

Attitudes affecting behaviour

If you can model good behaviour, and inform your learners that you expect good behaviour from them, this should lead to a positive learning experience. If you have a positive attitude, hopefully your learners will too. They will want to learn, and will not want their peers to affect that learning. Some learners might not have engaged with education in their past, perhaps had a bad learning experience or had a teacher who could not control the group. They will therefore have returned to education not wanting these experiences repeated.

It could be that your learners are not attending your course voluntarily, or they may be there for social reasons rather than having an interest in achieving something. They may therefore not be as keen as you would like them to be, and you will need to keep them continuously interested and motivated. A way of overcoming this might be to try and relate the subject to their interests and/or their personal or working life.

Betari's cycle of conflict

Betari's cycle of conflict, as in Figure 1, also known as Betari's box, is about how attitude affects behaviour. For example, *my attitude affects my behaviour, which affects your attitude which affects your behaviour, which in turn affects my attitude and so on.*

It's not clear where the name Betari came from or when it was created; however, attitudes, whether positive or negative are reflected in behaviour. Positive attitudes should encourage positive behaviour in yourself, as well as in others. This can be through words and actions, verbal and non-verbal messages and body language. If an attitude is positive, it can help others be positive, the same will apply if it's negative.

To change the attitude and behaviour of others you may need to be aware of your own attitude and how it affects your own behaviour. You can then notice how your behaviour affects other people's attitudes and behaviour. You can break the cycle by noticing how the behaviour of others makes you do what you do and by refusing to let it affect you. You will need to recognise negative cycles and turn them into positive ones, this applies to yourself as well as to your learners.

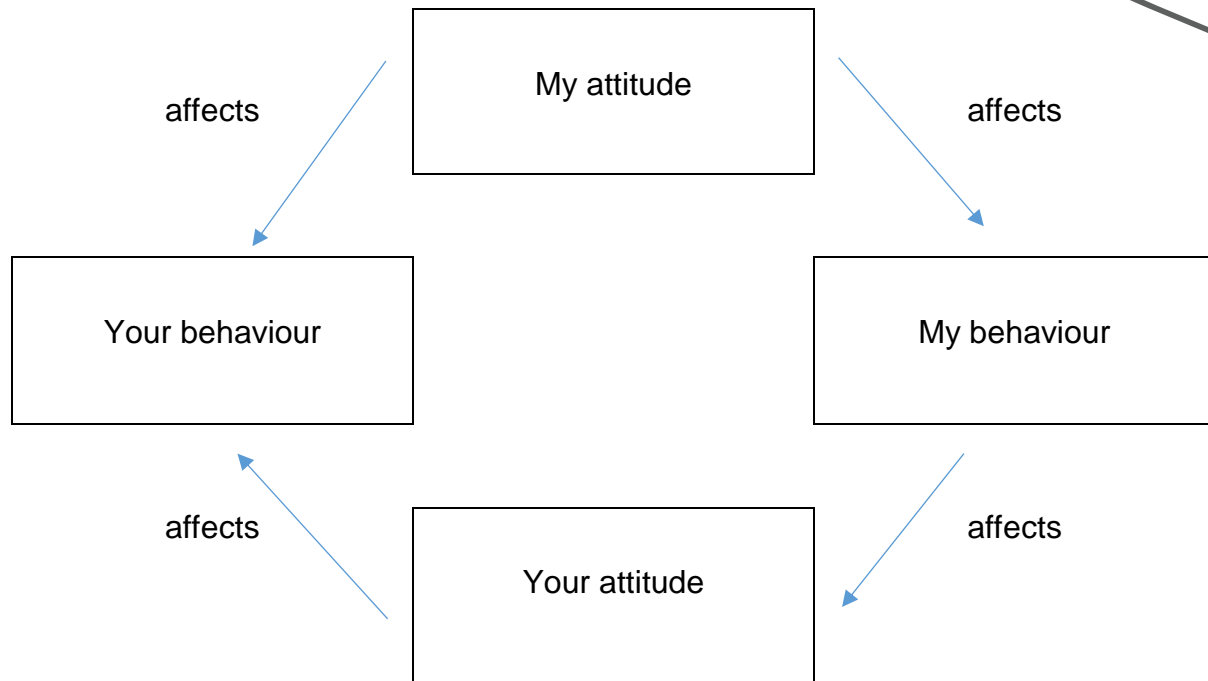


Figure 1 - Betari's cycle of conflict

Example

Gemma, a learner attending cookery classes, really enjoys the subject. She likes using practical skills and often tries new recipes, makes mistakes and learns from them. Today, she has a different teacher, Abigail, as her usual teacher is absent. Abigail is quick to notice when Gemma is struggling and takes over what she is doing. This continues throughout the session, therefore Gemma now stops when she is unsure of something and calls over Abigail. Because of Abigail's attitude and behaviour towards Gemma's learning, Gemma has adapted her attitude and behaviour to fit in with Abigail.

The following are some strategies which you could use with your learners:

- allocate time at the beginning of the course, or each session, to find out what your learners' attitudes are to the subject i.e. have they had good or bad experiences which might affect their learning?
- ensure all learners can participate in the session and access all equipment and resources

- hold group and individual tutorials with all learners to discuss progress and concerns
- use learners' names, use eye contact and treat each learner as an individual
- make sure everyone is aware of relevant policies and procedures
- negotiate and agree appropriate ground rules
- schedule one to one discussions with learners who require additional support
- use a suitable and inclusive icebreaker.

There may be occasions during your sessions where behaviours exist that are offensive, directly discriminate, or are distressing to others. This behaviour may be obvious, but it can also be unintentional and subtle. It might involve a learner using nicknames, teasing, name-calling, or excluding someone. Although it might not have a malicious intent it will still be upsetting. You will need to know what steps your organisation requires you to take, and deal with any inappropriate behaviour as it occurs. There are various ways of managing this depending on the circumstances, such as:

- challenging prejudice, discrimination and stereotyping as it occurs
- creating an acceptable behaviour contract which learners sign up to, and revisit it regularly, perhaps as part of the ground rules
- embracing learner diversity within the group
- encouraging your learners to discuss confidentially any of their own behaviour concerns they have, for example, if they are autistic
- ensuring all resources are inclusive through the use of positive images
- establishing at the start of the programme what the unacceptable behaviours are.

There might also be instances where you do something inadvertently and not really think at the time how it could affect someone else.