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ABSTRACT

This paper presents classroom management practices that can be used to avoid the "revolving classroom door." In the revolving classroom door, misbehaving students are sent to the principal, and eventually returned to the classroom with no gains in student behavior or opportunity for learning. The paper begins by discussing the meaning of classroom management which is defined as how teachers maintain order in the classroom. There follow sections on features and teaching behaviors that must be in place for good classroom management. These include ways to create a positive classroom climate (for example, being friendly and warm, helping students to learn); planning for teaching before school begins, the first day of school, and throughout the year (for example, reviewing and outlining textbooks for each course, posting classroom rules, and reviewing the entire course plan with students the first day); prevention strategies (for example, acting and dressing professionally, teaching standing up and moving around), and consequences and punishments (for example, not ignoring misbehavior problems). The paper concludes with a summary listing of teaching strategies. (Contains 11 references.) (JB)

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Revolving Classroom Door: Management Strategies to Eliminate the Quick Spin

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Revolving Classroom Door: Management Strategies to Eliminate the Quick Spin

Introduction

During the past decade, the gateway to education for too many students has become a revolving classroom door or school doorway. Many students are sent constantly from the teacher's classroom to the principal's office. The principal's office will eventually do one of two things: (1) apply an in-school conference and punishment or (2) out-of-school conference and punishment. In either case, when the disciplinary time has expired the student is sent back to the sending teacher's classroom. Most of these students, who are involved in disciplinary action to the extent of removal from the learning environment, return to the classroom less able to learn and a greater problem. This, of course, leaves parents, teachers, and administrators frustrated and concerned over ways to stop the revolving classroom door practice and return to an open gateway to educational opportunity. The problem, without question, can be resolved with effective classroom management practices.

Meaning of Classroom Management

Brophy (1982) has emphasized, the key to effective teaching practice is classroom management. Educators generally agree that classroom management is an important foundation of good instruction. Observation will tell us that good instruction is more likely to be present in a well managed classroom than in a poorly managed classroom. Classroom management has a lot to do with what teachers do to maintain order in the classroom. Burden (1995) reported that classroom management refers to the actions and strategies teachers use to maintain order. Emmer, Evertson, and et al (1994) support the notion that good classroom management exist where teachers have a clear idea of the types of classroom conditions and

student behaviors that are necessary for a healthy learning environment. It appears, therefore, to this writer that for a teacher to have a healthy learning environment the following classroom features and teaching behaviors must be in place:

Positive Classroom Climate

A short visit in the classroom is all that is necessary for most students to describe the climate. Students immediately can determine whether the classroom climate is wholesome for them. So what is climate in the classroom? Climate refers to the feeling tone that prevails in the classroom, Charles (1992). Real feeling tone in the classroom is not clearly understood by some teachers. These teachers seem to think the way to develop good feeling tone in your classroom is to be very relaxed with your rules and behavior. This is a mistake. Students know when their attitudes, emotions, values and overt disrespect for authority are affecting classroom management relationships.

As Charles (1992) has reported, classroom climate is poor when it is characterized as either chaotic and disorganized or as cold, unfriendly, and threatening. So, the classroom may be cold and rigidly controlled or out of control. Charles continues by saying, a good classroom climate is characterized as warm, supportive, and pleasant.

Students generally prefer encouraging, enabling, inducing, and supporting classroom climates. Organizational patterns that result in students feeling more capable and secure, result in higher achievement, Burden (1995). Burden, further emphasizes that to develop a cooperative, responsible classroom, the teacher can take actions that (1) promote student's self-esteem; (2)

promote student involvement and interaction; (3) promote success; (4) promote positive interactions; and (5) develop a non-threatening, comfortable environment.

Planning to Teach

Effective classroom managers spend time planning for teaching before school opens and perform certain activities the first day of school. Teachers must plan for students' presence in the classroom. As Waller (1932) stated a long time ago, the first day of school or the first meeting of class, is all important in determining the success or failure of the school year. But success in the classroom must be planned before the first day of class. For instance, the teacher must develop learning enrichment activities to complement textbook exercises and procedures to achieve appropriate student classroom behaviors before the first day of school. Emmer, Everston, and et al (1989) reported that before you plan classroom activities for the first week, you need to have your room and materials ready and to have identified your rules, procedures, and consequences. Emmer, Everston, and et al (1989) also report that the planning activities for the first day should include the following: (1) procedures obtaining books and textbooks and checking out to students (2) required paper work (3) class rosters (4) seating assignments (5) first-week bell schedule (6) tardiness during the first day of classes (7) administrative tasks (8) rules (9) course requirements and (10) time fillers.

Classroom Management in a low SES Junior High School was studied by Sanford and Everson (1985). They found that effective teacher managers on the first day: (1) spent more time

(21 minutes) discussing classroom rules and procedures (2) gave their students seatwork the first day and (3) positioned himself/herself so the whole class could be monitored.

It appears during the first few days of a teacher's class, students use that time to study the behavior of the teacher. For instance, Allen (1986) reported that figuring out the teacher is a strategy used by students during the first few days of each class. He also stated that the strategy was used to figure out what the teacher was like, the teacher's limits for socializing, and the requirements for passing the course.

Sanford and Evertson (1985) found also that during the first 3 weeks, effective teachers used organization and management strategies in eight categories. These were as follows: (1) Teaching rules and procedures (2) consistent enforcement and feedback (3) clarity (4) knowledge (5) students' accountability for their work (6) time use (7) standards for students' behavior and (8) maintaining leadership role.

After using about three (3) weeks to set classroom organization and management strategies, the effective teacher manager must continue to use the same teaching and classroom management strategies throughout the year. Effective teacher managers maintain a high level of student cooperation, appropriate behavior, and task orientation in class. Sanford and Evertson (1985), Emmer, Evertson, and et al. (1989).

It is quite evident that effective teacher managers use a wide range of classroom management strategies throughout the year. For instance, Weber (1985) in a study of 163 experienced, knowledgeable elementary and secondary teachers found that the eight most frequently selected classroom managerial strategies were: (1) using positive reinforcement

(94.5%); (2) applying logical consequences (91.4%); (3) establishing and maintaining group cohesiveness (84.7%); (4) establishing and maintaining productive group norms; (5) exhibiting unconditional positive regard; (6) using time out and extinction (77.3%); (7) employing problem-solving classroom meetings (63.2%) and (8) establishing clear expectations and enforcing rules (60.1%)

Prevention Strategy

The best teaching strategy for maintaining order in the classroom is to prevent disorder from occurring. It has been said by some educators that the best way to prevent misbehavior in the classroom is to provide an interesting curriculum. That is, the students are so involved with the learning they do not have time to misbehave. According to Charles (1992) there are some specific things teachers can do to reduce the likelihood of misbehavior. These strategies are as follows: (1) make your curriculum as worthwhile and enjoyable as possible - select valuable learning and provide enjoyable activities; (2) take charge in your classroom - maintain ultimate authority in the the classroom; (3) with your students make good rules for class conduct- keep rules short, clear and few in number; (4) continually emphasize good manners and living by the golden rule- you care enough about your students to expect the highest standards of behavior from them, you expect them to use good manners and never be sarcastic or cruel to each other. Be the best model you can , by showing concern, manners, courtesy, and helpfulness.

Some writers view preventing student misbehavior in the classroom with strategies incorporating cognitive and affective practices. For example, Curwin and Mendler (1988) listed the following practices for teachers to use to prevent misbehavior problems:

(1) be aware of self (teacher) - congruence between real and ideal teaching selves; (2) be aware of students- their needs and desires; (3) express genuine feelings - genuinely express your feelings (4) become knowledgeable of alternative theories - provides an opportunity for the teacher to use alternatives which are congruent with values, attitudes, and experiences; (5) motivate students to learn - teach in a way that is either interesting or meets students' needs as learners. Students who are highly motivated rarely become discipline problems; (6) establish social contracts- list of rules and consequences governing behavior, either in class or school wide. Rule in this case means an agreed upon standard of behavior; and (7) implementing social contracts-. when misbehavior occurs, a consequence is implemented or acted upon.

Consequences and Punishment

No matter how effective teachers are in the classroom, occasionally they will have to implement consequences or punishments with a few students. Some educators use consequences to be synonymous with punishment. In fact, Ramsey (1981) said students should be aware that there are consequences for their actions, both good and bad.

Consequences should be directly related to the rule and logical. According to Curwin and Mendler (1988), consequences are both logical and natural, and help the rule violator learn acceptable behavior from the experience. So teachers should use logical consequences with their students. A logical consequence is an event arranged by the teacher that is directly and logically related to the misbehavior, Burden (1995). For example, if a student marks on the desk with pencil, the student is required to remove marks from the desk. Basically, logical consequences

require misbehaving students, in regard to a rule, to restore something, work along, not be recognized, or make up (missed) work. The delineation may make the line of separation between consequence and punishment smaller.

Many educators feel that some form of punishment will assist teachers in controlling or helping students' to control their own misbehavior in the classroom. So what is punishment? Punishment is the act of imposing a penalty with the intention of suppressing undesirable behavior, Burden (1995).

Punishment is not something that should not be used without discretion. As Good and Brophy (1994) suggested, punishment is a treatment of last resort for students who persist in misbehaving despite continued teacher expressions of concern and assistance.

Teachers are usually more involved with trying to correct chronic misbehaving students in their classroom. That is, they are trying to punish students who are repeat misbehavior problems. So many of the students who are not repeat misbehavior problems are not punished by the teacher. It is with this repeat misbehavior group that teachers must hone their understanding and skill use of consequences and punishment.

Curwin and Mendler (1988) offer some specific examples of the difference between consequences and punishments.

Rule

Example 1 All trash must be thrown in the basket.

Consequence

Pick your trash up off the floor.

Punishment

Apologize to the teacher in the front of the whole class.

Rule

Example 2 Tests and homework must be completed by yourselves unless group work is assigned. There is no copying other students work.

Consequence

Do the test or homework again under supervision.

Punishment

write 100 times, "I will not will not copy other student work".

Rule

Example 3 No talking when someone else is talking. If you want to speak, wait until the current speaker has finished.

Consequence

Wait five minutes before speaking.

Punishment

Sitting in the hall for the entire period.

Therefore, the main difference between consequences and punishments is as follows: consequences are simple, direct, logical and instructive actions required of misbehaving students which are related to the rule and punishments are not related to the rule, are not natural

extensions of the rule, and tend to generate anxiety, hostility, and resentment in the student, Curwin and Mendler (1988).

Summary

Too many students in the revolving door practice of managing the classroom are repeat misbehavior problems. Teachers continue to search for workable strategies that can be implemented to prevent or resolve repeat misbehavior problems with their students. The summary listings, which will follow, are a compilation of classroom teaching strategies for teachers to use in such areas as developing a positive classroom climate, planning and teaching behavior for effective managers, preventing misbehavior, and consequences and punishments.

Developing a positive classroom climate

- 1. Be friendly, warm, and helpful to all students
- 2. Promote student's self-esteem by helping them to be successful with the learning
- 3. Promote student involvement and interaction in the classroom by asking all students questions initially may need to be low risk
- 4. Promote success by chopping the learning up into smaller pieces making achievement more likely to happen
- 5. Promote positive interactions with students- smile and poke a little fun in classroom activities
- 6. Develop a non-threatening, comfortable environment for students in the classroom
- 7. Be an ambassador for your teaching discipline and show enthusiasm.
- 8. Express genuine feelings-genuinely express your feelings

9. Make eye contact with each student as you teach and when you talk to them individually

Planning and Classroom Teaching Behavior for Effective Managers

Before School Opens:

1. Review textbooks for each course and outline course content.
2. Develop assignment homework sheets from easy (75% activities all students can do) to more difficult for all chapters or most sections in textbooks
3. Develop several short time filler exercises to reinforce and review many concepts taught in various chapters throughout textbook.
4. Develop a student profile of each student on roster. Example: Name, address, phone number, DOB, father and mother or guardian, home and work phone no., best subjects, hobbies, extra- curricular activities, person(s) in family admired the most and etc.
5. Develop classroom rules and procedures and post where each student can see.
6. Arrange classroom for orderly movement and easy convenient teacher observation of each student.

First Day of School

1. Introduce yourself to class briefly and tell them a few things about you that they ordinarily would not know.

- 2. Ask each student in each of your classes to introduce themselves to other members of the class and tell the class a few things about themselves that others would not ordinarily know.
- 3. Review course outline, grading scale, assignments, and give a complete overview of the course.
- 4. Discuss classroom rules and procedures (take at least 20 minutes).
- 5. Clearly express your academic and behavior expectations.
- 6. Teach a short lesson and give guided seatwork.
- 7. Give a short homework assignment that all students can experience success.

Throughout the Year

- 1. Continue to teach and enforce classroom rules and procedures.
- 2. Apply the use of positive and negative reinforcement when necessary.
- 3. Consistent application of logical consequences for the violation of classroom rules and procedures.
- 4. Teach on your feet, using the whole classroom and proximity control to prevent misbehavior.
- 5. Use praise and encouragement.
- 6. Exhibit a with-it-ness behavior- know what is going on in the classroom at all times.
- 7. Foster reasonable clearly understood expectations.
- 8. Foster positive interpersonal relationships.

Preventing Misbehavior in the Classroom

- 1. Be well prepared to teach
- 2. Act and dress professionally
- 3. Make your curriculum as worthwhile and enjoyable as possible
- 4. Teach on your feet and move around in the classroom, always keeping each student in your view.
- 5. Be assertive in the classroom . (1) Confident or aggressively self-assured of presence and what you do in the classroom (2) telling students up front what you expect of them
- 6. Make good rules for class conduct (1) Keeping rules short, clear, and few in number (2) Write each rule on chart or postal paper and discuss with class.
- 7. Continue to emphasize good manners and living by the "Golden Rule".
- 8. Be aware of self (teacher)
- 9. Be firm and fair with each student , but always respectful
- 10. Be aware of students their needs and desires
- 11. Motivate students to learn-teach in a way that is either interesting or meets student's needs as learners.
- 12. Show enthusiasm in your teaching
- 13. Become knowledgeable of alternative theories to prevent misbehavior of students
- 14. Establish social contracts

- 15. Establish close contact with parents by weekly phone calls or notes to give student progress reports

Consequences and Punishments for Misbehavior

- 1. Don't let misbehavior problems fester by ignoring them
- 2. Establish time out in an uncomfortable place in the classroom
- 3. Require student to clean bathroom
- 4. Require student to miss out on recess time or a special event
- 5. Require student to write letters of apology to teacher, student or person they offended
- 6. Ask parents of misbehaving student to sit through one or more classes with their son or daughter.
- 7. Require after school detention in the classroom where students are not transported by bus
- 8. Mark a student's poor classroom or school conduct on report cards
- 9. Require misbehaving students to acknowledge actions they need to do to make right a situation
- 10. Require student to restore what has been destroyed because of misbehavior.
- 11. Require misbehaving students to make up work missed - never giving a work-free ride in the classroom

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