

Classroom Management Newsletter

Methods of Intervention

Part 2

Tulley and Chiu (1998) analyzed the anecdotes of 134 grade six students who described five categories of discipline problems: disruptions, defiance, aggression, incomplete work, and miscellaneous behaviours. The authors also revealed the discipline strategies teachers used to address these student behaviours: 1) rote punishment, 2) explanation (discussing correct or desired behaviour with student), 3) presentation punishment (yelling at student, corporal punishment), 4) threats and warnings, 5) removal punishment (detention, isolation, taking away privileges), and no action or ignoring the behaviour (Tulley & Chiu, 1998). The most frequently used and most effective of the strategies employed by teachers was the use of rote punishment (writing sentences or copying classroom rules). This method was effective in 65% of the instances in which it was used (Tulley & Chiu, 1998). Tulley and Chiu mention that progressive teachers "may view this simple and traditional strategy as an outdated relic from a bygone era, but it seems to be alive and well in the classrooms included in this study. Indeed, this was the strategy of choice in one third of all incidents described in student narratives, and its overall success rate (i.e., the ratio of effectiveness to ineffectiveness) was 70% - 30%" (p. 192). The authors go on to mention that teachers used rote punishment when dealing with incidents of disruption, the most frequently occurring discipline problem, described by students

as being "effective nearly twice as often as ineffective, and although it was not used proportionately as often by teachers with other types of discipline problems, its effectiveness was consistently strong" (p. 192). More difficult students and serious forms of misconduct require other discipline strategies. Although involving school administration as an intervention strategy is an option, teachers need to deal with matters that affect the classroom *in* the classroom, or developing better student behaviours becomes more difficult (Glasser, 1986).

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Apart from having to treat chronic problem behaviours and difficult students with more care and patience (Canter & Canter, 1992), using strategies such as time-out and removal of a disruptive student from the classroom can be an important and, sometimes, necessary tactic. Using time-out "reduces unwanted behaviour by removing the offending student from the situation and, therefore, from the attention and rewards provided in the situation"

(Cruickshank, Bainter, & Metcalf, 1995, p. 390). However, time-outs must be exercised with caution. The strategy can be exploited by teachers who simply want to remove the cause of the problem rather than addressing and solving it (Marzano, Marzano, & Pickering, 2003). Kazdin (1982) recommends that students should only spend one minute for each year of the student's age in time-out, anything longer could increase resentful feelings towards the teacher. Furthermore, Bullara (1993) warns against sending a student out of the classroom during time-out because leaving the classroom may be the escape a child wants.

But there are times when removing students from the classroom is required. First, trying to deal with pupils who are on the verge of losing self-control is almost inevitably a lost cause (Palardy & Palardy, 2001). In addition, when students use "verbal or gestural threats, coming to close to others, using intimidating tactics to coerce the teacher into withdrawing requests, throwing objects, walking out of the classroom or school without permission, resisting physical blocking or holds, or physically hitting others" (Shukla-Mehta and Albin, 2003, p. 50) temporarily removing the student from the classroom or school is necessary.

Quote of the Issue

"Good teachers are those who know how little they know. Bad teachers are those who think they know more than they don't know."

- R. Verdi

Upcoming Events

TLS Introduction Workshop

Wednesday, January 21
St. Mary's
Chilliwack, B.C.

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