

Behaviour Management Strategies to Promote a Positive Classroom Environment

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"It's not fun, but it's surprisingly effective."

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Introduction:

Teachers must hold paramount the rights of all students within their classroom to learn in a safe, respectful and positive learning environment. A positive learning environment needs to be;

- Safe and comfortable
- Welcoming and reliable
- Interesting and Challenging
- Involve independent and collaborative work
- Value students, their opinions and their efforts
- Require students to take ownership of their own behaviour within the classroom

(O'Neill & Hawken, 2012)

There is a requirement for order in the classroom as a basis for effective teaching and learning (Rogers, 1998). This order is achieved and maintained through the use of a number of Preventative, Supportive and Corrective Strategies (Charles, 2002) that are underpinned by various theories.

Key Theories Underpinning Behaviour Management:

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs states that children have basic needs which need to be met, see figure 1. It is when these needs are not fulfilled that a student begins to misbehave. It can enable you to understand what is motivating a child to misbehave (Wikipedia, 2014a).

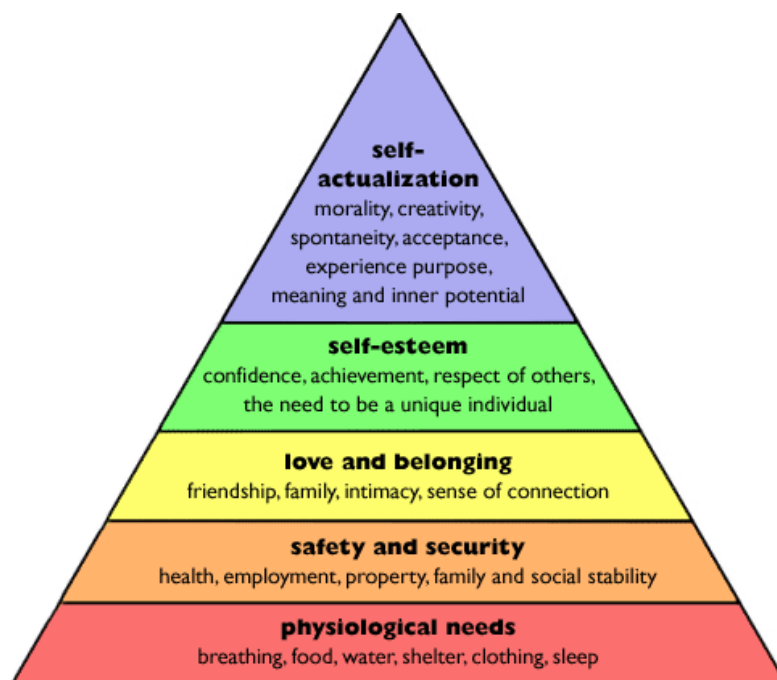


Figure 1: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (Wikipedia, 2014a)

Kounin's Philosophy states that effective classroom management is based upon a teacher's ability to organise and plan their lessons well. He also states that a high level of student involvement and proactive behavioural management ensures for a smoothly run classroom (Wikipedia, 2014b).

Gardner's Multiple Intelligences state that everyone has various different intelligences which underpins how they learn within a classroom and the types of activities that they are most suited for. Understanding how your students learn will enable you to better target your lessons towards them (Martin, 2013).

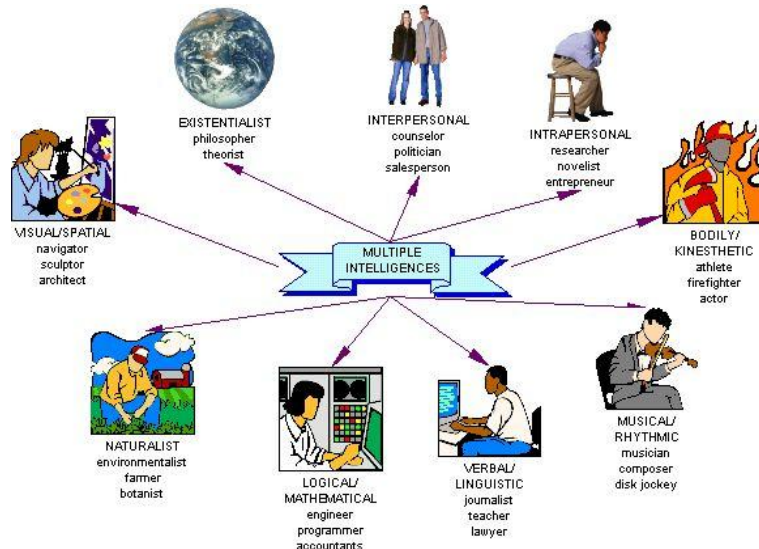


Figure 2: Gardner's Multiple Intelligences (Martin, 2013)

Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) is a concept that explains the amount of scaffolding that a student requires to be able to complete a learning task. It enables you to determine what level tasks need to be 'pitched' at and the amount of support that students will require to complete them (Wikipedia, 2014c).

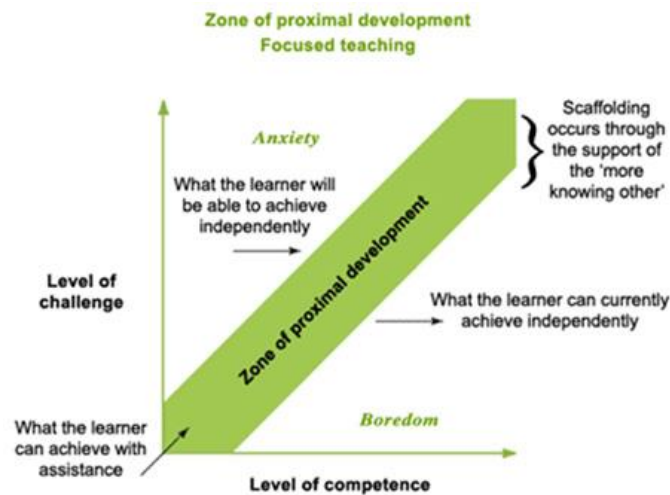


Figure 3: Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (TRIADS, 2014)

Glasser's Choice Theory states that a person's behaviour is determined by what that person wants or needs at that particular time and not an outside stimulus. He believed that all living creatures control their own behaviour to fulfil their needs for satisfaction in one of the following 5 areas.

- Survival
- To Belong and Be Loved by Others
- To have Power and Importance
- Freedom and Independence
- To Have Fun

(Wikipedia, 2014d)

Dreikur's Social Discipline Model states that it is possible to understand children's misbehaviours by recognising the four main purposes or goals of the child; Attention Getting, The Contest of Power, Seeking Revenge and Displaying Inadequacy (Wikipedia, 2014e).

What strategy should I use when?

As all students are different, the behavioural management strategies you may need to utilise will vary depending upon the situation at hand, the behaviours exhibited and the student(s) involved. In some cases multiple strategies will need to be implemented within the same class to have the desired effect. Behavioural management strategies occur on a scale, with varying levels of intensity, confrontation and interruption to the rest of the class, as seen in Levin and Nolan's hierarchy of management strategies.

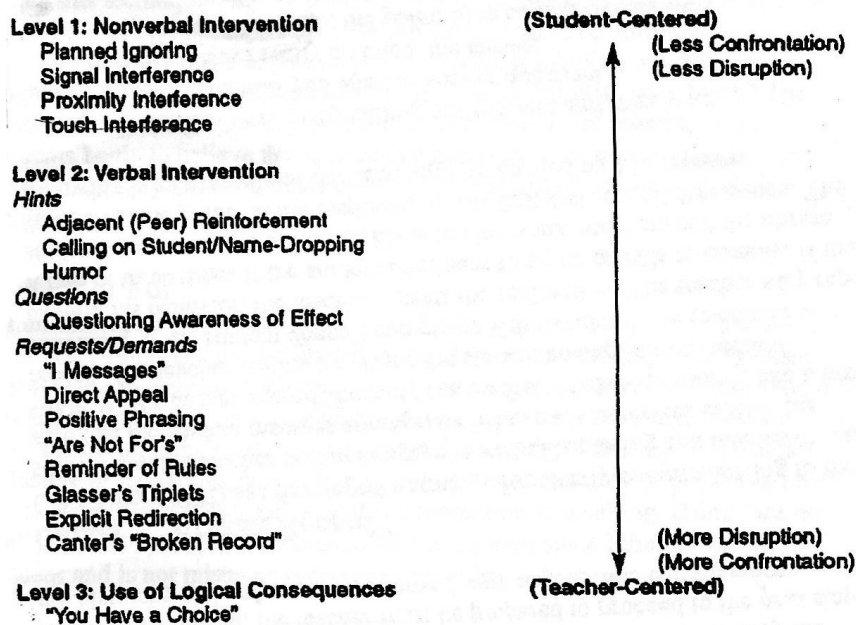


Figure 4: Levin and Nolan's Hierarchy of Management Strategies (Levin&Nolan, 2005)

The type of behavioural management utilised also depends on any strategies that have been previously implemented and the continuation of the undesired behaviour. The following flow-chart shows how you can move through the various types of strategies, dependent upon student behaviour(s) exhibited.

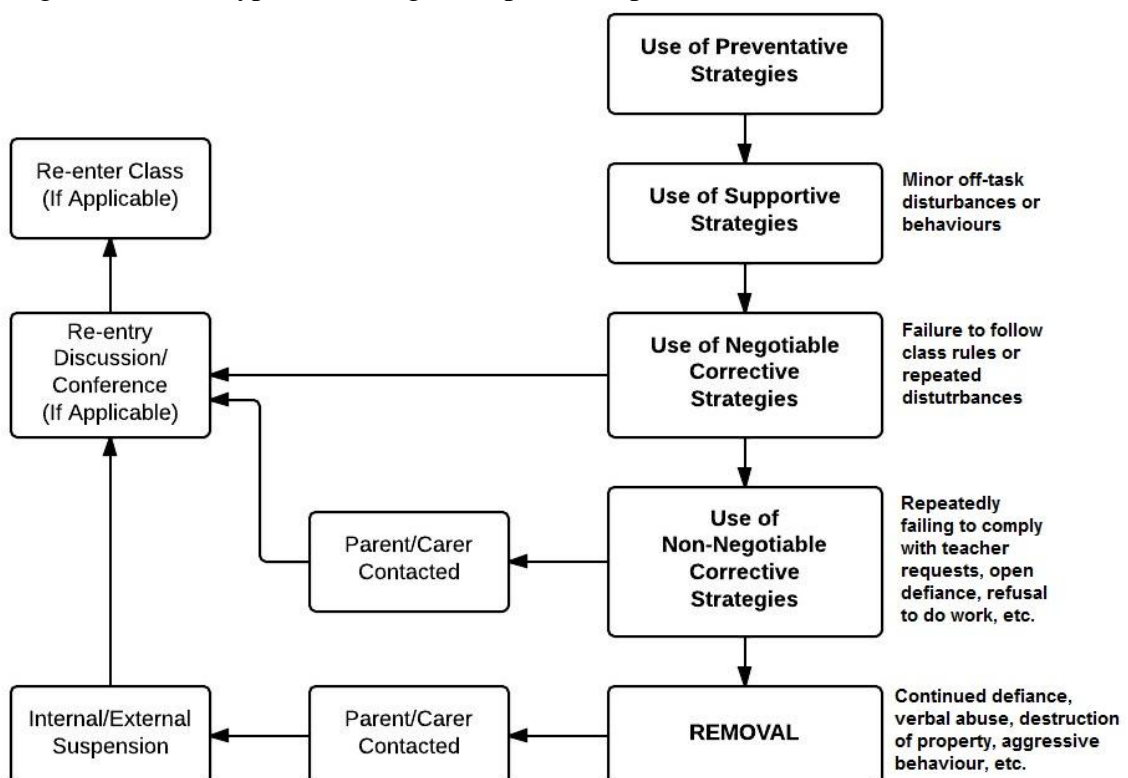
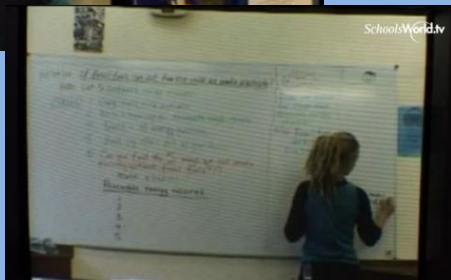


Figure 5: Flowchart of Classroom Behaviour Management Steps. Adapted from Alex Robinson's Behavioural Management Strategy (Robinson, 2010)

Preventative Discipline Strategies

Preventative strategies aim to avoid the occurrence of minor behavioural issues in the class. Knowing your students, their interests and learning styles and ensuring you deliver your curriculum in a fun and interesting way that keeps your students engaged and interested can all but eliminate behavioural issues within the classroom! Some key Preventative Strategies include:

- ✓ Teacher organisation: Ensuring lessons/units are well prepared and full of planned and organised activities to minimise down time and distractions.
- ✓ Providing Structure and Routine: Ensuring students have a routine that they know they are required to follow – this prevents students from not knowing what to expect/what is going on in each class.
- ✓ Engaging Activities: Ensuring activities are engaging to prevent students from getting bored, instead remaining focused and participate in the learning activities. All activities need to be targeted at the right level with the appropriate level of scaffolding for the students to complete and maximise their learning (Brady & Scully, 2005).
- ✓ Sharing Responsibility for Learning with the Students: Teachers need to share the responsibility for student learning with the students themselves, giving them some ownership of the learning/assessment activities.
- ✓ Variation in Learning Activities: Ensuring that activities are varied and changed often throughout the lesson maximises student engagement with the learning activities (e.g. switching from a reading activity to a physical activity and then to a listening activity) (Brady & Scully, 2005).
- ✓ Establishing Classroom Values/Expectations/Rules: This establishes the guidelines, values and ‘rules’ that are agreed upon by the class to ensure exactly what is expected of them while in the class. At this time, specific ‘consequences’ for not adhering to the set guidelines can be ascertained so students know that not following them will have specific ramifications.
- ✓ Practicing Mutual Respect: Ensuring that the relationships within the class between students and yourself are respectful at all times. This ensures that all students know that their values and opinions will be treated with respect, promoting the likelihood of student participation and engaged learning.
- ✓ Ensuring Regular Small Successes: Some students become conditioned to believe that they cannot succeed at any learning activity (i.e. learned helplessness). In extreme cases, students may refuse to complete any work or will not put any effort into their work as they are sure that they are going to fail. Making sure that all students achieve some success in each class ensures that students feel empowered and are more likely to remain engaged in the learning activities at hand.
- ✓ Building Relationships: Understanding the key values and interests of your students will enable you to better target lessons to them at a level that will best suit them. Simple discussions with your students will allow you to understand what makes them tick, what they find difficult and what frustrates them within a classroom environment. Having good, respectful and reliable relationships with your students can prevent misbehaviours from occurring as students realise that you really do care about them and their learning journey (Czyson *et al.*, 2001; Brady & Scully, 2005).
- ✓ Motivation: Motivation can be fostered intrinsically (i.e. from the student’s desire to learn) or extrinsically (i.e. rewards for completing work on time, good grades). Motivation can be fostered through the teachers’ enthusiasm and passion of the subject. Praising previous successes in work can intrinsically motivate students to succeed again (Brady & Scully, 2005).
- ✓ Altering the Classroom Environment: Changing the layout of the classroom prior to the class to maximise student participation and/or minimise disruptive behaviour. This can be done by providing seating plans to separate disruptive students or moving the desks so that they best suit the task at hand (i.e. grouped desks for group work or rows for presentations).



CASE STUDY ONE

In the video 'Praise and Preparation,' Australian teacher Amy Alexander shows how teacher organization and structure and routine can help prevent negative behaviours from occurring. She greets her students at the door, giving them instructions of what they are expected to do as they enter the class. Her whiteboard is extremely well planned and colour co-ordinated with extensive instructions, so students know exactly what they are doing during the class, giving students some autonomy in their learning. She also provides extension tasks so students who finish early don't disrupt other students from completing their work. Amy believes that by being well prepared for every lesson, she is more able to manage minor behavioural issues before they escalate. (SchoolsWorld.tv, # 273)



CASE STUDY TWO

In the video 'A Lesson from the Best' English teacher Philip Beadle has taken the time to get to know his students and has realized that they are extremely visual, audio and kinesthetic learners who enjoy socialising. Philip acknowledges that in order to keep the student's attention, he has to vary the style in which he teaches greatly throughout his lessons. He has come up with the concept of 'Argument Tennis' in which students have a debate about Macbeth, but in a form that is more accessible to them, making the task more engaging. Philip frequently gets the class to alter the classroom environment throughout the lesson, giving the students a break from the learning activity as they move through the stages of the 'game.' The Argument Tennis game addresses 6 of the Gardner's Intelligences, making it highly accessible to a wide range of learning styles. (SchoolsWorld.tv, # 263)

Supportive Discipline Strategies

Supportive discipline strategies aim to prevent minor misbehaviours from escalating into behaviours that will disrupt student learning. Teachers employ supportive strategies by ‘reading’ their class and responding appropriately when students become restless, agitated or otherwise deviated from the learning task. Most students only need a small reminder of what they should be doing, thus supportive techniques prevent minor behaviours from escalating and requiring corrective discipline. Some supportive strategies include:

- ✓ **With-it-ness:** Teachers are responsible for inhibiting poor behaviour and preventing potentially distracting behaviours from escalating. With-it-ness is the idea that teachers are aware of their students and what they are doing at all times, also known as ‘having eyes in the back of one’s head.’ With-it teachers know their classes well (i.e. their students’ strengths, weaknesses, interests and learning styles) and are able to read their class and know when to change teaching techniques or challenge their students to maximise student attention and engagement in the learning activity.
- ✓ **Scaffolding:** Altering the scaffolding you provide students throughout your class helps to maximise their learning. This can be done both during your class and across your unit plans, depending on the amount of modification needed. By modifying the scaffolding provided when required, you ensure that your students are able to complete the tasks required of them (e.g. if activities end up being too hard, increasing scaffolding to enable students to help finish their activities, and reducing the amount of scaffolding if students find their tasks too easy).

Low-Profile Intervention Techniques

When utilised correctly, low-profile interventions can alter or stop the undesired behaviour(s) without disrupting the rest of the class or obviously singling out the student(s) who are misbehaving (Lakes & Smith, 2002). Low-profile intervention techniques include:

- ✓ **Non-verbal cues:** The use of non-verbal cues (i.e. eye contact, shaking of the head, hand-signals and appropriate touching) acknowledges the undesirable behaviour and indicates to the student that you wish them to stop or alter it without distracting the rest of the class (Cowley, 2006).
- ✓ **Tactical Ignoring:** Tactical Ignoring completely ignores undesirable behaviour, refusing to acknowledge it while only paying attention to desired behaviours (Cowley, 2006).
- ✓ **Wait-times:** Utilising wait-times ensures that you have all students’ attention before beginning or continuing talking. This guarantees that you do not start speaking over students and prevents you from having to repeat yourself (Cowley, 2006).
- ✓ **Name-Dropping:** When used correctly, name-dropping should not disrupt the rest of the class. You can drop a students’ name into the dialogue in a natural way, bringing students attention back to the class/topic at hand and stopping undesired behaviour. (e.g. “... and so Michael, you should notice that....”). It can also be used when asking questions, essentially putting off-task students on the spot to answer a question about what you were just speaking about to indicate that you know that they have not been paying attention and are watching them (Levin & Nolan, 2005).

- ✓ Praise: Praising students shows them that you acknowledge their good work or the behaviour that you desire. Skinner's theory of 'Operant Conditioning' suggests that when praise reinforces desired positive behaviours, students are more likely to repeat these behaviours. Praise can be delivered multiple ways; to the entire class as a whole, to specific students in front of the class, or privately to the individual. In some cases, students who are under-appreciated at home may require an increased amount of praise in order to fulfil their basic needs before allowing them to succeed.
- ✓ Selective Attention: Selective Attention only provides on-task and well behaved students with the attention that off-task attention seekers crave/desire. This reinforces the positive behaviours while indicating to the off-task students that in order to gain your attention, students must exhibit the desired behaviours. Kounin's 'Ripple Effect' shows that selective attention can promote the positive behaviour in other students who desire the teacher's attention, further reinforcing the positive behaviour. Over time, as more students desire the teacher's attention, they will adopt the desired to gain the attention they desire (Cowley, 2006).
- ✓ Mobile Monitoring: Being a mobile presence within the classroom allows students to know that you are watching them at all times and are there to help them when they need it. Being mobile within the class makes it easier to answer questions and provide help where needed. Mobile Monitoring enables you to support struggling students that may not ask for help as you are able to ascertain their difficulties early on and provide intervention and support where needed (Cowley, 2006)
- ✓ Whisper Technique: The Whisper Technique involves invading a student's personal space to have a quiet, private word with the student. When utilised correctly, The Whisper Technique can be used to privately remind a student of what they are supposed to be doing or to privately reprimand them, allowing them to save face. Similarly, the Whisper Technique can be implemented to deliver praise to specific students in a private way, especially if they tend to get embarrassed when praised more publicly.
- ✓ Proximity: Varying your proximity to your students can be used to change students behaviour and/or re-direct students focus or attention. Bailey discusses the three teaching proximities in the 'Attention Seekers' video;
 - Teaching Position – this position is at the front of the class, it is utilised for giving instructions and/or praise and adoration
 - Middle Position – this position is half-way between the front of the class and the student(s) that you are targeting. It is utilised when re-iterating instructions to specific members of the class who may not be following them and for gaining an individual's attention while addressing the entire class.
 - Close-up Position – this position is within the student's 'personal space' and is utilised to get students back on task by standing close to them and/or to privately warn or tell off specific students in a quiet voice. (See Whisper Technique)

CASE STUDY THREE



In the video 'Attention Seekers' French teacher Jayne Wright was having some issues controlling her class. After her discussion with John Bayley she began to implement Non-verbal cues to modify behaviour during a listening activity. She increased the amount of praise she gave to well behaved students while tactically ignoring misbehaving students. A 'Ripple Effect' was observed as more of the misbehaving students started following suit of the well-behaved students, seeking similar praise. Jayne also started altering her proximity to the students, using the three different 'positions' within the class. She used the 'up-close position' to remind a specific student of what they were supposed to be doing and asked them to get back on task. After implementing the suggested changes, her class was more engaged in the learning activities and consequently, easier to manage! (SchoolsWorld.tv, # 1044)

CASE STUDY FOUR



In the video 'Praise and Preparation' Australian Science teacher Amy Alexander uses a number of supportive strategies to keep her students on task. Amy is a very mobile presence in her classroom, constantly moving and monitoring her students at all times, allowing her to help those who need easily. Amy praises her students regularly when they do anything from simple tasks such as following instructions to answering questions correctly or reading from the board or textbook. She recognised that her students come from broken homes in which they may not feel appreciated, and so her extensive amounts of praise meet their basic needs. Amy utilises wait-times to ensure she has the classes' attention before continuing with her instructions. She also utilises the Whisper-Technique both for praising an individual student and for privately reprimanding students in a non-confrontational, almost conversational way. (SchoolsWorld.tv, # 273)

CASE STUDY FIVE



In the video 'Girl Talk' Mathematics teacher Nicola Lamb struggles with a group of extremely chatty year 10 girls who constantly seek her attention. She begins being more selective with her attention, only giving the chatty girls her attention after they have completed the questions she has asked. Nicola begins to Tactically Ignore the chatty students when they are off-task but are calling out for her help or attention. John Bayley also suggests that she take this one step further by trying to 'befriend' the girls once they ask to see her wedding rings. She then begins to use their interest and friendliness, agreeing to show them her wedding rings after they have completed the tasks she has asked them to. Nicola also utilises the whisper technique when one of the girls finishes a task before the others, praising her quietly which in turn motivated the other girls in the group to finish the task so they could be in on the discussion. (SchoolsWorld.tv, # 126)

High-Profile Intervention Techniques

Higher-profile intervention techniques typically single out the misbehaving student(s) in front of the class or the group in which they are working. These techniques should not be used regularly as they can cause students to become embarrassed in front of their peers. They are best utilised only after low-profile intervention techniques have failed to rectify the undesired behaviour (Lakes & Smith, 2002). High-profile intervention techniques include:

- ✓ **Rule Reminding:** Done in an almost conversational voice, rule reminding is utilised to remind students of the rules/guidelines established at the start of the year. In the process of reminding the specific student who has ‘broken’ the rule(s), the rest of the class is reminded as well and shown that you are enforcing them. Typically the reminder is followed by the reiteration of the agreed upon behaviour that should have been used instead.
- ✓ **Altering the Classroom Environment:** Altering the classroom environment can include anything from removing a specific distraction (e.g. magazine, book), to moving specific students or getting the entire class to re-arrange the classroom mid-class to maximise learning and reduce disruptive behaviour within the class.
- ✓ **Glasser’s Choice Theory/ Logical Consequences:** Glasser’s Choice Theory provides students with an option to stop the undesired behaviour they are exhibiting and follows with a logical consequence that will be implemented if they fail to comply. The consequence provided should be reasonable and directly related to the negative behaviour being exhibited. (e.g. if students are throwing rubbish around they are given the option of stopping and picking up the paper or picking up papers for 3-5 minutes at recess/lunch.) This can also be utilised as a corrective strategy, with more severe consequences implemented and the concept of a ‘right’ and ‘wrong’ choice being included by stating that you “hope they make the right decision!”
- ✓ **Assertive I-Messages:** These are used to confront misbehaving students in a non-threatening way. Assertive I-Messages tell the student exactly what you want or expect them to do (e.g. “I need you to ...” or “I want you to ...”). They are intended to get students to focus on the desired behaviour/task while you ignore and refuse to acknowledge the undesirable behaviour by not mentioning it in the reprimand.

CASE STUDY SIX



In the video ‘Manage That Class’ Science teacher Jenny Campbell has some behavioural management issues with a group of boys in her class. Jenny utilises wait-times to separate negative behaviour from learning, ensuring that she has the classes attention before continuing to teach. Jenny drops misbehaving students’ names into her dialogue and asks off-task students specific questions. She reminds students of the ‘hands up rule’ once a student has called out. Jenny uses proximity to get students back on task and then gives specific students a choice and a logical consequence for disobeying her without interrupting the flow of the lesson too much. Jenny also uses Assertive I-Messages in combination with proximity, telling specific students ‘I need you to be doing ...’

(SchoolsWorld.tv, # 1752)

Corrective Discipline Strategies

Corrective behavioural management strategies are employed when there has been a significant violation of the class or school rules or the occurrence of extremely disruptive behaviours. Corrective behavioural management strategies can be implemented both inside and outside of the classroom. Internal classroom corrective strategies occur in front of the other students and identifies that the misbehaviour(s) exhibited are not tolerated in the classroom. External classroom strategies occur with the individual student outside of the classroom, allowing for a more informal chat with the student and providing them with an opportunity to save face.

- ✓ Consistency in discipline: They key component of corrective behaviour management strategies is that any 'threat' given is followed through with. Teachers should be consistent with their message and the types of discipline they give out. Punishments should fit the 'crime' and be consistent in level for all future students who may misbehave in the same way in the future (Churchward, 2009)
- ✓ Relationship Building: Building relationships with your students is an important part of corrective behavioural management. According to Dreikur, if a student continually misbehaves within your class, furthering your relationship with them may enable you understand what is underpinning their misbehaviour, what they aim to achieve from misbehaving within your classroom and how you should respond (Edwards, 2004). The following table shows a number of goals that students may try to achieve through their misbehaviour.

Table 1: Various goals and the associated behaviours exhibited by students in the classroom and the best way teachers should respond when these behaviours are exhibited. (Adapted from Damon, 2009)

Goal	Student's Behaviour	Teacher's Response
Attracting Attention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Clowning around ▪ Being a nuisance ▪ Showing-off ▪ Being obtrusive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ignoring the behaviour ▪ Asking student a direct question ▪ Rewarding the appropriate behaviour of another student
Power	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Argues ▪ Rebels ▪ Is defiant ▪ Contradicts you ▪ Bullies you and other students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Do the exact opposite of what the student expects (remove yourself from the power struggle) ▪ Turn the situation over to the class to discuss it
Revenge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Steals from others ▪ Is Vicious and Cruel ▪ Is destructive ▪ Exhibits Passive Hatred 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Never retaliate! ▪ Helping to resolve their real/perceived hurt/suffering ▪ Being empathetic to their needs
Escape by Withdrawal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Idle within the classroom ▪ Constantly saying "I'm Stupid" or "I can't do this" ▪ Won't mix with others ▪ Won't complete work and places head on desk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide constant encouragement and adequate scaffolding ▪ Ensuring the child experiences success regularly ▪ Involve other students in encouraging the student

Negotiable Strategies

Negotiable strategies allow the student to contribute to the process and outcome of the behavioural discipline they receive (Rogers, 1998). Some Negotiable corrective behavioural management strategies include:

- ✓ One-on-One Chats: One on one conversations are a very useful tool for correcting students negative behaviour. The teacher is able to explain to the student exactly why what they are doing is wrong or against the rules without having to worry about them getting defensive in front of their peers. It also allows for an open dialogue to occur in which negotiations can be made in regards to the students behaviour and the types of consequences that should and will be taken out if they fail to adhere to the agreed upon behavioural guidelines established.
- ✓ Peer Reinforcement: The peers of the misbehaving students can be sued to squash out the negative behaviours or reinforce your desired positive behaviours. While not advisable, threatening the entire class to stay back into their recess/lunch time when a small number of their peers are misbehaving can be an excellent way of getting peers to alter the behaviour of the misbehaving students. Positive reinforcements can also be offered on the basis that everyone completes a certain task, increasing the peer-pressure on the misbehaving students to conform to the rules set out in the class.
- ✓ Glasser's Triplets: Glasser's Triplets put the student on the spot and make them take ownership of their negative behaviour. It involves asking the student 3 simple questions and ensuring that they follow through with their responses.
 1. What are you doing?
 2. Is it against the rules/guidelines?
 3. What should you be doing instead?
- ✓ Canter's Broken Record: Canter's Broken Record is a method utilised when refusing to engage in an argument with a student, acting like a broken record by repeating the same instruction multiple times and then moving on (McInerney & McInerney, 2002).
- ✓ Take a Break: Telling a student to 'take a break' can be a useful way to remove them from the situation and allow you to recompose yourself. After the student has taken a break, a re-entry discussion should be conducted before they return.
- ✓ Breaking the Cycle of Discouragement: Some students with chronic behavioural issues struggle in the classroom and have a low success rate. Consequently, they act out to fulfil their need of acceptance or adequacy. In these cases, it is best to give the student the attention they desire in a positive way, reinforcing that they are more than capable of completing the task required and supporting them to do so (Levin & Nolan, 2004)

Non-negotiable Strategies

Non-negotiable strategies are used with serious behaviours such as verbal or physical aggression, smoking, violence or bullying, etc (Rogers, 1998). The consequences of these behaviours are known in advance and are adhered to without negotiation. Non-negotiable strategies include:

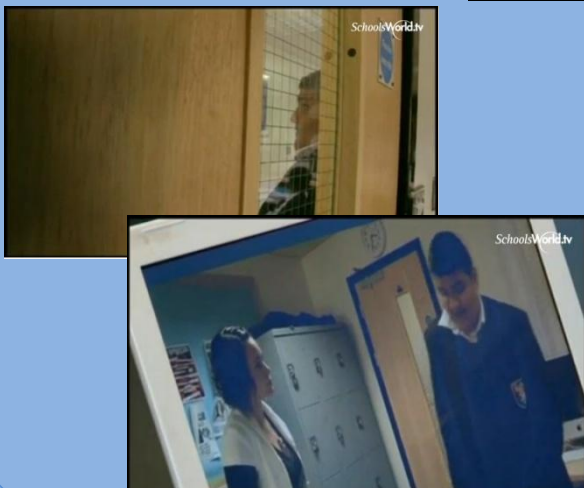
- ✓ Conferences with the student's parents or care-givers
- ✓ Removal from the class/learning activity
- ✓ Detentions
- ✓ The creation of behavioural management contracts with the student and their parents or care-givers
- ✓ Issue elevated to senior staff members for the consideration of
 - Suspensions (Internal or External)
 - Expulsion (Levin & Nolan, 2004)

CASE STUDY SEVEN



In the video 'Key Instructions' Music teacher Teddy Prout has some issues with misbehaving students within his classroom. He implements a number of corrective strategies throughout his classes during the day. When he catches a student in the wrong room during a practical he uses Glasser's Triplets ascertain what the student is doing in the wrong room without placing blame. He tries to utilise 'Peer Reinforcement' by threatening to keep the entire class back after school if they do not stop talking after 5 seconds. However, he ends up only following through for specific students instead of the class as a whole, so it doesn't have the desired effect. Teddy also threatens students who continue to defy him with lunchtime detentions if they do not modify their behaviour. Bailey suggested that he try to use the 'take a break' by sending disruptive the students out of the class, something that said he would Teddy take on board for his next lessons. (SchoolsWorld.tv, # 564)

CASE STUDY EIGHT



In the video 'Challenging Personalities' English teacher Amy Mayes struggles with some challenging students in her class. Amy utilises Canter's Broken Record when a student continues to question her instructions, reiterating her instructions and refusing to engage with the student. Amy also ejects a student after he puts down another student's work in front of the class. She tells him that what he did was unacceptable and asks him to leave. After the class, Amy then has a one-on-one discussion with him regarding his behaviour and uses Glasser's Triplets to ask him what he did wrong, why it was wrong and the type of behaviour that he should have exhibited instead.

(SchoolsWorld.tv, # 3376)

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