

EDUC 4502

THE HANDBOOK

Promoting a positive learning environment

This handbook aims to provide a range of educational theories and strategies that can be adopted in classroom management, particularly in the following three aspects of discipline:

Preventative, Corrective and Supportive.

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Introduction

The teaching profession requires a great deal of responsibility. It is essential that teachers are aware of these responsibilities to ensure that every student receives a quality education in a safe and positive environment. These responsibilities include:

- ✓ Structuring the teaching program to facilitate learning and encourage students to achieve their personal best.
- ✓ Catering to the developmental, social and emotional needs of individual students and use a range of teaching methods
- ✓ Providing formal and informal feedback on student learning to students and parents, or caregivers, and reviewing teaching programs according to student learning outcomes.
- ✓ Developing classroom management strategies

(DECD, School Discipline)

Why is it important to promote a positive learning environment?

A positive learning environment sets the stage for student success, and allows teaching to be done in the most effective and productive manner. A positive learning environment needs to:

- ✓ Be safe and comfortable
- ✓ Be important and meaningful that include short- and long-term goals
- ✓ Be interesting and challenging, but realistically achievable
- ✓ Involve independent and collaborative work
- ✓ Value students' efforts
- ✓ *Require students to be responsible for their own behaviour*

(Killen 2006, pp. 23-24)

It is imperative that teacher's are able to develop a range of strategies for a diverse range of behaviours in the classroom. These behavioural management strategies are necessary in order to administer effective teaching and improve student learning. Throughout this handbook, different theorists' models of discipline and strategies will be discussed in relation to the three aspects of discipline: Preventative, Supportive, and Corrective.

2. Preventative Actions

“No classroom management strategies will prevent discipline problems if effective teaching is not taking place.” (McInerney & McInerney, 251)

The discipline aims to find means of misbehaviour before it happens and to lessen the need for use of more intrusive management techniques (Levin & Nolan, 2003, p.25). In preventing such occurrences, teachers should always consider these strategies:

- ✓ Teachers need to be attentive. ('with-it')
- ✓ Teachers need to keep students attentive and actively involved.
- ✓ Teachers should be able to multitask and monitor their students at all times.
- ✓ Teachers should plan lesson activities that are enjoyable and challenging to stimulate their minds
- ✓ Maintain an appropriate lesson pace
- ✓ Deliver accurate and effective instructions
- ✓ Establish routines and procedures
- ✓ Management lesson time well
- ✓ Communicate expectations and establish a good rapport with student

2.1 Kounin's Theory

Kounin's theory on classroom management is for teachers to be organized, prepared, and use proactive behavioural management combined with high student involvement with the goal of leading to a more effective classroom while minimizing disruptive behaviour.

Kounin coins his theory as Lesson Movement, comprised of techniques called: 'withitness', overlapping, momentum, smoothness, and group focus. Kounin suggested that "good classroom behaviour depends on effective lesson management, especially on pacing, transitions, alerting, and individual accountability" (Andrius, 2011).

With-it-ness – The teacher's ability to know all the things that are going on in a classroom. 'Withitness' is usually followed up by supportive disciplines, but by developing classroom awareness, students will notice it and the chance of misbehaving occurring can be prevented. (Charles 23-24; McInerney & McInerney 257)

Smooth Transitions – Student attentions can be kept on task when activity momentums are well controlled and smooth. Irregularity in activity transitioning can lead to confusion and unnecessary activities which eventually result in misbehavior. (Charles 25; McInerney & McInerney 259)

Planning – Student misbehaviour stemming from boredom can be avoided by careful lesson planning. This can be done by adding a variety to the curriculum and classroom environment to optimize student engagement and learning, thus minimizing disruptions.

Strategies

Case Study I - A Lesson From the Best



Philip connects with pupils by using visual, audio and kinetic stimulus material in unique ways. He structured his lesson well, and was highly creative in turning his classroom into a tennis court, where students played 'argument tennis' in relation to Macbeth. Student's were engaged in debate which proved the effectiveness of his lesson. He gave instructions that allowed for smooth transitions between activities, and ensured that students were on track. This displays the quality of 'with-it-ness' mentioned above.

Keeping Student's Attention

Be motivated – “The teacher needs to ‘sell things’ to children, to enthuse, encourage and motivate. If the teach is enthusiastic, the children become enthusiastic... If the teacher is not lively and enthusiastic, then the children will take that on.” (Gipps, McCallum & Hargreaves, 140)

Be flexible – it's Friday afternoon and the students just aren't engaged mentally, it's time to change to an activity that will get them more engaged

Be explicit – with your expectations and instructions, this will help with carrying out the planned lesson activities

Surprise them – generate and sustain students' interest by doing something different at times, “so that you don't become predictable in the ways you commence new learning.”

Create suspense – Begin sentences by saying things like ‘I wonder if anyone knows this?’

Use scaffolding – support student learning by setting reachable challenges as platforms for students to achieve higher understanding

Provide positive feedback – because “making children feel clever is the number one step for teaching and learning, and behavior management” (Bailey – Too Much Talk).

(Brady & Scully, 47-62)

2.2 Skinner’s Theory: Behavioural Management

The Neo-Skinnerian model based on B. F. Skinner’s behavioural theory suggests that “human behaviour can be shaped along desired lines by means of systematic application of reinforcement”(Charles 1993)The model comprises of four types of reinforcement strategies:

- ✓ Social – words and visible gestures and expressions.
 - Eg. Verbal: Well done, excellent, good job
 - Eg. Non-verbal: Nod, thumbs up, clap,smile
- ✓ Graphics – visuals expression through various kinds of marking
 - Eg. Stamps, stars, stickers etc.
- ✓ Activity – activities that interest students, yet reinforcing academic learning
 - Games, group work, discussion
- ✓ Tangible – objects that students can earn as rewards
 - Certificates, badges etc.

(Charles 38-39)

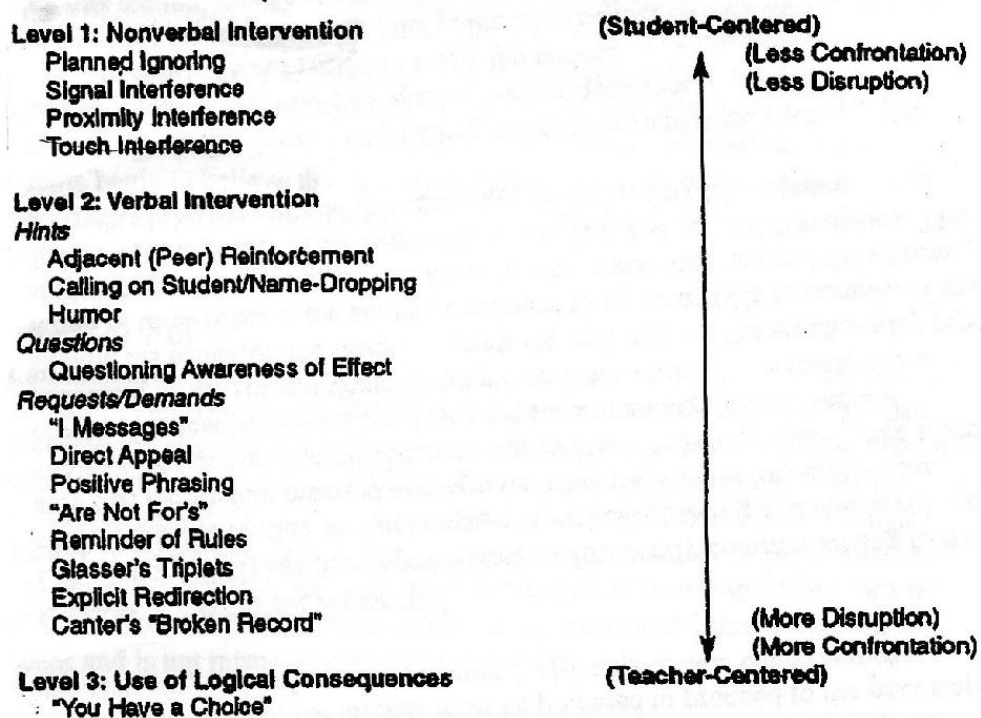
Case Study 2- Praise and Preparation



In this video, Amy displays thorough preparation of the lesson in order to “deal with behaviour at all times.” Set delivers clear instructions, and establishes rules and expectations. She used scaffolding techniques to encourage higher order thinking. Amy understands her students and their needs, thus creating a “comfortable and secure environment” for learning. This is achieved through positive reinforcement , which can all be found in the Neo-Skinnerian model.

Hierarchy for Management Intervention – Levin & Nolan (2005)

Levin & Nolan have scaled intervention strategies into a hierarchy ranging from student-centred actions to teacher-centred actions. Student-centred actions should always be tried first as it causes less disruption and confrontation. Non-verbal methods should also be used more often instead of verbal ones.



3. Supportive Actions

Despite teachers' best efforts, students do sometimes become restive and can start to misbehave (Charles, 2002). What can you do then to assist students who show signs of incipient misbehaviour?

3.1 Jones's Theory: Non-verbal Communication

Jones's theory maintains that teachers can effectively prevent misbehaviour or reduce it significantly through body language (McInerney & McInerney 2002, p. 265). Most misbehaviour is minor, therefore the strategy should be as well (Andrius 2012b).

Advantages of applying nonverbal intervention:

- Less disruption to the learning process
- Less confrontation with the student
- Public intervention avoided, the student is given a chance to correct his behavior without embarrassment

(Levin & Nolan 31)

To minimize intrusion of instructions, teachers should:

- ✓ Enter and move around the classroom with confidence
- ✓ Maintain self-control and dignity
- ✓ Look directly and briefly into the eyes of the student
- ✓ Use facial expressions/gestures to communicate approval/disapproval
- ✓ Utilize physical proximity

(McInerney & McInerney 2002, p. 265)

Effective Body Language

Jones devised a discipline model that focuses on using body language to enforce classroom behaviour rules and its desired expectations. Similarly to Kounin's concept of 'with-it-ness', a teacher's effective body language communicates to the students the teacher's 'presence' (McInerney & McInerney 265), that he is aware, in control and "means business" (Charles 82)

Jones claims that "Good discipline depends mostly- 90%, on effective body language." (Charles 82)

There are five types of effective body language:

- **Body Carriage** – Good, confident posture suggests strong authority and leadership. So stand upright and move around the classroom with energy, because students notice when a teacher is intimidated or disinterested through his lethargic body posture.
- **Eye Contact** – Sweep eyes continually across the room, pause briefly but look directly into the eyes of a student. Even if the student averts the teacher's gaze, he will take note of his own behaviour.
- **Facial Expression** – Much like body carriage, facial expressions reveals a teacher's enthusiasm and confidence, or the opposite – uninterested and resignation. It's also an effective non-verbal reinforcement when used with eye contact:
 - Approval – Smiles, nods
 - Disapproval – Firmed lip line, frowns, slightly shake head

- **Physical Proximity** – “Students near the teacher rarely misbehaved” (82). This is a non-verbal strategy. Move towards the misbehaving student and stand beside him without breaking off from what you were doing (e.g. explaining to the class).
- **Gestures** – Teachers use these to maintain student attention and to display behavior encouragement and discouragement. Gestures are effective even when giving verbal instructions. Some examples are:
 - Stop – Palm out
 - Quiet – Index finger to lips
 - Approval – Thumbs up

(Charles 82-83)

Case Study 3- Attention Seekers



In this video, Jane uses a behavioural strategy called ‘planned ignoring’ (Levin & Nolan 2005, p. 29) in order to show her students that she only pays attention to good behaviour. While she is teaching, she notices a girl who isn’t on task, she utilizes proximity by moving towards her (non-verbal intervention) to show she is aware. When other students were busy, she attends to the student and motivates her.

Glasser’s Triplets

Teacher’s direct students to appropriate behaviour through the use of these three questions:

- i. What are you doing?
- ii. Is it against the rules?
- iii. What should you be doing?

(Levin & Nolan 2003)

*It is important that parents are always fully informed of the rules, procedures of enforcement and consequences that exist in the class, so they can be supportive in the process (Charles, 2002).

Verbal Intervention

Guidelines for applying verbal intervention:

- ✓ Use nonverbal intervention first if possible
- ✓ Be as private as possible – for the students’ confidence and dignity
- ✓ Be as brief as possible – prolonging the verbal intervention disrupts learning and may also lead to further confrontation
- ✓ Address the situation (e.g. label the behaviour as inappropriate) and not the person – because, as Ginott explains, this “allows students to appraise the situation, consider what is right and wrong, and decide how they feel about the situation and themselves” (Charles 50)

(Levin & Nolin 31)

4. Corrective Actions

“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.” (Charles, 2002, p. 237).

Teachers’ behaviour should be genuine at all times, and when they are angered in situations where corrective discipline is required, it is very important for teachers “to learn to express anger, even displeasure, without damaging the students’ character.” (Charles 50)

What can you do to suppress and positively redirect misbehaviour once it occurs?

4.1 Kounin’s Ripple Effect

Kounin coined the term ‘ripple effect’ to describe the positive effects teachers may exert on students. According to Kounin, the effect occurs when a teacher asks a student to stop a distracting or destructive behaviour. This affected all the other students in the class, and promoted better class control.

(Morris 1996)

- ✓ Prevents contagion of undesired behaviour
- ✓ Occurs when teacher corrects one student’s behaviour and everyone follows
- ✓ Allows minor misbehaviours to stop quickly
- ✓ Promote the contagion of desired (on-task) behaviour
- ✓ Provide supportive attention (by praise) to on-task students.
- ✓ Reinforces positive behaviours in other students

Case Study 4- Girl Talk



In this video, Nicola uses two strategies. Like Jane(Case study 3), she uses 'planned ignoring' to show she gives attention to on-task behaviour. In addition, Nicole also adopts Kounin's 'ripple effect' method, whereby she corrects one student's misbehaviour which positively influences the behaviour of surrounding students. This method is shown to effective in this class, as the girls start to help each other through the task.

4.2 Dreikur's Theory: The Four Behaviours

Dreikur's discipline model states that students attempt to gain recognition through different kinds of behaviour, and if they fail to gain recognition through socially acceptable behaviours, they turn to the four sequential motives that lead to misbehaviour. (Edwards, 1993)

1. **Attention Getting** – students ask a substantial amount of irrelevant questions and favours, disrupt class learning, and continually seek help with tasks. (65-66)
 - *Example strategy:* If a student is late to class, the teacher should “calmly point out that the missed work must be made up in the student's own time.” (McInerney & McInerney 266)
2. **Power Seeking** – students express their need for power through arguing, lying and aggression. As soon as the teacher is engaged into a power struggle with the student, the student has achieved his goal. (66)
 - *Example strategy:* If a student pursues an argument, the teacher should keep calm and refrain from arguing back, and tell the student firmly to discuss the matter after class.
3. **Revenge Seeking** – because the student has failed to gain recognition from the previous two motives, he now turns to hurt others in order to be recognized and to feel significant. (66)
 - *Example strategy:* If a student destroys another student's property (e.g. a pen), he is required to apologize and replace it.
4. **Displaying Inadequacy** – failing to attain recognition through the previous motives, the student would label himself as a failure and attempt to gain recognition by being inadequate. (66; McInerney & McInerney 266)
 - *Example strategy:* Students at this stage would “withdraw from any situation that can intensify their feeling of failure,” and instead of giving them constant

attention and help, set them “short-term, achievable goals for which encouragement can be given is preferable” (McInerney & McInerney 266).

(Charles 62-67)

Case Study 5- Too Much Talk



In this video, John is aware that a student is displaying inadequacy. At the start of the lesson he questions the student, and the student doesn't respond. John then asks him to nominate another student to answer. During the lesson, he explains the concept to the student and his friend. At the end of class, he asks the student the same question, and he responds with the correct answer. He praises the student as a result.

4.3 The Choice Theory

This theory should, on most occasions, only be used 'when all else fails' (Levin & Nolan 2005, p. 42).

Try offering students a choice whether or not to use expected behaviour. Be clear about positive consequence if they do and the negative consequence if they don't:

Sue Cowley suggests:

- 'state the behaviour you require'
- 'make clear the positive behaviour of doing as you ask'
- 'make clear the consequence of refusing to comply'
- 'give the student a short time to consider his or her action'
- 'if the student doesn't comply, apply the sanction you have specified'

Sue Cowley (2006) p41

When sanctioning, the nature of the consequence is important. Always prepare a list of logical consequences applicable to different misbehaviours.

Some possible consequences for misbehaviour:

<u>Behaviour</u>	<u>Consequence</u>
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Talking in class	Change seats
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Not doing work Stay behind

Interrupting/disruptive Stand up

Case Study 6- Key Instructions



In this video, Teddy learns the effectiveness of making his expectations and instructions explicit to his students. This case study shows the difference in classroom management and student behaviour before and after the teacher sets the limits. John Bailey also makes a good point that expectations should be made explicit “especially when it’s going good.”

Assertive Discipline Model

4.3 Canter’s Model

Lee Canter’s assertive discipline emphasizes on teachers being assertive with their expectations of students’ behaviours, and on teachers following a “well-organized procedure” for misbehaviour as well as good behaviour. There are five basic steps to Canter’s discipline model:

1. **Recognize and Remove ‘Roadblocks’ to Assertive Discipline**– ‘Roadblocks’ are teachers’ beliefs that limits effective education, such as negative expectations of students, failure to recognize the positive influential role of a teacher, and the belief that they are alone without support.
2. **Practice the use of Assertive Response Styles** –This style is used to maintain the respect and rights of both the student and the teacher. With this method, the teacher’s expectations of the students are made clear, and a relevant consequence will be applied if they fail to comply.

Compare three types of responses:

- Non-assertive: Can you please try to stop doing that. – *passive*
- Hostile: Stop acting like a baby! – *hurt student’s feelings, provoke disrespect*

- Assertive: I want you to stop doing that and finish those problems. – ***protects the rights of both teacher and student***
- 3. Learn to Set Limits** –Teachers need to be explicit with their expectation of students' behaviours. Canter highlights three verbal limit settings:
- ***Requesting appropriate behaviour*** –
 - i. Hints: statements made from time to time reminding student's of teachers expectations
 - ii. (Gordon's) I-messages: telling students how their behaviour is affecting the teacher
 - iii. Questions: hints and commands phrased in an interrogative form
 - ***Delivering the Verbal Limit***–
 - i. Tone of voice: should not be harsh, abusive, sarcastic or intimidating
 - ii. Eye contact: look student straight in the eye
 - iii. Gestures: facial expression and movements accentuate messages
 - iv. Physical touch: a hand lightly placed on shoulder communicates forcefulness and sincerity
 - ***The Broken Record technique*** – using “insistent repetition of the original message” (100) When students refuse to listen, persist in responding inappropriately or refuse to take responsibility of their misbehaviour.
- 4. Learn to Follow Through on Limits** – After explicitly setting limits, take appropriate action when students comply or defy those limits, with a positive or negative consequence respectively.
- 5. Implement a System of Positive Consequence** –
- Personal attention from the teacher- most students respond enthusiastically to such attention.
 - Positive feedback to parents – approving messages help teaches gain the support of parents
 - Material rewards, Home rewards, Group rewards – rewards for good behaviour individually or as a group.

(Charles 94-102)

Conclusion

Achieving a positive learning environment is every teacher's goal. Teachers can adopt an array of behavioural management strategies, as mentioned above, to ensure that learning is maximized throughout their lessons. Every theory serves a different purpose, depending on each individual class; it may or may not be effective. However, teachers have to learn to understand student's needs and apply these theories and strategies to improve teaching methods. Teachers have to keep in mind that we can have a positive influence on students through the way we communicate by preventative, supportive or corrective means.

It is important to remember that:

“Some theories work better than others with children of different ages, children with different personal and social aptitudes, children from different home situations or social environments or ethnic and racial groups, and children involved in different school situations. All these elements create a considerable complexity and, to be properly managed, require a full range of discipline approaches.”(Edwards 2000, p. 34)

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