



SWIFT Masters

Name: James Edwards

School: Saltash.net Community School

Independent Research Project

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Question

“How to encourage more effective listening”

During my time at school A, I observed that there was one particular year group that would be more disruptive than the other year groups whilst in lesson. This was mainly due to the fact that the students did not listen to instructions given by the teacher teaching them. So when it was time to start the work they did not know what to do and became disruptive. This year group identified was year 9. This research is based around this particular year group because I have taught such a group and ran into similar problems myself. It also states in my Summative Report that I should “Continue to develop classroom management skills”.

The main initiative behind the research is to learn the strategies that year 9 students employ to not listen whilst in class. The expectations of the results of this study will impact on my teaching and allow me to identify what students are doing, and therefore allow me to tell whether or not they are listening. This will also assist me in the process of pre-empting a student or students from not listening to me in my classroom.

It is vital for students to listen to and understand instructions in order for a lesson to run smoothly. I have had to reiterate instructions in order for students to get a sense of direction within the lesson. I hope that this research will be successful and I will be able to list several strategies that students use not to listen in class.

There are different factors that this research will analyse such as class size, seating plans and the ability of the group. These will influence the results that are obtained.

The teaching standards that this research is linked and targeted towards are:

3.3.1 Have high expectations of pupils and build successful relationships, centred on teaching and learning; establish a purposeful learning environment where diversity is valued and where pupils feel secure and confident.

3.3.9 Set high expectations for pupils’ behaviour and establish clear framework for classroom discipline to anticipate and manage pupils’ behaviour constructively, and promote self control and independence.

(TDA Publication 2007)

At present, I am fairly confident in my classroom management strategies but I am aware that there is always room for improvement. I am also aware that in order to be an effective teacher you have to be very observant. At the end of this research I intend to use the information that has been gathered to allow me to be aware within the classroom environment.

Knowledge, understanding and critical enquiry

The school is a city based, mixed sex, Community College, which is a specialist Art College. The school is also classed as an extended school. The catchment area for this school is rather wide compared to other schools of its size. There are over 1078 students (School A prospectus 2006-7) with approximately 200 staff members. I teach ICT across Key Stage 3 (KS3) and Key Stage 4 (KS4). Each school day is broken up into five 1 hour lessons. ICT is allocated 1 lesson per week per class at KS3 but at KS4 this is increased to 2 lessons per week if the students choose it as an option.

The school rules are stated very clearly in the school's prospectus as well as in every classroom and all of the students' planners. The school also enforces a behaviour system which the students must follow. Below is a breakdown of what the system consists of.

Consequence	Meaning
C1	Warning
C2	Second warning
C3	After school detention
C4	Isolation for the day

This situation fits in with Ellis (2005 page 65) who states that behaviour management policies and classroom rules are commonly displayed on notice boards within the classroom environment. Ellis (2005 page 65) also informs us that this information will be available in staff handbooks. This is evident in school A.

Although the research question can be considered to be related to classroom or behaviour management, these are far too broad subject area's to address by themselves. The main area of concentration will be on the students who do not pay attention to the teacher's instructions and not those who are disruptive in class. The reason for not including the disruptive pupils in this research is that from previous observations and experience in actually teaching students, the disruptive ones listen to the task set and decide that they do not wish to take part in the task and therefore become disruptive.

There is not a great deal of research that specifically addresses the research question head on. However there is research that relates to the question in some form. Wragg and Brown (2001:34) have looked into listening in the classroom and found that:

“Being able to listen effectively and take account of the response is just as important as being able to send the message effectively”.

Wragg and Brown (2001:34)

Wragg and Brown's research suggest that as a teacher it is also important to actually listen to the students especially when they are asked a question. If the student looks bewildered or gives an inappropriate answer you will have to ask yourself was that pupil not listening or was the question asked not worded correctly for the student to understand. Repeating and rewording the question will help determine if the student was listening or not.

Wragg and Brown (2001:34) have identified from their research four different listening styles that people use and can adapt, these styles can be seen below:

Listening style	Description
Skim listening	This style is when a person is aware that some one is talking but what is being said is not registering. (an example of this is when an answer to a question seems irrelevant)
Survey listening	This is when a person is trying to build a wider mental map of what is being said.
Search listening	This is when a person is actively searching for a specific piece of information in order to answer a question.
Study listening	This is a blend of survey and search listening to identify the underlying meaning and uncertainties of the words the pupil is using

Wagg and Brown (2001:34)

Capel, Leask and Turner (2001) talk about “getting into a routine” this is so that pupils know what to expect from a particular lesson. They state that one particular method which is often put into practice by teachers is saying “Stop what you are doing and just look at me for a minute”. This I have observed is common practise for new and experienced teachers.

Capel, Leask and Turner also mention that students expect teachers to explain things clearly as they become frustrated when they cannot understand what is being said. This has been observed whilst I was teaching in school A when the students felt that the instructions were not clear enough at the start of the lesson. The students would say they knew what they had to do but it was very clear that they did not by the fact they did not start the task set. So it was necessary to stop the class and reword the task.

Another angle of research that has taken place is to address this topic of listening is entitled "The Cocktail party effect". This describes the ability to focus one persons listening attention on a single talker amongst a mixture of conversations taking place along with background noise.

The effect was first described (and named) by Colin Cherry in 1953. Much of Cherry's early work in this area can be traced to air traffic controllers and the problems they faced in the early 1950's. During this period, the air traffic controllers received messages from pilots over loud speakers in the control tower. Hearing intermixed voices over the loud speaker made it difficult to pick out the particular voice they needed to hear.

This effect can take place when a person is paying attention to a particular sound (i.e. someone's voice) or when it is invoked by a stimulus which grabs the attention of a person suddenly. An example of this would be if a student is talking to another student whilst the teacher is explaining something to the class. The student can still listen and understand what is being said by the other student even though the teacher is talking to the class. However, if that student's name is called out they will immediately recognise the sound and respond to it.

Cherry (1953) conducted experiments into this occurrence. His results revealed that the ability to separate sounds from background noise is based on the characteristics of the sound such as gender of the speaker, the direction from which the sound came from and the speaking speed.

This technique should also be used when giving praise to a student, for example if a teacher says "Well done John", the student will only pick on what the teacher was saying at the point of which their name is said. For this to be effective a teacher should say "John, well done" this way the student hears that his name has been said and therefore hears the praise being given.

Another researcher in the 1950's called Broadbent conducted research into "multi-sound listening" he did not agree with Cherry's finding and conducted his own investigation. Test subjects were asked to hear and separate different speech signals presented to each ear simultaneously (using headphones). From the results obtained, Broadbent suggested that:

"Our mind can be conceived as a radio receiving many channels at once"

(Broadbent 1950's)

His research suggested that the brain separates incoming sound into channels based on physical characteristics (e.g. perceived location), and submits only certain sub signals for analysis.

Broadbent believed that the brain has a type of “audio filter” that selects which channel a person should pay attention to from the many kinds of sounds perceived by the brain; this is called “Broadbent’s Filter Theory”.

This is still a topic of research today, as the neural mechanism in the human brain is not yet fully understood. This does however; raise interesting facts on how to get a student’s attention when he or she is not listening.

There is research that suggests the students who do not listen to teachers in school may not be able to help it. There is a disorder known as Auditory Processing Disorder (ADP) - this was previously known as “Central Auditory Processing Disorder” (CAPD). This is where the subject of this disorder has problems processing auditory information. It is important to stress that APD is not a sensory hearing impairment; individuals with APD usually have normal peripheral hearing ability. ADP is a term that describes a variety of problems with the brain that can interfere with processing auditory information.

ADP is recognised as a major cause of dyslexia. This means that students with special needs will have more problems concentrating. ADP is fairly difficult to detect and diagnose, it can often be misdiagnosed as Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Aspergers and other more severe forms of autism.

ADP can manifest itself in many different forms. Below are a few of which relate to a school environment:

- Difficulties understanding what people are saying when there's background noise.
- Preferring to learn a foreign language (or challenging vocabulary words, or difficult last names) by learning to read and write the words first, and then learning to hear and speak the words, and then only when the words are spoken slowly
- Difficulty remembering spoken information (i.e., auditory memory deficits)
- Difficulty taking notes
- Difficulty maintaining focus on an activity if other sounds are present; child is easily distracted by other sounds in the environment
- Difficulty with organizational skills
- Difficulty with reading and/or spelling

I have observed a number of these characteristics within some of the students and especially those considered SEN at school A. There is no evidence that any of the students have this disorder just the fact that some of the students display certain characteristics. As the research stated these characteristics are very common across the autism spectrum.

All of this research is important because the current government plans on implementing a personalised learning policy in which the students will have an input into what is being taught to them within the current curriculum. A report has been published on this topic of personalised learning called the “2020 report (2006)”.

The report considers ways to improve and continue the rate of pupil progress as well as strategies to enhance teachers’ skills, and how to engage pupils in the learning process.

This report is important because if you can provide the students with strategies on how to improve their listening they will improve their academic performance. Also if you can provide a teacher with techniques on how to get students to listen, as well as information on the strategies the students use in order not to listen, then the teacher will be able to provide a more diverse personalised learning environment within a school for the pupils.

Research methods

Throughout the research stage a number of methods were undertaken. Initially, it was necessary to observe two year 9 classes to determine which students did not listen to the teacher when they were talking. A seating plan of the classrooms was drawn up (this can be found in Appendix1), in order to indicate which students were not listening. After the teacher had stopped talking the students were asked if they could explain what the teacher had just said. If they could not they would be selected for an interview. From the interview process it was determined which pupil would be followed during a pupil pursuit.

A particular student was involved in the case study, I was particularly interested in finding out if the student would listen more in different lessons than others. There was also a need to identify if not only the lessons but the teaching styles and strategies of the teachers made a difference to the students listening to the instructions. A data capture form was used to collect information on the lessons I observed on the pupil pursuit. (This form can be found in the Appendix 4).

As with all research there are positives and negative sides to each technique. When conducting observations on a class there is less chance of this disrupting the class’s natural setting as it can be done discreetly. The main negative side to this kind of research is that it is down to the researcher to decide what data to collect and how to interpret that data.

The interviews that were conducted with the students produced some informative and helpful results. The main advantage of using an interview technique is that you get the opinions of the person or persons being interviewed. One of the disadvantages of this technique is that if the questions are not constructed in a relevant form the data collected from the interview will be hard to collate and analyse.

I decided against a questionnaire to analyse student's opinion because from the background research conducted it was proved to be not as effective as an interview in this kind of research project.

The pupil pursuit was conducted as covertly as possible in order to allow the pupil to continue with their lessons naturally. This helped track the attention span of a student as they travelled to different lessons. The negative side to this technique is that if the student realised that you are observing them their behaviour will change. If this happened the results obtained would be contaminated.

Report on findings

Observation

The observations made on the two classes proved to be informative with regards to the seating plan of the students who tend not to listen in class. Another finding from this technique of research was the observations made on what the students were doing whilst they were not listening. Some of the students would be playing with pens, writing things in their planner or just generally talking to their friends. These are things that a teacher should be aware of, although it was interesting sitting at the back of the classroom watching these situations develop.

Student interview/Discussion

The interview process was interesting because the students were not sure that I wasn't going to take the results to their Head of Year and get them in trouble. Once I had explained that no names will be written down and their Head of Year would not see the results they smiled and relaxed. They gave me their answers and opinions in what I believed to be an honest manner. The interview questions (which can be found in the Appendix 3) consisted of 10 questions. 8 students were interviewed and the answers they gave were interesting especially when you compared certain questions together. This will be discussed further in the analysis of findings section.

Pupil Pursuit

Whilst on the pupil pursuit I observed teachers with set routines and they have very good classroom management. The students however seem to adopt their behaviour depending on what teacher and subject they are being taught. For example, they may think they can get away with not listening as much in a Math lesson than they could in a PE or technology lesson.

The students are always pushing the boundaries to find out what they can and cannot get away with. If the classroom layout is not as efficient i.e. there are certain areas where a student's actions cannot be observed all the time they will also endeavour not to listen to instructions.

Teacher interviews/discussion

The interviews with teachers proved to be most interesting when compared to the answers given by the students from their interview questions. These will be compared in the analysis of findings section. This was a very helpful exercise as it allowed me to get the opinions of the staff in the school. The interview consisted of 6 questions which were open ended so that the teachers did not feel that they were confined to specific answers. I talked to a range of teachers with different degrees of experience within the teaching profession.

Critical discussion and analysis of findings

Observation

The observation aspect of this research project proved to be useful; it allowed me to be in a class and see what students do when a teacher is explaining something. It also allowed me to identify the seating positions of those who are less likely to be listening when a teacher is talking. The seating plans (which can be found in the Appendix 1 and 2) show that the students who were not listening sat in a position in the classroom where it was hard for the teacher to get to as well as to see what was going on in that position.

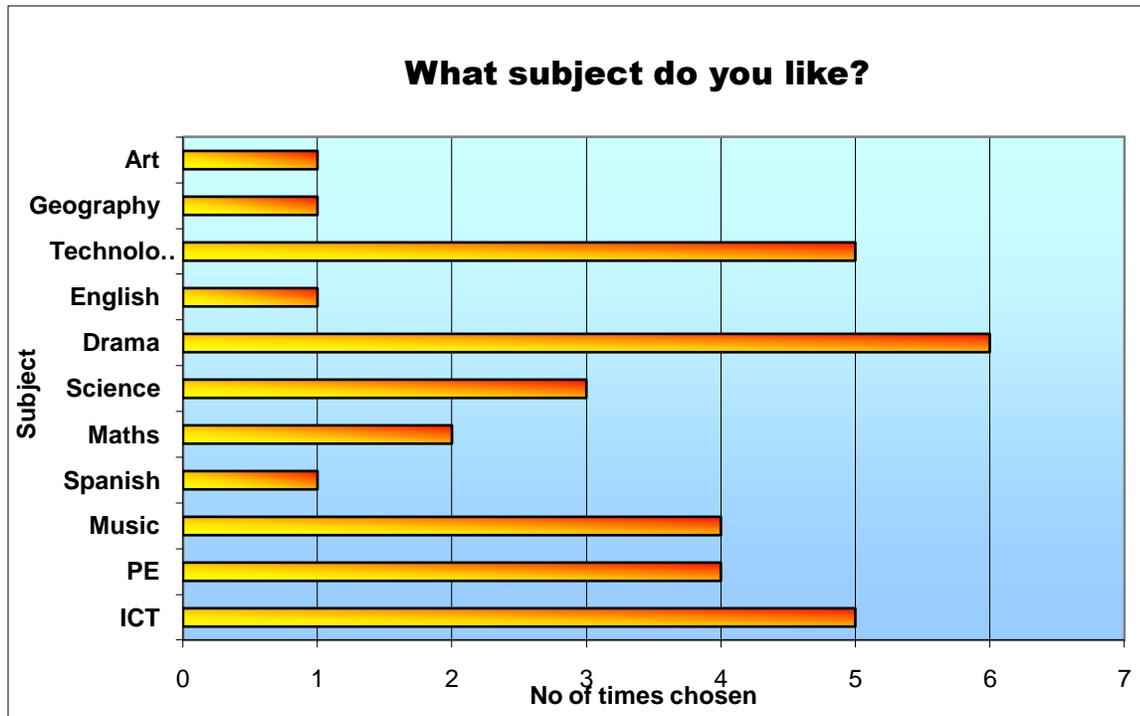
In classroom A the majority of the students who didn't listen sat closer to the wall. In classroom B the students sat in the corners of the room or as far away from the teacher as possible.

The initial observation of the students that I made was that when they were not listening they tended to be fiddling with whatever they could find. I observed students writing in planners, playing with their pens and pencil cases as well as talking to friends.

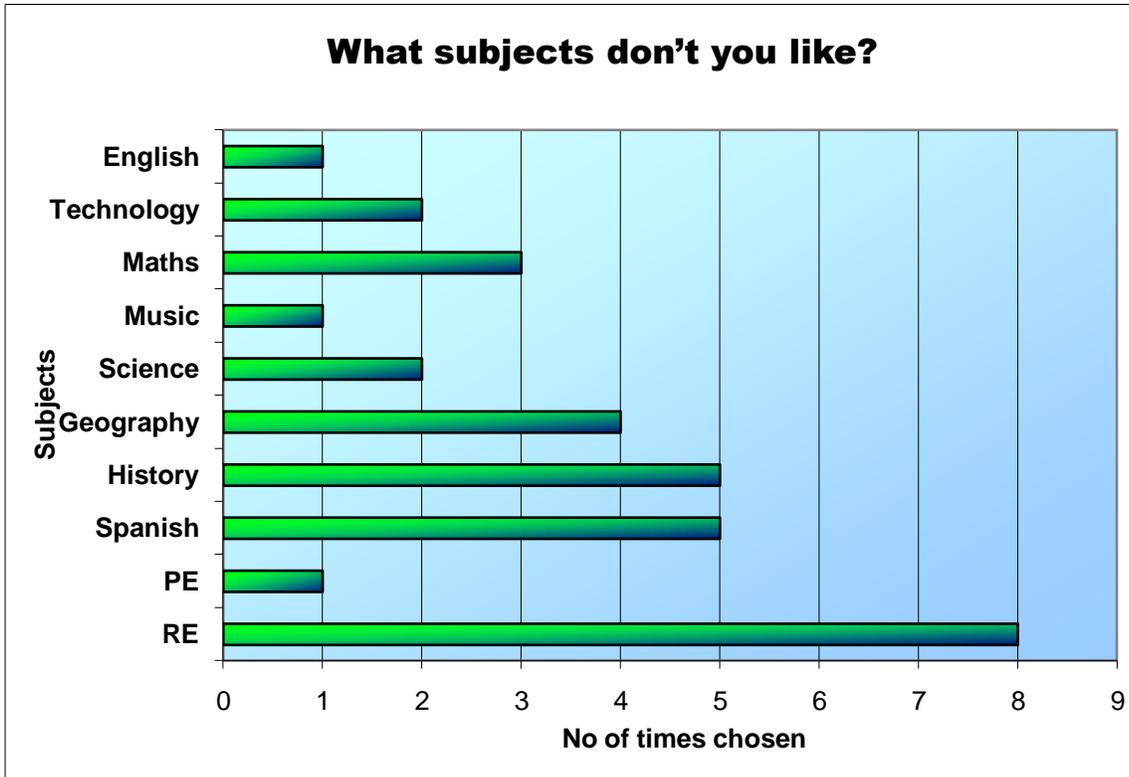
This part of the project fulfilled its purpose as it allowed me to identify the students who would best be suited for the interview process. This also made sure that I did not interview pupils who did listen in class and therefore would not aid me in answering the question.

Student interview/Discussion

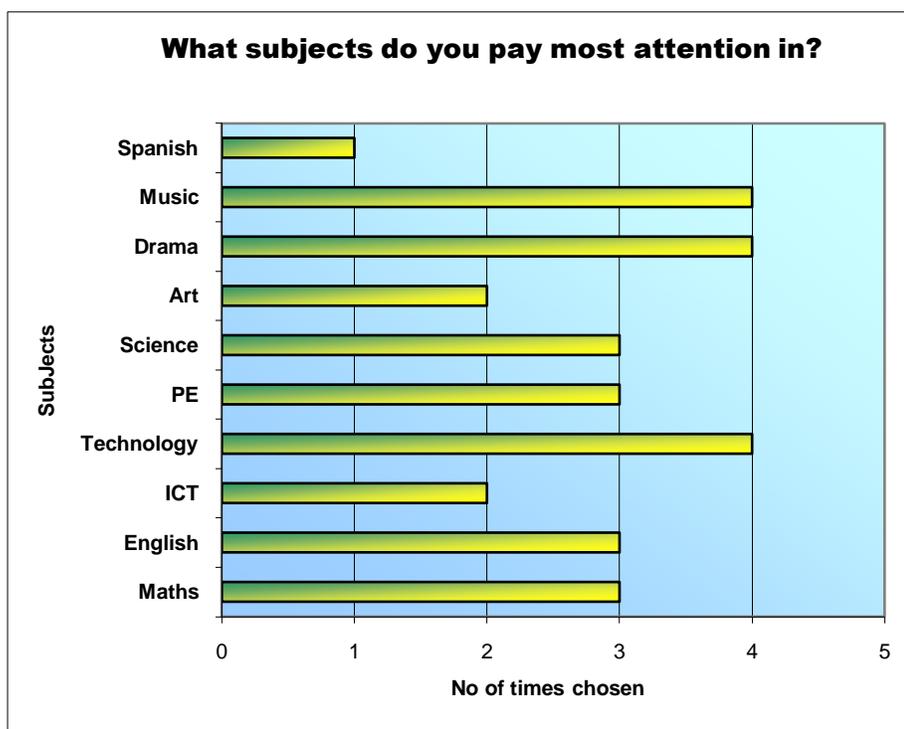
The student interview section of the research project produced some interesting results (these can be found in the Appendix 3). From the observations, the assumption is that the students were not paying attention because they did not feel involved in the lesson and that they did not feel the need to take part. Below is a breakdown of the questions that were of particular interest and beneficial to the report. These answers that were given have been converted into graphs in order to analysis the results more effectively.



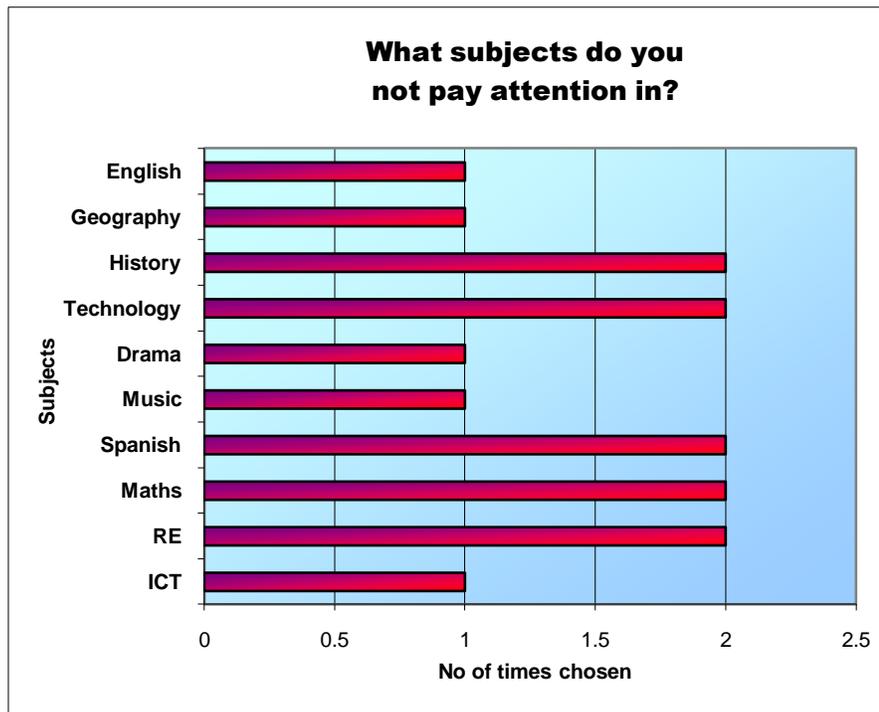
The first graph produced was from the question “What subject do you like?” From the results it can be determined the most popular subjects are all practical or involve some element of practical work. Surprisingly the subject of art was not considered to be a popular subject with the students who took part in the interview even though there is a strong element of practical work involved.



The second question that was part of the interview was “What lessons don't you like?” The results of this question were as expected when the results of the first question are viewed. The lessons the students did not like are RE, Spanish and History. After talking to the students these are considered by the students to be less practical subjects. It is important to realise that any subject can have a practical element to it and these are just the views of the students that took part in the interview.



Another question addressed in the interview was “What subjects do you pay most attention in?” The subjects that were highlighted the most were Music, Drama and Technology. As before, these are all primarily practical subjects. These results seem to show a pattern that the students who took part in this interview prefer to take part in and pay more attention in practical lessons.



“What subjects do you not pay attention in?” was the next question chosen to be analysed. The results of this question surprisingly relates to the results of the previous questions asked in the interview. It appears that the students who took part in this interview do not pay attention in the lessons were practical elements are not involved. The lessons identified as those they do not pay attention in are RE, Maths, Spanish, History and Technology.

The interview of the students also provided results to what the students do when they are not listening or paying attention. The majority of the answers given by the students who were asked “What are you doing when you are not paying attention in these lessons?” said the majority of time they talking to their friends or messing around with what they can find e.g. writing in their planner, fiddling with pens.

Surprisingly, when the students where asked “Do you think you pay enough attention to the teacher when they are giving instructions?” they all said yes even though they answered the question about what they did when they did not listen.

The students were asked “Would you say you are easily distracted?” The responses they gave where all yes. This could be related back to the research about ADP, were it states that people are easily distracted when they have ADP. Although the research states this, it also states that ADP is a common attribute across the autism spectrum. So it is unfair to assume that the students who took part in the interview have ADP without further research into the students’ background.

When the students were asked “What would make you pay more attention to the teacher?” The response received all related to more practical activities during lesson time. This has also been apparent in various other answers, it would appear that the student respond better to more practical lessons such as Drama, Music and Technology.

Pupil pursuit

The pupil pursuit (See appendix 4) that was conducted was useful because it allowed for observations of students behaviour throughout the day in different lessons. All of the lessons observed were of mixed ability except for Math which is set. All of the teachers seemed to be in control of their lessons and when the class stepped out of line they followed through with the appropriate course of action.

The student I was pursuing did get told to pay attention a few times during the day but so did the majority of the class. It was interesting to observe that during the day the student’s behaviour changed depending on the lesson he was in. When the student was not listening, he was doing what he said he would do when he was not listening. He did play with his pens and stationary and he did talk to his friends. Although in the more practical lessons such as drama the student behaved even though he was excited about the lesson he was constantly active though out the lesson.

All of the starters that the teachers used for their lesson were no more than 10 minutes long and they kept the students interested. All of the teachers, even the trainee teacher taking math had well presented handouts. Silence when taking the register was one of the strict rules that all the teachers insisted on during their lessons, and it had a noticeable difference on the behaviour and structure of the lesson. One of the main observations I made is that the teachers always follow through what they say they are going to do - for example moving a pupil.

Teacher interviews/discussion

The teacher interview/discussion (Appendix 5) I conducted was helpful because it gave me an insight into the views of the teacher as well as their opinions on this subject.

The teachers’ response when asked “What are the most common ways that pupils disrupt lessons?” were varied but talking was mentioned by the majority of teachers. The teachers also mentioned that it is vital that you keep a good rapport with students and letting them know that there is a zero tolerance on bad behaviour.

When they were asked “Do you think that the school environment and culture has a part to play in preventing disruption of this nature? One of the teachers’ stated that “Discipline ethos is very important and determines the behaviour in most schools, values should be reinforced regularly and values should be in classroom”.

From the interview/discussion with the teachers it is apparent that they believe in a firm but fair approach to teaching. They are also aware of the problems of students not listening in classroom which they also consider to be disruptive behaviour. They also support the schools introducing behaviour policies as they feel these have a positive impact as well as building relationships with pupils to try and encourage them to excel at everything they do.

Conclusion

When I started this research report I did not realise how much my question related to behaviour management. When I observed the classes to find out which students listened and those who did not, it was interesting to be an observer because it gave a completely different perspective from actually teaching a class.

The general behaviour of the classes was good even though the majority of the students did not listen 100% of the time when the teacher was talking to them. During the interview with the students they stated that they would listen more if there were more practical/activities to do during the lesson. This is backed up by the pupil pursuit research that was conducted. During the more practical lessons the pupil I followed behaved more and listened when the teacher was talking.

Routine is also of great importance when it comes to teaching. On the pupil pursuit all the teachers had a set routine that they would follow and the students would abide by. As a teacher it is important that I set my own routine/expectations when teaching lessons, this will be accomplished by having a set list of rules that all the students can see when they enter my classroom.

The observations of the students not listening whilst in class have proven to be beneficial as I aspire to be a more effective teacher. I now know that if I see a student writing something in their planner or on paper they may not be taking notes - in fact they may not be listening to me at all. Cherry's (1953) theory has been a great help when it comes to tackling the problem of students not listening. It proves how beneficial it is to use a student's name when giving praise or a sanction.

From the research and observations conducted, there is not a definitive answer to the question "How to encourage more effective listening" There are commonly used strategies used such as talking to friend and drawing in planners or on scrap pieces of paper. All students are individuals and have their own unique ways of not listening when they do not want to. There is not a set list of strategies that students use.

The methods I used throughout this assignment to collect student's opinions and data were good methods of collecting research. However they did have limitations.

With regards to the questionnaires I handed out to the staff. I had to hope that the questions asked meant the same thing to all the staff answering the questionnaire else I would not get relevant data for the report. To some extent this problem could be rectified by conducting a Pilot Study before actually doing the main study. If I were to redo this study I would make sure that this happens so I could be confident about the data collected.

The Interview process I went through did produce some good results but again this also had its limitations I did not take advantage of the use open ended questions which meant that the interview was structured. This meant that there was a high chance that the interviewees gave answers that they thought I wanted to hear. If I used open ended questions more effectively I could have probed deeper into the initial response of the interviewee. This would have given me more in depth results for me to examine in the report.

Another method of research I used which was beneficial to me was the pupil pursuit. This allowed me to see how the students behaved in lessons. However the drawback to this is that fact that I could not be 100% sure that the students were not acting differently because I was present in the room as this was a change of routine for the students.

It is my opinion that students are however more likely to pay attention to a teacher if the teacher keeps to a set routine, has good quality resources, makes the lesson fun and gets all of the pupils involved and active throughout the lesson.

I will now be more aware of what the students are doing when I am talking to them and giving instructions. I will also make sure that I incorporate as much practical activities as the topic allows into my lessons to keep the interest of the students.

Further research could be developed into the investigation of whether students with different special needs have any common methods of not listening during lessons. These results could be cross referenced with my own results to see if there are any similarities.

If I were to undertake this research project again I would include a larger range of pupils from different year groups to see if a trend develops over the course of a student's educational career. As mentioned previously I would also make sure that I do a Pilot Study to make sure as best as possible that my data collected would be as accurate and relevant to the report.

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School documents/policies:

- Behaviour management policies
- Expectations of pupils document

Both of these documents are not referenced due to anonymity.

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: URL <http://www.canteach.ca/elementary/classman.html> [18 January 2007]
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Research articles (journals)

- Holmes, S. (2006) *Attention seekers*. Teaching careers, Winter 2006 pg 2
Jewell, S. (2006) *Keep a tight rein*. Teaching careers, Winter 2006 pg 1-2

Appendices

Seating plan of Classroom A (PSHE) (Appendix 1)

1	2	3	4	5	6	Teaches desk	
X	X	X			X		
7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
	X	X					
23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
		X			X		
<i>White board</i>				<i>Door</i>			

This is the seating plan of the class I observed. I have replaced the student's names with numbers to allow for anonymity.

On the classroom diagram above, the students who were observed not listening to the teacher's instructions are marked with an X. The students who were selected to take part in the interview are marked with an **X**. These students were selected for the interview process because not only were they observed not listening they did it repeatedly after the teacher asked them to listen and get on with their work.

Seating Plan of Classroom B (ICT) (Appendix 2)

X	X	Door leading to library				X	
1a	2a				4a	5a	
Door			3a			6a	X
						7a	
		27a	28a			8a	
		26a	29a			9a	
		25a	30a			10a	
		24a	31a			11a	
		23a				12a	
	X	22a				13a	
		21a				14a	
	X	20a	19a	18a	17a	16a	15a
						X	

This is the seating plan of the class I observed. I have replaced the student's names with numbers to allow for anonymity.

On the classroom diagram above, the students who were observed not listening to the teacher's instructions are marked with an X. The students who were selected to take part in the interview are marked with an **X**. These students were selected for the interview process because not only were they observed not listening they did it repeatedly after the teacher asked them to listen and get on with their work.

Interview Questions for Students (Appendix 3)

Below are the questions that I asked the students I interviewed. The student names have been removed for anonymity.

1. What lessons do you like?

Student 16	ICT	Spanish	English	Science	Technology	
Student 1	ICT	PE	Drama	Music		
Student 2	ICT	Math	Drama			
Student 25	PE	Math	Drama	Music	Technology	Art
Student 2a	ICT	Science	Drama	Music		
Student 15a	PE	Drama	Technology	Geography		
Student 1a	ICT	Science	Technology			
Student 22a	Music	Drama	Technology	PE	Art	

2. What lessons don't you like?

Student 16	RE	PE	Geography	History	Math
Student 1	RE	Spanish	Science		
Student 2	RE	Spanish	Science	Technology	
Student 25	RE	Spanish	Geography	History	
Student 2a	RE	History	Geography	Technology	
Student 15a	RE	History	Music		
Student 1a	RE	Spanish	Math	English	
Student 22a	RE	Spanish	History	Geography	Math

3. Do you think you pay enough attention to the teacher when they are giving instructions?

Student 16	Yes
Student 1	Yes
Student 2	Yes
Student 25	I do now but I never used to
Student 2a	Yes
Student 15a	Yes
Student 1a	Yes
Student 22a	Yes, sometimes

4. Where do you normally sit in class?

Student 16	2nd row from the front
Student 1	3 rd row from the front
Student 2	At the front
Student 25	Middle of the class sometimes at the back
Student 2a	Middle of the class to the side
Student 15a	At the front in the corner
Student 1a	Along the side of the room
Student 22a	At the back

5. What lessons do you pay attention most in?

Student 16	Math	English	Science	Spanish		
Student 1	English	PE	Drama	Music		
Student 2	English	PE	Drama	Music		
Student 25	Math	PE	Drama	Music	Technology	Art
Student 2a	ICT	Science	Drama			
Student 15a	Technology	Math				
Student 1a	ICT	Science	Technology			
Student 22a	Technology	Art	Music			

6. What lessons do you not pay attention in?

Student 16	ICT	Drama	
Student 1	RE	Technology	
Student 2	Math	Technology	
Student 25	Spanish		
Student 2a	RE	History	Geography
Student 15a	Music		
Student 1a	Math	English	
Student 22a	Spanish	History	

7. Is there a reason why you do not pay attention?

Student 16	I find these lessons boring
Student 1	The teacher talks to much
Student 2	I talk to my friends to much
Student 25	I find the lessons boring
Student 2a	I talk to my friends
Student 15a	I don't like the teachers
Student 1a	I don't like the subject
Student 22a	I'm not interested in them

8. Would you say you are easily distracted?

Student 16	Yes by people talking to me
Student 1	Yes
Student 2	Yes
Student 25	Yes
Student 2a	Yes by people talking
Student 15a	Yes
Student 1a	Yes
Student 22a	Yes

9. What are you doing when you are not paying attention in these lessons?

Student 16	Scribbling in my planner and talking
Student 1	Fiddling with a pen
Student 2	Talking to friends
Student 25	Listening to other peoples conversations
Student 2a	Playing with my pens
Student 15a	Mucking around with friends
Student 1a	Talking
Student 22a	Talking to friends, drawing in my planner

10. What would make you pay more attention to the teacher?

Student 16	More interactive and fun lessons
Student 1	More practical
Student 2	More activities
Student 25	More practical
Student 2a	Fun activities not just working in our books
Student 15a	More Practical
Student 1a	Being more active
Student 22a	More fun lessons

Pupil Pursuit Notes (Appendix 4)

Subject	Ability group	No. of lessons per week	No. in group	Lesson period	Students lined up outside	Silence when taking the register	Amount of time until starter activity starts	Objectives in sight	Seating plan	No of times student is told to listen	No of times class is told to listen	Notes
Technology	Mixed	2	28/30	1	Yes	Yes	9 min	Yes	No	1	3	Welcomed into room by teacher, general talk with students as they came in.
Drama	Mixed	1	28/30	2	No	Yes	6 min	No	No	0	4	Class told to calm down as they enter the hall. (Class is very excited). Teacher firmly in control.
RE	Mixed	4	28/30	3	Yes	Yes	8 min	Yes	Yes	6	7	Class is fairly rowdy. Talking as they enter class. Starter handouts handed out
Math	3/5	3	27/29	4	Yes	Yes	7 min	No	Yes	4	9	Trainee teacher taking lesson. Work sheets handed out for lessons
PE	Mixed	2	26/30	5	Yes/No	Yes	10 min	No	No	2	4	Students told to get ready quick and no messing around.

Interview questions for teachers (Appendix 5)

What Strategies do year 9 students employ in order not to listen in class?

What are the most common ways that pupils disrupt lessons?

No equipment.

Deliberately talking over teachers and peers

Throwing things to distract and goad other students.

Arriving late for lessons

Asking inappropriate questions

Interrupting the teacher

What in your opinion are the main reasons students don't listen in the classroom?

De-motivation

Personal problems outside school

Student or staff clashes taken into lesson

Lack of understanding

No intention of working

Attention seeking

Boredom

Bad previous lesson

Low attention spans

Do you think that the school environment and culture has a part to play in preventing disruption of this nature?

Discipline ethos is very important and determines the behaviour in most schools, values should be reinforced regularly and values should be in the classroom so that they can be referred to if disruption takes place.

Lack of space gets pupils over excited which is why lunch is limited to 40 minutes. Some schools stagger lunches to avoid problems.

Pupils need inspiration to help with the work environment and if this is lacking it can encourage problems with listening.

Physical environment - small corridors and communal areas make pupils over excited.

Other than the consequence system, what do you think helps prevent students not listening in your classroom?

Keeping a good rapport with the pupils and using praise and rewards regularly

Total respect for pupils

Seating Plans- breaking up friendship groups

Reinforcing expectations regularly

Consistency in praise and punishment from teacher

Zero tolerance of poor behaviour

Rewards, merits

Positive environment

Classical music to change mood

How effective is the consequence system in tackling this problem?

Very effective on the whole, although it does not seem to trouble persistent offenders

Very effective as long as the pupils know boundaries and it is applied with consistency

How do you tackle students who consistently display this behaviour?

Contact parents

Signed agreements with parents, teacher and pupils, keeping the parents on side and part of the agreement

Isolation from friends and peers

Build relationships

Always expect the best

Lay out plans with problem pupils so that they are aware that any disruption will be harshly dealt with.