

## Classroom Management Newsletter

### Considerations about Interventions - Part 2

Choosing the best intervention strategy can be difficult because of the many factors teachers need to take into account when disciplining students, but exactly how educators intervene and seek to develop positive behaviours can be just as complicated. Dreikurs, Grunwald, and Pepper (1982) recognize that teacher-imposed consequences are not equally effective on all students. For this reason, it is not only wise for teachers to develop a range of alternative intervention strategies for different students, but to discuss with students that "fair is not always equal" (Curwin & Mendler, 1988, p. 67). In helping students to understand that just as some classmates need individualized education plans to meet their learning needs, there are some students who need a range of alternative consequences in order to meet their social needs. This enables teachers to be both consistent and flexible rather than rigid when intervening in students' behaviour. (Curwin & Mendler, 1988)

One of the difficulties of the traditionalist and constructivist philosophies is finding a balance between emphasizing students' right to learn and teachers' right to teach without disruption from misbehaviour (Canter & Canter, 1992) and the approach in dealing with problem behaviour in a manner where teachers work with students to develop positive behaviours, rather than doing things to them (Kohn, 1986). This is not easy to deal with since Morrish (1998) claims that

children are growing up with a value system where making choices is based on weighing the advantages and disadvantages on whatever is best for themselves. In this kind of system, "children feel empowered to do whatever they like, as long as they are willing to take the punishment" (p. 32). In essence, "attention is focused on avoiding the punishment, not on the action - and on how one is personally affected, not on the way others feel or what is the right thing to do" (Kohn, 1996, pp. 44-45).

When inappropriate behaviours do occur, Charles (2002) suggests teachers "help (students) learn from those mistakes. To make all this possible, help the class formulate clear agreements about how they will work and conduct themselves. Help them see how violations of those agreements are detrimental to the class, why intervention is required when agreements are transgressed, and how mistakes can be turned into valuable learning experiences" (p. 223). Furthermore, Gossen (2001) sees restitution as an approach to working with students to help them construct their picture of what good behaviour means to them. Restitution is a "technique for helping people become self-directed, self-disciplined and self-healed. The emphasis in restitution is not on behaving to please other people or to avoid unpleasant consequences. The emphasis is on becoming the person one wants to be" (p. 43).

Explaining the expectations of class agreements and reminding students of "what kind of person they want to be" is

rather easy to implement, but what about remembering to require these expectations day in and day out? (Bullara, 1993) If the enforcement of rules is inconsistent or, even worse, ignored, students may perceive the teacher's inaction as permitting the misbehaviour to continue (Morrish, 1998). Consistency means "retaining the same expectations for appropriate behaviour in a particular activity at all times and for all students" (Evertson, Emmer, & Worsham, 2003, p. 135). Inconsistencies in using or applying consequences can cause confusion about acceptable behaviour (Palardy & Palardy, 2001). As a result, students will frequently "test the limits" of rules and procedures, causing teachers to either abandon certain procedures or tolerate high levels of inappropriate behaviour (Evertson, Emmer, & Worsham, 2003). In addition, "when students watch other students repeatedly violate the school's behavioural expectations and do not see any consequences imposed, they begin to lose faith that their school is a moral community" (Bonnell, 2004, p. 44). Evertson, Emmer, and Worsham (2003) believe:

There are three sources that contribute to inconsistencies in the classroom. First, the procedures or rules as presented are not reasonable, workable, or appropriate. Second, the teacher fails to monitor students closely and detects only a fraction of the inappropriate behaviour. This creates the appearance of inconsistency. Third, the teacher may not feel strongly enough about the procedure or rule to enforce it or to use the associated penalty (p. 136).

In September: Considerations about Interventions - Conclusion

## Quote of the Month

"Be the change that you want to see in the world."

- Mohandas Gandhi

A BIG thank you for supporting the Trust Level System this past school year.

Have a relaxing summer!

- Dennis Staginnus



## Upcoming Events

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Friday, August 29

9:00am – 12:00pm Room 6

Henry Grube Education Center

Register at [www.trustlevelsystem.com](http://www.trustlevelsystem.com)

Cost: \$5.00

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