into practice to successfully manage the behaviour of her students. It uses real life examples that she has used in her own practice.

Interestingly, Cowley also details the thoughts and comments of her students which she obtained through feedback and interviews. It shows how very often students can perceive the way that we treat them, and the reasons for their misbehaviour in a very different way to us. This, I believe, gives a valuable insight that helps us to understand student behaviour and their motivation.

5. What did you learn from reading the book? What ideas/approaches/practice will you change or adopt as a result of reading this book?

I found the chapter on *Types of Students* really useful and interesting as it outlined strategies for students with specific Special Educational Needs and other emotional or behavioural difficulties. It also details ideas on how to use support staff and Teaching Assistants effectively. In consideration, I now plan to utilise the ideas of the TA when planning lessons; their expertise and knowledge of targeted individuals would enable them to suggest differentiation techniques or adaptations to the lesson/activity that will best support the individual - subsequently avoiding any disruptive behaviour which the student may use as an avoidance strategy to disengage from work that they may have found inaccessible.

The book also details scripted conversation structures that help give you an idea of what to say and how to react in challenging situations in order to avoid unnecessary conflict or disruption.

6. Could you share a quote from the book that particularly resonated with you?

'Your first meeting with any class offers you the chance to sow the seeds for an easy year, or take the first step on the road to disaster'.