

Construct Your Skills

Context:

Construction workshops and classrooms present unique behavioural challenges: high-energy environments, practical risk, varied literacy levels, and many learners entering FE with difficult previous experiences of school.

Research shows that trauma-informed, relational practice significantly improves engagement, behaviour, and attainment in vocational settings (Bhise, 2024; Parsonson, 2012). These approaches are particularly effective for construction learners, many of whom thrive with clear routines, strong relationships, and predictable expectations.

Why construction teams benefit:

- **Behaviour-as-communication:** Many construction students' express frustration or anxiety through practical avoidance or conflict. Trauma-responsive approaches help teachers decode what's behind the behaviour.
- **Risk-heavy environment:** Positive behaviours directly affect safety, especially in workshops with tools, machinery, and group practical tasks.
- **Industry expectations:** Professional conduct, teamwork, and communication are essential for apprenticeship progression.

The Technique/Method:

CONNECTION BEFORE CORRECTION

(Trauma-Responsive Behavioural Approach)

- 1 Establish clear, visible routines
- 2 Notice and interpret behaviours
- 3 Connect first
- 4 Set boundaries without escalation
- 5 Use relational resets
- 6 Restore, don't punish
- 7 Reinforce positive behaviours

See the Technique/Method in Action:



[CTEC Fostering Positive learning behaviours](#)

Top Tips:

When useful: low-level disruption, practical sessions, learners resistant to authority.

Benefits: improved trust, safety, readiness for industry.

Things to watch out for: avoid sarcasm, keep corrections private, maintain consistency.

Resources required: expectations matrix, praise prompts, restorative scripts, de-escalation guides.

Understanding behavioural roots: Behaviour is Communication. Student actions reflect underlying needs, past experiences, and current emotional states

Relational strategies for change: Connection Before Correction. Prioritising positive relationships is the only way to achieve sustainable behaviour change and longevity

Trauma-responsive practice: Trauma-Responsive practice: Approaches must recognise the profound impact of trauma, shame and unmet needs

Interaction over intervention: Interaction over intervention: Everyday interactions shape behaviour more effectively than reactive, punitive responses.

Dig Deeper:

- Bhise, S. A. (2024) 'The Role of Effective Communication in Positive Behaviour: An Overview', International Journal of Advanced Research in Science, Communication and Technology (IJARSCT), 4(3), pp. 2581–9429. Available at: Paper15835.pdf (Accessed: 17 December 2024).
- Hafen, C. A. et al. (2014) 'Teaching through Interactions in Secondary School Classrooms', The Journal of Early Adolescence, 35(5-6), pp. 651–680. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/270722368_Teaching_Through_Interactions_in_Secondary_School_Classrooms (Accessed: 17 December 2024).

Monitoring Progress and Impact:

Clear and Observable Behaviour Expectations	Ongoing Classroom Monitoring and Reflection	Positive Behaviour Recognition	Student Voice and Learner Experience	Behaviour-Focused Walkthroughs and Professional Dialogue
Consistent expectations for positive learning behaviours are established and translated into explicit, observable indicators. These include student engagement, professional conduct, self-regulation.	Teachers use light touch, formative monitoring during lessons to identify patterns and trends rather than isolated incidents	Monitoring places a strong emphasis on recognising and reinforcing positive behaviour. This contributes to a calm, purposeful learning environment and supports students in developing the behaviours required for future learning, employment and civic participation.	Student feedback is used as a key monitoring tool to evaluate the clarity, fairness and impact of behaviour expectations. This includes: - Short learner surveys focused on classroom climate and consistency - Structured feedback during tutorials or focus groups	Learning walks and peer observations focus specifically on behaviour for learning, rather than individual staff performance.