Effective classroom management techniques - a preventative approach to problem behavior

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# EFFECTIVE CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES -

## A PREVENTIVE APPROACH TO PROBLEM BEHAVIOR

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

THE PROBLEM

Discipline is one of the major problems in many schools. At times it even supercedes the area of curriculum or the teaching of reading. Classroom discipline is a major problem for many contemporary school teachers. In spite of the vast amount of information written on the subject, translation of knowledge has not kept pace with the changing nature of the problem. Today we find that many of the chief violators of classroom rules are students who can not be classified as emotionally disturbed or mentally retarded. They are neither neurotic or psychotic and in most cases, they are not delinquent or criminally inclined. Many of these students do not fit any of the categories listed under exceptional educational needs, as identified by the school's multi-disciplinary team; therefore they are not eligible for psychological counseling or other supportive services which are available within the school setting and are provided for under federal legislation (P.L. 94-142). Quite often, from the teacher's viewpoint, these students are a periodic disruptive force in the learning environment.

It is evident that discipline is of primary concern to parents, teachers, administrators, law enforcers, and just about everyone else who deals with our youth. Former Vice President Spiro Agnew said,

"I would think that restoration of discipline and order ought to be the first priority--even ahead of curriculum--in the schools of this country. It's a
simple fact, 'he added', that unless order is
maintained there can be very little learning
accomplished, no matter how modern or innovative
the teaching techniques may be."

The result is that everyone talks about discipline and sincerely
believes that he/she has all the answers for solving the problem. Somehow,
some people feel that mere verbalization of the problem helps to solve it.
Others feel that the identification of a cause puts an end to all discipline
problems without personal effort. Then, there are those of us who find it
easier to blame someone else for the behavioral problems which exist in
our classrooms.

A principal once said, "Show me a smoothly run
classroom and I'll show you a teacher who is a good
strategist. He continued, when I say smoothly run
I don't mean that the kids are sitting ramrod straight
at their desks, hands folded. That's not being a
teacher or a strategist. Smoothly run, to me, means
that every child is busy at the task of learning and
that the teacher is managing. Strategy is still the
name of the game. It's basic to good classroom
management."

The number of articles, books, speeches, institutes, and workshops
dealing with classroom discipline is indeed sizable; however, those which
have been found to be informative and helpful to the classroom teacher are
still relatively small. While the value of adding yet another article to
the already voluminous supply of educational material may seem debatable,
anything new that might suggest a new philosophy or set of procedures which
eliminates punishment as a method of correcting problem behavior certainly
deserves a hearing.
The purpose of this study is to present in a concise form a review of the literature that demonstrates a preventive approach to problem behavior in classroom situations. The writer hopes to show that there is a direct and cohesive relationship between effective classroom management, and the establishment of the kind of discipline needed to foster positive attitudes for learning. Some ways of dealing with common behavior problems will also be suggested.

No attempt has been made to present an exhaustive, theoretical discussion of the topic of discipline or classroom management techniques. Instead, the major focus is to provide what the writer hopes will be a valuable set of suggestions which might be utilized by the classroom teacher in the prevention or management of disruptive behaviors. The suggestions in this paper were derived from a review of the literature related to discipline. Throughout this paper where the term "discipline" is used, its meaning is synonymous with "classroom management". The writer of this paper was concerned with the literature most recently published unless the material was considered to be particularly significant to the topic development. A justification for this study can be seen in the following statement by Robert DiGiulio.

The vast majority of discipline problems in the classroom are caused directly or indirectly by the teacher. Your ineffective and inappropriate classroom behaviors are the bases of your classroom discipline problems. Teachers are charged with the responsibility of maintaining an educationally stimulating and controlled learning environment. Teachers
are also responsible for both managing classroom discipline and helping students to gain control of their own lives through self-discipline. It helps very much if you are in control of your own actions and behaviors in your role as a classroom teacher.

DEFINITION OF TERMS:

*Discipline or classroom management* - 1) That set of activities by which the teacher promotes appropriate student behavior and eliminates inappropriate behavior, develops good interpersonal relationships and a positive socioemotional climate, and maintains an effective and productive classroom organization. 2) A set of procedures designed to eliminate behaviors that compete with effective learning.

*Control Technique* - Any action that is taken to stop a deviant from misbehaving or to prevent a deviancy from recurring may be called a control technique.

*Multi-disciplinary team* - A team of experts who possess expertise in educational assessing, diagnosing, and programming. The M-Team determines the extent of the exceptional educational need and then decides if the child requires psychological, counseling or other supportive services outside the classroom.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Presently our school system is in a dilemma concerning discipline. One of the reasons for this dilemma is that the majority of people, educators and parents alike, use the term discipline to mean control through punishment. To many it implies physical punishment; to others it implies rigid control of rules and regulations or autocratic authority. Under autocratic authority the students are completely left out of the process of establishing rules and are never consulted concerning the enforcement of these rules.5

At one time or another, most children who attend school will engage in behavior which can be considered disruptive. The important factor in recognizing the child who needs special management is the consistency with which this behavior occurs. A child who constantly breaks the rules throughout the week should be the focal point of special management techniques.6

Teachers often find that many of the discipline problems stem from events which in reality are quite trivial, often ridiculous, and even pathetic at times. While most researchers dwell on the big four reasons for disciplinary problems; the schools, teachers, parents and the youth culture of today, many other reasons are also cited. One reason most often listed is the lack of a clear cut code of student behavior, outlining what is acceptable and what simply is not acceptable in any given classroom situation.7 However, the causes of the breakdown of discipline
in the nation's schools are many and complex, and the causes are often rooted deeply in the problems of contemporary society over which the schools have no control.

There is little doubt that when school work presents a distress-producing encounter, or is too easy, or is of no interest to the child, it can become a potentially disruptive force in the classroom. An important relationship also exists between disruptive classroom behavior and the degree to which children are accepted by their peers. Children who have achieved high social acceptance tend to participate actively in the classroom in a positive manner and to conform well to rules and regulations; whereas, children of low social acceptance tend not to conform to rules and do not participate well. The latter may display disruptive behaviors which seem directed toward gaining the attention of their classmates.

Children who consistently disrupt a class are in many cases, distressed children and their disruptive behaviors represent indirect attempts to communicate this distress to the teachers or to their peers. There is also a definite relationship between school behavior and academic level. Children distressed by the difficulty of school work will often attempt to communicate these feelings through disruptive behaviors.

Certain physical conditions in the learning environment may encourage disruptive behavior. The design and organization of the classroom may also contribute to a variety of these disruptions. Some disruptive students may be imitating behaviors observed at home. It is a fact that home and community are frequently mirrored in school behavior.

Children who fail to learn to read and to achieve academically experience school as a kind of public hell. To a failing child who must cope with a
threatening classroom environment, delinquent behavior often serves as a defense or device to maintain a measure of comfort.

Children caught up in a book dependency system, who have difficulties reading may resort to the following devices: hostility, identification, displacement, projection, or denial. They could withdraw and run away. If they elect to take the hostility route, failing and frustrated students often make the teacher their special hate object. Constant failure breeds frustration and frustration can lead to aggression against self, against others or against property. When children are discouraged they often misbehave, have no respect for order, and learn very little.

The force behind every human action is its goals. We find that there are four possible goals of disturbing and maladjusted behavior in children. The goals are these: attention getting, power, revenge or a display of inadequacy. It may be difficult for many to accept the fact that children who are disruptive and fail to cooperate, to study and to apply themselves are motivated by one or the other of the four goals. Children who may otherwise feel lost and worthless may gain attention by pulling others in their service. These children may believe that a feeling of importance or a feeling of being somebody is gained by proving one's power. This is often accomplished by defying adult pressure, by doing as one pleases, or by hurting others as one feels hurt by them. These children may also display actual or imagined deficiencies in order to be left alone. Children may feel that as long as nothing is demanded of them, the deficiency, stupidity, or inability will not be too noticeable.

Despite its complexities, its frustrations, and its many varied problems, discipline in the classroom is seen as absolutely necessary to develop positive
attitudes toward learning. Discipline is more than keeping a group of children quiet while we speak to them. It is important that teachers find out what is causing children to behave in an unacceptable manner.\textsuperscript{14} It may be that they do not understand what is going on in the learning environment or they may be ahead of the other members of the class and may be bored.\textsuperscript{15}

Maintaining discipline is, however, a part of the educational process. Too often discipline is thought of as an either or proposition, either the children rule the class or they have to obey instantly. The teaching of discipline is a continuous process, not something to turn to merely in times of stress or misbehavior.\textsuperscript{16}

Discipline does not have to take the form of punishment. Punishment is what some people use when training fails, or in the place of training. Punishment here does not necessarily mean corporal punishment.\textsuperscript{17}

We can avoid the development of problem behavior by practicing preventive discipline. This requires a growing, or at least a continuing ability on the part of the teacher to recognize promptly the signs that may indicate that problems exist. When such signs appear, a teacher should investigate the cause and start corrective measures.\textsuperscript{18} Perhaps we should look for alternatives for preventing problem behavior rather than seeking specific solutions as a means for solving the problem.

There is no one answer on how to best (sic) tackle the problem of discipline or the lack of it in the nation's schools. There are many effective approaches a classroom teacher can take. Although these approaches do not constitute the ultimate answers to the problem, they can form a blueprint, a charter course to better days ahead.\textsuperscript{19}
Much of the inappropriate classroom behavior can be changed when a teacher has the confidence to initiate specific classroom strategies. The most effective means of dealing with disruptive students is prevention. The classroom teacher must identify and reduce, or eliminate those elements in the class that contribute to unacceptable student behavior, and must strive to create a positive climate for learning. Force may be necessary to regain control in classes which are hostile and in which violence is prevalent, but it is counterproductive in most cases. In addition to "personalizing" discipline, the following will contribute to the reduction of disruptive student behavior:

1. Building a positive classroom climate.
2. Implementing strategies which enable students to succeed.
3. Teaching children how to behave by modeling appropriate behaviors.
4. Developing open and honest communication.
5. Modeling and teaching interpersonal relationships.
ESTABLISHING ONESELF AS AN EFFECTIVE TEACHER

Discipline is one of the most serious problems a teacher faces. Teachers must begin their understanding and implementation of discipline with themselves. Teachers must establish a professional philosophy of preparation, respect, and dedication. Educators generally agree that what works for one teacher may not work for another. They also agree, however, that certain guidelines must be followed by all teachers if they are to effect positive discipline in the classroom.22

Some of the things "effective" teachers do often eludes the untrained observer. Their classes are always orderly. Some of what these teachers do comes from experience, knowing some of the probable responses children will make to differing expectations, activities, and seasons. These "good" teachers are sensitive observers, flexible in their responses, and possess a repertoire of behaviors which mix, match and meet the infinite variety of personalities in their classrooms. "The 'good' teacher represents the application of good theory which is important for establishing positive attitudes toward discipline."23

Achieving discipline and creating a climate for learning in the classroom is the direct result of the image that you, as a teacher, have of yourself and your perception of your role as a teacher. These concepts govern the manner in which you function. The role of the teacher will not be identical for every teacher. The primary function of a teacher is to transmit knowledge to students, to impart skills, and to help students learn to solve problems.24

We all know highly successful teachers who, were one to visit their classrooms, would never appear to be working hard but their children are. These teachers often give the impression that they are relaxed and enjoying
themselves. This is possible because they have established the climate for teaching and learning. Teachers may achieve this control through a number of strategies but, primarily, it is achieved by being in control.25

In your role as a teacher, you need to be flexible. Teachers must assume the responsibility for creating a climate for learning if they are to be successful teachers.26 The teachers who will succeed in the classroom are those who have an integrated personality, have chosen their professional careers carefully, and are aware of its problems as well as its rewards. These individuals will not interpret misbehavior as a personal affront but know how to handle it with calm, deliberate action.27

Skilled teachers will be as effective in minimizing inappropriate behavior as in maximizing the frequency of appropriate behavior. Even though many have cautioned teachers against the use of punishment to control undesirable behavior, fewer have suggested alternatives.28

Teachers have considerable and differential impact on the extent to which students find classroom life a pleasant, acceptable or an uncomfortable experience. Kounin's research (1970) suggested that the teachers who are most successful in managing their classrooms are more alert in monitoring the classroom and remaining aware of what is going on at all times.29

Teachers do change students' behavior. It may sound very blunt to come right out and say that teachers change students' behavior, but it is sometimes helpful to stress the obvious. A teacher, like a parent is given a limited amount of time to teach a child. A teacher may have 180 days of a school year to change a non-reader into a beginning reader or a one column adder into a two column adder, but without doubt, there is suppose to be some change in the way a student can behave at the end of each school year. One
becomes accustomed to thinking of teaching as a process that develops understanding, improves motivation, promotes creativity, generates insights, and fosters appreciation. All of these sound like commendable objectives, but each is merely a label which stands for a way in which a child behaves.  

It is essential to establish oneself as an effective teacher in order to be an effective disciplinarian. Teaching and learning must be linked so that good learning indicates good teaching and bad learning indicates bad teaching. Effective teaching can best occur when students are engaged in a large number of different behaviors. If teachers are to achieve the greatest effectiveness, they must become involved and aware of what is going on around them. Lines of communication must be kept open and viable so that student concerns and problems can be easily identified and readily discussed before problem behaviors develop. Effective teachers are confident and experience success in a profession that they find rewarding. These persons will have developed an awareness of their personal relationships to teaching as a profession.

Four characteristics of effective teachers which are considered important are (these): understanding of oneself, sensitivity to the needs of students, a good knowledge of the subjects taught and the ability to establish a healthy classroom climate. The discovery of oneself is an important characteristic because to know oneself a person needs to see clearly his/her strengths and limitations as a basis for improving one's competencies and for capitalizing upon one's assets. As teachers are able to do this, they become increasingly more mature.

Teachers must have a healthy attitude about themselves and their basic needs. This understanding will allow them to reach levels of attainment and
satisfaction. It is essential to have a sensitivity to students and a knowledge of the developmental stages of their growth. Teachers should get to know the students early in the school year and be able to associate the names with the faces of these students if they wish to influence them. Convincing students that you know them individually can also be an aid in classroom control. Teachers must like working with students and must take seriously the task of helping them to grow in self understanding. As teachers become carried away with helping children grow, they themselves will grow in understanding. Discipline and learning can be facilitated when teachers recognize and act upon the theory that pupils want to learn, grow, and become. One must also recognize and accept the uniqueness of each child's learning process, pace, and style, only then will learning take place.

Artistry in teaching is necessary for establishing student motivation and this involves knowing one's subject area. This means that a person must continue to learn more about the subject area each year. Teachers must also like what they are teaching. The two are connected. An effective teacher must have a command of the subject matter. He/she has planned, organized materials, and has developed teaching techniques or teaching strategies to communicate this specialized knowledge with an effectiveness that provides meaning to students.

Teachers must each develop a teaching style that is uniquely their own. The style of teaching will determine the classroom climate. What one does in teaching must be discriminating, unique, original, and must take into account the learning styles of the students.

Teachers who are sensitive to children as personalities will place little stock in direct teaching. It is worth the effort to make adjustments for
individuals when you contemplate the possibilities for the unique growth of personality and the distinctive social development. An understanding of each student as a unique individual deserving of respect is essential. It is important to let students know from the beginning just what is expected of them. This should include the basis on which grades will be assigned, procedures for making up work, rules, and pet peeves. It is also an aid in classroom management.

They are wise teachers who will occasionally change their approach or occasionally abandon a planned lesson and follow a student's interest or concern. The ability to individualize is also important since all students do not learn at the same rate or in the same style. To do this persons must be able to vary their teaching strategies and techniques.

One can not teach without love and understanding, without communication and respect, and one can not have these without the ability to control one's class. The successful teacher has a love for people as a group or as individuals. When teachers can truthfully say to a student, "I care about you as a person but I don't approve of what you did," then they are communicating with this child on a most important level. Deep down all children want to be liked or loved. Love is different things to different people - a smile, a pat on the back, or a wink. It is a sign of approval - such as the gold star, the words, "I am proud of you," or the comment "very good" you make when a child answers a question. The need for acceptance and love is great and students really need it desperately.

Teachers, today, can not afford to be autocratic authoritarians. However, teachers must have control over what is going on in the classroom. They are responsible for teaching children and this can not be done when children are
not paying attention or when the resulting climate is chaotic. Teachers can gain this control through a number of devices, but primarily through being in control. They cannot be a "buddy", a "pal", a member of the group or a peer of the children. Teachers may be their friend and their confidante, and share experiences with them. However if students don't feel that teachers are in control, these teachers can rarely, if ever, be effective. If teachers cannot assume the responsibility for establishing a positive learning environment, they cannot be successful teachers.

Students cannot reach their potential when discipline is absent. A class must function as a group, and every group needs to have a leader. The leader ought to be the teacher because teachers have been trained for this task. They must know methods and techniques and need to have an understanding, and a feeling of empathy for children. They should be able to work with students rather than on them and should also be able to control them.

Teachers who really believe that children and learning are important tend to be enthusiastic, and that enthusiasm is catching. Be as courteous with your students as you want them to be with you. Also, "don't see everything" that happens, learn to ignore some things and laugh at others.

Make education interesting and relevant to children's lives. Teachers who believe they can get by without planning may be losing control. The lack of planning may produce dreary lessons, student restlessness, increasing unhappiness and eventually chaos. The largest number of classroom problems occur because the curriculum is dull and the teachers have planned poorly.

Threats should never be used in an effort to enforce discipline. Threats that are not carried out make teachers look ridiculous. For example, if a
teacher threatens to read aloud any notes confiscated, he/she may find himself/herself in a confrontation with a determined student who won't give up the note or he/she may look ridiculous when the note proves to be a deliberate plant.\textsuperscript{42}

Teachers should be fair, firm and friendly. Most children have a keen sense of fair play. A child who does something wrong expects to be punished, however, a teacher should not play favorites or punish the whole class for the misbehavior of a few students (group detention). Teachers should be unquestionably fair and courteous, especially if they want the same respect. Teachers who make remarks which are flippant, arrogant or sarcastic can expect to be treated in the same manner. These teachers are not in a position to resent their student's attitudes.\textsuperscript{43}

A good relationship between teacher and child calls for mutual respect and confidence. Children who are treated with dignity and friendliness, consistently respond sooner or later and accept order and cooperation, which is necessary for any social existence. Be warm and kind and show children that you have their best interest at heart. A genuine interest in the well being of your students will help them respect you and help them to have confidence in you as a teacher. Children can sense the warmth and real concern of a genuinely interested teacher.\textsuperscript{44}

The art of listening should not be taken lightly because this is how teachers interpret what people, especially their students are trying to tell them. Unfortunately most teachers feel that they are listening when they are only hearing the words. Listening involves understanding from the speakers point of view, a detail often missed by even good teachers. Teaching involves the interaction of human beings and good teachers learn from what they hear as well as from what they see.\textsuperscript{45}
Teachers should be mindful of the rights of students. They should accept input and constructive criticism from students and be willing to admit when they are wrong, make a mistake, or simply don't know the answer to a question. Teachers should be willing to relax with and enjoy students. Teachers must also be willing to instill a sense of worth and success in each student by being aware of each student's needs and by providing each student with attainable goals.  

The student's favorite teacher is often the one whose class is structured, the one who feels comfortable and unthreatened, and the one who can relax with the students. The favorite teacher is warm and interested in the children but in no way will he/she permit these students to waste their time or his/hers. This teacher has something of value to give them, and he/she presents it in an acceptable fashion as possible. This is where dramatic ability comes into play. The teacher knows he/she is adequate in this task and because of this adequacy he/she becomes creative and innovative.  

Since many of the problems of discipline are actually responses to inadvertent teacher behavior, conscientious teachers will examine their day to day habits with care to make certain that what they call student misbehavior is not really their fault. They must try to understand the behavior games they and the students play.  

College bound students across the nation concur that their "best" teachers were those who were "demanding and caring" and their "worst" teachers were those who were either soft on discipline or soft on grades. The best teachers were those who worked the students the hardest. Most students said discipline is desirable and that order in the classroom is necessary if they are to have the opportunity to learn.
When it comes to choosing and using a classroom management system - behavior modification, Glasser's reality therapy, transactional analysis, Adlerian psychology or teacher effectiveness training - to name a few - teachers are confronted with a bewildering diversity of procedures, philosophies and jargon. But almost all managerial systems share basic ideas and techniques. Identifying these "basics" and tailoring them to one's own teaching style and student needs can help one arrive at one's own "best" system.  

Although there are differences of opinion concerning classroom control and methods for achieving it, all teachers will agree that a pleasant, well disciplined classroom atmosphere results in more effective learning for all. Effective teachers realize that to a very large extent they themselves create the climate in their classrooms. But even a good teacher may play classroom games that lead to boredom and disinterest, and result in behavior problems.  

The game of ambiguous rules, for example, is a common cause of classroom disturbances. Teachers and pupils learn the rules and then spend hours playing the game with repeated student testing to make the rules specific. Uncritical enforcement of traditional rules is another cause of classroom misbehavior. Too often teachers perpetrate rules without knowing why they do so, what purpose the rules serve, or what the total effect of the rules are on either the class as a whole or an individual student. Among the most common classroom "games" are the teachers' attitudes and behavior. Children behave much like the adults around them. While it is flattering to have a student imitate them, teachers must realize that anything they do before children, for good or bad, remains with them longer than most adults realize.  

Although teachers may recognize the pupil's imitations of their virtues, it is much more difficult to recognize faults secondhand, and they may be using
a teaching technique which has become a disciplinary pitfall and the cause of problem after problem. Flippant remarks, sarcasm, and unfriendly looks are often unconsciously used in teaching. Truly objective teachers will notice antagonistic or belligerent pupil feedback, but many teachers fail to recognize it. When teachers believe they are right, it is hard to hear or see contradictory evidence.53

Teachers should realize that the life goals of children and of adults are usually different and that children of different ages have different goals. Students' actions should be evaluated in terms of the individual or group goal being sought at the time. Students will select from their different behavior patterns, the actions they believe will help them to achieve personal goals and then behave accordingly. Teachers who learn to adjust their thinking to what is appropriate student behavior in terms of the children's ages and goals will seldom need to apply external controls. Failure to see this viewpoint means that the teachers will be out of step with their classes most of the time and may experience many disciplinary situations.54

Some problems develop from the way teachers implement their teaching. Classwork that is too advanced, too verbal, or in a poorly planned sequence will create difficult situations for both the teachers and the students. Behavior standards that are too high or too low, or a classroom that has too much or too little organization may result in boredom or fatigue. An important factor affecting the environment of every classroom today is the increased emphasis placed on education. Students are expected to read more, study more, write more, and learn more. The problems posed by this pressure are creating anxiety and additional indirect disciplinary pressures within the classroom.
It takes conscious effort and constant readjustment for even experienced teachers to match their teaching to student needs, abilities, interests, and time.55

Many problems of discipline are actually responses to inadvertent teacher behavior. Difficult as self-assessment always is, conscientious teachers will examine their day-to-day habits with care to make certain that what is called student misbehavior isn't really their fault. They must also understand the behavior games teachers and students play.56

Classroom management is that technique or method which teachers develop within the framework of existing school rules, to provide the proper learning climate for students. Classroom management is a very individual matter. Teachers must decide on the conditions under which they can function and those conditions under which the students learn most effectively. For some teachers, a quiet classroom symbolizes the education process. Others encourage student interaction and accept the ensuing noise as being an integral part of learning process.57 Yet in spite of the individual nature of classroom control, most teachers seek some form of guidance. This is understandable. Classroom control is probably the largest single cause of teacher and pupil frustration. The entire procedure would be greatly simplified if control could be divided into lists of specific "Do's and Don't's" which could be committed to memory and then used as needed. However, the achievement of an effective climate for learning often goes beyond a simple listing of mechanical tasks into more complex areas. At the same time, there are some general rules concerning control which can be discussed and upon which agreement can be reached.58

Students bring into each classroom a wide range of problems from outside sources, their homes, peer groups, and from previous classrooms. None of these problems may be directly related to the particular teacher or class in which the
student is seated at that moment. Yet, if they remain uppermost in the students mind, or if they are aggravated by the teacher's actions, an open problem may develop within the classroom.59

The following list of basics is derived from several current management systems, all of which question one of the oldest systems, corporal punishment. Paddling, however, is still the "treatment of choice" in many schools. Quick and often temporarily effective, it is "doing something" about a problem. Corporal punishment also provides the teacher or principal with the feeling that "I am in charge and I do have everything under control".60

In arguing against the use of physical punishment, most of the newer management systems raise a number of questions. Is it ethically right to hurt a child to stop a particular behavior? Does the use of physical punishment cause the child to use similiar procedures in dealing with his or her own problems? The recent systems offer alternatives to the use of physical punishment, ideas to consider if you want to help your students take on active responsible roles in your classroom.61

Good discipline is more than rewards and punishment; it is a progress toward mutually established and worthwhile goals. A good disciplinarian is a leader who investigates and directs action toward these goals without dependence on rewards or punishment but with an awareness of what to teach and how to teach it.62

It is the responsibility of the teachers to set the proper tone in the classroom, which should be one where pupils, by virtue of the climate, are encouraged to assume appropriate demeanor and to work. To build a healthy classroom environment, however, teachers must have due regard for the essential directives.
Some discipline problems, hopefully minor ones, come up in every classroom. But minor ones are not likely to become major ones if teachers remember the following guidelines:

1) BE INVOLVED

Involvement - recognizing and treating all of your students humanly, or with proper regard by sharing mutual feelings, beliefs, frustrations and expectations is a prerequisite to any type of management system. Establishment of a good relationship between teacher and child calls for mutual respect and confidence. Children who are treated with dignity and friendliness, consistently, respond sooner or later, and accept order and cooperation, which is necessary for any social existence. One can and must establish mutual respect and confidence. Let students know you care. Caring means determining, preferably with the class, what is acceptable, and what is not, both in terms of behavior and achievement, continually keeping in mind that all children differ and that what is reasonable and acceptable with one group may not be with another. Caring means that you are interested in what your students have to say even though it may not pertain directly to the lesson and that you must forego doing all the talking. Teachers must learn to care and become friends with the children with whom they work, letting them know that they are liked as individuals, that we do feel that their humanity is of primary importance, and that we want to work with them to help all of us grow toward our maximum potential as human beings. Say "good morning" to the child who was a holy terror the day before; know when to say something and when not to say anything; spend about as much time listening as talking.

2) ESTABLISH RULES

Setting limits with children is a form of training in discipline. Training children in the everyday routine of living is basic. Discipline in this sense
means teaching the child that there are certain rules in life that people live by and one can expect that the child will become accustomed to these rules and adopt them for his own. Setting clear ground rules is one of the first steps in managing a classroom efficiently. Most sociologists agree that almost any group must set its own rules in order to be productive. Teachers and students are not exceptions. The rules for establishing classroom rules are:

• Limit the number of rules. Five or six are usually sufficient.
• State rules in very specific language that your students will understand.
• The rules for classroom behavior, arrived at through the cooperative efforts of the class not only gives the children an opportunity to increase their understanding of some of these laws of our society, but they also help build respect and obedience for them. Solicit student ideas and opinions and use them.
• Once rules are fairly conceived and established, they should be enforced with as much consistency as possible. Determine ahead of time the consequences of breaking and not breaking the rules.
• Design the rules to enhance and further student learning.
• Make sure rules are printed, posted within sight, and a copy distributed to all students concerned.
• Examine rules carefully from time to time and eliminate those that are unnecessary.

3) INVOLVE STUDENTS IN DECISION MAKING

When students have a say in decisions regarding class activities or procedures, the chances of those decisions being successfully implemented are increased. In other words, the teacher who knows where his or her students are "coming from" will have a much better idea of where he or she is "going."

Group discussion sessions - referred to in most management systems as class meetings, rap sessions or class councils - provide an excellent format for obtaining student reactions and recommendations. All the systems emphasize
the role of the teacher as a guide, moderator and arbitrator, and they usually offer specific guidelines.

However, since you have the responsibility for the classroom, you must make the ultimate decisions on rules, procedures and activities. When you must make decisions that your students object to or don't understand, explain your reasons to them.68

4) **BE CONSISTENT**

Dealing with student behavior in a consistent way has a high priority in all current management systems. The importance of children knowing what they are expected to do and the consequences of their behavior cannot be over-emphasized. Rules and the necessary enforcement procedures must be realistic to the students and to the classroom situation. They must be enforced in the same way for all students - the best student in the class as well as the constant trouble-maker. Children expect consistent treatment from a teacher. They recognize the importance of rules and expect to be punished when they break a rule openly and with no reasonable excuse.69 Teachers have to start the year by helping the students they work with learn what is expected of them each day. By doing the same thing every day at the same time, by having each child's desk or home base in the same place everyday, and by reacting to each child in a consistent, predictable manner day in and day out, the children soon learn what is expected of them by actually performing the behavior in an appropriate way.70

5) **RECOGNIZE APPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR**

"Positive reinforcement", "encouragement", "strokes" and "warm fuzzies" are terms from different management approaches that apply to a common idea: Acceptable student behavior should be recognized. Although exact techniques may differ, each system stresses the importance of "something good" happening to the student for his or her performance in a particular area. The most common
form of recognition is praise. Regardless of the exact technique you use, the mandate to "catch the child being good" is a basic tenet. The students should be receiving positive reinforcement such as praise, tokens, free time or whatever the class has chosen, in some consistent pattern when they do what the teacher expects of them. This includes completing work, following directions, working quietly or cooperating with others. Along with this, teachers must make sure they are giving each child plenty of attention so that the individual can get the needed help with work, thus preventing frustration and permitting each child to gain a feeling of self-importance. Work should certainly be provided which enables each child to meet a very high rate of success. We can increase every child's sense of worth if we appreciate his effort or opinion and avoid putting him down. To offer this encouragement requires constant observation of the pupil's reactions. We should recognize the perfect worker occasionally. The remarks "well done" or "keep up the good work" are adequate.

6) **IGNORE INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR**

Often your immediate reaction to a classroom disruption is to do something. Many students misbehave just to get that attention from you, and their "I'll get to you" game can be difficult to handle. Management system designers tend to emphasize the importance of not getting involved in this type of power struggle. Instead, they recommend continuing regular classroom activities combined with consistently ignoring the disruptive behavior, of course, potentially dangerous situations cannot be ignored. However, typically attention getting behavior may best be handled by not handling it at all. For instance, the child may start a temper tantrum or start shouting obscenities. The teacher can first of all withdraw her attention from the person displaying the negative
behavior, while reinforcing positive behavior on the part of the remaining children. An example would be, "Joe, I like the way you went right ahead with your work even though the noise Sandra is making must be very disturbing to you." The teacher can be alert and give special praise to those who would normally react to such an outburst. If the outburst is such that it simply can not be tolerated by the class and the teacher, the child should be informed of what will happen next if the behavior doesn't stop. One must make sure, however, that the consequence is reasonable and enforceable. Then if the behavior continues the stated action should be carried out in a matter of fact way. 74 In applying logical consequences to misbehavior, do not threaten, coax, or talk too much. We want to convey to children that they are able to take care of their problems, not that they must do what we decide. We should not assume responsibilities for children nor should we take the consequences for their actions. We have no right to impose our wills on children. However, we have an obligation not to give in to children's undue demands. We can no longer force proper behavior; we can only stimulate appropriate behavior. 75

7) CALL A TIME OUT

At one time or another, most teachers have probably asked a disruptive student to stand in a corner, sit outside the classroom, go to the principal's office or go home. The idea of time-out is not a new one, but most management systems offer basic suggestions on how to use them most efficiently:

* Make sure the student clearly understands why he or she is being removed from the classroom.

* Establish a specific amount of time for the time-out. Sometimes it can be too long to be effective. Ten minutes outside the room may be better than 30 minutes; a one day suspension can have a greater impact than a three day one. As stated before, the consistency with which you use this technique is more important than the time you allot.
Use time-outs as only one part of a total classroom management approach that emphasizes positive and responsible student behavior. You might remove the child from the classroom community to a private spot where the child can continue to work and receive reinforcement if he/she starts to behave appropriately. If, however, the unacceptable behavior continues, next is a set of consequences which might be a time-out room which is a place or room without stimuli, with nothing for the child to do but sit. Again children should be informed before actually being placed there, that they may return to the classroom when they are ready to perform in an acceptable manner. This gives children another opportunity to make a choice about how they are going to behave. If children begin to work, they should receive immediate reinforcement, but if they choose to continue the obnoxious behavior, they might be isolated. When children change a behavior so that it is appropriate once again, they should be accepted back into the classroom community with no grudges held over on the part of the teacher.

8) **MAINTAIN A CHEERFUL CLASSROOM**

Maintain a cheerful and attractive classroom rather than a disorderly one which might encourage unruly behavior. All teachers should insist upon at lease minimum classroom cleanliness and comfort for themselves and their students. If physical surroundings are below acceptable standards, then it is unrealistic to expect appropriate behavior or adequate teaching and learning to take place. Classroom lighting, temperature level, sanitation, and furniture condition and organization must meet minimum standards. Keeping a room attractive can also offer excellent opportunities to teach students social responsibility and self-discipline. The teacher who cares enough to bring in bright bulletin board materials will soon find his efforts rewarded and reciprocated when
students respond and bring in something which they feel would improve their room. Not only is the physical appearance of the room highlighted but the emotional learning climate is also strengthened. 78

A businesslike classroom need not be a humorless one. Keep your sense of humor at all times and tell a funny story now and then when the room is tension filled. Show you are human. Also, remember that a pleasant voice, a neat appearance, and a positive attitude are contagious.

9) ANNOUNCE EXPECTATIONS

It is important to let children know at the beginning of the year how the classroom will function. Let children know what is acceptable and unacceptable classroom behavior. Let them know what is expected of them and what they can expect of you. During the first class session, let your students know what is required of them in class, what is to be accomplished, and in general how the class will be conducted. This will help relieve the anxiety of pupils. Teachers should not keep secret the operation of their class. 79 To students nothing is more frustrating than trying to guess what the teacher expects them to accomplish or how they are to behave. Far too often, teachers operate under the false assumption that students know what is expected of them. This is rarely the case unless they are told. Teacher demands differ widely from class to class. Students are entitled to know all of the requirements of the course and their individual responsibilities as members of the class. Naturally, this should include the basis on which grades will eventually be assigned, procedures for making up work when absent, rules regarding tardiness, and any behavioral taboos in the classroom. Students want to know the rules and regulations under which they will function. Unless the children have a sixth sense or highly developed ESP, it is grossly unfair to expect them to know without
having ever been told what is required of them. If you expect children to behave in an adult manner and to do their work conscientiously, they will. If, on the other hand, you expect or will expect negative results, you will get these too. However, be sure your children know exactly and specifically what it is you expect of them. Many teachers are shocked by the poor quality of work and behavior they receive from their classes. If children are aware of exactly what type of work you anticipate they will most often do it. Be sure however, that they are capable of handling the work assigned, and that they are reasonably interested in it.

The same principle works in regard to pupil behavior. If children are told, "you're bad," they will be disruptive, to prove what is said is true - if on the other hand, they are told, "I know you're trying, but I am sure you can do better", they have your expectations to work up to.

10) ESTABLISH ROUTINES

You may have set up your routines, your system of doing things, long before you meet your class. You may decide on a number of routines in advance, and work out some of them in your class. You may, however, choose to work out all of the routines with your class, based on the philosophy that any rules or regulations made by those upon whom they are to be imposed will be more effective than if dictated by others. It is best to institute rules at the beginning of the year but it is never too late. If you are having difficulty in the middle of the term, institute the routines immediately. This should help alleviate the problem. Some procedures which should be routinized are:

- **Entry** - children should be told exactly how to enter the classroom in the morning. They should be told whether they hang up their coats first or sit down. Are they allowed to talk during opening activities?
- **Some times**? Sometimes conversation should be allowed until a specific hour
at which time conversation ceases because it gives the children
the opportunity to say what is important to them at that time.
After this time children are ready to settle down to work.

• Hanging up clothing - Designate a specific place for each
child's coat.

• Seating - Assign a permanent seat and be sure that it is
accepted as permanent. It is worthwhile to change seats every ten
weeks, putting those children up front who were in the back and vice-versa.

• Determine as many actions as possible that can be routinized, thus stress
the method decided upon. This can not be carried too far. Giving out materials,
collecting them, getting in line, leaving the room, and firedrills are a few.

• Have work on hand for the children to do at all times. This is fundamental
to establishing a climate for learning. The writer is not talking about "busy
work." The latter is deadly. Work assigned should have value, and be the kind
which children will find interesting. For example, children love to "unscramble words." Give them a list of spelling words, and have them figure out what
the words are. Children will not sit still or quiet if they have nothing to
do. They need, indeed crave, intellectual stimulation. A book shelf with
magazines and books can supply this stimulation when they have finished the
assigned work - or before the day's work has begun. If children don't have
anything to occupy them, don't expect for them to behave for long periods of
time. 83

11) MAKE EDUCATION INTERESTING

Finally, make education interesting and relevant to children's lives. The
teachers who believe they can get by without planning may get away with it
temporarily, but before long this lack of organization and imagination will
produce dreary lessons, student restiveness, increasing discontent, and ultimate chaos. The largest number of classroom offenses occur because the curriculum is dull and teachers have planned poorly. 

12) HANDLE NORMAL MISBEHAVIOR YOURSELF

Expect to handle the normal kinds of misbehavior yourself, but seek assistance for those problems that need the skills of a specialist.

BASIC TECHNIQUES FOR WORKING WITH PROBLEM STUDENTS

Most children can be reached and if you have a number of methods at your disposal, you will be able to reach them. These techniques are not tricks or gimmicks, but procedures based on sound psychological principles. Many are obvious and yet we know from experience that they are not utilized by some teachers. But following a method is not enough. You must be humanely interested in your students.

Teaching is a profession which must be based on love, for without it, our efforts are worth nothing. In dealing with troubled youth, one who annoys or harasses you or others, one who is hostile and aggressive, one who takes up an inordinate amount of time and attention, it is essential that you love that child, and that you try the following methods basing them always on love.

Developing rapport with problem students is essential. When mentioned, "rapport" refers to a close, sympathetic relationship which a teacher should seek to develop with each of the pupils. When there are troublesome (and troubled) children in a class, establishing rapport with them is one of the most important methods for helping them to improve, and to achieve self-control. This rapport or closeness can be developed in the following manner. Arrange to sit down and talk to, and more important, listen to this child, not while the
rest of the class is working, but at a time when they are not around. Perhaps you can meet with the child during an unassigned period. This is absolutely the most effective method for reaching troubled children. They are aware of the fact that you are giving of your free time to talk to them. Don't arrange this immediately after children have misbehaved because they will feel they are being rewarded for bad behavior. Do it, rather, between incidents. When you have set up the situation, you can open the interview by saying gently, "We seem to be having our ups and downs, don't we?" "Why can't we get along?" "What can we do to improve things?"86

Sometimes children will open up and talk to you. Other times they may not. But it is important to keep trying. Give the students time to think and answer between questions. You might ask the child, "Is there something bothering you?" Again, maybe they will tell you, but possibly they will not. You may continue, saying to them "I can't understand it. I like you. We're both here to work. You are here to work, aren't you?" Always give children an out, a way to gracefully back away from the situation. Show them you are not angry at them, but perplexed. "You are, you tell her/him an intelligent child. Is there anything you are having trouble learning?" Perhaps you can help him/her with it. "Is there something bothering you? Is there something wrong at home?" By asking questions casually, by showing the children you really want to help them, by convincing them that you care about them, you can usually win over the most hostile children. Children usually react favorably to this kind of treatment. Their attitudes do change. It is human nature to be favorably disposed to teachers, who profess to love you, and who behave as if they do. Try to get the children to promise that they will try to cooperate.
To further achieve rapport, encourage the children to be warm and friendly with one another, to help their classmates whenever possible. To encourage the children to learn and to help them learn will not only foster the development of intellectual pride, but may also defeat animosities, preclude quarrels and make for harmonious relationships.

The children's birthdays might be remembered. A birthday song, a gift, a little party, all these expressions of good will will do much to create a family spirit, drawing the children and the teacher together in thoughtful appreciation and enjoyment of one another.

Children can be encouraged to listen sympathetically to each other's problems, and whenever necessary to enlist the help of the teacher in solving these problems.

Troublemaking children need special attention. First thing in the morning greet them with a compliment about something which they have done right. No act is too small to mention.

If you see a child in a bad mood coming through the door, immediately assign the child a special responsibility: making books, passing papers, posting a bulletin or running an errand. This will help the child get into the swing of the school day and to leave any worries at the door.

If you have a hard to reach child, ask him/her to have lunch with you in the classroom. Make it one day a week for several weeks. While conversing, work on developing friendship. Don't try for an attitude change, or to convert the child to what you regard as the good life.

Assure everyone at the beginning of the school year that they can pass. Show and tell them that you do care and that because you care, you'll insist that each child do a certain amount of work. Eliminate all general threats of failing.
When you need the class' attention, call out, "Freeze!" Everyone stops what they are doing as if they were hit by a gun ray. Say what you have to say, and then command, "Relax," to get the students back to their previous activities.

Return at least one set of graded papers daily since youngsters turn in their work daily. Show them, that you're doing your part. Collect papers again and save them for a weekly work folder which can be sent home on Friday.

Stand close to noisy children and whisper when you correct them for loud talking. Tell them that they are to use the same volume you are using. A teacher who stands across the room and calls, "Be quiet", adds considerably to the noise level and simultaneously sets a bad example.

These are only a few suggestions for working with problem children. It is important to treat all children as individuals worthy of respect and to separate the person or child from the misbehavior. Tell the child, "I like you as a person, but I do not like what you have done." Reassure the child that you care about him/her and talk about the misbehavior and possible acceptable alternatives to current unacceptable behavior patterns.
CHAPTER III

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Positive attitudes toward discipline can be achieved through effective classroom management techniques. Classroom management is that technique or method which is developed within the framework of existing school rules to provide the proper learning climate for students. Teachers must decide those conditions under which they can function and their students, learn most effectively. For some, a quiet classroom denotes that learning is going on. Others encourage student interaction and accept the ensuing noise as being an important part of the learning process! Educators who will succeed are those who have an understanding of self, a sensitivity to the needs of students, a good knowledge of the subjects taught, and the ability to establish a healthy classroom climate. The failure on the part of teachers to set realistic goals for their students and to plan effectively also invites disorder in the classroom. Teachers must further recognize their responsibilities concerning the physical environment of their classrooms. The room ought to be a cheerful, comfortable place in which to teach and learn.

Failure to recognize the dignity and worth of each student can quickly cause serious discontent among them. Successful teaching under such conditions becomes extremely impossible. Furthermore, teachers who fail to advise students of the rules and their responsibilities in class, are asking for trouble. Frustrated students are likely to strike back against the source of their frustration. It is important that teachers do not become disturbing factors
that trigger unacceptable behavior from their students. Anxious teachers who try to enforce each and every rule, whether personal or school regulation, will soon discover that such efforts may alienate students. Teachers must develop those behavioral and academic requirements which they feel are necessary for the teaching-learning climate of their classes. Educators should feel secure enough to enlist the aid of an administrator or parent when a problem arises that they cannot solve. Professional teachers do not hesitate to involve anyone necessary to discover solutions to problems.

Course goals are determined by teachers and students at the beginning of the school year. Thus, by attempting to involve students in the work of the class, teachers will have fewer and less serious discipline problems. As mature adults, able to recognize their strengths and accept their shortcomings, teachers can empathize with their students and maintain an appropriate emotional climate in their classrooms.

Sensitive teachers like their students. Though it is not possible to like every student equally, successful teachers convey their intent to do so. Enthusiasm for the subject taught is another characteristic of caring teachers. Those who are enthusiastic transmit a sense of vitality about their subject to the students.

Another ingredient for reducing behavioral problems in the classroom is teacher empathy. Sensitivity to students can strengthen rapport between teachers and students and can further reduce the possibility of discipline problems. If teachers are to achieve maximum effectiveness, it is necessary that they become involved in and aware of what is going on around them. Lines of communication between teachers, administrators, and parents must be kept open so that student interest, concerns, and problems can be easily
identified and readily discussed before a crisis develops.

Teachers who make no effort to aid students in recognizing the need for self-discipline may find themselves locked in a struggle for control of the class. Through careful selection of the appropriate action options, the proper degree of understanding and the right amount of humor, teachers can prevent an incident from becoming a crisis. Empathy with students and an awareness of their moods will enable teachers to adapt lessons and pace activities in order to avoid any serious disruptions to learning and self-growth.

The classroom atmosphere should be void of sarcasm, fear, and ridicule. Students will accept their role as part of an educational community if they are allowed to be themselves. Teachers ought to develop some degree of consistent behavior, so that they are not too forceful one day and too lax the next day. Effective teachers are able to maintain open, flexible responses when dealing with disruptive behavior in the classroom. They realize the value of humor and a sense of proportion so that they do not allow small situations to become major problems.

The emotional climate in the classroom should be such that the students are encouraged to voice their opinions, question statements, and arrive at their own conclusions. Their contributions ought to be encouraged, for through participation and group interaction, they will better understand their own beliefs and feelings as well as those of others.

Developing positive attitudes toward discipline begins with teachers who are sensitive observers, flexible in their responses, and command a repertoire of behaviors that match and meet the infinite variety of personalities in their classrooms. 87
FOOTNOTES


7 Jones, *Discipline Crisis in Schools*, p. 7.

8 Rivers, *The Disruptive Student and the Teacher*, p. 11.

9 Ibid., p. 12.


12 Ibid., p. 17.


14 Ibid., p. 21.


17Ibid., pp. 21-22.

18NEA, Discipline in the Classroom, p. 56.

19Jones, Discipline Crisis in Schools, p. 23.


22Jones, Discipline Crisis in Schools, pp. 53-54.


25Ibid., p. 20.

26Jessup, Positive Attitudes for Learning, p. 9.


29Bushell, Classroom Behavior: A Little Book for Teachers, p. 4.

30Jessup, Discipline: Positive Attitudes for Learning, p. 152.


38Karlin and Berger, *Discipline and the Disruptive Child*, p. 18.


46Karlin and Berger, *Discipline and the Disruptive Child*, p. 22.


48Jones, *Discipline Crisis in Schools*, p. 54.


53 Ibid.
54 Ibid.
55 Ibid., p. 99.
57 Ibid.
58 Ibid., pp. 7-8.
60 Ibid.
62 Dreikurs, Maintaining Sanity in the Classroom, p. 59.
64 Dreikurs, Maintaining Sanity in the Classroom, p. 25.
65 Welch and Halfacre, "Ten Better Ways to Classroom Management," p. 86.
66 Howard, "Discipline is Caring." P. 54.
67 Welch and Halfacre, "Ten Better Ways to Classroom Management," p. 87.
70 Ibid., p. 128.
71 Dreikurs and Cassel, *Discipline Without Tears*, p. 54.

72 Welch and Halfacre, "Ten Better Ways to Classroom Management." p. 87.

73 NEA, "Classroom Control." p. 128.

74 Dreikurs, *Discipline Without Tears*, p. 63.

75 Welch and Halfacre, "Ten Better Ways to Classroom Management." p. 86-87.

76 NEA, "Classroom Control." p. 29.


78 Faust, *Discipline and the Classroom Teacher*, p. 55.


80 Karlin and Berger, *Discipline and the Disruptive Child*, pp. 29-30.

81 Ibid., p. 30.

82 Ibid., p. 25.

83 Howard, "Discipline is Caring," p. 53.

84 Ibid., p. 54.

85 Ibid.

86 Faust, *Discipline and the Classroom Teacher*, p. 54-59.

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