

A COMPREHENSIVE STUDY IDENTIFYING  
THE MOST EFFECTIVE CLASSROOM  
MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES  
AND PRACTICES

By

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### ABSTRACT

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The purpose of this study was to explore and determine the most effective classroom management techniques and practices. This study included a comprehensive review and critical analysis of research and literature associated with classroom discipline and ongoing management to promote positive student learning. A summary was presented. Conclusions and recommendations were made in order to provide insight for teachers, superintendents and local school board. The goal is that the recommendations may serve to improve classroom management skills for beginning, as well as for veteran teachers in order to promote ongoing learning for all students.

With the diverse population of students, changes in cultural behaviors and social and emotional pressure children had in their lives; the classroom environment became chaotic and disorderly. Teachers were in need of an effective classroom management plan that would help bring order and productive learning back into the classroom. As teachers learned more about a variety of classroom management approaches, they would be able to sample techniques that would fit their needs. Not all the classroom management programs researched were geared to the same grade levels. Therefore, teachers would be able to choose the program that would best fit the needs of their own classroom grade level. Teachers would be able to choose an approach to use within the individual classrooms or choose a school-wide approach to enhance student behavior. The planning and creating of classroom rules would also assist teachers in developing efficient and effective rules to promote an orderly and productive learning environment for all students regardless of ability or age group.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### Introduction

The issue of discipline in the classroom continues to surface as one of the most challenging problems in education today. Conte (1994) stated, "If teachers, administrators, parents, and students acknowledge that the lack of discipline is a serious concern and interferes with the teaching-learning process, one would think that steps would be taken to remedy the problem" (p.308). Canter (1976) states that you cannot get your needs met in your classroom unless you have an effective method of discipline which you thoroughly understand and are comfortable utilizing.

The history of education and discipline of students was one of extreme harshness. In the 1700's, teachers were given the parental right to act as they would when dealing with discipline problems. Teachers who felt the need would administer corporal punishment to students under their supervision.

Frameworks for encouraging and maintaining good behavior overwhelmed the trend-setting halls of elementary schools across the country with the later works of behavioral theorists such as Kounin, Skinner, and Glasser. These theories were created to help classroom environments exhibit behavior conducive to learning. They also stressed positive relationships between students and teachers. Although 28 states currently allow corporal punishment in public schools (as cited in Conte, 1994), the modern approaches of classroom discipline help to teach students to become more responsible for their own behavior. Some of the approaches include Assertive Discipline, Discipline with Dignity, 1,2,3 Magic, and Student Peer Mediation. Teachers now have some choices in finding a

classroom discipline plan to suite their needs. The question is, which approach works *best* for managing today's classroom behavior?

Today's classrooms are much more complicated than in years past. Discipline, now known as classroom management, has added factors. New dimensions to classroom management were born with the advent of inclusion, bilingual classes, and students with disabilities. An analysis of the past fifty years of educational research as noted by Wang, Haertel, and Walberg (as cited in Conte, 1994) revealed that effective classroom management increases student engagement, decreases disruptive behaviors, and makes good use of instructional time.

The demands made on teachers have grown significantly in the past few decades, which also makes classroom management more difficult. In the later part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the reality was that:

- (a) Teachers do not receive the respect from parents that they once did.
- (b) More students come to school with behavioral problems than ever before.
- (c) Teachers are not sufficiently trained to deal with today's behavioral problems.
- (d) The myth of the "good" teacher discourages teachers from asking for the assistance they need.
- (e) Relevant curriculum content is not always enough to motivate students to behave as once thought (Canter & Canter, 1976).

All of these factors have combined to diminish a teacher's real or perceived ability to influence students' behavior. It is that loss of influence that has made it

more difficult for many teachers to effectively maintain discipline in the classroom (Conte, 1994).

### **Statement of the Problem**

A review of literature shows that a classroom management approach is needed to maintain positive student behavior. Studies have also shown that classroom rules have a significant effect on student behavior.

Therefore, teachers that have effective classroom rules incorporated into their classroom management plan will have more success in maintaining positive student behavior.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to determine which management techniques and practices were most effective in the classroom in controlling student behavior. Based upon critical analysis of the research literature, the researcher has made conclusions and recommendations.

### **Objectives**

This study was focused on the following objectives:

1. To describe how behavior theorists influenced classroom management.
2. To identify approaches for managing student behavior.
3. To determine criteria for creating well-designed rules.
4. To identify steps for planning a rule management concept.

### **Definition of Terms**

In order to provide a comprehensive framework of the materials incorporated in this study the following definitions of terms are presented.

A principle-defines the positive attitude and expectations for long-term behavioral growth.

A procedure-a specific activity by students and/or teachers that is directed at accomplishing something related to the rule.

A rule-is developed from a guiding principle, is short-term in nature, and defines a general standard for observable behavior to support the principle.

Classroom management-a systematic instructional process used by teachers to guide students toward successful rule compliance in the classroom, on the job, and in the community.

Obedience-based models of discipline-uses punishments as deterrents, then creates fear that something bad will happen when rules are broken, and provide rewards for doing what is expected.

Responsibility-based models of discipline-requires teaching students the skills of decision making and providing opportunities to see appropriate behaviors in action from good role models.

### **Limitations**

The researcher has identified two limitations to the study.

- 1) Knowledge included will only apply to the area of classroom management.
- 2) The study does not include a first-hand empirical quantitative research assessment.

## CHAPTER TWO

### Review of Literature

#### Introduction

A well-managed classroom can provide an exciting and dynamic learning experience for everyone involved. Unfortunately, student behavior can often interfere with this process. Classroom discipline plays a large part in today's educational system. Teachers feel overwhelmed and "powerless" in dealing with behavior problems in their classrooms. Canter (1997) explained, in the past, a simple stern look or warning was sufficient to shape up a classroom. Then, because of the social and political upheavals of the late '60s and early '70s, the respect and deference granted any authority figure—from the president to police officers to doctors, and even teachers—dramatically declined. That is why it is so important to find a behavior management approach to fit the needs of the teacher and the students. This chapter investigates four areas that may assist teachers in promoting a positive learning environment for all students. These areas include: how behavior theorists influenced classroom management, approaches for managing student behavior, criteria for creating well-designed rules, and steps for planning a rule management plan.

#### Influences on Classroom Management

Behavior theorists in the 1930's through present day described frameworks for encouraging and maintaining good behavior. These behavior theories greatly influenced, and are still influencing classroom management. According to Emmer and Stough (2001), some studies have used student achievement or attitude as outcomes. But most classroom management research today has been concerned with identifying how teachers

bring about student engagement with each other and limit the disruptions in the classroom.

The following paragraphs will summarize the work of some important behavior theorists. These summaries will identify the influences each has made on classroom behavior and management.

### Burrhus Frederick Skinner

Burrhus Frederick Skinner's philosophies can be related to the issue of classroom management. As a renowned learning theorist in the 1930's and 1940's, Skinner (Sprinthall, 1981) emphasized his research on how the organism learns, regardless of its inherited potential, regardless of its stage of physical or psychological development, and often regardless of its species. Otherwise stated, he saw learning as a result of associations formed between stimuli and actions, or impulses to act. Simple associations would accumulate to larger groups of learned associations. Skinner felt learning resulted due to conditioning, similar to Pavlov's dogs' being conditioned to salivate at the sound of a specific tone. In regards to the classroom, Skinner (Conte, 1994) stated that by rewarding students for good behavior and ignoring or punishing wrong behavior, students would come to understand how to behave in a classroom environment. Behaviors that were rewarded would be repeated; those that were not would be avoided, and thus, a well-behaved class would result. This step-by-step conditioning process helped Skinner (Sprinthall, 1981) develop and test his first "teaching machine" in the 1950s. The teaching machine was a form of programmed instruction. At first, it was seen as a threat to teachers and their jobs. Reassuring the educators, Skinner announced that his programmed instruction was a learning aid, not a substitute for a human teacher. He also

reassured educators that the children trained with the device would not become mechanized little robots, but would more likely be able to reach their intellectual potential. Later, Skinner was credited with creating a revolution in the technology of education.

Skinner's research of reinforcing stimuli also led him to the development of behavior-modification techniques in the classroom. Behavior modification involved training teachers to wait for their students to emit appropriate responses and then to reinforce those responses quickly and consistently. This idea of behavior modification would again, revolutionize technology in education.

#### William Glasser

In the 1950's, Glasser's Reality Therapy (Emmer and Stough, 2001) stressed the use of choice as the cause of behavior, good or bad, and thus instructed teachers to direct students towards making value judgments about their behavior. By making value judgements, students would come to realize the importance of "good" choices in behavior and continued to make them again in the future. Therefore, students were taught the difference between a "good judgement", and a "bad judgement". Students are taught "right" from "wrong" at a very young age. Parents model this behavior for their children on a daily basis. They make value judgements by making "good choices" and "bad choices". In today's classrooms, rewards are given for "good choices" and consequences are given for "bad choices". This process too, is to promote good behavior and diminish bad behavior in the classroom.

### Jacob Kounin

Jacob Kounin and his colleagues engaged in substantial classroom management research during the 1970s. His work focused on determining whether specific behavior settings and environmental conditions influenced behavior. He also identified a set of teacher behaviors and lesson characteristics, including, withitness, smoothness, momentum, overlapping and group alerting. These characteristics would describe a teacher who knew what was going on at all times in the classroom and was able to deal with more than one issue or problem at a time. Good classroom management would then facilitate student learning, by allowing teachers to accomplish other important instructional duties. Kounin (Conte, 1994) thought teachers who could be that “aware” would be better managers of children in the classroom.

According to Emmer and Stough (2001) Kounin also became interested in a rather contemporary issue of the time. He questioned whether managerial behaviors that work for regular education students have the same effects on students identified as emotionally disturbed in the same classrooms. His answer was “yes,” at least in whole class behavior settings in regular education classrooms. This research was an early indication that inclusion of children with disabilities within the classroom was the right approach.

Kounin’s work then focused on management research shifting from reactive strategies to preventive strategies and from teacher personality to environmental and strategic components of management. His work highlighted the influence of classroom activities as a source of important variations in student and teacher behavior. With this wide range of theories, Kounin’s research of classroom management helped to identify many of the issues teachers are still facing in today’s classrooms.

### Abraham H. Maslow

Maslow's research on hierarchy of needs has also influenced effective classroom management. Helping students meet their own needs is of the utmost importance to enhance student learning opportunities and to maintain teacher longevity in the classroom. Maslow (as cited in Sprinthall, 1981, p. 327) an important psychologist in the area of motivation theory, has suggested that there is a definite order in which individuals attempt to satisfy their needs. Maslow had declared there is an "order-of-importance" that is universal among all humans. Until these needs are met, the individual will not be concerned with the needs of the next level of importance. In other words, basic survival needs override other needs in this hierarchy. Herbert Grossman (Gordon, 2001) recaps students' basic needs and the order which those needs must be met to produce well-balanced members of society. The following is a summary of Grossman's basis for student need using Maslow's Need Hierarchy:

- physiological satisfaction: taking care of hunger, thirst, and rest
- safety: avoiding injury, physical attack, pain, extreme temperatures, disease, and psychological abuse
- nurture: receiving love and acceptance from others and having a feeling of belonging to a group
- a sense of personal value: experiencing self-esteem, self-confidence, and a sense of purpose and empowerment
- self-actualization: realizing one's full potential

The theory of hierarchy of need, can be related to the school setting. According to Gordon (2001) school staff members may attend to basic physiological needs on a

daily basis by providing breakfasts and lunches for needy students and, in some cases, making home visits to teach parents how to provide for their children's needs. Until these physiological needs like food are met, basic functioning in the learning environment is very difficult, maybe even impossible. Although meeting the second category of needs—those regarding safety issues—may lie outside of the teacher's direct influence when students are at home or away from school, some of these needs can be addressed in the classroom. Good classroom management can help to ensure protection of students from physical attacks by other students, dangerous environmental conditions such as playing around electrical equipment, and from psychological abuse from peers or adults.

Gordon (2001) believes the teacher has the opportunity to create a learning environment that is kind and respectful in order to meet the nurturing need. Students will be better able to reciprocate genuine loving, caring behaviors toward other people if the demonstration of affection is modeled for them in the classroom.

The fourth category of needs that Gordon (2001) states surrounds self-esteem, self-confidence, a sense of purpose, and empowerment that will directly relate to love and acceptance. If a student feels cared for and can express those emotions and behaviors, the student will continue to build self-esteem and confidence. The need of self-actualization can be fulfilled when the more basic needs have been met.

All of these theories are an intricate part of the history of classroom management research. Together the theories help build a foundation upon which we can continue to build our research on classroom management, inclusion of disabled students, reactive and preventative responses, and making value judgements.

### Other Influences on Classroom Management

Within the last seven decades, classroom management theories have held the philosophy of promoting a productive learning environment. Why then, is there still a need for management strategies? The world of education has drastically changed from what many of the behavior theorists had been exposed to and upon which they based their research. Today, more than ever, efficient management systems are needed to establish and maintain a positive, learning environment for students. Curwin and Mendler (as cited in Gordon, 2001, p. 3) presented a list of global causes of misbehavior that describe the specific roots of classroom deterioration. They are as follows:

- violence in society
- massive media coverage of overt and covert messages regarding “sex, violence, and death”
- a throw-away societal mentality focused on individual indulgence and subsequent escape from family commitment
- unstable home situations
- a wide range of temperaments among children

Students have an overwhelming amount of social and cultural demands placed upon them. This in most cases has made education less of a priority. Students coming from unstable or abusive homes suffer feelings of powerlessness. They have nowhere to turn in their chaotic life. According to Brownlee (1996) very few children who are mistreated or abused receive the kind of help that can reverse the underlying physiological changes they suffer. Social and peer pressures misguide children who are driven to seek comfort and understanding from social groups and cultural gangs. School aged children lack

appropriate outlets for expressing negative and sometimes destructive feelings and emotions. In other words, children arrive at school each day bringing much more than their homework and sack lunch. They also bring with them all the insecurities, fears, and bottled emotions that are a part of their everyday life. Hannon (2002) observed many conflicts with this type of situation in her classroom. She chose to use the conflict to her students' own advantage. She would utilize the conflicts as part of her school curriculum. This would give her students the opportunity to discuss rules, infractions, and find solutions to common problems the children would be faced with on a daily basis.

#### Approaches for Managing Student Behavior

The need for an effective classroom management strategy continues. Teachers struggle to keep order in their classrooms, leaving little time to do their job...teach. Several discipline programs have been "commercialized". Each program claims to bring order back to the classroom. Each denotes less discipline time will enhance learning. But which strategy is the *most effective* in promoting more quality learning time, and less discipline time? The following approaches have been chosen by the researcher to review. It is not to say these are the only strategies available to implement in the classroom. The title of the classroom behavior management approach is given, along with a summary and key points of the program.

#### Assertive Discipline

Lee Canter and Associates (1976) developed the Assertive Discipline plan. This approach demonstrates how school staff can assertively communicate their expectations to students. It is a comprehensive, systematic method of classroom management. It was developed on the basis of four concepts: (a) behavior is a choice, (b) every student has a

right to learn in an environment that is free from disruption, (c) every teacher has the right to teach without disruption from students, and (d) no child should engage in behavior that is not in the child's best interest. These guidelines are expressed and supported by a discipline plan. The plan incorporates class rules with positive and negative consequences. The student's behavior is relative to the teacher's expectations in the classroom. Meaning, once the teacher explains the classroom rules, the children know what expectations the teacher has.

#### A Modified Approach

This assertive approach can be modified to fit any classroom setting. For example, Dial (Gutloff, 1998) who is a middle school band teacher, used an assertive approach to control behavior in his music class. He began the school year with a written contract which the student and parents signed. He set his classroom behavior expectations at the start of the year, giving both student and parents a clear, firm message to begin the year positively. Dial (as cited in Gutloff, 1998, p.4) offered 10 tips for establishing harmony in the classroom.

1. –Limit idle time-keep routine consistent by having immediate activities ready.
2. – Let kids help make rules – this give the students ownership to the rules.
3. –Make parents allies – parents are more likely to reinforce your expectations for good student behavior if you establish ties early.
4. –Spell it out in writing – list specific behaviors in a behavior contract.
5. –Give respect to get respect – when you treat students with respect, you get it back.
6. –Model the behavior you want – don't just tell them.

7. –Get up and move around – move around the room to see what is going on.
8. –Structure play at recess – where playtime is carefully supervised.
9. –Bring kids to order quickly – non-verbal signals can be used to quiet students quickly.
10. –Praise the behavior you want – acknowledge and praise good behavior whenever possible.

### Main Objectives

These tips mirror many assertive discipline key points. The following are the main objectives of the Assertive Discipline approach (as cited in Canter, 1976, p. 13):

- Discriminate between the effective and ineffective response style of the teachers.
- Explain how teachers set up personal “roadblocks” to their becoming assertive.
- Explain how a teacher can identify his/her wants and needs in the classroom.
- Describe cognitive and behavioral procedures, which can help a teacher change his/her ineffective response styles.
- Describe the skills a teacher needs to express wants and feelings verbally.
- Describe the skills a teacher needs to follow through on teacher verbal responses.
- Describe persistency-building procedures designed to assist a teacher in establishing consistently assertive responses.
- Describe how teachers can clearly and firmly express their wants and feelings with parents and principals.

### Objectives for the Child

In addition to the objectives of the teacher, the Assertive Discipline plan also created objectives for the child. These include:

- The child has the right to have a teacher who is in a position to and will help the child limit inappropriate self-disruptive behavior.
- The child has the right to have a teacher who is in the position to and will provide the child with positive support for appropriate behavior.
- Will be able to choose how to behave and know the consequences that will follow.

Incorporating these key points and objectives into a management plan can have positive results. Teachers will be able to teach. Students will be able to learn.

### Discipline with Dignity

This is a program that offers essential skills and strategies for dealing with anger and disruptive behavior. The philosophy behind this approach is that dealing with student behavior is part of a teacher's responsibility. Treating students with dignity is essential in this program and being fair means treating students individually, based on what will work for them. The theory proposes that responsibility is much more important than obedience. To implement a consequence effectively, several techniques are suggested. First, implement a consequence and be firm, clear and consistent. Teachers who are not consistent with consequences send a message to the student. The message is that sometimes the behavior is acceptable, and sometimes it is not. Students will sense this message and the undesirable behavior will continue. Second, do not embarrass the student in front of his or her peers. Children are very sensitive creatures. They deserve

the same respect that adults demand. Third, do not think in terms of winning and losing. In the end, learning will be the outcome for responsible students. Above all, your professionalism must prevail. Responsible students who have learned to manage themselves in appropriately often require much less management from the teacher. Schools should be providing quality staff development that supports the dignity of students in the classroom.

Another approach to discipline compares obedience -models of discipline to responsibility-based models of discipline. Responsibility models require educators to teach students the skills of decision making and provide opportunities to see appropriate behaviors in action from good role models. We find that more students actually change their behavior when they are given instruction on how to behave in the future. For example, teaching students to be attentive and respectful in an all- school assembly. Teaching these expectations to students before the assembly event will help to deter undesirable behavior.

#### Peer Mediation

This approach assists students to develop effective communication and problem-solving skills for resolving conflict among their peers. Peer mediators orchestrate proceedings with two or more disputants. The disputants are the students who are having the fight or conflict. The mediators respond through active listening, and use questioning and problem solving techniques. The mediators do not take sides and are not judges.

When a problem occurs between students, they are automatically

referred to a peer mediation session, instead of a staff member deciding their fate. The intervention decreases the time teachers need to spend trying to solve minor problems between students. The conflict will be resolved between the two conflicting students and the peer mediators. The trained student mediators act as a “third party” to help the individuals talk out the problem and come to a win/win solution.

Some of the key points the students are trained in are: how to observe conflict, learning the rules for fighting fair, and learning the Do’s and Don’ts of mediation. This training is conducted by a staff member or in some cases, the school counselor.

When students are trained to observe conflict, they keep a report while monitoring hallways and the playground. They record which students seem to be engaged in conflict and where the dispute is happening. Is it located on the playground, classroom, or maybe at home? The mediator also records what is said or done (actions or words) during the conflict. Lastly, the mediator records how the conflict was handled.

The mediator must also learn the rules for fighting fairly. This becomes an important tool for the mediator to use when dealing with the disputants. It is vital that the disputants are treated with respect and are given the opportunity to have their side of the story heard. Listed below are the rules for fighting fair that the peer mediator must learn and focus upon during mediation (as cited by Schmidt, Friedman, and Marvel, 1992, p. S5).

#### Rules for Fighting Fair

1. Identify the problem.
2. Focus on the problem.

3. Attack the problem.
4. Listen with an open mind.
5. Treat a person's feelings with respect.
6. Take responsibility for your actions.

Along with the rules for fighting fair, the mediators need to learn the Do's and Don'ts of mediation as cited by Schmidt et al. (1992). These guidelines remind them to keep the session fair and unbiased.

#### Do's and Don'ts of Mediation

##### Do:

- listen carefully
- be fair
- ask how each feels
- let each one state what happened
- treat each person with respect
- keep what you are told confidential
- mediate in private

##### Don't:

- take sides
- tell them what to do
- ask who started it
- try to blame anyone
- ask why they did it
- give advice
- look for witnesses

This type of school service can make a big impact on school environment.

It can also make a big difference in the lives of students. According to Schmidt, et al. (1992) students who participate in a peer mediation program gain valuable experience, skills and understand about conflict and resolution. This knowledge can also empower students to deal with conflicts in their own life more constructively and creatively.

Meditation (Schmidt, Friedman, and Marvel, 1992) is a relatively new field,

especially for behavior management. Meditation programs are being used more and more in the community by courts, individuals, businesses, and governments. Mediators help resolve environmental, divorce, neighborhood, and international business disputes. As mediators in the school setting, these students already have an advantage that they can use once they join the workforce in their community.

### 1-2-3 Magic

The 1-2-3 Magic (Phelan, 1995) approach, was developed over a period of years by Thomas W. Phelan. This approach was first dedicated to helping parents manage their children's behavior in or away from the home. It began its history as a parental tool to help others control their child's behavior. But soon it found its way into the schoolrooms and offices of teachers, counselors, and psychologists. Because of its widespread popularity, the author released the second edition of 1-2-3 Magic. Included in the second edition are four new chapters for teachers, covering preschool to junior high levels.

According to Phelan (1995) there is no magic in 1-2-3 Magic. It is simply based on careful, logical and persistent extension of certain common-sense ideas and behavioral principles in the discipline and training of children. Some unique, critical child-rearing principles include; the distinction between "Start" and "Stop" behavior, the little adult assumption, and the "No-talking, No-emotion" rules.

Phelan (1995) describes the "Start" and "Stop" behavior as two distinct behaviors. Each would have its own tactic. The "Start" behavior would describe behavior you would like a student to "Start". Such behavior might be clean up time, transition time, or moving to another class. Tactics that could be used to facilitate behavior are Sloppy PVF

(Positive Verbal Feedback, given without a constant reward), kitchen timers, or a variation on the counting of 1-2-3. For example, one teacher of 25 students would not count out loud 1-2-3. She would simply hold up the counting fingers. This action allows the teacher to continue in her task of teaching, while still sending an important message to the student of the behavior that is expected. The “Stop” behavior includes actions you want the child to discontinue. Some behaviors may include arguing, fighting, tantrum, or talking during class instruction time. The tactics used would be the counting procedure.

The “no-talking, no-emotion” rule is used when the teacher begins counting. To avoid further commotion from the student, counting is to be completed with no talking, and no emotion. The more verbiage used during counting would encourage the student to manipulate the situation.

The little adult assumption is a belief that kids have hearts of gold and are basically reasonable and unselfish – they are just smaller versions of us. In other words, the author is explaining how many parents choose to “reason” with children in order to achieve desired outcomes. When the “reasoning” tactic doesn’t work, the parents are surprised. Phelan feels that children not only need limits and boundaries, they thrive on them.

### Procedure

A summary of the procedure for 1-2-3 Magic for use in the classroom is as follows:

1. Start the program at the beginning of the school year.
2. Together with students, make a list of all “countable” offenses.

3. The teacher chooses the consequence in the event that you reach the counting of “3”. (Pre K – 3 is usually involves a time out area, 4-8 involves losing recess time or after school detention.)
4. At the counting of “3”, the student goes to the time out area. (If the student refuses to go, this warrants a more serious tactic such as a phone call home or going to the principal’s office.)

#### Frequency of Problem

If there is a frequency of problem behavior, and 1-2-3 doesn’t solve the problem, Phelan (1995) suggests the following sequence of steps.

1. Classroom adjustments (e.g., move seats)
2. Parent conference with teacher (child participates in part of the conference)
3. Parent conference with principal or assistant principal
4. Social worker or behavioral consultant gets involved
5. A special services team gets involved
6. A case study is started

Phelan (1995) believes the benefits of his program are; the strategies are clear and simple, and teacher instructional time is not wasted on continuous discipline. For busy teachers, the program is easy to learn and allows students to make positive behavioral choices.

#### Unified Discipline

White, Algonzzine, Audette, Marr, and Ellis (2001) developed the Unified Discipline program. It is an advancing school-wide intervention approach. It is designed to support administrators, teachers, and other school personnel. This school-wide

approach was designed the five professors from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. The basis of this behavior management program is to establish unified attitudes, expectations, correction, procedures, and team roles.

### The Discipline Procedures

The behavioral instruction in Unified Discipline exposes students to a united, caring, firm, and very determined action plan. The plan includes four interrelated objectives. As cited by White (2001, p. 4), Unified Discipline established:

- attitudes
- expectations
- correction procedures
- team roles

The participants including teachers, administrators, and other school personnel need to adopt a consistent viewpoint about encouraging appropriate behavior and correcting undesired behavior. As cited by White (2001, p. 4), the unified attitudes were as follows:

- support the belief that all students are able to improve their behavior
- provide correction in a professional manner
- support the belief that anger and emotional upset undermine instructional effectiveness

These unified attitudes help to facilitate successful learning activities for all students. Therefore, these activities help students learn how to manage their own behavior. The Unified Discipline methods were effective when teachers' mental and

emotional firmness were consistent. It is crucial that the methods are also supported by the administration and by other teachers.

Expectations for success in schools that were using the Unified Discipline relied on several points. Clearly described school rules, classroom rules, procedures and consequences are all necessary for positive outcomes. The expectations for school rules need to apply across all locations and all activities within the school. All personnel need to be involved in determining the major school rules. These rules will ensure that all students will be free from actions of threat (e.g., physical threats) and be kept safe at all times. The expectations also need to be applied for the minor school rules, such as running or talking loudly in the halls. These actions disrupt the positive flow of the learning process. Expectations applied to classroom procedures should be clear and concise. One example for classroom expectations would be where to find free-time activities. The classroom expectations would of course vary between teachers and grade levels.

When expectations within the school or classroom are violated, professionals would respond consistently using the Unified Discipline correction procedures. These procedures involve monitoring student behavior and applying consequences consistently. As cited by White (2001, p.5), the professional would respond to the student using the four steps below:

- state the behavior
- state the violated rule
- state the unified consequence
- offer encouragement to prevent future violations

Faculty and staff then established team roles. Responsibilities for each member are described. Team roles and responsibilities promote faculty support of administrators and administrator support of faculty. It also eliminates second-guessing when disciplinary actions need to occur.

### Implementation

Implementing the Unified Discipline approach involved several steps. The following is a list of implementation steps and examples. These steps are important for successful outcomes.

- developing inservice procedures – creating materials and scheduling dates
- staff preparation – using demonstrations, practicing, follow-up
- to establish unified expectations – classroom and school rules
- planning intervention procedures – monitoring student behavior, applying consequences
- engaging in scheduled and unscheduled staff meetings- to review, revise, and update information

According to White (2001), the Wheelock Elementary School successfully implemented the Unified Discipline program. Its faculty and staff were determined to increase appropriate behavior and correct misbehavior in their school. They became enthusiastic after participation in an inservice workshop instructed by university faculty.

The staff at Wheelock Elementary School supported the belief that all students were able to improve their own behavior. They were committed to correcting undesirable behaviors in a consistent, professional manner. They would achieve this goal without becoming angry, emotional or become personally offended. The staff also agreed to be

vigilant in their discipline approach. After much hard work, dedication and commitment, the end result was a school that was a safe, orderly, learning environment.

### Criteria for Creating Well-Designed Rules

A good rule management routine begins with a set of well-designed classroom rules that will remind students how to cooperate and practice good work habits. However, before designing effective rules, basic knowledge of classroom management needs to be examined. Teachers should also differentiate between principles, rules, and procedures. Other related criteria should not be overlooked when developing classroom rules. The fact that new teachers have not had formal training in designing a rule management routine puts them at a disadvantage. Disability inclusion should also be examined in order to design rules that would accommodate the needs of these students. In the following paragraphs, these criteria will be examined in order to create the best designed rules for the classroom.

### Development of Knowledge

#### Classroom Management Skills

As Emmer and Stough (2001) believed, the development of classroom management understanding and skill is likely to be a staged process. This means knowledge of how classroom management works will be acquired over many years. A teacher must have a basic knowledge of the many approaches available to build a management routine that is both comfortable and efficient. While there are countless behavior management approaches, only a few have been examined in this research.

#### Principles, Rules, and Procedures

According to Curwin and Mendler (as cited in Rademacher and Callahan, 1998, p.2) a principle defines the positive attitudes and expectations for long term behavioral growth, like showing respect and caring about others. A rule is developed from a guiding principle. A procedure is a specific activity that is directed at accomplishing something that is related to the rule. Therefore, principles, rules, and procedures are necessary for instruction to continue without major disruptions.

### The New Teacher

According to Freiberg (2002) new teachers are often limited in their range of instructional strategies. Often, these teachers were not taught how to establish the positive, organized learning environment necessary for them to teach and for students to learn. This puts new educators at a great disadvantage. They have not acquired the knowledge or skill to determine criteria needed to develop an efficient management plan. After many years of struggle, trial, and error, these teachers have haphazardly developed their own working strategies or the struggle became too great and they have left the teaching field. These educators are expected to comply with national curriculum standards to create an active learning environment. A task in which they have not had experienced instruction. Freiberg (2002) also stated that organizational strategies were the most difficult for new teachers to master. So, in order to create well-designed rules, a new teacher must first become organized and confident in the instructional strategies used in the classroom.

### Inclusion

Cook and Hussey (2002) reported that the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendment of 1997 recognized the right of every child to free and appropriate

education, included the concept that children with disabilities are to be educated with their peers. Emmer and Stough (2001) also presented the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1990 mandates that student with disabilities be provided an appropriate education in the least restrictive environment, which for most students is in the general education classroom. These disabilities could include psychological as well as physiological, or a combination of both. Regardless of the controversy over the inclusive education movement, teachers are continually being placed in inclusive classrooms. Often times the range of student abilities and instructional needs are wide. Teachers often lack the appropriate training and background required to effectively instruct students with disabilities. Therefore, it is very important that teachers gain some basic knowledge in disability awareness. This knowledge is necessary in order to develop well-designed classroom rules to accommodate those students with disabilities.

### Time Management

Time management strategies are also a basis of criteria necessary for designing rules for the classroom. Glazer (2001) expressed concerns for students that may need time management strategies to compensate for a learning problem or perhaps a child at risk. Some time strategies that have been successful with students are listed below (as cited in Glazer, 2001, p. 138).

- using a timer so the child is able to gain control of passing time
- creating a signal for the student to inform “time spent” on a specific activity or task versus “time left”
- providing smaller units of work in regularly scheduled time periods

Teachers who understand and use time management strategies are an asset to the student who is not labeled with a disability, but may have other underlying causes for work delays.

Dornbush and Pruitt (1995) presented an example of an underlying cause for delayed student work and a time strategy to compensate the problem. If a student has problems with handwriting, the teacher could reduce the number of problems on an assignment, test, or homework sheet. Reducing the number will accommodate the handwriting deficits and the slowness with which the student works.

The practice of using time management strategies can aide in designing classroom rules that will facilitate all students. These students will become stronger, more confident learners. Therefore, building self-esteem as well.

As you can see, there is a bountiful collection of criteria to weigh before an educator can begin developing well-refined classroom rules. Those who posses the knowledge and understanding of this criteria will be able to develop and maintain an efficient and effective classroom management plan.

### Criteria for Creating Rules

The following list will entail a more specific look at the criteria for creating well-designed rules, as cited by Rademacher and Callahan (1998, p.2).

1. Make rules acceptable to both teacher and student. Rules should be reasonable, they should be changed when conditions change, and they should be decided upon jointly by teacher and student if at all possible. Giving a voice to students in the formulation and acceptance of rules increases the

likelihood that students will follow them. This in turn will facilitate a more positive learning environment.

2. Begin each rule with an action word. Action words prompt students to act accordingly, with desirable behavior. Thus, action words serve as a reminder to students as to what they must do in order to exercise the correct behavior associated with the rule. The importance of clear and concise wordage stating rules that promote and prompt appropriate behavior for students with particular disabilities cannot be overstated.

Example of precise rule statement: Raise your hand to be recognized.

Example of vague rule statement: Students should never talk when the teacher is teaching.

3. State rules in positive terms. When a rule is stated in positive terms, it implies that students are expected to act in a mature and responsible manner. A negatively stated rule may communicate a negative expectation.

Example of a positive rule statement: Walk in the halls.

Example of a negative rule statement: Don't run in the halls.

4. Focus the rule on observable behaviors that can be taught in association with well-established procedures. A rule must be observable in order to be measurable.

Example of observable rule statement: Raise your hand to be recognized.

Example of unobservable rule statement: Think before you speak.

Observable rules are also measurable. In the example it is possible for the teacher to count the actual number of times the child remembered to raise his or her hand

during the lesson. Measurable behaviors associated with particular rules are necessary in order to give a positive and corrective feedback to the student.

Specific feedback lets students know you appreciate their effort in following class rules. Corrective feedback that includes problem-solving components help students see how their behavior might be improved in a particular area.

Example of positive feedback:

“I noticed that practically all the members of the class remembered to raise their hands to be recognized while the speaker was here.”

Example of positive and corrective feedback with a problem-solving component:

“I noticed that all students followed the speaker’s directions. However, several warnings had to be given to students who frequently failed to raise their hands to be recognized. It seemed our speaker was having trouble telling us about his exciting adventure because of so many student interruptions. Can anyone suggest what we might do in the future to be better listeners for guest speakers?”

5. Relate rules to work and safety habits. Rules should never specifically address academic achievement, but they can reinforce the principles of developing good work habits and establishing a safe environment.

Example of positive rule statement: Begin work on time.

Example of negative rule statement: Everyone must make 85% on the weekly test.

6. Design rules that are general and transferable. Students with learning and behavioral differences often have difficulty transferring what has been taught in one setting to another setting. Therefore, designing rules that help students behave properly across a variety of setting demands is recommended.

Example of general rule statement: Begin work on time.

Follow directions at all times.

Example of specific rule statement: Do your work.

Do what the teacher says.

7. Keep the number of rules small and in sequential order. A general rule to remember is to limit the number of rules to no more than eight, fewer if possible. It is also important to list the rules in a way that will prompt appropriate behavior from the moment students enter the classroom until the end of the school day. This is possible when rules and procedures are clearly delineated.
8. Post rules so they can easily be seen by students and the teacher. Displaying a set of well-designed rules in a significant place in the classroom reminds students and the teacher of a specific code of behavior that has been established and agreed upon by the entire class. For students who have difficulty using appropriate behaviors, the posted rules serve as a helpful visual reminder about how to act appropriately. Teachers benefit by the posted rules because they can easily refer to a specific rule when giving verbal reprimands and that offers the student some choices.

Example of specific rule statement:

“Jane, remember our rule is to stay on task. It’s your choice, so get back to work.”

Example of vague rule statement:

“Jane, you know when you continue to talk to Sam that it bothers everybody.”

### Steps for Planning a Rule Management Concept

Rademacher and Calahann (1998) defined a rule management routine as a systematic instructional process used by teachers to guide students toward successful rule compliance in the classroom. The authors go on to say that this instructional process should be a part of every teacher’s comprehensive classroom management system.

### Classroom Management Procedures

Effective classroom management procedures promote independent learning and success for all students in classrooms that are productive, orderly, and pleasant. Knowing the importance of a classroom rule management routine will help in developing effective classroom rules and procedures.

An efficient and effective rule management concept should include procedures for planning, teaching, and evaluating the effectiveness of the classroom rules. There are many opportunities throughout the school day to define procedures. According to Project PARA, most activities in the classroom occur on a regular basis. Getting materials and starting lessons, asking a paraeducator for assistance, and moving from one activity to the next are all examples of activities which may occur on a daily basis in a classroom. Classrooms that establish procedures for accomplishing activities are more effective.

To create procedures, the teacher outlines the steps in the activity and creates rules for carrying out the procedure. The procedure is then explained to students and practiced in the classroom. The teacher and the paraeducator may provide cues to students, model correct behaviors and reinforce students for following identified procedures.

Listed below are some examples of activities which a teacher might define procedures as cited in PARA (n .p.)

- General procedures
  - beginning of the period
  - use of materials and equipment
  - ending the period
- Procedures during seatwork and teacher-led instruction
  - student attention during presentation
  - student participation
  - procedures for seatwork
- Procedures for student group work
  - use of materials and supplies
  - assignment of students to groups
  - student goals and participation
  - learning teams
- Miscellaneous procedures
  - behavior during interruptions

#### Steps for Planning

Rademacher and Callahan (1998) explained that when formulating rules and supporting procedures, teachers should think in terms of observable student responsibilities. Teachers must also think of their own responsibilities that must be executed in order to create positive and interactive learning environments. It is within the rule management routine where the positive and interacting learning environments must be developed.

The following steps as cited by Rademacher and Callahan (1998) are used for planning a rule management routine.

Step 1. Create rules and procedures based on cooperative and productive learning behavior.

Many behavioral problems can be eliminated when teachers begin to understand individual differences. For example, students who are low-achieving due to differences in learning styles, often have difficulty completing assignment and following rules and instructions inside and outside of the school setting. In other words, teachers who design and later teach effective rules and procedures based on principles of quality work expectations and cooperation will provide the necessary framework for teaching these low-achieving student how to be successful both in and out of school.

Step 2. Identify specific student behaviors for rule compliance.

After rules have been established, it is important to think about what the student needs to do in order to follow the rules successfully. How students will behave in accordance with the rules is important so that teacher expectations of the students can be communicated.

Step 3. Define teacher responsibilities for rule compliance.

It also important to consider what the teacher needs to do to assist the students with rule-following behaviors. Understanding teacher responsibilities associated with each rule are an important element for determining the success of a rule management concept.

Step 4. Establish logical, positive and negative consequences for rule compliance.

Teachers must not criticize student in front of others for breaking rule. If they do, teachers will risk the opportunity to build a trusting relationship with the students. In addition, if the teacher implies that the student who broke the rule is bad, the teacher fails to promote positive self-esteem.

Step 5. Develop communication links among teachers, students, and parents.

Parent support is essential for positive rule management routines to work. It is recommended that a copy of the rules and consequences be sent home to parents on the first day of school. Perhaps older students can include this as a writing assignment. For younger students, a copy could be sent home. Most importantly, parent should become informed of the class plan as soon as possible. In addition to a copy of the rules and consequences, parents should also be notified that the purpose of the rule management concept is to help students become successful at practicing desired behaviors necessary for school and work success in the future. Keep parents informed on a regular basis. Let them know how their child is progressing. Tell parents that consequences will be applied at school, and once

the consequence is served, students make a fresh start. Also, explain that the rule concept will serve as a monitoring system to spot identify possible problem areas that can be quickly remedied in order for each student to be successful in school-related behaviors of self-discipline, cooperation, and respect for others.

Teachers who develop and implement effective rule management concepts do not merely tell their student what the rules directing student behavior are but systematically teach them the reasons of how and why they are following the rules.

According to Rademacher and Callahan (1998) teachers who practice these guidelines operate from the belief that every child has the potential for growth and success. Educators turn their thoughts away from the causes of low achievement and view themselves as pathfinders for improved ways to foster cooperative and productive learning environments where all children learn to work together in meaningful ways. These teachers recognize that well-designed rules based on principles of cooperation and responsibility are the foundation for beginning to teach diverse learners how to become productive and positive citizens. All students want to be successful, and it is our responsibility to see that they are!

### Summary of the Literature Review

Overall, the review of literature gave a broad spectrum of classroom techniques and practices. The review revealed many styles of classroom management approaches and philosophies. No one specific classroom management approach towered over others. Each program had its own unique approach to discipline and management of student behavior within and at times outside of the classroom setting.

The evolution of classroom management accelerated during the 1960s and 1970s, when respect for authoritative figures such as teachers, along with the educational system diminished. Over time, the return of respect for the world of education increased, but has never fully recovered. Today, teachers must continue the struggle of maintaining order in the classroom while creating a positive, productive learning environment.

## CHAPTER THREE

### Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

#### Introduction

Every child deserves a safe and efficient learning environment. For hundreds of years, educators have put their best foot forward and were able to deliver just that. There was order and peace in the classroom. Students were obedient. They attended school every day, learned their lessons well, and were respectful of their teacher. Teachers were able to handle any discipline problem that came along. They had full cooperation and support from each student's parents. Life in the classroom was simple. Teachers could teach, students could learn. So what has happened to change our educational system? The world has changed, and with it has brought many evolutions and conflicts for both the student and the teacher.

#### Summary

Life certainly has changed inside today's classroom. What was once an orderly, productive classroom now has become a chaotic, disrespectful setting. This paints a pretty grim picture of our educational system. Is there hope for a successful change? Can we once again have a proud, productive classroom? The answer to both of these questions is YES! Thanks to the many researchers, theorists, professors, and educators who have dedicated their careers in search of efficient and effective classroom management techniques and practices.

Many new and innovated classroom management programs are now available to assist teachers in building a classroom management system that is effective and easy to use. These techniques and practices will accommodate the wide variety of student

behavior found in today's classroom because of the dynamic cultural aspects and social pressure. There once again can be order and productivity in today's classroom.

### Conclusions

Behavioral theorists, such as B. F. Skinner, have devoted their time and energy into researching behavior, and how we can motivate and condition children's learning. Many others have influenced how behavior can be modified for optimal learning. The history of child psychology and development has assisted teachers in learning the stages a child experience from birth to adulthood. These important aspects of growth and development have assisted the evolution of education and behavior management in the classroom.

Out of all the studies and research that have been conducted in our past, new and successful classroom management approaches have developed. Of the five approaches that were researched in this study, it was found that each approach was unique in its own right. Each had solid goals and objectives. Each had substantial research data to support its theories and ideas.

Some classroom approaches were not appropriate for every grade level. The 1-2-3 Magic (Phelan, 1995) approach was more appropriate for preschool through eighth grades. There was no information found for management at the high school level for this approach. This approach did describe techniques that could be applied at home as well as at school. Having the same behavior management techniques at home and at school would be advantageous to the child who needed strong consistency. On the other hand, Student Peer Mediation was appropriate for older students. This approach also had unique techniques such as students helping other students. It allowed older students gain

skills in conflict and resolution. This approach gave teachers more opportunities to teach because many of the disruptions could be settled outside of the classroom.

There were several classroom management approaches that could be geared toward all grade levels, or used as a school-wide program. The Discipline with Dignity approach offered essential skills and strategies to handle anger and disruptive behavior in the classroom. The main objective was to treat the student fairly, but on an individual basis. The program also strongly encouraged students to learn self-discipline and responsibility. The Assertive Discipline approach (Canter, 1976) could easily be recommended as a school-wide program as well as an individual classroom management program. The rules could be consistent inside and outside of the classroom. For example, the rule of: follow the directions of the adult could pertain to the classroom as well as recess on the playground. This program had an interesting practice of having objectives for both the teacher and the child. White et al. (2001) demonstrated that this approach was very effective as a school-wide program. Its special features included unified support by all faculty members and administrators. This was a rare, but welcomed technique for making all parties including students, staff, and administrators responsible for the success (or failure) of the school-wide behavior management.

The development of knowledge was found to be crucial in creating well-designed classroom rules. Teachers are still at a great disadvantage because professional training often overlooks the issue of classroom management skills. Yet, teachers are expected to create, implement, and maintain high standards for these skills. Teachers need to be organized, efficient, highly motivating educators. They also need to obtain knowledge

from the wide spectrum of categories including principles, rules, procedures, time management and inclusion of students with disabilities.

The steps for planning an effective classroom management concept revealed one overall objective. That objective was to provide a cooperative and productive learning environment for all students. After rules have been established it is important to remember what the student needs to do in order to follow the rules successfully. Communication is and always will be the key to success!

### Recommendations

The following recommendations are made to help the educator analyze critical information about classroom management techniques and practices. It is the researcher's hope that these recommendations may assist in reading and reviewing a variety of classroom management approaches. It is also the researcher's hope that the educator gain appropriate knowledge about the wide spectrum of criteria needed to select and create well-designed rules for an effective classroom management concept. Therefore, the following recommendations are given:

- Communicate high expectations to students.
- Use active listening skills.
- Look for what is positive in a student's work.
- Nurture student self-esteem.
- Create rules that will accommodate all students, including students with handicaps or disabilities.
- Provide positive reinforcement.
- Deliver clear expectations.

- Model effective leadership.
- Be consistent in handling consequences.
- Be fair.
- Always respect student's feelings.
- Avoid sarcasm, put-downs, and ridicule.
- Believe that students are competent.
- Be open to all points of view.
- Be sincere.
- Listen without judging.
- Make parents allies.
- Model the behavior you want.
- State classroom rules in positive terms.
- Always encourage children to do their best.
- Keep parent-teacher lines of communication open at all times.
- Keep children safe.
- Belief in yourself as a fine educator.
- Try new approaches.
- Wait for appropriate response time.
- Set clear, concise goal for instruction.
- Give students choices to develop positive self-worth.
- Get to know your students.
- Start your day off with a positive ritual.
- Provide a productive learning environment.

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