Student Learning and Interaction

Promoting a Positive Learning Environment

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Appendix 3: Dreiker's Views on Classroom Management

"It is Dreiker's assertion that the following eight conditions foster a democratic classroom:

1. The establishment of order
2. The setting of limits
3. The use of firmness and kindness:
    Firmness from teachers shows that they respect themselves
    Kindness shows their respect for others
4. Involving student when establishing and maintaining rules
5. Leadership from the teacher
6. Inviting cooperation and eliminating destructive competition
7. Promoting a sense of belonging within a group
8. Encouraging an atmosphere of freedom to explore, discover, and choose acceptable behaviour through understanding the responsibilities and consequences associated with it

Dreiker believes teachers should:

1. See each behaviour in its proper perspective. In this way, you will avoid making serious issues out of trivial incidents
2. Let students assume greater responsibility for their own behavior and learning
3. Treat students as your social equals
4. Combine kindness and firmness. The student must always sense and respect that while you are a friend, you will not accept certain kinds of behavior
5. At all times distinguish between the deed and the doer. This allows you to retain respect for the student while not accepting their behaviour
6. Set limits from the beginning but work toward mutual understanding, a sense of mutual responsibility and mutual consideration for others"

(TeacherMatters, 2011b)

Introduction

Maintaining a positive learning environment in the classroom is vital for effective teaching. There are a number of strategies which can be employed by teachers to assist them in their goal for such an environment. These include:

- Preventative actions
- Supportive actions
- Corrective actions

This handbook will explain each of these strategies in detail and give examples of how they can be used and why they are important for maintaining a positive learning environment.

Preventative Actions

Preventative actions are those which are used for maintaining motivation and attention in the classroom. Charles (2002) states that "you can prevent most misbehaviour if you treat students sensitively, provide an interesting curriculum, and use a helpful teaching style." Outlined below are some of the strategies behind preventative:

Increase Student Motivation

Motivation is "an internal process that activates, guides and maintains behaviour over time. Motivation can therefore not be seen." (Krause, Bochner and Duchesne, 2003:217 cited in Brady and Scully, 2005:48). The presence of a positive learning environment has been found to help motivate students and hence is an important aspect of effective teaching (Stuliff, 2008).
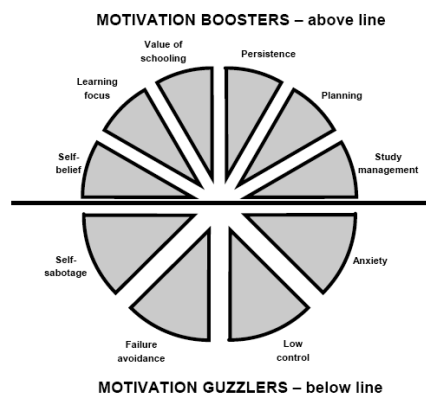
Some strategies which teachers may employ to increase motivation may include:

- Capturing student interest in the subject matter
- Highlighting the relevance of the subject matter
- Varying your instructional strategies throughout the lesson to maintain interest
- Planning for active student involvement
- Selecting strategies that capture student's curiosity

- Selecting strategies and presenting material with an appropriate degree of challenge and difficulty
- Grouping students for tasks
- Designing the lesson to promote student success
- Allowing students some control over the lessons

<div align="right">(Matthews, 2011a)</div>

Referring to the following "student motivation wheel" in *figure 1* may also assist in increasing the motivation of your students.

Figure 1: The Student Motivation Wheel: How to Motivate Your Child for School and Beyond (Martin, 2003 cited in Martin and Marsh, 2003)

MOTIVATION BOOSTERS – above line

Value of schooling
Persistence
Learning focus
Planning
Self-belief
Study management
Anxiety
Self-sabotage
Failure avoidance
Low control

MOTIVATION GUZZLERS – below line

The above model reflects the feelings, behaviours and thoughts which support academic engagement at school. The factors which reflect increased motivation are labeled "motivation boosters" and those which reflect reduced motivation are labeled "motivation guzzlers" (Martin and Marsh, 2003).

Provide Meaningful and Enjoyable Lesson Activities
When teachers present uninteresting lessons, students tend to "tune out" and misbehaviour can arise. Presenting lessons in an enjoyable fashion can assist in attaining student attention (Brady and Scully, 2005). Great teachers have the ability to inspire their students. By planning different and unexpected approaches to lessons, students

Appendix 2: Gordon's "I Messages"

The "I message" technique was developed by Thomas Gordon in 1989 for dealing with misbehaviour verbally. As discussed on page 9, the "I message" is comprised of three parts and the main objective is to show the student that their behaviour is having a negative impact on the teacher. The method runs under the same assumption as the "questioning awareness of effect" (page 8). The assumption is that once the student can identify their behaviour is having a negative impact on others, they will be motivated to correct it. This technique is most useful for teachers who have a positive relationship with their students because if students respect their teacher, they are more likely to stop their misbehaviour if they know it is having a negative impact on the teacher (Levin and Nolan, 2005).

Appendix 1: The Adoptions of Scaffolding

In 1983, Cazden distinguished between *vertical* and *sequential scaffolding* by adopting Bruner's use of the term. He defined vertical scaffolding as the adult extending a child's language by asking further questions. For example, a child may say "Cow", the adult will follow with "Yes, that's a cow. What does the cow say?" Sequential scaffolding is found in games played with children at bath times, meals, and so on (Foley, 1993).

Applebee and Langer introduced the concept of *instructional scaffolding* used to describe essential aspects of formal instruction in 1983. They proposed "learning is a process of gradual internalisation of routines and procedures available to the learner from the social and cultural context in which the learning takes place" (Foley, 1993). Instructional scaffolding involves the assistance of a skilled language user who models a language task, which is to be used verbally and /or in writing, to a language learner. Leading and probing questions are also used to extend the knowledge of the learner. The teacher, rather than evaluating the learner's answers, supports, encourages and provides additional props. The scaffolding is reduced gradually as the learner becomes more competent and eventually it is lifted completely (Foley, 1993).

may become more inspired and engaged in activities (Brady and Scully, 2005). Some strategies which can be used to assist in providing enjoyable lessons include:

- The use of humour: A study has shown that students are more likely to retain the information being presented to them when humour is used. (Skinner, 2010)
- Be passionate about what you teach: Students can sense when teachers are passionate about what they are teaching and will become drawn in by that energy (Stuliff, 2008).
- Be organised: the ability to be organised for lessons provides less downtime for students and hence there is less chance for misbehaviour to take place (Del Guercio, 2011).

Foster Respectful Relationships
Teachers who educate their students to respect each other and who show respect for their students tend to be more effective and limit barriers in student learning (Stuliff, 2008). Building a rapport with students is extremely important for cooperation of students in the classroom. If students believe you care about their welfare, they are more likely to cooperate (Del Guercio, 2011). The following are a couple of ways in which respectful relationships between teachers and students can be developed:

Picture: (no author, 2009)

- Getting involved in school events
- Learning more about your students (Del Guercio, 2011)

Discussing Classroom Practices with Students
Effective discipline policies must be created in order for chronic misbehaviour to be prevented. The development of discipline policies informs the students of teacher expectations and ensures all students are treated equally (Del Guercio, 2011). Some helpful hints in issuing effective discipline:

- Consequences must fit the misbehaviour (logical consequences)
- Follow through with your policies – do not make "empty threats"
- Discuss misbehaviour with student – do not assume the student knows what they did wrong
- Try to gain the parents as allies
- Use the resources within the school (counsellors, psychologists, coaches)

(Del Guercio, 2011)

Mindful of Students' Needs

Determining the needs of problem students is very important for creating a positive learning environment. Sometimes it is possible for good students to turn their behaviour around for what seems like no apparent reason. However, phoning the parents or talking to the student may uncover useful information on why this misbehaviour is taking place. If you do learn something serious about a student it is important to refer them to a school counsellor to rectify the behaviour (Del Guercio, 2011).

Modelling Appropriate Behaviours

Bandura suggested that "most human learning occurs in social settings, through the processes of observation, modelling and reinforcement" (Brady and Scully, 2005: 52). Modelling and observation can be seen as replications of behaviour. Petri proposed that "observed behaviours are stored symbolically and retrieved at some later time to guide behaviour" (Brady and Scully, 2005 :52). This emphasises the fact that students are influenced by the behaviour modelled by teachers. If they observe behaviour that is inappropriate, it is possible they will replicate this behaviour at a later stage.

Picture: (Cartoon Stock, n.d.)

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Supportive Actions

Supportive actions are those which are used for minimising management problems through pre-emptive and effective classroom management. Some strategies which can be used as supportive actions are outlined on the following pages:

- Use praise for students who are following your directions
- Name drop (Levin and Nolan, 2005)
- Planned ignoring (Levin and Nolan, 2005)
- Use physical proximity: students are less likely to misbehave if they think you could be behind them at any moment (Levin and Nolan, 2005)
- Use body language (Cowley, 2006)
- Use humour (Levin and Nolan, 2005)
- Use the whisper technique: involves speaking quietly to students reminding them their behaviour is inappropriate. It can reduce attention drawn to poor behaviour and reduces the risk of escalating to a whole-class situation. Part of Kounin's model.
- Give attention to on-task students rather than off-task students (Ripple Effect page 7) (TeacherMatters, 2010a)
- Change activity: students may be bored of the activity because it has been going for too long or it may be too challenging (or easy) (see pages 5 and 6, Vygotsky)
- Wait for silence (Cowley, 2006)
- Be a "with it" teacher (see page 6)
- Use Gordon "I-messages" – see pages 8 and 9 (Levin and Nolan, 2005)
- Use Maslow's hierarchy of needs (see page 7)

<u>Vygotsky: Change the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)</u>
Vygotsky used the term "ZPD" to describe the difference between tasks which students can complete with assistance and those which they can complete independently (Wikipedia, 2011). The level of skill required for students to complete tasks independently are at the lower limit of the ZPD and tasks the students can complete with assistance are at the upper limit (Wikipedia, 2011). Theorists such as Bruner, Cazden, Appleby and Langer adopted Vygotsky's idea of ZPD and this inspired them to invent the concept of scaffolding (Foley, 1993) (*Appendix One*). However, each of the theorists used the term to distinguish between different types of scaffolding. Bruner believed that in order for children to learn, social interactional frameworks must be supplied. For these frameworks to be

put in place, the teacher (or caregiver) must be one step ahead of the child (Foley, 1993). By changing the level of support, or scaffolding, students have to complete a task, they can accomplish activities that require a higher level of skill and hence are performing in the upper limit of the ZPD (Wikipedia, 2011). If students feel a sense of achievement, they are less likely to misbehave (Gaddy, 1988). *Figure 2* shows Vygotsky's ZPD.

Figure 2: Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development


(Matthews, 2011b)

Kounin: With-it-ness

Kounin was the theorist responsible for suggesting that teachers should be "with-it". He used the term "with-it-ness" to describe teachers who have a knowledge of what is happening in all areas of their classroom at all times. Kounin discovered that teachers are more likely to be in control of a class if the students think they are "with it", that is, the teacher knows who is misbehaving and can correct that behaviour immediately (TeacherMatters, 2010a). As suggested by Kounin, the "with-it" teacher should possess the following attributes:

- "Know what is happening in every area of the classroom at all times and communicate that fact to students
- Be able to deal with more than one issue at a time
- Correct the appropriate target before misbehaviour escalates
- Ensure smooth transitions from one activity to another
- Maintain group focus through alerting and accountability
- Provide non satiating learning programs by emphasizing progress, challenge, and variety" (TeacherMatters, 2010a)

A number of the supportive and corrective actions discussed above have been adapted from the hierarchy for management intervention as discussed by Levin and Nolan (2005). The summary is shown in *figure 4*.

Figure 4: Hierarchy for Management Intervention
(Levin and Nolan, 2005)
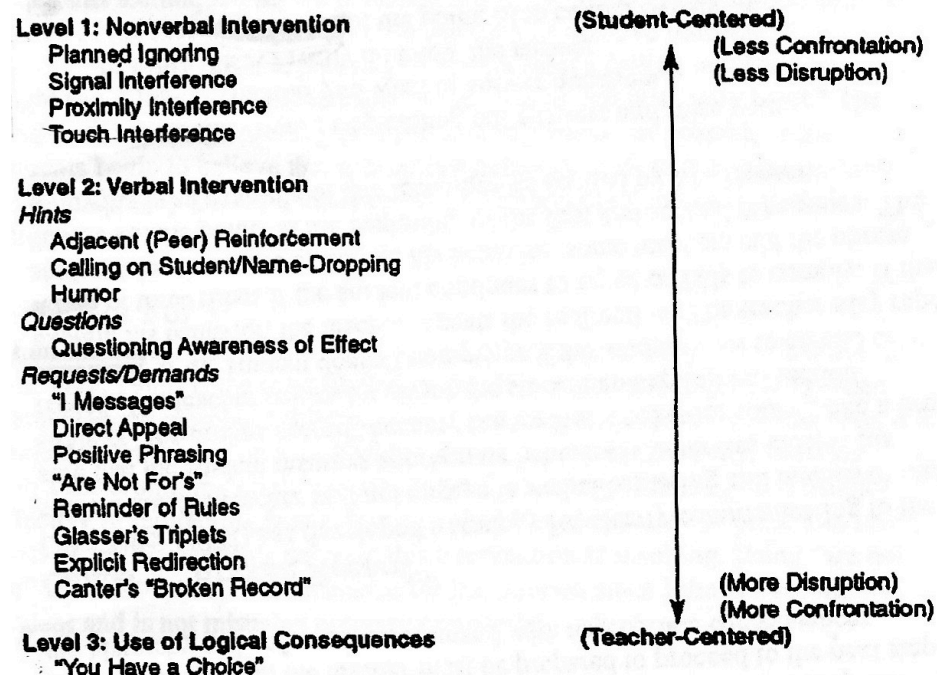
Conclusion

This handbook provides a number of different strategies which can be employed by teachers in the classroom to either prevent or correct misbehaviour. The broad categories include preventative, supportive and corrective actions. By incorporating some of these strategies for behaviour management, a positive learning environment can be established. This allows all students to feel comfortable in the classroom and allows them to engage in their learning. Effective classroom management is "an essential element in student learning and sustaining academic achievement" (Del Guercio, 2011).

1. What are you doing?
2. Is it against the rules?
3. What should you be doing?

These questions are known as Glasser's Triplets. In order to use this technique effectively, classroom rules must be established firmly in students' minds (Levin and Nolan, 2005).

Explicit Redirection
When using this strategy, the teacher orders the student to stop misbehaviour and return to appropriate behaviour. This technique leaves no room for students to negotiate and has the advantage of being simple and closed. The main disadvantage is that the student is confronted (Levin and Nolan, 2005).

Canter's Broken Record
This technique involves the teacher giving a student a command to stop their inappropriate behaviour. This command is repeated if the student fails to cooperate or argues. It is a useful technique for avoiding verbal battles (Levin and Nolan, 2005).

<u>*Use of Logical Consequences*</u>
You have a choice
It is often useful to give students a choice of following teacher instructions or facing the consequences. For example "John, you have a choice. Stop calling out answers immediately and begin raising your hand to answer or move your seat to the back of the room and you and I will have a private discussion later. You decide." This method allows the students to take responsibility for their actions (Levin and Nolan, 2005; Cowley, 2006). These consequences must have a direct relationship with the behaviour and be understood by students (TeacherMatters, 2010b).


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A.BACALL

"For throwing spitballs in class, I am sending you to the principal's office. It's nothing personal. It's just a classroom management thing."

Picture: (Cartoon Stock, n.d.)

The Ripple Effect may arise if teachers award encouragement to on-task students (TeacherMatters, 2010a) because those students who are off-task may feel they want the teacher's attention. The off-task students may then feel they have no choice but to complete the tasks which are set because in doing so they know that the teacher will pay them positive attention.

<u>*Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs*</u>
Maslow's hierarchy of needs influences the effect of classroom management (Kaliska, 2002). The theory states that if the basic needs are not met, a person will not be concerned with the needs of higher importance. Teachers connect students in a variety of learning activities, these may be associated with higher needs in Maslow's terms, or meet several needs simultaneously (Brady and Scully, 2005). If teachers can assist students in meeting their needs, student learning can be enhanced and students will, in time, reach self-actualisation where they may realise their potential. (Kaliska, 2002). The hierarchy of needs is summarised in *figure 3*.

Figure 3: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (Wikia, n.d.)
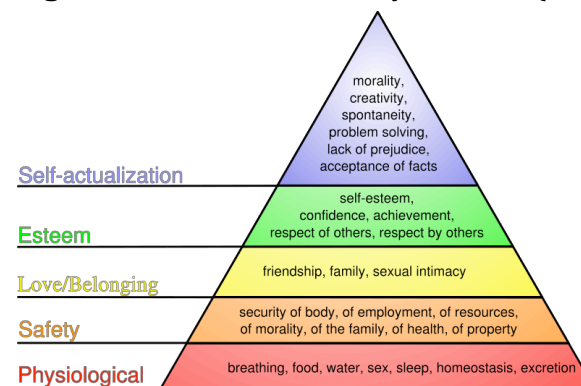
Corrective Actions
Corrective actions are those which are used for responding to common and chronic misbehaviour problems when they arise. Charles (2002) states that "we have to accept that while good discipline systems can prevent most misbehaviour, your students will nevertheless break rules at times and you must deal with the transgressions. If you approach misbehaving students in a sensitive manner, you can help them return to proper behaviour with no ill feelings." Strategies which can be used as corrective actions are outlined on the following pages:

Questioning Awareness of Effect

This technique is used to assist students in controlling their behaviour by allowing them to recognise both the positive and negative effects thereof. This is useful as often students who misbehave are unaware of the effect their behaviour has on others. The method includes the use of a rhetorical question which points out the student's misbehaviour but does not require a response from the student. For example "John, are you aware that your calling out answers without raising your hand robs other students of the chance to answer the question?" (Levin and Nolan, 2005)

Dreiker's Model of Confronting Mistaken Goals

Dreiker's model works on the basis that most students misbehave because they seek attention and when they become frustrated because they are not receiving this recognition, their behaviour aims to acheive four "mistaken goals". These include seeking attention, gaining power, taking revenge and displaying inadequacy. Dreiker categorised teachers into three groups: autocratic, permissive and democratic. He believed that democratic teachers had the greatest ability to effectively ascertain discipline. For information on the qualities that democratic classroom environment possess see *Appendix Three*. There are a number of strategies that Dreiker believes teachers should use to establish effective discipline, some of which are outlined below. For an extended list see *Appendix Three*. (TeacherMatters, 2010b)

- Give clear instructions for what is expected of students
- Establish positive relationships with students based on trust and mutual respect
- Use logical consequences
- Deal with incidents quickly and effectively

(TeacherMatters, 2010b)

Requests/Demands
Use Gordon's "I messages"

A theorist named Thomas Gordon developed this technique for dealing with misbehaviour. The "I message" technique is comprised of three parts and the main objective is to show the student that their behaviour is having a negative impact on the teacher (Levin and Nolan, 2005). The three parts include:

1. A description of the unacceptable behaviour
2. Descriptions of the effects the behaviour is having on the teacher and peers
3. Descriptions of the teacher's feelings

"I messages" show the students that they must take responsibility for their behaviour in the classroom (Levin and Nolan, 2005) - see *Appendix Two*.

Direct Appeal

The direct appeal approach uses a simple request for the student to stop disrupting the class (Levin and Nolan, 2005).

Positive Phrasing

This technique emphasises positive outcomes to redirect student misbehaviour. Instead of the teacher saying to the student "If you don't stop doing that, you will get a yard duty at lunch time" the teacher will say "If you do X (behave appropriately), then we can do Y (positive outcome)". The use of positive phrasing allows students to develop control over their behaviour as they start to believe that suitable behaviour leads to positive outcomes (Levin and Nolan, 2005).

Reminder of the Rules

Simply reminding the students of the rules which were set at the beginning of the year can often stop misbehaviour. This technique works best when previous episodes of misbehaviour have been followed up with this strategy and then negative consequences follow if misbehaviour continues (Levin and Nolan, 2005).

Glasser's Triplets

Glasser suggested that teachers should direct students to acceptable behaviour by the use of the following three questions:

Picture source: (India Education, 2010)

(Embers, n.d.)