Discipline and classroom management are probably the most taxing aspects of a teacher's role. Many teachers today express concern over student behaviour and wonder how best to tackle the thorny issue of discipline.

William A. Rogers believes that to be effective and positive, discipline must be planned. In **Making a Discipline Plan** he develops the concept of a discipline plan as a system of consistent teacher behaviours that a teacher devises, in advance, to deal effectively with the disruptions that are inevitable with any group of students. When Johnny calls out, when Jason demos with a clownish burp, when Miro says 'This work is boring innt?', when Michelle refuses to go back to her seat, teachers need to know exactly how to handle the specific situation. They need to have a prepared, organised response.

Making a Discipline Plan sets out a range of specific strategies that enables teachers to develop positive, skilled and practical approaches to discipline problems as they arise in the classroom and to respond to them decisively and effectively.

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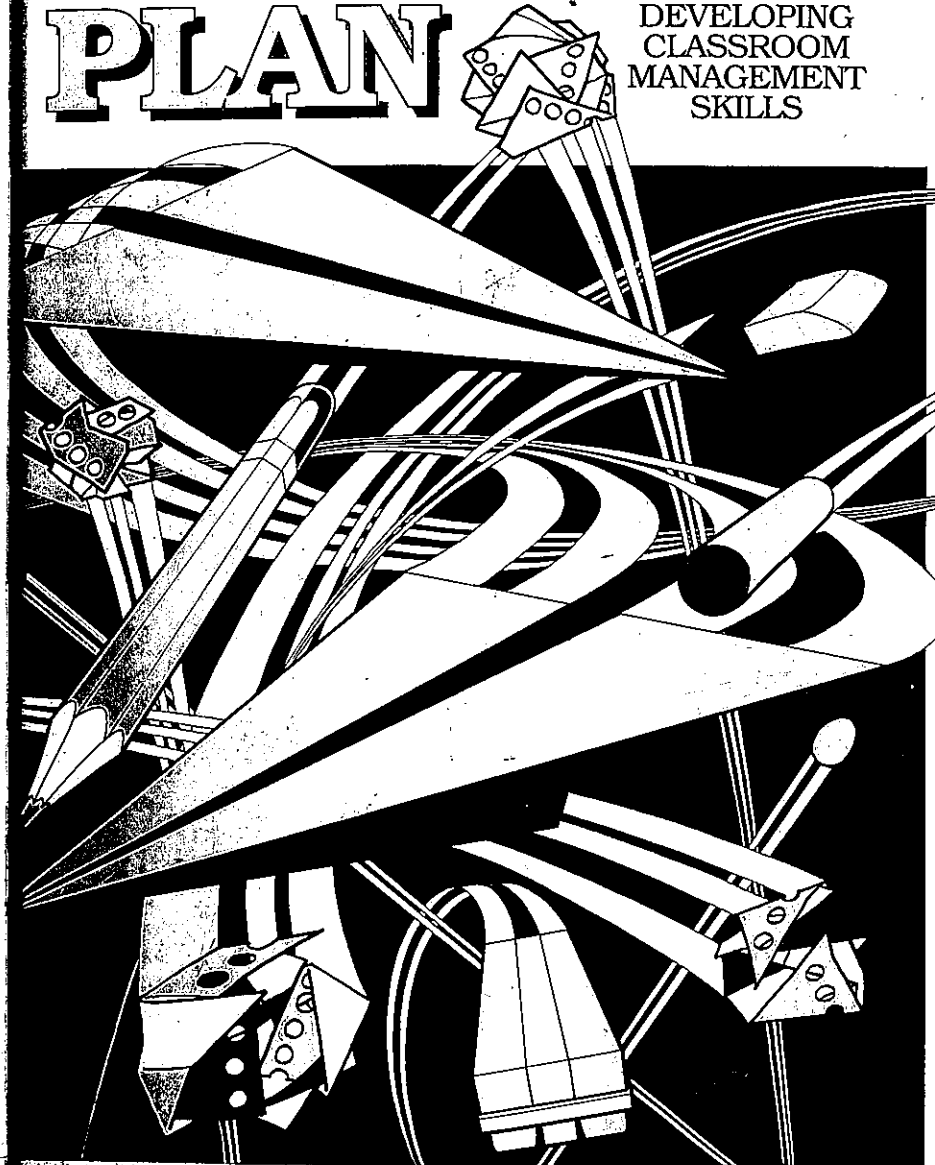
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MAKING A DISCIPLINE PLAN

DEVELOPING
CLASSROOM
MANAGEMENT
SKILLS

WILLIAM A. ROGERS

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Discipline and classroom management is probably the most taxing aspect of a teacher's role. Make no mistake about it; our job, our craft, is not merely teaching content (literacy, numeracy, science, art...) it is managing a group of disparate individuals so that learning can actually take place. The better part of our teaching role is to lead, guide, direct and enable students so to govern their behaviour that each student can cope with, even enjoy, their life in that social mix called school. Discipline is essential if students are going to learn unhampered by annoying, aggravating or hostile disruptions. When discipline is effective the teacher is enabling the maximum enjoyment of due rights by all (including the teacher's fundamental right to teach) by enabling students' due responsibilities–no mean feat.

Control as a feature of classroom discipline is harder these days. Reliance on 'role-authority' to establish control over student behaviour is proving extremely difficult for those teachers who still try it; gone are the days when a teacher could march around the room with a metre (sorry, yard) ruler under the arm and demand silence. "Sit still, shut up, and get your books out!" is easily (and rightly) resisted by today's students. Even primary-age students are arguing for their rights; they will not be treated as passive recipients in the education stakes. With the abolition of corporal punishment in the early '80s combined with a media-satiated society, less stable employment futures and family structures, the children of the '80s present as more precocious, more 'street-wise', and certainly less submissive to adult authority. All this puts a great deal of pressure on the teacher as 'disciplinarian'. In teacher-stress surveys discipline and pupil disruption rate highly as 'causing' significant emotional concern, even distress, to teachers.

But we cannot hark back to some halcyon days when teachers had 'real power' (i.e. the strap or the cane) to control. Not only do children express their relative independence from adult authority earlier these days, and differently, from preceding generations - society itself has changed. The school experience has become democratised; the jargon (and, let us hope, the reality) of the '70s and '80s is social justice. The style of discipline has moved from imposition, power, forced-control orientation to a sense of democracy and fair treatment. At least that's the rhetoric. In this climate teachers are called to a practice of discipline centred on 'rights'. All well and good. But does this mean a weakening of teacher authority and control? Are we virtually saying students have a free reign?

Many teachers express concern over student behaviour these days and wonder how best to tackle the thorny issue of discipline; how to balance leadership and authority with rights and self-discipline. This book argues that discipline has to be *planned*, to be effective and positive. We tend to plan well (sometimes with rigour) for curriculum and method; we tend not to put the same effort into *planning* for discipline. Yet we know, in any one day, there will be a range of disruptions to classroom life and learning. Most (hopefully) will be in the low-level range (calling-out, not having equipment, harmless clowning and the like). No doubt, though, we will strike a few hard cases along the way. A good deal of discipline involves what we say as teachers, and how we accompany our verbal behaviour with appropriate body language. Because we get frustrated when students act disruptively, our verbal repertoire needs as careful planning as our lesson.

This book develops the concept of a discipline plan as a conscious repertoire of teacher behaviours that a teacher plans out, ahead of time, to effectively deal with the disruptions we know are inevitable within any group of students. A range of specific approaches are set out to enable the teacher to develop a more positive, decisive, and skilled approach to discipline.

No one pretends that discipline is easy. To merely hope that students will be fair is naive, even foolish. To simply demand they obey is unjust. To enter the classroom with good curriculum is not enough; we need to know what we are going to do, specifically, when Johnny calls out, when Jason demos with a clownish burp, when Miro says "this work is boorin innt?", when Michelle refuses to get back in her seat... This book is designed to enable that level of planning. Good will and hope are not enough.

As Sydney Harris states in his book *Winners and Losers,* "A loser believes in fate, a winner believes we make our fate by what we do or fail to do".

1 WHO CONTROLS WHOM?

THE NORMALITY OF DISRUPTION

All teachers face, in any one day, any one session, a range of disruptions to classroom life. These disruptions may be the low-level variety arising from attention seeking ('notice me!': tapping, calling out, noise at the desk, loud whispering, fidgeting, calling out, interrupting); they may arise from the child's emotional state (from home environment); they may arise from frustration and boredom; they may be high-level disruptions of defiance, blatant task refusal, yelling, overly mobile behaviour, rude gestures at the teacher, swearing, or even aggression aimed at the teacher.

THE NATURE OF THE GROUP

Disruption is a normal feature of classroom experience, of child and adolescent group behaviour. Even the 'typical' child can be annoying and frustrating at times - it's par for the course. However, for most teachers the bane of their disciplinary life are those behaviours that cluster around attention and defiance: behaviours where the child signals clear messages of 'notice me, notice me!' or 'c'mon, make me!'. Their behaviour demonstrates that their sole purpose is to keep you, and/or their peers, busy with them. They seek an audience of one or many. They include the persistent caller-outer, the class clown, the regular out-of-seater, the procrastinator (or classroom lawyer), the sneaky child who gets attention vicariously (rude signs, teasers, distracting others or hurting others), and the child who uses abusive or 'foul' language to fellow students or teacher.
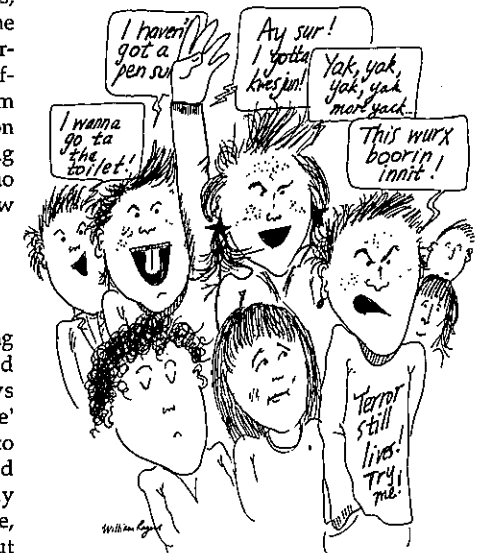
WHY DO THEY DO IT?

Quite apart from the fact that we are getting many more socio-emotionally disturbed children in our classes these days (traumatised by sometimes tragic 'home' settings), all children have to find ways to belong to the group. If they can find themselves belonging by being basically cooperative, on-task and socially responsible, all well and good for 90% of the time. But many children (due to their home patterning) find annoying, frustrating attention seeking or defiance a route towards 'being noticed' or 'having a place' or 'belonging' to their class. In other words, their behaviour is not accidental.

When David persistently calls out and his teacher yells "Why are you calling out again?!", *who is controlling whom?* When a teacher pleads with a procrastinator, who when asked why he is out of his seat (the 10th time!) starts a debate with "I was just gettin' my pencil sharpened - don' pick on me!" (ad nauseam) and his teacher ends up arguing, *who is controlling whom?*

As a first principle in planning discipline it is important to remember that children's disruptive behaviour often has a purpose: namely putting teachers into 'Workcare' quickly. No

- I mean they are *actively* seeking what they often get, *undue* attention. Some of the harder tasks for a teacher are to:

- be aware of a child's 'game' playing: "Notice me!" (attention seeking), "Make me!" (challenging or defiant or contesting behaviour)
- be aware that such disruptive behaviour (children who are annoyingly lazy, who click their fingers and loudly say, "I gotta kwestjun too!!", who say "I'm not gunna do this work," "I hate you") naturally and often easily elicits frustration, anxiety and even anger in the teacher
- be aware that when your guts are tugging and your diaphragm is flapping, that such emotions left to themselves may only elicit behaviour that reinforces the child's 'game playing'
- be aware that we are better served in handling our emotional state and the child's 'game playing' by having a 'plan' that we can mentally tune into.

Managing such behaviours will depend largely on the style of discipline we employ: aggressive/hostile/demanding, submissive/ indecisive, or decisive/assertive.

THREE KINDS OF TEACHERS

The demanding/hostile teacher

The grade 5 teacher, Mr Grayson, seems to wear expressions demonstrative of perpetual annoyance with the world; especially if the world is his annoying grade 5s!

He's trying to teach applied number. The board is full of writing and he is half-way through an explanation of measuring grams.

Paul, a scraggly-haired overweight child lounging in one of the front seats, starts tapping his pen. It sounds trifling and annoying but to Mr Grayson it's a major disruption. He's getting frustrated. Understandably. We all get frustrated; but how best do we handle the inevitable frustrations of disciplining disruptive behaviour in groups?

His shoulders tighten, he glares at Paul and points. "What do you think you're doing? Put that pen down NOW!" He does. The teacher sighs and says, "Gee, what's wrong with you?!", as he turns back to the board. Still very uptight. A few minutes later, Paul starts again. This time Mr G has had it. "Look!" he yells "I said stop it and I mean it!!" He reaches across and snatches the pen from the boy's hand. Paul just sulks and scowls. He's not game to do any more.

The other children are off-task yet again. All are quiet. Mr G has controlled yet another disruption, but at what cost? Inside Mr G is uptight, he's endorsing once again that he must be in control of these children: 'If I let it go, I'm weak'. He demands that children do and be what he requires. On other days you can hear him dish out sarcasm: "you think this is a circus son!"; put-downs: "Look, I've told you a hundred times how to do that, can't you get it into your thick head *yet* ?"

Humiliation and embarrassment: "You, yes you Zlato - I told you, don't come into my class late without a late notice. Now get out, go on!"

Teachers who embrace demanding styles often act from trenchant win/lose beliefs about control. It's as if every little disturbance has to be jumped on. Of course there are degrees of demandingness in teachers, but all rely on authoritarian-style force. Such a style, in its rigorous form, tends to:

- embrace hostility, put-downs and embarrassment,
- minimise or remove student 'choice' or negotiation,
- believe that children can only be controlled by force and external control,
- expect the worst - often getting it,

- confuse *liking* and *respecting*, often ending up by acting on feelings of like and dislike rather than acting respectfully in verbal and non-verbal behaviour,
- disenfranchise children's rights, especially their right to dignified *treatment*.

The indecisive teacher

Mary likes children and respects their rights. She is overly kind but can be pushed-to-the-limit when the children just will not settle down or do the 'fair' thing. Giovani has a comic alongside his maths work. He is giggling and showing it to his mate Vlado. Their noise level is annoyingly high.

Mary walks over to these two year 7 boys and tries to settle them down.

"Gino [his nickname] please put that comic away, c'mon, you know you're not supposed to be reading in class."

Her voice has a pleading quality, her body language is uncertain, she is communicating a message of indecision (as the following diatribe makes clear).

"Not doing anything wrong Miss. I just got my magazine here to show Mr. Davies later."

He messages contempt and felt unfairness in his 'hurt-tone' voice.

"But this isn't Mr. Davies' class Gino. Now please put it away. It's far too noisy and distracting. Please be fair ..." (sigh, sigh).

"Geez, you're always pickin' on me!" He folds his arms defiantly.

He's getting masses of attention, of course, to be increased by Mary saying, "Now look [frustration] please be fair [ever a dangerous approach to take to children in an audience-seeking group] I'm not picking on you!"

Vlado, not to be put out, adds "Yes you do Miss, you're always pickin' on Gino an' me ..."

"Now look here ..." And so it goes. Mary doesn't know where she's going. The boys do. They are grand attention seekers of the procrastination variety. The class find this much more interesting than directed numbers. They, of course, are well off-task by now.

Mary evidences indecision and uncertainty which finds her playing-it-by-ear when it comes to management. She gets so frustrated by their disrespect, intransigence, time wasting and attention seeking but regularly finds herself giving the children what they seek (attention) in ways that perpetuate their inappropriate, disruptive, behaviour.

Indecisive teachers tend to:

- have unclear rules and expectations,
- model uncertainty in their voice and stance,
- have great difficulty in asserting their due rights as a teacher (especially appropriate, respectful authority),
- allow the students to 'write' the inter-personal agenda in the group often ending up in overly discursive approaches to discipline,
- get pushed into yelling (uncharacteristic) or loud pleading.

Both the indecisive and demanding styles tend to lack planned, skilled, approaches to discipline and classroom management.

Taking a decisive approach

Frank has a difficult year 7 (7E!). He's been teaching four years but he's coping reasonably well. He has learned that he must *plan* for discipline just as he plans for his science classes. If he doesn't plan he finds he gets caught with his 'emotional pants down', as it were. He knows,

all too well, that positive classroom management doesn't just *happen* fortuitously; and playing-it-by-ear or how-I-feel-on-the-day, often ends up in verbal slanging with the students.

The children file in with inevitable beginning-of-session noise. He scans the class with his eyes, waits several seconds for them to sit, and then says, "Thanks for settling down ..." (looking in the direction of several quiet children). "*And* Maria, Michelle, Denise....", in other words signals the quieter members. After a while the noisier ones settle down. When they are quiet he begins.

"OK, today we're looking at Pythagoras. Remember him?"

"Ha, ha, not the Greeks" sniggers a terminally zitz-faced sloucher, row 1.

Frank steams on, giving a firm direct eye-gaze across the room to all but the zitz fellow. He's tactically ignoring *him*.

"Now Pythagoras had a fantastic way of finding out the length of the long line on a right angled triangle without actually measuring it." He draws one on the board. "Anybody have any idea how he might have done it?"

Five boys call out, he tactically ignores them. One boy puts his hand up and clicks his fingers (another A-grade attention seeker). Frank says again (he uses tactical ignoring for low level attention seeking like calling out or clowning) "Who'd like to guess?" someone puts his hand up and Frank says, "Yes Mike ..." Because Frank has effective eye-scanning he is able to see the caller-outers without *actually* visually targetting them.

In this way he is able to look past, around, alongside them thus not giving *direct* reinforcement. So far, so good. If any of the caller-outers should relinquish their notice-me behaviour and put up their hands (per the fair class rule) he will duly acknowledge them. It is reinforcement.

If any student calling out is too disruptive he might firmly and clearly restate the class rule. " ... you know the fair rule for communication in our class." Firm eye contact, brief, assertive and he'll swing back quickly to the on-task members of the group.

HAVING A PLAN (FOR OUR OWN BEHAVIOUR)

In fact, in Frank's mind is a plan, an understanding of how he will direct *his own behaviour*. He knows, all too well, that he gets frustrated and anxious (especially with 7E!) so he has planned his basic verbal repertoire *ahead* of the need to actually use it. He has sat down with a few colleagues and discussed effective approaches based around a fundamental concept:

There is a sense in which I can't really decide what Johnny S. or Michelle P. will actually do (especially in 7E). Of course I can predict but I can really only decide what *I* will do - my personal agenda of interaction with the students.

Such planning will carefully consider –
- the normal range of disruptions clustering around attention (*notice me!*) and power defiance/provocation (*make me!*). Such behaviour can easily be reinforced by what the teacher actually does ("Look I won't tell you again!" - though he will. "Don't you dare defy me, now get up and get out!" "Do as I say, now!" "Shh, shh, shh!!!")
- being clear about the nature of the disruption: is the child into attention seeking, teacher-baiting, having a bad day?
- clear rules discussed with the class within a rights/responsibility focus.
- seating organisation, air flow from windows, aesthetics of the room
- expected work procedures
- the effect of curriculum, group work etc.
- actual teacher behaviour in the management context - being *aware* of what I actually do in dealing with disruptions.

At the core of this plan is the realisation that effective management is a matter of skill, not merely personality or good fortune.

The features of a 'plan' are that the teacher is aware of controlling the discipline dynamic by *deciding* how intrusive to be according to the level of disruption. To develop a more decisive approach the teacher plans in a 'stepwise' fashion, going from least intrusive to most intrusive teacher behaviour as the need arises. For example, calling out may be handled by using basic tactical ignoring of behaviour.

If the behaviour is more disruptive - i.e. if the teacher's right to teach or the students' right to learn is being significantly infringed - the teacher may restate the rules, or give a simple direction, or question for feedback.

APPLYING A PLANNED APPROACH TO DISCIPLINE

A planned approach to discipline enables a teacher to know *where* they are going in the discipline dynamic.

Teachers know they will face calling out, interruptions, task-refusal, mobile students, etc. Many of these disruptions will be low-level, but are still annoying and frustrating. From time to time they will experience more intensive disruptions with a difficult grade 6 or year 8.

Teachers need a 'stepwise' mentality. A rehearsed set of basic intervention possibilities (tactical ignoring, simple clear directions, restating the rules, reminding of the rules, asking questions for feedback, simply moving alongside the student, giving choices, isolating students (See later, Chapter 2).

The teacher has thought these through and worked out which approach is broadly appropriate to each basic behaviour (high/low attention-seeking, high/low defiance). The teacher will have sat down with a few colleagues and discussed how to use these in a normal class setting or an 'abnormal' one like 8D.

In the classroom : a plan in action

Watching the teacher (back to Frank) in the room one can observe his plan in action.

When the class settles down (7E Maths) he says his good morning and informs them that they will be studying angles. Two boys, front seats, grumble. He tactically ignores them and continues. He scans across the room with his eyes without giving any eye contact to the grumblers. One boy calls out twice (with his hand up) - he ignores him and continues teaching. He could, of course, remind the whole class of the communication rule, but Frank has chosen to use decisive (tactical) ignoring at this point in the lesson.

He draws a few examples of angles on the board and asks the class how to *measure* an angle. Half a dozen caller-outers start. He only reinforces students with hands up, rigorously

ignoring the calling-out; they shut up. When any of them observe the rule he notices them. He puts up a large sheet, with Blu-Tack, outlining some problems and the basic steps in dealing with them. "Any more questions?" Again a couple of boys and one girl call out. He applies tactical ignoring, directs them to start work, and begins to move around the room.

Frank has learned that it is important not to hang around 'up the front' but to move around, meeting and working with his students. Most start work, a couple of students start talking (turning around to yak, yak), another student folds his arms and looks out of the window, books untouched. Michelle walks up to the board (blocking the view of half the class) and puts her book on the teacher's desk and starts writing.

Another girl calls out, "Sir, Sir whater-we aveter do again?" All this in the space of a few minutes.

He ignores the caller-outer, and walks towards Michelle. As he passes the two yakkers he simply says, "Get back to work please I'll be with you in a moment." He says it firmly, clearly, decisively. He gets up to where Michelle is doing her mini grandstand (watch me) routine and asks what is going on. "Can't see the board can I?"

"OK Michelle, sit in that spare desk over there".

"S'all right here I'm not in anyone's way", face alight with annoyance and where-you-going-to-take-it-from-here look.

"Michelle move over to that desk now, thanks". She procrastinates so he repeats and she picks up her folder and sulks off to sit down. Frank moves off to visit task refuser No.1 and casually says, "What are you doing, Paul?".

"Nuffin".

"Sure, but what should you be doing?".

"Don't want to do this".

"Can you do it, Paul? Do you need some help?" Paul just sits. Frank says "Paul, if you won't have a go now, we'll need to discuss it later. OK?", and moves off, leaving him with a choice. He walks past several students, affirming them, now and then asking, "Where are you up to?", "How's it going?", "Let's have a look", "OK, how'd you go with that first one?". In this way he gently intrudes into their work-space to offer help and direction rather than hostility ("Look, you haven't even started yet!" "Why have you only got the date down? We haven't got all day you know!").

The yakker starts again, Michelle is sulking. He goes up to the loud yakkers who are reminded of the rule: "You know our rule for working noise..." It is an implicit choice, as well as a reminder. They know that if they keep it up he'll come back with a firm choice to work by the class rules or work separately.

He ignores Michelle (no eye contact, he just walks past) and goes back to Paul (task-refuser) who has picked up his protractor. "How goes it, Paul?". He spends a few minutes helping Paul to decipher degrees over 90∞ He notices, out of the corner of his eye, that Michelle has started work and decides to re-visit her in a minute or two. Gino yells out "Sir he just frew my pen on the ground". Frank ignores the outburst, walks past a few bent heads and comments on their work. "Set that one out well... did you get that obtuse angle measured? Good on you..." He notices (with oblique eye sweep) that Gino is arguing with Vlado about something. He doesn't rush over, being half-way through an explanation on 'obtuse' with the now-working Michelle. He looks across directly at the two boys and in a firm, raised voice says, "Vlado and Gino, settle down now. If you can't settle down I'll have to ask one of you to move".

Gino says, "It's not fair!"

"It's your choice", is all Frank will say for now. They shut up but glare at each other.

Frank looks at his watch: 25 minutes until afternoon tea (you beauty!). He walks over to the two boys and quietly reminds them of the conflict rule. They argue with him and he says, "If you can't work by our rule, I'll ask you to move". He gives them a firm, brief, eye contact and moves off to work with other students.

The door bangs and in comes a senior teacher who asks for Michelle. Frank says, "Excuse me Brendon, we're in the middle of a lesson. Can't it wait?".

"No, she's on a smoking detention Frank, the boss wants to see her". Michelle goes out. She comes back into class ten minutes later fuming and stamping and throws herself down at her desk. She sits legs outstretched, arms folded, swearing under her breath. Then she turns around and loudly discusses the bas----s in this sh-t school! Frank can't ignore this one. He calls her over. "Michelle, Michelle I want to see you here, now, please".

She slumps over. He draws her aside from the group near the door and has a quiet word. "Look I can see you're uptight. I know what it's about..."

"Bloody liars, I wasn't smoking. Someone dobbed me in!"

"OK, look I can see you're uptight, just settle down. The others are working. I'll catch you later. OK?"

She goes back, still high but knowing her teacher has at least tuned in to what she's feeling. Frank will follow this up later. If she disrupts the others he'll ask her to move. The rest of the lesson he spends directing Gino away from Vlado for the last five minutes, and plenty of moving around and encouragement to the other students. Just before the bell he asks them to pack up and tidy their books, and has a brief chat about the coming school camp. "OK, chairs under - see you Friday. Michelle can I see you for a moment?"

Anybody watching would merely see Frank walking around and talking to his students. A keen observer would have noticed a sense of control or timing about what he said, and the content of what he said. It wasn't accidental. In Frank's head is a relatively clear sense of direction. I'll do this, before this, after this. If this doesn't settle Michelle I'll need to .... He still gets frustrated by Gino's tapping, Michelle's sulking, Vlado's procrastination but he uses his frustration to generate the interactions he has *planned* so that the students don't dictate his own behaviour. He is seeking to choose how he will discipline rather than simply letting events dictate how he will respond.

2 A DISCIPLINE PLAN : THE STEPS

A discipline plan is a conscious awareness of what one can, and will, do in a discipline transaction. Such a plan has a series of steps that define a given course of action: what one will do, what one will say.

Discipline Steps

A *step* describes the teacher behaviour used to deal with a discipline incident. A simple rule-reminder is a step: "David, you know the fair rule for movement", is the 'scripted' suggestion for such a step. Accompanying the verbal repertoire of such a step would be the appropriate non-verbal behaviour:

> eye contact,
> proximity,
> use of hand gestures.

Verbal Repertoire

A good deal of discipline is what we actually say. It makes good sense, therefore, to plan our verbal repertoire before we need to use it. A form of scripting can help. It's hard to think of positive, respectful, decisive things to say when one is frustrated, anxious or angry. Using appropriate verbal assertion in discipline is the outcome of good planning.

Match the step to the disruption

It is important to match the level of teacher intervention, in discipline transactions, to the level of disruption.

It is inappropriate, for example, to make a big scene over 'wrong' uniform, calling out, out-of-seat behaviour, lateness, chewing gum etc. 'Listen, I'm tired of telling you, get that filthy stuff out of your mouth now!" Such a 'step' (complete with finger wagging) is often straight-out-of-the-guts repertoire, demonstrating little, if any, reflection or forethought.

It is entirely appropriate, say for chewing gum, to merely make a motion with the finger to one's mouth (non-verbal behaviour) and point to the bin as you walk past, or pick up the bin and with a bit of humour quietly say, "Vlado in the bin, thanks. You know the rule - OK?" (A combination of simple direction and rule-reminder).

The *degree of intervention* is determined in the teacher's mind by how disruptive the student's behaviour is with respect to the teacher's right to teach and the other students' right to learn.

In developing a step-wise plan we are asking several fundamental questions:
- What will I do/what should I do when 'x', 'y', 'z' is disruptive? (what steps, what approaches, will I utilise?)
- When will I intervene in a disruption? Timing is important. Some teachers intervene very quickly, others utilise tactical ignoring or brief reminders. The ultimate test is how significantly the disruption is affecting the rights/rules dynamic.
- How will I intervene? What level of assertion does such a disruption merit? (Voice tone, eye contact, proximity.)

The answers to these questions are a combination of planning, better repertoire, trial and error, discussion with colleagues and plain experience.

Knowing what steps one can use, planning and practising them, is at the heart of successful discipline.

From least intrusive to most intrusive

A discipline plan enables a stepwise approach to the discipline dynamic by going from least intrusive step to most intrusive step according to need. Some teachers have little pacing and proceed to highly intrusive measures quickly:

"Put that pen down now!"

"Stop calling out - I'm sick of telling you!"

"One more time, just one more time and you're for it!"

A plan enables us to better handle the inevitable frustration that attends classroom management, by ordering our steps.

A plan gives confidence when the pressure is on

Playing discipline 'by ear' often means leaving it to the vagaries of mood, chance, or circumstances. Knowing *beforehand* that we can proceed through a basic process of steps gives consistency, stability and confidence when disruptions occur.

It's a bit late when the pressure is on and Mike is calling out, Michelle is out of her seat again... and we're getting frustrated, to *then* try to decide what to do. Because we know we will face common control problems (calling out, out-of-seat behaviour, defiance, task refusal) we can prepare an effective repertoire beforehand.

When we are frustrated, anxious or angry we can count to 3 and utilise the appropriate steps.

It is important for students to experience consistency and stability in our classroom discipline. In this way it gives them confidence that things will be followed through, that their rights will be protected, and responsibility/accountability practised in the classroom.

Students want teachers to be 'in control' so long as that control is delivered fairly, within agreed rules, correctly targets the disruptor, gives fair warning, and does not punish out of spite or punish the whole class for the behaviour of a few. Students cooperate when the teacher remains 'calm' and minimises embarassment (Lovegrove and Lewis, 1985). Positive steps enable such control.

Minimise embarassment and hostility

Lovegrove and Lewis (1985) in their research on student preferences for teachers' disciplinary practices showed that students rated teacher 'calmness' and 'minimising of embarassment' very highly. The students did not mind the teacher being firm, within fair agreed rules, providing the teacher remained 'calm' while exercising discipline.

None of us like to be embarrassed or shamed.

Abusing, innuendo, unfair humour ("You've got brains like cement, son!"), sarcasm and embarrassment do work. There are teachers who 'utilise' such practices because they believe they have a 'right' to show-those-little-so-and-sos or to 'get back', or prove who's boss. They are used because of beliefs of power and effect. Such approaches are 'successful'.

Neitschze once said, 'Success is the greatest liar.' Utility is not proof of good management; just because something 'works' doesn't make it right.

I once watched a teacher 'disciplining' two grade three students who came in a few minutes late from morning play. They'd obviously been playing in the mud (probably in an off bounds area). He stopped talking to the class and focussed on the two boys.

"And where have you two been? Um!? You look like you've been in a pig sty!".

(This apparently gave him an idea.)

"Pigs - is that what you are, little piggies? Alright stand up here on these chairs." He then proceeded to get members of the class to make piggy noises at these two, and a chorus of 'oink, oinks' was heard in grade 3 that morning. It worked. It shamed them, it embarrassed

them."Get out and don't come back 'til you've washed that mud off..." He then proceeded to tell the class what he thought of them. I wonder what they thought of him?

Such punishment is demeaning, hostile, unnecessary and undignified.

One can be firm without roughness. One can be clear in discipline and consequences for misbehaviour without resorting to the practices just mentioned.

Whenever we find ourselves in the wrong, we prefer fair, calm treatment - and a chance to 'settle up', to tell our side, to 'cool down'... to make amends. A positive discipline plan builds in such options.

A 'plan' is based on the awareness of distruptive behaviour patterns (section 1)

This enables the teacher not to fall into the easy trap of *over-reacting* to children's attention seeking, defiance, or provocation. Having a 'plan' enables us to better deal with students' inappropriate ways of belonging to the group.

Be brief (avoid nagging or over-correcting)

A step is a form of script that the teacher has prepared to enable her to be brief, clear and appropriately decisive. When students are disruptive they don't listen to long-winded harangues (they have a propensity to feign "what, me?", or simulate deafness). The first few words are important therefore, to establish the *context*. The more we get caught in long discussions with students, in front of their peers, the harder it is to manage the disruption. The first few words, if said a little louder than the rest, gain attention. Then drop the voice. A clear step enables us to decide how brief we need to be. Speaking calmly and firmly should be the routine, so that when/if we *really* have to raise our voice it is more likely to be effective.

How many times have I got to tell you eh.?! What kind of rubbish do you call this.?! I'm sick and tired of telling you to put a margin on your page, and the date, and another thing.....

Teachers who are regularly loud have loud classes, and overly loud classes (as distinct from healthy working noise) tend to be poor learning environments.

If we need to speak at length, or the student clearly feels badly done by, we can

- Take him aside quietly from the group and discuss it .
- Refer it to a follow-up session,

Relationship building

A plan enables us to speak more respectfully and assertively where necessary. In this it enables a better working relationship with the student. Whatever steps we use to enable the student to come back on-task (at least) to stop the disruptive behaviour, is balanced by

- going back to the student when he's on task and giving situation-specific encouragement (encouragement related to work or behaviour)
- showing respect in/out of classroom (even the mere 'hello')
- giving assistance
- providing some opportunities for the child to experience success.
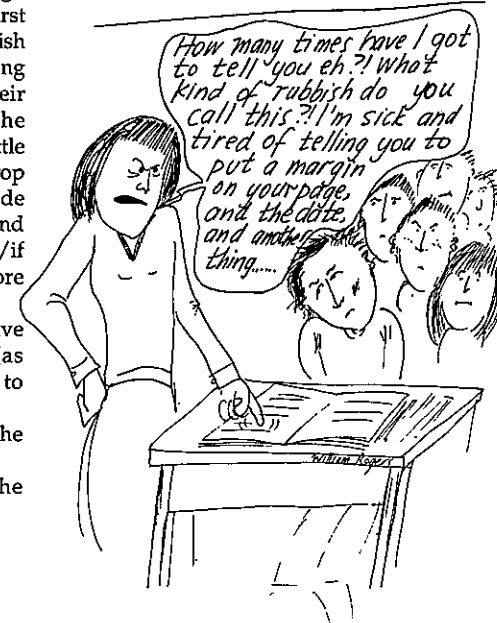
THE STEPS IN DETAIL

The steps are outlined in the following pages in detail. Application of these steps to some of the more common control problems is outlined later.

The steps are discussed in terms of their degree of *decisiveness* of teacher action.

Tactical Ignoring of Behaviour (TIB)

There are many low level disruptions that proceed from a students' desire to gain attention - calling out, sulking, throwing tantrums, persistent butting in, clowning and the like.

TIB *tactically* ignores (a decisive choice not to notice) such behaviour for as long as we deem necessary. TIB is a difficult step to utilise because of the frustration we feel, say, when a student is calling out. We feel we have to do something to make the child quiet.

TIB, however, *is* doing something. We are deciding:
- which behaviours we can appropriately ignore (Never ignore rude, arrogant calling out, swearing, defiance, or aggression.).
- how long we are prepared to ignore
- what we will do then (next step) if TIB is not achieving its purpose, namely negative reinforcement.

The purpose behind TIB is reinforcement. We attend, notice, and reinforce on-task behaviour ("I see your hand up Dave. Thanks, what's your question?") while at the same time looking past, around the calling-out student; treating the disruptor/s (for a time) as if they 'do not exist' (negative reinforcement). If we always notice their off-task behaviour we tend to over-reinforce it. Students are not silly. They are aware when, and why, teachers are using TIB. TIB, of course, has to be balanced by giving positive reinforcement when such disruptors show on-task behaviour.

When students are being tactically ignored the teacher is giving a cue, a de facto choice to the disruptor, to get his attention the way the others are - *reasonably*, fairly, on task.

TIB is sometimes called differential reinforcement. When Johnny Slagg is disrupting he draws his reinforcement from as many sources as possible. If we yell, threaten, take the bait (from the teacher-baiters, you know, "C'mon, make me!") not only do we reinforce the very behaviour we don't want but everybody else is watching too and giving the student reinforcement. Teachers work better when they use differential reinforcement to their advantage, i.e. by positively reinforcing, or sometimes using negative reinforcement (ignoring or isolating the student). In other words, we are aiming to give the student a chance to be noticed for their positive behaviour.

Encouragement is also a form of dynamic reinforcement. At the beginning of the lesson, lining up time, or leaving the class time, pick out students who are on task. "OK, thanks - the chairs are under that table over there. Right, off you go."

TIB does not conflict with the need for teacher control. It is itself a form of control for it says *in effect* to the disruptor, *when* you put your hand up, stop sulking, stop clowning etc., then I'll notice you.

A teacher needs effective eye-sweep skills to pick up on-task behaviour and also not give direct eye contact to off-task behaviour. Whether 'up front', or moving around the room, the teacher needs to be aware of what students are doing so that she can effectively use the reinforcement process by appropriate use of TIB.

Non-verbal Messages (NVM)

A simple eye-message can convey that we are annoyed, decisive, silently questioning, communicating pleasure or happiness. They are useful for communicating intent, as are the expressions on our face and the bearing of our body. If our face messages display boredom, hopelessness, don't-care, such messages will be as powerful as anything we say. If we slouch, if we stand without confidence or in the posture of defeat we are sending clear (and unhelpful) messages. If we are unwell, of course, we are better advised to tell the students - tell them clearly what is happening, rather than by default. If we are really angry it is more effective to *explain* why we are angry; if we don't we only send a partial message. "David, I'm really angry about the way you treated Sean. I expect an apology, and I'll see you later about it."

'I' messages at least explain why we are upset and concentrate on the student's behaviour.

Facial messages should be combined with our verbal communication. To communicate assertion, annoyance, frustration, resolution, 'good-on-you' expressions, appreciation, wonder, even a 'wink' with a smile, can often be a useful 'OK' message.

Casual Statement or Question (CSQ)

Effective discipline seeks to prevent unnecessary conflicts arising. Some teachers can make an overly loud conversation between two children the scene of a major conflict simply by the initial approach they take. "OK what's going on now? Oh, it's you two talking again - look I'm sick and tired of all this ..!" (ad nauseam)

Discipline is relational, it is not *merely* the exercise of power. Where we strain the relationship by increasing the relational 'heat' we make it difficult for either side to effectively manage their mutual obligations.

One way of minimising the likelihood of escalating the problem (of such a disturbance) is to casually move alongside the student and ask a question in a non-threatening tone. The teacher acts *as if* walking by and simply asks,

"How's it going Dave, Paul?" or
"OK, where are we up to on this page?" or
"G'day Mike, how's it going then?" or
"Having problems?" or "Need a hand..?"

Many students recognise this teacher activity and respond appropriately.

"Oh, I'm just gonna start." "Oh, sorry Miss." "OK, OK I'm starting now."

To casually ask a question or make a statement ("Paul I notice you haven't started") without making a big fuss gives the student an easy, face-saving opportunity to get back into the on-task behaviour; to redirect them. Teachers will use this approach for low level disruptions like students yakking off-task, vacant look time wasting, students who appear not to know what to do, fiddlers...

A statement or question is made as if by casual intent without any sarcasm or malice:

"How's it working out?",
"Let's have a look at this Paul..."
"I know that TV show is interesting, but how's the maths going?"
"Michelle, where are you up to now?"

If it is more than a couple of students off-task, look directly and firmly at one of the students then 'eye sweep' the group before asking the question.

For example, a group are apparently time wasting in science. They haven't touched the equipment, have little written evidence of 'activity', but plenty of yakking. Looking directly at one student the teacher eye sweeps the rest and casually asks, "Where are we up to then?" His voice tone is casual but decisive, his body language relaxed, and he is standing not too close to the group.

CSQ as a first step is casual, non-hostile, and keeps a workable relationship going with the students.

Of course, if students start to procrastinate or argue, or defy, the teacher can move on to more decisive steps.

When coming alongside a student's desk to look at, review, or assist them with their work it is important to show basic courtesy by asking, "Can I have a look at your work thanks Michelle..?" Then reach over to move it to a position where you can comment on it. It is their work and it's bad form to poke at it, jab it with an angry finger, or make derogatory comments about it in front of their peers (however bad we think it is). We should never throw their work in the bin (there are teachers who do this in order to teach the student a lesson!). Our guiding principle should be respectful actions.

Simple Directions (SD)

A simple direction should express our intent clearly and simply rather than getting involved in long-winded discussions.
- "Paul put that pen [tapping] down now thanks." (Implied message "I'm trying to teach".)
- "This is a quiet reading time David. Open your book and into it, thanks."
- "Lorenzo, hands off the clay pots. They're not dry yet."
- "Back in your seat now Mike."
- "Nick give me those scissors now, please. Scissors are not for play fighting."

Even the simple "David", said firmly, can communicate a message in some instances. The student is aware of the hidden agenda.

In all discipline it is important to remember to use the student's personal name. It mitigates, as it were, the discipline transaction as does "*Excuse me* Michael ..." "Please" or "thanks".

SDs are generally used early in a discipline transaction.
- Establish eye contact,
- speak clearly, firmly, briefly,
- repeat if necessary
- expect compliance.

Often a SD is a *reminder* to the student:
- "Paul put the scissors away now."
- "Maria pack up the sewing machine please."

When giving a simple direction to a group eye-sweep the whole group, then speak as if to two or three.

"Keep the noise down please, we're trying to work over here."

"Use the equipment properly, thank you."

"Shh", that favourite of some teachers, is quite ineffective; it doesn't explain anything (except one's frustration) and doesn't direct (or re-direct) the student.

SDs can often be combined with other steps, for example:

"Paul and Michael. You know the safety rule. Use the scissors properly - thank you."

Here the rule-restatement is followed by a simple direction.

Simple Directions and small children

Adrian is 5. He presents as an angelic little prep, but appearances are deceptive. He happily enters into the class cut-and-paste activity except at pack up, clean up, time. Ms Dianne comes over and establishes eye contact with Adrian and says firmly, clearly, "Adrian put your scissors away now in the scissor bucket please". She motions with her hand to where the bucket is. "But what about Michelle too?" (he carries on cutting).

Ms Dianne doesn't look at Michelle. She keeps firm eye contact on Adrian and repeats the simple direction. It is not a debate and she is not about to make it into one. He picks them up, shoves back his chair (which falls over - a scene!) and walks over to the scissor bucket. (Ms Dianne is now working with Michelle.) She hears Adrian throw the scissors in the bucket and come back. When he is settled she walks over and gives a new direction. "OK now the clag"

"Oh not the clag!" wails Adrian. (Mummy has picked up after her blue-eyed boy for too long.) Not Ms Dianne. With smaller children a good deal of discipline involves *training* with the directions we give.

Not the clag as well!

- Keep the directions simple, speak firmly
- Stay clear and calm (not hostile)
- Establish and engage eye contact
- Stay close at hand (about a metre away)
- Repeat if necessary, *expect* the child to do it
- Encourage

If Adrian had refused the scissors away routine the teacher would have pursued other steps:

(i) Given him a choice, "Either you put them away now or I'll have to ask you to do it at playtime"

(ii) If he refused then (it's not worth a fight and she knows she can't 'make' him) she would let him know he will not be allowed to use the scissors next time (logical consequence). If the teacher picks up all the time, Adrian doesn't learn responsibility. Most students follow through.

Q. "How long do I have to use SDs? Surely they should know by now the cleaning up rule!"

A. Maybe they should. They don't - as yet.
Maybe Mummsie does all his/her cleaning up at home.
Our job is to lead, train, guide, direct.
Just keep at it: encouraging, expecting, directing.
It's better than nagging.

Rule Restatements, Rule Reminders (RR)

The teacher simply restates the rule to the student or quietly reminds them of the relevant rule. RRs can be employed one-to-one, to the whole group, or to a small group.

RRs remind the disrupting student/s of an established rule:

"Paul, you know the rule for calling out." Brief, clear. Appealing to the rule (*our* rules) keeps the personal annoyance factor down. If the student argues or challenges, the teacher can use assertive 'blocking' (repeating the direction a few times). "But, Paul, you know our rule. If you want to ask questions it's hands up." Don't get caught in futile, pointless discussions when the disruptor has an audience.

When restating the rule it is generally better to briefly refer to the *key descriptor* (safety, communication, learning, movement, manners, treatment, conflict, etc.)."Maria, Denise, you know the rule for fixing up problems" is enough when two students are quarrelling about something. The level of assertion used with RRs depends on how significant the rule-breaking is. Michael dangerously playing with the bunsen burner in science would receive a much more assertive RR then two girls arguing over a texta pen.

Question and Feedback (QAF)

It is useful sometimes to break into a disruption cycle (say a student who is task-refusing, two students talking, a student aimlessly out-of-seat during maths) with a question.

Moving up alongside the student/s the teacher asks:
"What's happening here?" or,
"What's going on?" or,
"What are you doing?" or
"I can hear a lot of noise from over here, what's going on?"
Voice tone during QAF is not sarcastic or threatening, just appropriately firm.

A *what* question is an attempt to get some feedback from the student. *Why* questions are rarely helpful when a student is in the group.

Why questions are better used when taking the student aside (TCA) or in contracting, conferencing steps. Most students say "nothing" in answer to a *what* question. At that point it is better to simply inform the student about what we heard or saw (our feedback to the student).

A student is throwing the M.A.B. blocks at another student - silly behaviour.
T   "Michael [said firmly] what's going on?"
S   "Nothing" (pained expression)
T   "You were throwing blocks at Paul"
S   "He was, as well!"
T   "Put the blocks away, both of you". (SD) (no discussion)

One further way of using *what* questions is to use an approach I call the simple interrogative. It is a variation of QAF.
T   "What are you doing Michelle, Denise?"
S   "What's it look like?" (in smart alec tone)
T   (Not drawn in) "Actually it looks like you're talking loudly over here [feedback] What should you be doing?"
S   "Dunno!"
T   "You should be doing your maths. Would you get back to your maths quietly, thanks."
(SD) The implied agenda here is "If you don't, I'll come back with a clear choice that may involve you being separated, or staying back to explain your behaviour."

This brief transaction puts the students in the context of making a value judgement about their behaviour.
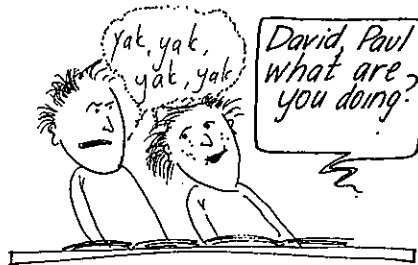First question: "What are you doing?"
Depending on the answer the teacher will either re-direct the student to his work or tell him what he is *actually* doing and ask a second question "What should you be doing?"
If the student doesn't know or tries to faze the teacher, redirect using a SD.

Distractions and Diversions (DD)

Teachers can often anticipate a disruption or problem, and distract or direct the student. We can do this by:
- inviting some assistance
- asking a question
- simply moving close to the potential disruptor while working with another student nearby
- asking them questions about their work
- giving them a task
- inviting another student to work with 'x'
- asking the student to move before a possible disruption occurs

Defusion (DEF)

Appropriate, judicious, humour can sometimes take the heat out of a problem. If the student drops his pencil box and shouts, "Sh-t", the teacher could say "Where?". Most students accept repartee or the little *bon mot*.

Marie says "sh-t" regularly; this time the teacher hears. He walks by and with a smile says, "You'll be in it if you keep talking like that Marie".

Paul, frustrated with his compass, said "Bugger this bloody compass".

The teacher, with the ready *bon mot*, replied, "Didn't know you could do that with a compass Paul!" "Eh?" says Paul.

Paul is not aware of the etymology of 'bugger' but he has been distracted and the heat defused. The teacher would follow up with the student later, if necessary, to discuss the level of swearing.

Not all teachers can use this step. It relies on a judicious sense of humour and a ready wit, but is very effective, maintaining a good working relationship with students while keeping the heat down.

Deflection (DEFL)

This is where the teacher acknowledges the student's frustration, anger, or anxiety but refers the student back to appropriate behaviour. "I can see you're uptight Michelle, *but* other students are trying to work. If you want to cool off, you can sit over there."
S   "This work [the student is clearly frustrated] is just so gross, its boring Miss!"
T   "I can see you're frustrated Nick, *but* that's the work I have to teach (DEFL). Not all our work is boring. Can I give you a hand?" (DD).
Acknowledge their position, but deflect the dialogue back to what the student should be doing, or could be doing. If they can't or won't settle down give them a choice (see later).

Taking the Child/Student Aside (TCA)

It may be necessary with some students (who are late, who are upset, who are teasing others, who are not settling down after appropriate warnings) to call them aside. Call the child over, quietly, from the group. Speak to them away from the others, preferably down the back of the room. TCA minimises hostility and embarrassment, gives time for a brief discussion and allows the student a right of reply if they feel unjustly targeted. Be sure the child knows what he should be doing before you ask him to go back to his workplace, seat, or group. If they are really uptight, a quick chat directly outside the door may be appropriate. "Look, Dave, what's up? We can't keep on like this, I've asked you three times to settle down, now what's up..?"

It may be appropriate if the child is upset to have a cooling off time before resuming work.

Clear Desist or Command (CDC)

This would only be used where the child is clearly engaged in significantly dangerous behaviour to himself or others. "David! Put that acid bottle down now! Move over there and wait." "Right, rest of you back to work."

"You two, Mike and Paul [fighting in class] move! Paul over there, Mike over there. Settle down, I'll speak to you in a moment." Be firm, be positive, be clear.

Physical Intervention (PI)

PI should be used with extreme digression and only in line with school policy and Education Department guidelines (e.g. fighting, attack on teacher, small children who throw a tantrum and are in the way of others, small children who self-inflict pain). We need to remember that corporal *punishment* has been abolished.

Assertive Message or Statement (AMS)

AMSs state the teacher's concerns or feelings about the disruption as it affects the rights of class members (including the teacher's rights). AMSs distinguish between the student and his action; the teacher conveys his feelings using 'I' messages. "Paul, I'm really angry at what you've said. You do yourself no credit by swearing like that." "Michelle, you can see I can't teach with that noise [the teacher may, here, wait for the whole class to focus quickly on Michelle], you know our fair rule." AMSs state one's rights, or protect others' rights by concentrating firmly and decisively on the *effect* of disruption. AMSs can be addressed to the whole group, or on a one-to-one basis, but are most effective when used infrequently.

Isolation Within the Room (IWR)

When a student will not settle down at his regular seat he is given a choice (SC) to work quietly or move. If he continues the loud yak, yak, he is asked to move across to an isolation desk and work there. This is not 'time-out' but a form of logical consequence. "Because you won't work quietly here I'm asking you to move over there (gesture) and work in that desk."

Blocking Statements (BS)

If a student argues, procrastinates or becomes tiresomely quarrelsome (the classroom lawyer), wanting to take the teacher everywhere rather than take personal responsibility, the teacher can repeat the SD, RR or SC. "Blocking" is a verbal stratagem that reasserts a teacher's fair direction using the same form of words - repetitively.

T   "David go back to your seat please",
S   "But I was just gettin' a pencil!" (for the third time, thinks the teacher)
T   "OK. Back in your seat please"
S   "You're always picking on me" (teacher-baiting time)
T   (Not drawn) "Just get back in your seat David." He slinks back as the teacher moves off to work with an on-task student. She will come back to work with David when he's on-task. Three 'blocks' are normally sufficient. If a student continues to procrastinate the teacher ought to give the student a simple choice.

Giving Simple Choices (SC)

Empty threats are pointless. It is far better to put the student into a context where he/she has to choose the responsible alternative. Choices enable students towards some measure of self control.

Choice over one's own behaviour and about one's behaviour is central to self discipline, self control and tolerance to frustration. When we phrase our 'step' in the context of a choice we are challenging the student to take responsibility for his behaviour.

When we use a SC with a student we need to phrase it as a choice, not a threat. "Listen, I said if you don't shut up you can move. Right!?" is a poorly disguised, hostile, threat.

If we have to give a choice to a couple of loud talkers (working noise that is inappropriate, disrupting others) we phrase it better by saying "Michelle, Denise, if you keep

talking loudly I'll have to ask one of you to move." "I'll have to ask..." is a better phrase than "I'll move you," or "I'll make you move". We can't actually *make* a grade 6, or form 2 student *move*. We can direct, ask, restate the rule, give a choice, but we cannot actually pick them up and move them! So why not phrase it as a choice? In this way we treat the student firmly, and with respect.

Simple choices should be preceded by appropriate warnings or RRs or SDs or QAF approaches. When we are giving a choice (SC) we are saying that the situation is significantly disruptive; it is a form of final warning.

Its most extreme form would be where a student is so disruptive that the teacher has to phrase the final step as: "Jason, if you won't work by the fair rules of our room we'll have to ask you to leave". (She may add "it's your choice").

Giving choices in conflict situations is also a way of *defusing* the conflict by putting the responsibility back on to the student.

Time Out in the Room (TOR)

Is generally the opportunity given to a student to 'cool off', 'settle down' or experience isolation as a result of on-going disruption. It is time for the student to reflect on his/her behaviour during which they do nothing at the isolation desk (or, with small children, a corner in the classroom). Students are made aware they can come back to their activity whenever they are ready to work by the fair rules.

Time out is a serious step and should be used judiciously. The normal length of time out in the classroom is between 5 and 15 minutes. Elementary grade teachers sometimes use a timer for such students. Again TOR should be prefaced with a simple choice.

Can I See You? (CISY)

Reminding the student you will follow up later, "Can I see you?" is said towards the close of the lesson as a reminder you will keep them back to explain their behaviour.

It is a way of following up and following through. It assures the student you are fair dinkum, and consistent.

Where we need to regularly keep a student back (i.e. a pattern of disruption) we need to employ conferencing and contracting steps. Such steps enable a student to face up to some accountability and responsibility. It may also uncover extenuating circumstances which need to be considered when applying consequences. We will often need to call in senior staff, parents, welfare teachers or other personnel to support us in on-going management of long-term disruptions. It is at this point we develop a plan with the student (and parents if appropriate) to contract for appropriate behaviour. The teacher (and other staff) will offer appropriate support for the utilisation of a mutually agreed plan.
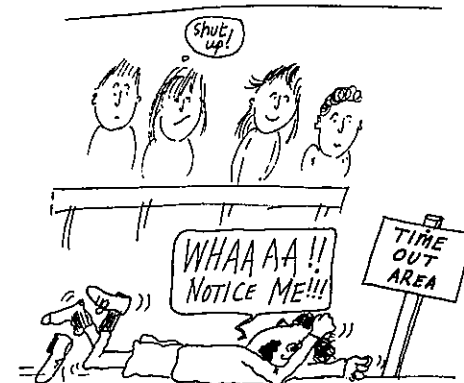
Basic Contracting/Counselling Steps (CCS)

"What are you going to do about your behaviour, David?"

"What is your plan so you don't break our fair class rule again?"

"How can I help you with a plan?"

With Glasser's (1969) approach the time out process is a time for the student to 'cool off' and come up with an acceptable plan to deal with their behaviour.

Contract/s would then be affirmed and applied in line with behavioural (logical) consequences.

If the student is being dealt with outside of class (he/she has been exited) then this approach to questioning is more effective because it focuses on a student's responsibility. It can be combined with conflict resolution and reflective listening, but the final stages need to move to, "*What* are you going to do about your behaviour?"

Steps beyond counselling, contracting, and parent conferencing may include:
- Suspension
- Welfare/support group
- Part-time school attendance
- Regional support (from psychologist, specialist teacher, social worker etc.)
- Inquiry procedures

At each stage, however, we seek to firmly place responsibility (relevant to child's development) back on to the child while at the same time offering as much support as possible.

Exit Procedures (EOR)

When a student's behaviour is so disruptive that other students' rights are being infringed or a teacher's rights (to teach/communicate and manage the group) are significantly disrupted, then a teacher may need to exit the student/s. Of course, *any* exit procedure will have been preceded by some steps aimed at enabling the child to manage their own behaviour.

A teacher may need to exit a student for:
- aggressive behaviour that won't settle down
- fighting
- continual disruptive noise or clowning around
- dangerous behaviour
- tantrum behaviour that will not settle down after appropriate ignoring
- *or* any behaviour that overtly *continues* to disrupt the learning/behaviour rights within the group.

It would be churlish to exit a student for *just* swearing once, even if it is directed at the teacher. There are several less stressful and reinforcing ways to handle conflict than *demanding* apologies and then exiting said student.

It is most important that a teacher thinks through steps or responses to deal with likely disruptive behaviour so as to develop some consistency in conflict management, rather than relying on reacting to events as they come.

An option to *exit from the room* is to send the overly disruptive student to a colleague's room. That is, use another room for a time-out phase to give the child time to cool off and think about re-negotiating entry back to your class. When the student goes to another room, because it is a different audience the child is less likely to continue attention-seeking or yelling or challenging. Some schools have an exit-card system, a small card with exit written on it and the room number. In a crisis situation a runner is sent to the main office with the card. The office then locates a resource person (generally a senior teacher) who goes straight to the room to give support. Whatever system or approach is used, we need to be sure we know exactly what the school policy is regarding exit-from-the-room.

Exiting is a last stage when other steps have been pursued. A teacher needs to be assured that he/she is not impugned as a failure just because Johnny Snott is exited (*providing* serious attempts at rational conflict resolution are the teacher's normal route). A constant exiting of Johnny may indicate as much a problem about the teacher as it does about Johnny.

Exit procedures are best employed calmly and clearly without over-reinforcing the exiting student ("I'm glad you're leaving !!", or turning to the class to whinge, "Goodness, what a foul-mouthed wretch that Dianne Swine is!!"). The exited student needs to know that they will be accepted back when they abide by the fair rules/rights/responsibilities of *our* room.

Questions to be answered are:

(i) *Who actually exits the child?*

It is problematic if it is left to the teacher, as they have 25 or so other children to manage. It is especially difficult where the child/ren are highly aggressive or angry. Some schools have an allocated senior person. Where this is not possible (in a small school) the teacher 'across the way' may quickly step in and remove the child.

(ii) *What will happen to the exited student?*

- Will it be a properly organised time-out process?
- Sent to the D.P.?
- Sent to coordinator?
- Notify parents?

(iii) *What will be required of the student to re-enter the classroom?*

- Verbal contract, verbal assurances?
- Consequential warning?
- Time Out is, essentially, time away from the group to rethink one's behaviour and come up with an agreement to work by the fair rules, or to follow consequences.

(iv) *If a student has a pattern of being exited - what then?*

(The school ought to have a clear policy on this)

For the teacher the assurance needs to be given that a clear exit procedure is school policy. The teacher may need back up, and some work on pre-exit steps where an unhelpful pattern is observed (i.e. being exited for low-level or badly-handled disruptions).

For the student being exited is a serious matter and they need to understand that they must renegotiate their entry back into the room on a clear understanding of their rights and responsibilities. At all times the exited student should be spoken to in the language of responsibility and choice.

These steps, then, are the building blocks of a discipline plan. They are balanced by a teacher's encouragement, sense of humour, curriculum, personal manner and demonstrated care.

When developing a discipline plan it is important to develop it within our own personality and style.

When using a plan we will be at different levels with different students in the same lesson.

The significant point, though, is that *we* are prepared -
- prepared to better deal with frustration and uncertainty,
- prepared for likely (normal) disruptions,
- prepared not to get caught in long discussions,
- prepared to be as decisive as may be necessary,
- prepared to enjoy teaching.

It's not all managing off-task behaviour. The better we work at the relationship-building the easier it is to teach, lead, direct, motivate and even correct. Students accept correction and direction far more positively when the relationship is *human* (fair, humourous now and then, effort expended to make lessons as interesting, and clear as we can, and where we employ respect and encouragement).

SUMMARY OF THE STEPS

TIB   Tactical Ignoring of Behaviour
NVM Non-verbal Messages
CSQ Casual Statement or Question
SD   Simple directions
RR   Rule Restatements/Rule-reminders
QAF Question and Feedback
SI   Simple Interrogative
DD   Distraction and Diversion
DEF   Defusion
DEFL Deflection
TCA   Taking the Child Aside
CDC Clear Desist or Command
IWR   Isolation Within the Room
BS   Blocking Statement
AMS Assertive Message or Statement
SC   Simple Choices
TOR   Time-out in the Room
CISY Can I See You?
EFR   Exit From the Room

The following section outlines how these steps
would be used in the context of 'normal' class.

3 DISCIPLINE AND ASSERTION

Assertion is best seen in contrast to aggression. Aggression is based on a win/lose stance: I must win at the expense of the other. Teachers who discipline aggressively believe they are acting powerfully, even decisively, when in reality they are acting harshly, rudely, meanly, unfairly, and in some unfortunate cases heaping abuse on the student.

When a teacher is aggressive their language is often couched in threats or hostile terms: "I said so, alright", "Don't argue I'm the teacher!" "Shut up and listen!" When aggressive teachers get angry they rarely tell (explain) their feelings, they simply emote. If we observe the body language we see tense shoulders, glaring, pointed gesticulating fingers or clenched fists, angrily waving in the air, slamming hands down on desks.

Aggressive teachers will often justify their behaviour by explaining that, "student X is a turd anyway so why not let him have it, the little b-----d!" Such teachers care little about building positive working relationships with their students.

EMOTION DRIVEN

When children are calling out, answering rudely, baiting us, are lazy, slack, indifferent, when they turn up late without books or equipment, when they "yak yak" instead of working we get frustrated, we get angry, sometimes (with those grade A disruptors) we get anxious.

Our physiological state is giving us clear messages, "I'm frustrated by that kid!" that's normal; it's OK to have such emotions, it's part and parcel of our profession, banged up as we are with a group of disparate personalities all seeking their place in the group. The question is not the emotional stress (much of it normal level stress) but what do we do with such feelings?

The most unhelpful thing to do is to simply act *from* those feelings. I feel frustrated by Jason calling out, I act frustratedly, "Jason! *Will* you put your hand up, for crying out loud? I don't know how many times I've told you Jason (sigh)!" Our emotions, in classroom management terms, don't tell us what to *do*, they merely indicate what we are feeling at a given moment. Such feelings are often a good *indicator* of where the students' behaviour is coming from (i.e. attention seeking or power provoking).

In classroom discipline terms we need to recognise our feelings *in concert* with the students' disruption and use it to marshall an appropriate step/steps that form our prepared plan.

I can't help my feelings

A commonly heard statement among teachers is "I can't help it..." "He makes me angry..." "she drives me up the wall with her damn whingeing!". "I could throttle that Jason - fair dinkum!".

While this is common enough language it indicates the ease with which we play 'victim' to another's behaviour to dictate our response. When we use prepared discipline steps we are deciding how assertive we need to be according to the level of the disruption.

ASSERTION: OUR CHOICE TO BE DECISIVE

An assertive approach in managing emotions does not deny the feeling of frustration, but uses it to decide ('freely' from one's emotion) how one will act. It is counting to 3 and saying to oneself "OK, I am uptight but I can choose to respond in a way that doesn't wreck things unnecessarily." It is the redefining of our responses, so that we take responsibility for our thinking and emotion as well as our final action.

Essential points to remember in an assertive approach:
- Count to 3.
- Establish clear eye-contact with the disruptor (whether from a distance or close alongside - not too close, about a metre away).
- Speak clearly and firmly.
- Explain briefly *what* they are doing.
- Direct (not threaten) them to the fair rule, or reasonable behaviour (SD).
- Give a choice or option if appropriate (SC).
- Don't waste time arguing, but restate your fair position. Use phrases like, "Yes, but you know our rule Maria..." "But, Paul, I've asked you to settle down twice..." State the situation as you see it within the fair class rules (RR).
- If you're really angry, it's better to explain so, but it's also better to be angry on issues that really count (*not* chewing gum, lateness, calling out, but things like putting other students down, racism, hurtful language, unsafe behaviour, aggression).
- Speak clearly, firmly, respectfully. Gesture with your hand to assert a point without pointing or waving. Use the open hand, palm extended, to make the point.
- Intentionally choose not to embarrass the student with phrases such as "You idiot!", "Dummy", "When will you ever learn?", "You always get this wrong, don't you?!".
- Explain to the student how you think and feel about their behaviour. "Melissa, I can't teach when you continue to make that noise..settle down."
  One way of doing this is to take the student aside quietly (TCA). This enables you to state your concerns appropriately (or restate the rules).
- Explain to the other party what you would like to happen. "David, I can see you're uptight, I want you to sit over there and cool off. When you're ready we can talk." (DEFL/TOR)
- Invite cooperation rather than forcing it. Demonstrate you want to assist by giving options or choices rather than threats.

We can communicate the *language* of choice in various ways.
- "David you've got a choice, you can either work quietly here or I'll have to ask you to work by yourself, over there."
- "Michelle if you can't work quietly here there's a desk over there..."
- "OK, Zlato, Michael, you know the rule for working noise - if it keeps up I'll have to ask you to work apart."
- "Excuse me Paula, Denise, I can hear your talking from over here. Too loud [feedback]. If it keeps up I'll ask you to separate. It's your choice."

All of these steps present a choice to the student and would have been preceded by either a simple direction or rule reminder.

PROCRASTINATION

Michelle (year 8) has wandered out of seat, in the Maths class, and is kneeling down with her maths book propped up against her friend's desk. She is yakking away to her three mates at the back of the class.

The teacher walks by without looking, hoping that an initial TIB (tactical ignoring of behaviour) will see Michelle go back to her desk. She doesn't. Michelle is clearly ignoring the fair class rules (learning and movement).

The teacher walks over, with a firm eye-contact, and gives a simple direction.

Step 1   *"Michelle please go back to your seat."*

"Why? I'm still doing my work". At this point it is pointless to argue with Michelle; she is a past master of procrastination, and it serves no useful purpose to answer her "Why?" question. It is better to repeat the direction (a form of reasserting and 'blocking' the procrastination BS).

Step 2   *"Michelle, would you please go back to your seat"* (gesture with the hand). The teacher is acting from the security of knowing where she is going. If Michelle refuses she will give a choice, if Michelle still refuses she will remind her that she will have to stay back and explain why she won't go back to her seat (CISY). The teacher has established a positive relationship with the class so that a fair direction is simply that - a direction, not a threat or a challenge.

Step 3   Michelle argues on. "I'll go in a minute. Don't pick on me!".

"Michelle, go back to your seat now thanks." If Michelle refuses, the teacher will give a choice (SC). When 'blocking' (or reasserting the direction or rule) it is wise to stop at the second or third repetition then leave the choice with the student (SC). Beyond three reassertions our directions become bogged down in a win/lose position.

Michelle picks up her book and grunts "see yer" to her mates and swaggers off to her desk. The teacher moves on to another student and will now tactically ignore (TIB) Michelle for a while. Michelle slams her books down on her desk, folds her arms, leaves her books untouched, and sulks. ('Sulk mode' is another version of attention-seeking. "Notice me", "pity me", "say you didn't mean it!") The teacher walks around Michelle, past Michelle, talks to students close by Michelle, but gives Michelle no direct eye contact or attention (TIB).

Five minutes or so later, out of the corner of her eye (non-direct eye contact) the teacher notices Michelle pick up her pen. She moves towards Michelle's desk and asks how things are going. Michelle grunts "alright", without looking at the teacher (after all she doesn't *like* the teacher at this point).

The teacher doesn't berate Michelle or say "Don't speak to me in that tone of voice!", neither does she seek redress, "Michelle, I've done nothing to you - why do you speak like that to me?". She merely has a brief, respectful, chat to re-establish working relationships. "Do you know what to do next?"

("Grunt"),

"OK, Stick with it Michelle."

"Yeah".

The little transaction is processed by the teacher as:
1 simple direction
2 repeated (as necessary)' blocking' or re-assertion
3 re-establish working relationship with the student
4 if necessary have a chat with Michelle later, when the class has finished.

A 'verbal block' is not a process of putting a child down, it is an attempt to not get caught in long winded discussions where other students are giving an audience to the disruptive student. 'Blocking' is best used then:
- when a student is clearly argumentative, quarrelsome or 'setting the teacher up',
- when the teacher is speaking with appropriate assertion without threat, humiliation or sarcasm,
- when the direction is clearly concerned with significant rule-breaking,
- as a message to the student that now, *right now*, is not the time for discussion but action. We communicate to the child that they have a responsibility, and we are merely reminding them of it.

EXPECTING COMPLIANCE AND COOPERATION RATHER THEN DEMANDING IT, OR MERELY HOPING FOR IT

When we are assertive in our communication to students we will speak in such a way as to expect the student to comply.

If Jason is tapping with his pen at the beginning of the science lesson we are faced with a choice. What will we do? Grab it off him? Yell at him to put it down? Ask him nicely? Ignore him?

It's a bit late there and then to decide what to do if we haven't already thought about appropriate steps for interrupting noises. If we haven't planned ahead it's easy for our frustration to get the better of us.

Let's assume we try a bit of tactical ignoring; it has no effect, and the noise continues. We have a right to teach, he is abusing it. Rather than walk over and make a scene (by grabbing the pen... what if we're not quick enough, apart from the hostility of it?) we can give a simple direction briefly, calmly, assertively: We eyeball him, extend our hand, and say "Jason, put the pen down thanks." Keep the eye contact established for a few seconds and add "Good on you" as we turn our attention back to the class as a whole. We imply by our tone of voice (clear, firm without threatening) our eye message ("I'm fair dinkum") and our bearing that we expect his compliance and, indeed, cooperation. We add "Thanks", or "Good on you" at the end of the direction to communicate that it is a fair direction and not merely a power-play.

In other words we are treating the student *as if* he will comply. If he chooses not to (and it is his choice) then we would either repeat the direction, give a simple choice ("Jason, if you continue to make it difficult for me to teach I'll have to ask you to stay back and explain your behaviour later."), or we could use a specific assertion about our right to teach, "Jason, that tapping is making it difficult for me to teach and for others to listen. Put the pen down thanks." Retain the eye contact for a few seconds until the pen is put down.

Some teachers may feel comfortable about using gentle humour "Nice rhythm Jason; but music is not on till after lunch. Put the pen down ... Ta." With smaller children (P-3) we may simply extend our hand and direct the student to give us the pen now thank you.

SUMMARY

- Being assertive is neither aggression nor submission.

- Being assertive means being clear, giving choices, respecting mutual rights.

- Being assertive means one has to think about the better thing to say rather than speaking and acting simply from one's feelings.

- Being assertive means separating the child's action from the child as a person.

- Plan, ahead of time, how best to act assertively. Think of common situations and plan some 'steps'.

4 USING A DISCIPLINE PLAN: CASE STUDIES

In reading the case studies, refer back to the steps (using the abbreviations) to refresh your memory. The case studies are given as examples of how a plan is processed in the teacher's thinking and behaviour.

CALLING OUT IN CLASS

- "Shh!" "Shh"
- "I won't tell you again" (but she will in the next minute or so)
- "I'm tired of reminding you to put up your hand!"
- "Don't you know the rule by now?"
- "Why are you calling out..?"

These (and other) stock teacher phrases tend to over-reinforce attention seeking. "You're calling out again Dawkins!", merely states something everyone knows and still reinforces the attention-seeking behaviour. This is why TIB is such a powerful teacher behaviour, conveying to the group the message "When you're off-task I'll ignore you" (unless you *significantly* disrupt our class). "When you're on-task (hands up) I'll attend to you." When using TIB during calling out it is important to be on the look out for students who are on-task. This is where effective eye-sweep is important.

When the calling-out student puts his hand up (with a closed mouth!) it is often useful to say "I'll be with you in a sec.", to give immediate reinforcement. If there are several people waiting, thank them for waiting then answer students in turn as time permits.

Step 1 Start with TIB. If student is still disrupting and tactical ignoring is having little effect, restate the rule (RR).

Step 2 "Dave (always use the child's first name) you know the rule for communication in our class, use it thanks." (RR)
Brief, clear, and reattend quickly to on-task students. Immediately pick out an on-task (hands-up) student. "Yes, Maria, what's your question?" This diverts attention back to the on-task students.

POSSIBLE STEPS FOR CONTINUED CALLING OUT

Step 3 If the student is still *significantly* disruptive then give a simple direction (SD) or simple choice (SC) or assertive statement (AMS).

SC: "Dave, if you keep calling out I'll ask you to stay back and explain to me why you can't keep the rule." (With younger students, P-4, a teacher can direct the student to the time-out corner in the room).

AMS: "Dave, you can see I can't communicate with that noise level" (teacher waits, looks at rest of the class to pick up peer pressure).

Utilising a discipline plan

Some common problems are calling out, silly behaviour, noise, interruption, no-book-or-pen-sir!, task refusal, off-task, low level swearing, out-of-seat.

Beginning the lesson

Mr P (Form 1) has started the lesson "OK, we'll make a start." He doesn't pick on the noisy ones, he looks around the room and reinforces the students' settling down. "Thanks Maria, Paul, Dimi." "Good on you, Mike, Frousoula, Michelle." This reinforcement and 'waiting' is a way of settling the normal noise at the beginning of a lesson by concentrating initial attention on those who have settled down - the others will usually follow suit. It beats the obverse, which is to concentrate on the noisy ones!. He often uses a more 'commanding' tone up front when giving directions to the whole class as distinct from one-to-one, such as,

- "OK, everyone settle down thanks," or (as his eyes sweep the class)
- "Right! Let's sit up, settle down, and into it," or (with a humourous touch)
- "OK I want your attention thanks."

These messages are appropriate for groups rather than for an individual. He begins to talk about the work they will be doing in groups when (and only when) they are quiet.

Mr P has regularly, and successfully, used cooperative group work in science. He organised the class into groups of five earlier in the term, and each group is expected to cooperate on the task for that session.

This unit is on crystals. As he outlines the work, Adrian (child who is able to burp at will) tries a bit of clowning, letting go a healthy, long burp. Without looking at Adrian Mr P humorously says, "Best thing you've said so far Adrian" (DEF). A welcome tittering across the room and Mr P steams on. "We'll be looking at salt crystals today."

He'll ask Adrian to stay back *later* saying something like, "Can I see you at the end of the lesson thanks?". If Adrian becomes argumentative the teacher will simply repeat the direction about seeing him at the end of the lesson. At the time of the burp Mr P doesn't make a big issue, but uses defusion to take the heat out of the conflict (or potential conflict) without giving Adrian undue attention (he actually says it without directly looking at him).

Whenever we give attention directly to a student, when they are disruptive, we best :

- do it briefly
- do it on our terms
- getting back to on-task students as quickly as possible
- re-establish a working relationship with the student later in the lesson if they settle down to work. If not, follow up later (CISY).

Michael calls out rudely, "I already did that at my last school!", and turns to face the rest of the class as if this is some big deal (attention-seeking time). Mr P, without looking at Michael, diverts (DD) his attention by saying, "Some of you may have done crystals, say soda crystals, in Grade 6. We're going to attempt to grow some coloured crystals today." Nick starts loudly tapping away with a pen. Mr P ignores Nick without looking (TIB) at him. A minute

goes by and he doesn't stop. Mr P finishes a point, and turns to face Nick. "Nick, you can see I'm trying to teach, put the pen down thank you." A brief gaze (Nick has stopped), then he continues with the lesson. The little transaction was brief, clear, decisive, resuming attention with the class immediately - expecting compliance and getting it. He then explains the process and asks Michael (DD) to put up a chart showing the four main points (with pictures) of growing crystals. This keeps Michael busy for a minute.

In extreme cases of persistent, unremitting calling out:

"Dave, you can either work by the fair rules or we'll have to ask you to leave our classroom."(SC)

- establish eye contact
- speak clearly, firmly, assertively
- expect cooperation
- stay calm but explain your feelings, if necessary
- give attention back to on-task students as quickly as possible.

BUTTING IN

Nick keeps butting in; his hand is up and he is clicking his fingers and saying, "I got a question too, hey over here!"

Mr P is annoyed by this and knows that TIB is not achieving its purpose. He turns, eyeballs Nick, and says briefly, firmly, his hand outstretched as if he is pushing the point home, "Nick, you know the rule for asking questions. Use it please." (RR and SD). He then turns back to the rest of the class, sees a hand up and calls on that student. This diverts attention back to the activity at hand. A few minutes later Nick puts his hand up and waits. Mr P's eye-sweep picks him up.

"Yes Nick?" Nick replies, "Haven't got a question now (in implied hurt tones)".

"OK, thanks for putting your hand up." Mr P then calls on Michelle.

He doesn't waste time by saying, "Look... if you'd put your hand up properly the first time I'd have answered you..." (sigh. sigh.)

He doesn't respond to the sulky voice-tone either, he merely acknowledges his on-task behaviour and moves on. When we over-indulge sulkers or pouters ("Don't speak to me in that tone of voice!" or "Why do you speak to me like that? What have I done to hurt you?") we endorse the very behaviour we are trying to either ignore or give brief attention to. Pouting, sulking and whingeing are attention-seeking behaviours ("notice-me"). If we give legitimacy to them we will often see the student repeating them. Why not, if it gets them what they want?

TEACHER BAITING

On another occasion Nick had called out from the back of the room in a persistent, noisy fashion and Mr P had used a QAF approach. Looking across the class he spoke clearly and firmly to Nick:

"Excuse me Nick," all are now giving Nick what he wants - attention. But the teacher will keep such attention brief and focussed.

"What are you doing?"

"I'm asking a question, aha!" he giggled.

"Actually, you're yelling out across the classroom" (Mr P gives him some feedback) *"What should you be doing?"*

"Putting up my hand, aha, like the other sucks!" Nick is new to this class and is trying out his old teacher-baiting routines. It doesn't work, Mr P doesn't take the bait, he merely says directly, "If you've got a question use our rule please."(RR)

"Any other questions?" he asks, turning to the whole class. Noticing Paul's hand up, "Yes, Paul?"

A few minutes later Nick puts his hand up and waits. Mr P respectfully says, "Yes Nick, what's your question?"

"S'pose you're going to notice me now!" he smirks.

"Have you got a question?" Mr P asks firmly, cutting through the teacher-baiting.

"Yeah, I was going to say ..." and Mr P answers his question. With low level teacher-baiting it is better to cut through the bait *to the task at hand*. Taking the bait is a sure-fire way of getting hooked and letting the student decide how he'll 'play the fish'.

BACK TO THE SCIENCE CLASS

Mr P directs them to their groups. A student from each group comes up to get the science equipment for their group. Mr P moves around the groups, keenly aware of what is happening across the room. It is important when one has finished the 'up front' phase of a lesson to be moving *around* the room, it's easier to discipline that way. Working away with one group he hears overly loud noise coming from his right. Instead of walking across and saying, "Look you lot, you can see I'm trying to work here, what's wrong with you?" or pleading, "Look why are you so noisy over here (pained expression) be reasonable!" He *divides his attention*.

"Hang on," he says to the group he is working with. Turning around and extending a hand across the room, he says firmly to the noisy group, *"Excuse me, we're trying to work here . Keep the noise down. I'll be with you in a minute."*

He gives feedback and follows with a simple direction and gives immediate attention back to the group he is working with.

DIVIDING ATTENTION

(sometimes called Overlapping, Kounin, 1977) enables a teacher to discipline from where they are if necessary.

Divided attention is one way of demonstrating that the teacher is:
- aware of what is going on across the room, keeping tabs.
- able to correctly target disruptions.
- able to discipline from where they are currently in the room;

working with "x", they speak across to "y" and "z", saving angst and energy.

While he is at Nick's desk he hears Michelle and Denise yakking about some TV program. It's too loud for TIB. Staying at Nick's desk, he speaks firmly across the two desks separating him from the yakkers and says, "Michelle and Denise, what's going on?" (QAF) "Nothing, just talking." "It's too loud, keep it down please. I'll be with you in a minute." (Feedback, direction and the reminder that he is coming round soon). He divides his attention. They settle down.

He goes over to the two girls a few minutes later to check on their work. He simply says, "How's it going?" (CSQ) and takes it from there.

Daniel, sitting near the front, picks up a piece of string (for use in the experiment) and starts clowning around. Loudly running it through his teeth in 'dental-floss' fashion, he starts an annoying attention-seeking scene.

Step 1 As the teacher moves around the room he is aware of Daniel (and the effect he's having) but starts off with tactical ignoring (TIB); after all, Daniel may stop.

Mr P can 'see' Daniel without actually looking at him, so Mr P is still 'in control'. But Daniel doesn't settle and is beginning to gather a small audience.

Step 2 Mr P comes close by the desk and asks the question (QAF), *"What are you doing?"* His eye-contact is firm, he's speaking clearly but quietly.

"Nothing!", says Daniel, and puts the string down. Mr P hadn't asked him to put the string down (yet).

"Actually, you're running it loudly through your teeth and it's distracting the class". (Feedback) Without waiting for a discussion from Daniel he asks the second question.

"What should you be doing?"

"I'm not doing anything wrong?"

"Daniel, what should you be doing?" (BS)

"Me science experiment!".

"OK Daniel would you get back to it thanks" (SD).

He grunts and resumes work.

CONTINGENCY

If Daniel had resumed the loud clowning Mr P would have gone back and given a choice. "Daniel either put the string in the bin, on my desk, or in your pencil case. Now."

If Daniel had said, "It's not fair, picking on me!". The teacher would not get drawn in but just repeat the choice (BS). As he stuffs the string into his pencil case, the teacher walks off.

RE-ESTABLISH WORKING RELATIONSHIPS

When (if) Daniel gets back to work the teacher would go over and ask about the experiment, "How's it going?" or, "What part are you up to now..?" "You've set that out well" - basic respect and encouragement (CSQ). This little incident, then, could be planned as a series of teacher steps (transactions).

Step 1 QAF

Step 2 (if necessary) SC.

Another approach to the string incident could be,

Step 1 Defusion (DEF) "You dental floss very well Daniel".

"Uh?" he turns, "What?"

"Your dental floss, between the choppers".

"Oh, yeah, ha ha!".

Step 2 Give a simple direction (SD) "OK back to work Daniel. Use the string later for the experiment."

Step 3 If necessary give a simple choice (SC).

The point is whatever 'plan' we make, we are deciding the agenda rather than the student, and each of these possible agendas
- gives the student a choice,
- minimises embarrassment,
- demonstrates respect,
- is appropriately firm (decisive).

RULE-REMINDERS

As he is speaking with Michelle and Denise, he hears loud carryings on at the back of the room. He finishes with the group he's working with and walks across. He 'eyeballs' the five students and notices the mess, water, powder spilt and a jar overturned. Without commenting on the mess (which is patently obvious) he reminds them of the rule.

Step 1 Looking at Daniel, then the whole group, he says "You all know the rules for safety in our room." (RR).

"Clean it up now or I'll have to ask you to stay back and clean this whole section up. Your choice" (SC) and walks off.

No other step was needed. If they hadn't settled down he would have separated (IWR) one or two of the students and still kept the lot back later (CISY) to clean up.

During the writing part of the lesson, Paul calls out several times that he has no pen or paper. Mr P ignores him (TIB) and he shuts up. A few minutes later he walks up to Paul's desk (when he's quiet) and Paul says, "No pen sir, no paper. Can't do me work!".

When students come to class without a pen, books, rulers (etc.) it's pointless wasting time on harangues ("Why didn't you?"). Have a plan.

Step 1 "Right. There is a pen, ruler, and paper in that tray on my desk".

"Oh, it don't matter sir, I can go to my locker".

"Not now, use my stuff and put it back later" (SD).

Step 2 If the student refuses, remind him of the fair rules (RR) or take him aside quietly (TCA).

Step 3 If he refuses to use your equipment give a choice (SC).

It is pointless arguing with students when they complain, it is better to re-state the fair position through simple directions or rule-reminders or take them aside (TCA). If the problem is on-going we will need to follow up with some conferencing or contracting at a non-classroom time.

As Mr P applies his 'steps' to the various disruptions in the class he also goes back to re-establish working relationships with those same students when they are on task. He balances the need for corrective discipline with appropriate encouragement and positive reinforcement.

TANTRUMS, DEFACING OTHERS' WORK

Ms D is a grade 1 teacher. It's first term and she is half-way through morning talk when Sean slams the door and stands apart from the group. All eyes are on Sean, naturally. "Sean, put your bag away, and come and join us" (SD). She doesn't waste time arguing about why he's late, but invites him to join the group (a form of distraction DD).

He kicks his bag and says loudly, "Sh-t!"

"Ooh Miss, did you hear what he said?" blurts out Raymond (who has been known many times to use the famous Oz adjective in frustration).

"Sean, I can see you're upset (DEFL) but it's morning talk. You can sit at your desk to settle down, or come and join us" (SC). She then asks a question to the whole group to distract their attention away from Sean (DD).

Sean lies down on the floor away from the group. The teacher ignores him (TIB) and tells the other students a story (DD). Sean is quiet.

Ms D finishes the story. "Alright; now we're going to do our number groups..." and explains a pattern and order activity which will end, before play, with a cut and paste activity.

Several children call out questions. She uses TIB, thanks those children and sends them off in ones and twos to their tables using a game (as most elementary teachers do), "Those with pink noses, - no? Those with, um, green jumpers. Those with pigtails. Those with earings". She has many games to draw children to and from the mat.

Sean is still sitting on the floor.

Step 1 Ms D walks up and says, "Sean, come and sit at your table," (encouraging) (SD). He refuses.

Step 2 TIB. She doesn't waste time over-coaxing.

She goes off to encourage and assist the others.

He gets up when he notices that nobody is attending to him. He sits in his desk and sulks.

The teacher can still 'see' him without looking at him.

She comes close to his desk and speaks to two students who, as yet, haven't started. "How's it going Mark, Paul?" (CSQ)

Sean starts calling out, "Miss, whaterwe aveter do?" At the same time she notices Kylie with her hand up across the room.

"Thanks for putting up your hand, Kylie - be with you in a sec".

Sean calls out again, Ms D gives him more TIB. She moves over to Kylie. As she passes Dimi and Frousoula she comments on their work.

Sean now puts up his hand and says, "Miss, Miss" (he's getting closer to the fair rule). She still TIBs him.

He sulks again.

As she walks back across the room she goes up and asks Sean, casually, "How's it going?"

"Whaterwe ave to do?".

She briefly explains what to do, and calls Mark over to assist Sean. She is trying to give Sean reinforcement when he's on-task.

Frank is zooming a transformer car up and down across his sheet of paper. He hasn't started.

"What are you doing Frank?" (QAF)

"Nothing"

"You're driving your car across the paper. You can put it away on my desk or in your locker Frank" (a simple choice to distract him).

He puts it in his plastic locker and comes back to his seat.

Ms D is working close by with Michelle. She quietly calls across to Frank, *"How's it going Frank?"* (CSQ)

"I'm just going to start".

"Good, do you know what to do?" (check)

"Yeah - I got to cut out a group of 5, and, and..."

"A group of ten. Have a look at Paul's sheet Frank and the sheet on the wall." (A demo sheet.)

Later in the lesson while helping Frousoula and Nancy, she sees Mark hit Paul with the unifix blocks. Without getting up from where she is she divides her attention and calls firmly across the room "Mark, put those blocks down now".

"But Paul hit me Miss!".

"Both of you put the blocks away, and carry on with your cut and paste. I'll be with you in a minute." (SD)

She goes over to them after visiting Sean, and several others. "You know our rule about fighting." (RR)

"But, Miss..!"

"If you can't work properly I'll have to ask you both to stay back with me and talk about what happened." (SC)

Unless she senses it is serious she will merely re-state or remind them of the rule. Often, when she asks the previously quarrelling children after class what the problem is, they say,

"Oh it doesn't matter now." A RR is often enough to settle children down. It reminds them that they should do something, and they also know that the teacher will follow up if necessary.

AFTER PLAY

When 2 or more children come in from play, arguing, she very firmly says, "Look, I can see there is a problem. We can't fix it up now. You know our rule for fixing up problems in our class."

If children are crying when they come in she assures them she will help but they will have to wait until the class is working (DEFL later TCA).

If it is obviously serious she will call for support (a hurt child, a sick child).

The rule for settling problems is basically:

(a) If you can't fix up your problems quietly, together, ask the teacher for help.

(b) If the teacher can't help there and then we may have to stay back to fix things up.

(c) If you fight you will immediately be separated and stay back to explain your behaviour.

Zlato and Dimi start mucking around with the clag on each other's work. Ms D comes over. *"Excuse me"* [feigned annoyance] *"what's going on Dimi, Zlato?"* (eye-balling each student).

"Nothing" (surprise, surprise). She gives them a 'choice'.

"You're messing up each other's work. Clean it up now or I'll have to send you to work separately." She gives them an interrogative eyebrow. They comply, quietly, sulkily. She'll come back to them when they are on-task.

Suddenly there is a howl from Andrea. The class stops. Ms D walks over and Andrea is crying; she notices the scribble all over Andrea's cut and paste sheet.

"Sean messed my work!!"

"Sean, I'm upset, very upset, by what you've done to Andrea's work."
Ms D briefly eyeballs Sean.

"I hate you." Sean says to Andrea with curled lip and clenched fists.

Because it is difficult to sort out conflicts quickly and because she needs to get the rest of the class on-task as quickly as possible, she distracts Andrea by saying, "Andrea, I know you're upset, but I want you to start again, over there (DEFL). Michelle, can you sit with Andrea over there for a while? OK class, back to it." She settles the class down, moving around for a minute or two until she's sure they are settled.

It is important for her to stay calm because the class take their cue from her. If she goes 'off' the class feels insecure and their behaviour becomes unsettled.

Sean is sitting in high sulk mode. She TIBs him for a while, and has a brief chat with Andrea (whose story is that she offered to help and he just scribbled on her work!)

Ms D knows Sean is going through a bad time at the moment (a break-up at home, insecurity etc.) but she won't excuse him. She will keep him back to apologise and re-do Andrea's work (logical consequence) if necessary - not for Andrea's sake but to teach Sean a point - replace what you damage.

On a previous occasion Sean had gone 'right off'. The teacher had warned him several times and even told him to go into the time-out corner but he started kicking cupboards and screaming.

Ms D:
(i) Calmed the class first. "Settle down everyone, you can see Sean's angry."
(ii) *Gave Sean a final choice.*
"Sean, if you don't settle down you'll have to leave our class." She helds on to Sean to calm him down.
(iii) *Employed the exit step.* When he 'went off' again she sent a student to the office with a small card saying 'exit Room 17'. The office knows that a significant disruption needs immediate assistance.
(iv) *Final exit.* The VP came in and took Sean by the hand and escorted him (still tugging and swearing, yelling) out of the room while thanking the class for settling down.
(v) Sean finally settled and was allowed to come back. At play he had to clean the front of the cupboards and tidy up the books he threw around during his tantrum! (logical consequence).

It's a slow process with children like Sean but calm, clear, consistent steps help to give a security, within which children like Sean belong and learn appropriate social skills.

A CONFLICT (A CASE STUDY)

Denise is sitting in her group in the Humanities class. There are four groups working on a poetry project. Suddenly, Denise (beautiful spiked hair, star earrings, jean jacket and a 10 cm jean skirt) starts to tear up her work into little bits (while looking around at her group and the others - who are working well with moderate working noise). She starts to chew up the bits and spit them, wet, onto the table and floor. Several people look around to see what is going to happen. They smell a conflict in the air. So do I.

A Plan for Conflict (swearing, defiance, blatant task-refusal)

I have a choice:

I can yell, threaten, do nothing, demand she pick it up, or be sarcastic, "You hungry or something?" "Don't they feed you at your place!?"

(bent humour, as distinct from defusion, is always counterproductive in the long run).

First why *is* Denise paper-spitting? Does she do it to spite the teacher? Is she hungry? Is she after attention?

When such conflicts arise in a classroom we haven't got time to psychoanalyse.

What we can do is operate from general understandings about children's behaviour in groups and utilise conflict resolution steps.

What shall I do?

I can't decide what Denise will do at this point;
I can decide what I will do.
Step 1 Initially ignore Denise, but briefly. She goes on, louder and more forceful.
Step 2 Quietly go over to her, *"Denise, please tidy your table up."* (SD) A brief simple direction, stated firmly.
"You can't tell me what to do"
"I didn't, I asked you..." As I'm walking away she mutters loudly "Get stuffed" I reply, without looking at Denise, *"Not today thanks."* (DEF)
A welcome laugh from the class. I know the game too well, it is power-broking time. She grunts, "smart arse." Again without looking, I reply *"I know"* and walk off.
I give her extended TIB for five minutes or so.
Step 3 Coming back halfway through the lesson, I remind Denise about the spitballs. *"Denise, you can either clean it up now, or later. It's your choice."* (SC) I am firm, clear and it's not a threat, it's actually her choice - I can't *make* her (inside I'm frustrated but she hears assertion).

"Who's gonna make me?" (Teacher - baiting time.) I've been through all this before. I know the game. I think I can predict the outcome. I'll stick to the plan.

Power

While Denise has got her audience she mistakenly believes she is top of the heap. Power-seeking students often believe that they can really only 'belong' by being as powerful as (or more powerful than) their teachers.

If a student is after power as a means of belonging there's not much point in the teacher using counter power. The win/lose method of conflict is fine for battlefields but Denise is not my enemy! So, the 'pyrrhic victory' is not on the agenda today. If I play her game and give wind to her sails I only put more heat into the conflict, making it more difficult to manage. e.g.

"Listen, I told you pick it up, now pick it up or you'll be in strife!" Other teachers try special pleading; "Why, Denise?; Why is it always you I have to speak to? What have I done to hurt you?" Pleading rarely works, it most certainly won't work for students (like Denise) who are after power ("Make me!").

So, if I give her a carte blanche audience by acceding to her game I confirm her power-seeking. The first rule in rational conflict resolution is: minimise hostility and embarrassment. The more heat a teacher pours on the harder it is to manage the conflict and the more disturbed, anxious, even off-side the rest of the class becomes. I need to communicate to Denise that I'm not into 'war games' in class. I can do that either by giving her a choice, re-stating the fair position, or taking her aside (if she will come) and having a brief chat to her. If she resists these fair options I can resort to exit procedures (EOR).

The drama continues

Where can Denise go?

She can comply, sulk or escalate. At this stage she tries egging me on by continuing to spit paper balls. As the rest of the class is working well (only occasionally bothering, now, to look in Denise's direction), I work around her, giving positive encouragement and assistance (with their poetry) to the other students.

Denise gets rigorous TIB. I have given her a choice, it's up to her now. The bell goes. I say good arvo to the class as I move towards the door. *"Denise wait there, thanks."* (SD)

The other students go off. A few hang around outside. Fine.

Denise's audience has gone. "Denise, I gave you a choice before. Clean up your mess now please." (SD)

"I didn't do all that! It's not fair, I gotta get the bus!" (I know that's untrue.)

"Won't take long. You can clean it up now or I can discuss it with your homegroup teacher." (SC)

Muttering under her breath, and a few 'sh-ts' thrown in, she elephant stamped her way over to her desk, picked the spit balls, threw them in the bin, kicked the bin then had to clean an even bigger mess up. "OK I picked the bloody mess up."

Ignoring the hostility I replied, *"Fine, see you Friday Denise,"* as she slammed out of the door to join her mates ...

No indulgence emotion ("I'm sick of your foul mouth!" or, "When will you ever learn?!"). Tempting as such indulgence is, it's not worth it. I can always speak to her about her 'mouth' later when the heat's not there.

Friday came and she couldn't have been nicer. She even wrote a special poem. It doesn't always work so well and one often has to persevere with both in-class conflict resolution and longer term conferencing, but the key element of conflict resolution is don't stoke the fires *unnecessarily.*

Effective conflict resolution

1 Attack the problem not each other. Slanging, 'cheap shots', put-downs, bent humour (as distinct from defusion), criticism and carping are not worth the effort. One can speak respectfully even if one doesn't like the other person. Assertion and respect are not incompatible, aggression and respect are. It is important not to unnecessarily (or, worse, intentionally) provoke. Many teachers get what they deserve when they start yelling and put-down routines.
2 Explain your feelings, don't use them as weapons or missiles. "I feel ..." is better than "you are a creep, a swine, a ..." "I am angry about..." is better than "You make me so angry ..."
3 Stay on the subject, and watch the volume. Shouting doesn't convince.
4 Keep the heat down, provide a face-saving way out by re-stating the fair position, calling a student aside or giving a choice. Use face-saving where possible on both sides.

5 Don't hesitate to refer the issue to a third party if you believe your contribution is not assisting the conflict-resolution process. Often with a third party we can:
- isolate the facts, find out what the problem is.
- work out what we can do, individually, together, to deal with the problem.
- express it as a 'contract' if necessary (what I will work on, how I'll do it, how the teacher will assist).
6 Keep the communication channels open. Don't hold grudges, try to start each new session with the student/s afresh.

POSITIVE CLASSROOM DISCIPLINE IS NOT ACCIDENTAL

In the course of their lessons these two teachers (Mr P and Ms D) have used many of the steps discussed earlier. To the casual observer the teacher is merely directing, answering questions, moving around the room, giving assistance, talking quietly on some occasions, talking across the room on other occasions. At times they are speaking very firmly, moving close to some students.

In the teacher's head, however, is a clear sense of *purpose* and *direction*. He knows why he is ignoring some students, when he will use simple directions, which disruption to go on to next. He knows (as does his colleague Ms D) who he has given a choice to, who he will move to next, with whom he will need to follow up or re-establish working relationships.

Of course he/she can't plan for every contingency. What he tries to do is to intrude into a disruption as economically as possible with the least amount of stress to all concerned. His class works better, learns better, cooperates better that way.

On those rare occasions when all steps fail (including TCA) and disruptors do not respond, then he will employ exit processes and follow up with the student later.

Tiring?
Yes it is, initially, but it enables a teacher to balance the need to be offering assistance, encouragement and support *with* the need to be corrective.

SWEARING

Swearing has become an annoying feature of classroom life in the last ten years. The street language of children now permeates the ebb and flow of classroom life. Where once social convention would have kept the four letter words to the playground and street we are likely to hear "sh-t", when a pencil case is dropped, or even "f--- these stupid scissors..." during art. Even the spatial presence of the teacher does not guarantee a quiet tongue.

Isn't swearing wrong? Yes and no. Swearing can be the easy epithet for frustration. The student who drops his compass and says "sh-t" may not have the same social skill as you or I who would probably say "Oh, bother, I have dropped my compass - Oh dear! I am so annoyed!". Teachers better handle frustration-triggered swearing by humour (DEF) or quiet rule-reminders. Swearing as verbal abuse is another matter. Here a teacher needs to use firm (assertive) rule-statements, give choices, or take the student aside and speak to them about the effect of their behaviour.

When Mike called Maria (another student) a 'slut' in class, loudly enough for all to hear, the teacher communicated powerful assertive anger. *"Excuse me Michael! You know the rule for respect in our room. I'll expect an apology to Maria!"* (He didn't say *when* because he knows he can't force it, at that point. The main issue now is to make clear what the rule is and protect Maria's rights). This also reinforces the rule in front of the class. He will later (CISY) call Michael to stay back, discuss his behaviour and follow through with consequences.

Swearing *at the teacher* is often a form of power-provocation. It can be handled with defusion, rule-restatement, choice or (if it continues into abuse) exit from the room. Swearing at the teacher, however, rarely occurs unprovoked.

Take the example of Senka who storms in late 15 minutes past nine without a late note. Teacher A says, "Look, Senka, why are you late? (whole class is over-involved in what is, now, an unnecessary conflict) and *where's* your late note?!"

Senka slams her bag down, "Don't sh-t me! I'm only a quarter of an hour late! You're always picking on me".

The teacher reacts, "Who the hell are you to speak to me like that! You apologise now!"

"No way!"

"Right, get out of my class now - go on, move it!" Senka slams out of the room.

It could have been dealt with differently.

Step 1 As the whole class turns to see Senka storm in, Teacher B turns and briefly says, "Hi Senka, grab a seat, I'll be with you in a sec." (SD) and gives her attention back to the on-task group. Senka (for some personal reason she is quite angry) loudly discusses something with a fellow student. The teacher hears 'sh-t' and 'a...hole' as part of the discussion.

Step 2 She calls Senka over away from her mates (TCA). "Senka, what's the problem..? (QAF). She finds out there's a problem at home.

Step 3 "I can see you're uptight. Look, settle down, we can follow this up later OK, (DEFL) I'll come over and explain the work in a moment, get your folder out and set out the work on the board." (SD)

TEACHER BAITING AND TASK REFUSAL

In the same class on a previous occasion, Michael picked up his work (a language sheet) and said "This work stinks!" The teacher walked over (all eyes are now on these two) *"This work is it Mike?"*

"Yeah (grin) - it stinks".

The teacher picked it up, sniffed, and replied, "You're right it does!" (DEF) and walked off. Mike is a seasoned teacher-baiter and swearer but is finding that this teacher is not fazed by his power games. At first it annoyed him, now he is getting used to Ms D who has gone out of her way several times to help him. Later in that lesson, she came back to Mike and said, "Let's have a look at this Mike - want a hand?" Re-establishing working relationships is crucial with students like Mike. It shows we care.

Mike had once shouted at Ms D "You can't make me do this sh-t work!" Ms D had agreed (thereby doing the unexpected) "You're right, I can't. It's your choice, I can help if you want. I can't make you." (DEF and implied choice).

This surprised Mike. He had expected the reactive approach and the unexpected teacher action had taken him by surprise. The teacher knows all too well the futility of win/lose arguments with students like Mike so she uses 'steps' like defusion, deflection, rule-restatement or taking the student aside.

A student has been talking loudly and is well off-task. The teacher has given a SD already and has re-stated the rules (RR). It's time to make the issue clearer so she comes over with a choice.

"Cathy, if you can't settle down and work here, I'll have to ask you to move". (SC)

"You can't make me move!" (teacher-baiting).

"That's right, it's your choice. If you don't move now, I'll have to ask you to stay back and explain why you can't work by the fair rules". The teacher moves off, expecting compliance.

Some students stay where they are but settle down (these students would still be asked to stay back later, CISY). Most comply in a sulky fashion.

If the student is still *overly* disruptive, the teacher would give an exit choice. "If you can't work by our fair rules I'll have to ask you to leave our class."

The more tense and forceful we become in win/lose situations the more credibility we give to the student in their power-seeking. With teacher-baiting where the student is clearly out to 'egg' the teacher into a power struggle, we are more effective when we resist the temptation to play the game. We best deal with conflict arousal by appropriate assertive steps.

Step 1 Use SD to re-direct, or DEF or RR. If the student doesn't comply, then

Step 2 Give a simple choice (SC) to settle or be isolated within the room (IWR).

Step 3 If the student doesn't comply and is overly disruptive, give the EOR choice.

What often stresses teachers is the fear of 'losing face', of not appearing to be forcefully 'in control', or just not knowing what to do when serious conflict arises.

If we believe that 'teacher-baiters' have peculiar magic to govern our behaviour we will find ourselves more stressed than we already are by the 'threat' they pose.

In examining how beliefs, emotion and behaviour interact, a more realistic belief about conflict says, "I know his goal; sure swearing is unacceptable but I won't give wind to his sails by proving I must win. I have a choice, I can choose how I will act. I will work through a *step-wise process*. I don't have to attribute to the defiant student the magic of ruining my day. Even when I am insulted or belittled I don't inevitably *have to be devastated*. If I define the child's words and actions as horrible, terrible, awful and can't-stand-able-type behaviour I'll be *much* more upset than if I treat it as an irritation but not personally traumatic. My self-talk and beliefs will help or hinder me here. I can learn not to waste physical and emotional energy on the four-letter provocateurs of this world. It is better to save my emotional strength to actively resolve the conflict.

SWEARING AT THE TEACHER

Presuming we have not gone out of our way to provoke the student, swearing at the teacher can be dealt with by: Assertive rule re-statement, taking the student aside (TCA), assertive statement or message (ASM), or deflection (DEFL).

"David you know our rule about swearing". The teacher would follow the student up later so that both he, and the class, see the immediate consequences. Often the student apologises fairly quickly.

TCA   Take the student aside and find out what the problem is.

ASM   Assert your feelings about the swearing and re-state the rule. "Excuse me, I don't use that language with you, ever; I don't expect it in our room. You know our rules."

DEFL/RR   If the student is angry with something (or someone) else and we happen to cop their anger in passing, then deflect. "Dave I can see you are uptight but you know our rule about swearing".

We know ourselves, from our own experience in conflict situations, when we're uptight, angry, that when others give us a chance to 'cool off' and ease the tension, then we can explore solutions. It's hard to even *think* properly when our emotions are high, let alone *behave* properly.

POWER

For a small number of students, swearing arises out of an agenda of power generally during that phase of classroom life where the teacher and students are establishing their common group life (term 1).

The extreme power seeker

Michael's got terminal acne, halitosis, a studded jacket and a foul mouth.

He spent many days out of class last year, with the year level coordinator and the principal. He's what some teachers call a pain in the rear end. His agenda for belonging to the

room is often to engage teachers (the ones he can play the game with) in teacher-baiting. This teacher was astute enough not to play his game.

She decided to use defusions as a key step followed by reminders of the fair rule. She also worked out some contracting with Michael and a fellow teacher (male).

DEF   When he told her to "p-ss off", in the first week, she replied "No thanks, I've already been to the toilet!" Brief, clear, and attention diverted back to the group.

He once called her a bastard, when she directed him to communicate by the fair rule. After she had given the direction as she turned away, he called out, loudly enough for the others to hear, "Bastard".

She faced him (class quiet, all eyes on the teacher and Michael) and said, with controlled assertion and humour "Ssh, I'm trying to keep it a secret!" The class gave a welcome supportive laugh, Michael's power (notice me - she can't stop me!) was reduced. He shut up. "OK class, back to work!" She re-directed her attention quickly back to the on-task students.

Later she followed up (CISY). At the close of the lesson she asked him to stay back. Several students were strung out outside the door, listening.

"Right, what about this swearing game Mike?"

"Sorry Miss"

"Yes you're sorry now. What are you going to do next time you're uptight in our class?" "Dunno"

"Well you think about it Mike - you don't need to set me up, I know the game. I want you to enjoy being part of our group and I'm not into stand up aggro. OK? You think about it" The swearing diminished (in her class) in a few weeks.

Defusion is not an easy step for teachers to use, no doubt because of our proclivity to control the student by force. Forced dominance however gives legitimacy to the game of win/lose. If win/lose is the student's agenda as well as the teacher's no one wins, an enormous amount of anger and energy is discharged, and the student is confirmed in these power-seeking games. If teachers feel uncomfortable with this step they would be better served by,

1 Assertively re-stating the class rule about 'swearing' or 'respect' or 'hurtful language'.

2 If it continues give a clear choice.

3 If it still continues use the exit step and follow up with senior-teacher support, or parent-conferencing.

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5 RIGHTS, RULES, RESPONSIBILITIES

RIGHTS

The language of rights is firmly embedded in education today and as a student's age increases so he is more conscious (and often vocal) about his rights. What do we mean by 'rights' in the context of a classroom?

A right is an expression of what we value.

For example the notion that I have a right to be accepted for what I am, whether 'ugly' or 'beautiful', proceeds from the assumption of a value about persons. It is (essentially) something we believe, as a social group, to be right or proper to the nature of the group.

Without such rights as:
* the right to safety
* the right to fair treatment
* the right to learn
* the right to tell my side of the story
* the right to a secure environment

we disenfranchise students in their community life at school.

A right is an expectation of how things ought to be.

As such rights are not automatic they can be removed. The statement: 'A right is something you have that cannot be taken away' sounds nice but is hardly accurate. Some teachers (unfortunately) do remove a student's right to tell their side of a story. They may take away the student's right to fair treatment by speaking abusively, or derogatively. Rights, therefore, are not automatic. They depend on the other person/s in the group behaving in such a way as to allow those rights their proper expression. Rights, therefore, are only meaningful in terms of relationships between persons.

When we express our 'rights' we need to be sure we express them in terms of their responsibilities.

The two go naturally together. If one student has a right to communicate (ask a question, express and opinion or idea), he can't exercise that right if other students yell, call out, make fun of others, or if the teacher does not in some way protect the students' rights by responsible leadership.

Appropriate to age, we need to teach students about rights.

The days when classrooms were dominated by teacher demands, and authoritarianism are over. Students today are aware they have rights and teachers need to harness and work with this expectation. We do this best by allowing appropriate discussion of rights, emphasising their mutual and responsible nature. Of course the best model for a rights-enhanced classroom is the manner in which a teacher leads the class. If we say students have a right to cooperate in classroom organisation and then stifle any appropriate student contribution, we have made a clear message about who has what rights!

Respect: the heart of rights.

For a teacher to establish his position of authority he needs to grant validity to the expression of rights by the *relationship* he builds with the members of the group. It is developed out of a personal style that includes well-developed lessons, an effort to be interesting, and a manner that models respect.

At the heart of mutual rights is respect - the manner in which we work/cooperate together. It's quite likely there will be students we don't exactly *like*. Now the problem with like and dislike is that it relies largely on how we *feel* towards 'x' or 'y' student.

Of course I don't always have control over *feelings* of like/dislike. What may happen is that I may then act from such feelings so that John (who I dislike) gets an angry retort when he calls out, whereas Jane (who I like) gets a reasonable, "Please don't call out..." (whatever) when she calls out.

Respect is primarily an action.

It is what used to go under terms such as protocol, or manners, or fair dealing.

Respect is something I can do (even if I don't hit it off with Johnny Slagg)
- I can speak respectfully to students,
- I can use respectful body language (meaning I won't crowd, slam my hands on the desk, etc.),
- I can make sure I go back to Johnny when he's on-task to encourage, support and assist him.

These considerations need to be worked through when discussing rights with students.

Schools have found that students respond positively to a rights-centred approach when they are taught in the context of responsibilities and rules. Even primary age children can discuss the concept of rights leading to rules and consequences.

They can easily appreciate there are certain things we value about relationships and if we don't protect the things we value (our rights) people get badly and unfairly treated.

RULES: PROTECTING OUR RIGHTS, INVOKING OUR RESPONSIBILITY

I was once part of a large TV audience discussing the merits of television and violence. There were students, several teachers, some well known 'personalities' (footy stars and the like), psychologists, psychotherapists, psychiatrists and a few lawyers.

There were several panel members at the front of the 'theatre' to whom we were to address our questions. One of the TV 'anchormen' said, "Look there's a lot of you out there; now we're not at primary school, we're all adults, so if you've got a question just call out OK? We don't need to bother with hands up." (Fool). Within a minute there were loud raised voices trying to compete for the attention of the 'chair.' Within 10 minutes it was marginal chaos. Several times there was a "C'mon everyone! Be fair!" by the anchorman.

The females had to adopt the loud calling-out styles of the males to get through to the chair. The quieter ones gave up.

Problem? No stated, clear, fair rule to protect people's right to communicate.

Rules are a social mechanism designed to:
- show what rights are being protected
- set reasonable limits to behaviour
- give security to class members (or members of the group - what happens at a staff meeting where the chairperson has no clear rules or expected procedures?)
- invoke accountability/responsibility by making expected behaviour clear in advance.

Where appropriate (to age and circumstance) rules ought to be:
- discussed, even negotiated, with the students. This gives a sense of ownership over the rules.
- clear; rules that are too general, or not specific, tend to create unnecessary confusion. Smaller children especially need explicitly clear rules. "Be considerate" is not a rule, it is an expectation. If we want to specify *how* we want students to be considerate re: manners, or respect, make a rule governing such an expectation.

Class rules ought to be:
- related to consequences for significant rule-breaking,
- referred to regularly.

With younger populations we will need to *teach* the rules regularly so we know where we stand. Tacit assumptions (like the TV anchorman) are unhelpful. We need to get expectations about rights and rules out in the open. The teacher needs to know that the students know that the teacher knows - that clear.

Of course children will test the rules (this establishes validity and security), they will break the rules (forgetfulness and wilfulness), some will challenge and even spit at the rules (arrogant defiance), but without some, agreed, rules we have no effective basis for protecting rights and invoking responsibility.

This is why we need a discipline plan backed up by clearly understood and fair rules. If rules are fair and democratic a teacher can appeal to *our* class rules. It cuts out a lot of unnecessary argument.

Consequences and accountability

Students can be encouraged to see that behaviour, generally, has consequences. If you hit someone else just because he borrowed your pencil it's likely he'll be uptight! If you never smile at others it's likely they won't be falling over trying to be your friend. If you fall over you get hurt, if you don't brush your teeth for 3 weeks you get rampant halitosis and increase the dentist's bank balance. These are examples of *natural* consequences.

Logical consequences are consequences designed by the teacher (sometimes with the student where appropriate) that enable the student to see that disruptive behaviour is accountable in terms of its consequences. To enable a student to understand accountability it is important to make the 'punishment fit the crime'.

If Jason scribbles over Mark's work, mere detention or writing lines ("I must not scribble on Mark's work") is illogical - mere punishment. It is better to keep Jason back to re-write Mark's work in his own time.

Logical consequences are the teacher's attempt to enable a 'fit' between the disruptive behaviour and the outcome experienced by the child.

Where the child clearly violates the fair class rules, logical consequences bring into play an 'if-then' dynamic. For example:

- if you damage equipment - you replace or correct it,
- if you are careless, or sloppy, or refuse to do work you will be asked to repeat it,
- if you keep using the scissors like that you'll have to work without them,
- if you continue to disrupt others' right to learn you will be asked to stay back and explain your behaviour, and you may be asked to sit away from others.

The key to consequential discipline is to relate the *fit* clearly, fairly, in the child's mind.

One way to do this is to ask the child, "What are you going to do about this?" It challenges responsibility by emphasising choice.

Logical consequences are best applied after the initial heat has died down. Once the initial frustration has subsided make clear to the child what he needs to do about his behaviour. If the consequences are applied aggressively, sarcastically, mean-spiritedly (like any discipline of this sort) it is likely to backfire; being perceived only as punishment. When we make consequences more 'logical' and 'fitting' we stress the responsibility side of a right and the accountability side of a rule.

When the concept of consequences is made clear through the class rules then students are more likely to see justice and *learn* from their experiences.

Staff can discuss the sorts of logical consequences that can better be applied for the normal school disruptions. The key question to ask the student is "What are you going to do?" If the answer is illogical ("Do some lines") ask "How will that help you to:

- fix the desk?"
- replace the window?"
- fix up Mark's bruises?"
- fix up the texta on Maria's work?"

With older students contracts can be drawn up, where the student contracts to work around the school to 'pay' for the broken window, busted racquet etc.

Where no logical, clear fit can be found for a consequence students can write *about* their behaviour:

- what I did (what is the particular problem? - be specific)
- what I should have been doing (who is responsible?)
- what I will do in the future (what solutions can we come up with? what is the best solution?)
- how the teacher will help.

With longer term disruptions these questions will form a contract with the student about their behaviour that may include parents and support personnel. The above questions would form the basis of a conferencing/contracting process.

The case of Paul and consequences for continued fighting in the yard

Paul (Year 4) was very aggressive in the playground - a bully. Bits of stick, punching, pushing - he had a low flash point. He was given a clear warning, "If you keep hurting people in the yard, Paul, you'll have to play in the yard *by yourself.*" For the next 5 days he had to play alone (with a teacher supervising). "It's not fair!", he moaned as he experienced the consequence of his bullying (isolation) "It's very fair Paul; *if* you keep hurting others you'll have to play alone".

He was supervised out to the school gate at the close of school. Parents were notified of the programme. He had his play at separate times. When he was inside he saw others playing in the yard.

He was experiencing the logical outcome of hurting others. When he complained he was reminded of the yard rule "If you keep hurting others then you'll have to play alone." No discussion. After the 5 days he was allowed to try again. Consequences have taught him it's

not worth such behaviour. His teacher also encouraged a few other boys to join in play in the yard with Paul. A slow process, but effective.

SETTING UP THE 3RS AT CLASSROOM LEVEL

It is important to develop the rules from day 1 with your students.

This can be carried out either by discussion of pre-arranged rules or starting from 'scratch' with the students.

Teacher directed discussion

This is where the teacher has several clear rules covering key areas: communication (or talking), learning, movement, treatment or cooperation, conflict, and safety.

A teacher would normally explain the purpose of rules in 'our' class, and have a general discussion on consequences for rule breaking.

The teacher would display the rules under key descriptors and develop a class discussion around the rules.

The importance of having key descriptors such as communication, safety, conflict etc. is that it makes it easier to re-state the rules during any discipline transaction. Brevity is important in dealing with off-task behaviour, "Dave, you know the rule for safety. Use that equipment properly please." It saves going on for 5 minutes about the elements of the safety rule or whatever. Brief, clear, focussed.

OUR CLASSROOM RULES

OUR TALKING RULE

Covers
- hands up
- working noise
- use of hurtful language

OUR LEARNING RULE

Covers
- the way we learn in our room
- how to get the teacher's attention/assistance
- cooperation between students

OUR MOVEMENT RULE

Covers
- movement in and around the room
- lining up outside the room
- chairs/equipment away etc.

OUR TREATMENT RULE

Covers
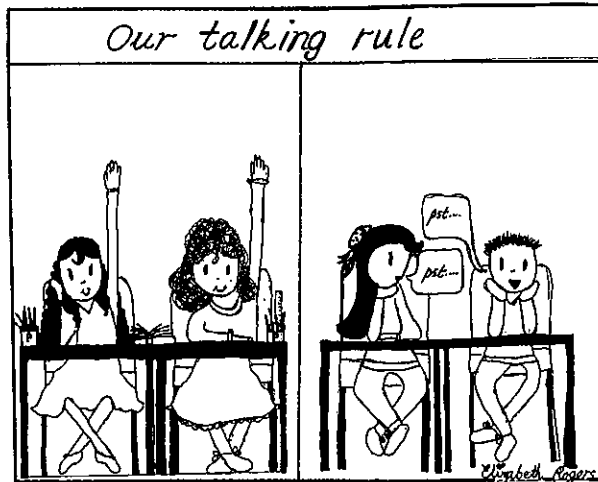- the way we treat one another (no sexism, no racism, no put-downs)
- manners

OUR CONFLICT (PROBLEM) RULE

Covers
- the way we fix up problems between each other

OUR SAFETY RULE

Covers
- use of equipment
- safe behaviour

The language is varied according to the age group. With younger students (P-2) the rules can be portrayed symbolically on pictures.

Our talking rule

When Ms Davis starts off with her prep class in the first week she holds up a large card with a picture of children holding up their hands. She eye-sweeps the class of preps. Some are fiddling with their shoes, some are staring out the window, Michael is exploring his nose with his index finger, Sharon is rubbing Maria's back, Sean is playing with a transformer toy - a normal class.

She holds up the card and asks the question, "Who can tell me what's happening on this card?" "Something to do with our class." Sharon calls out, "They got they hands up *Miss!*" She ignores Sharon, looking past and around her (she doesn't dislike Sharon or any student who calls out, she's simply trying to teach them something by tactically ignoring them). Four other students call out. She asks again, calmly, "What is happening on this card?" Finally (it always happens) Sean puts his hand up - *without* calling out. Ms Davies says "Thanks for putting up your hand, Sean. Can you tell us... ?"

In her behaviour Ms Davies has both explained the rule and reinforced it. If she had just negatively over-attended to each calling out she would have been far less successful in making the point.

She has a picture rule-card for each area and regularly refers to them. She will display them around the room.

With older students the rules can be written up on cards or on a sheet to be placed in their desk, or books.

Student discussion

The other way to develop rules is discussion by the students. Teachers split the class into small groups to develop the essential classroom rules and write them up. One effective way is to have a general discussion on rules and then give the class the task of writing 'our rules':

- Split the class into pairs for 10 min to come up with a few essential rules.
- Each pair shares 'their' rules with a new pair for 10 minutes.
- The groups of four share their findings in a whole class discussion. The teacher facilitates the common elements between the groups and the students can write them up.

EXAMPLES OF WRITTEN RULES

Our communication rule
(With younger students ' our talking rule')

- In our room when we communicate (or talk) with each other we should talk quietly so that others can get on with their work.
- When we ask questions (except in small groups) we put up our hands without calling out. This gives everyone a fair go.
- If we keep calling out we will be reminded of the fair rule and may be asked to stay back and explain our behaviour.
- If we need the teacher's help while we are working we should wait until they can see our hand up. We should not call out across the room.

Learning

- It's hard to learn when other people are making too much noise. It's hard to learn if the teacher is unable to teach because of rudeness, or noise, or children running around.
- In our room when we are working we need to think about others who are trying to work as well.
- If we make it hard for others to work by making too much noise, or by interfering with others' work, we may be asked to move away to work by ourselves. If we damage other people's work, we will be asked to fix it up.

Treatment

- In our room we treat each other with *respect*. This means we will not use hurtful language to each other, or put anyone down, or make fun of each other. Everyone in our room is unique. In our room we try to make the effort to *help* one another.

Safety/Security

- In our room we all need to take care of our equipment and use it safely. Accidents can easily happen so we all need to take care.
- If we use equipment in an unsafe way it will be taken from us, and we will be asked to fix anything we break. We will not be allowed to use any equipment unless we use it safely and correctly.

Our movement rule

This rule is difficult to specify because of teachers' wide differences regarding acceptable movement (especially in art rooms, trade areas etc.). The rule, however, should specify the amount/kind of movement acceptable in 'our' room.

- In our room before we get out of our seat and move around, we must really need to. (Some teachers may add: Ask the teacher first, do so quietly, do so without upsetting students.) If we move around noisily or without good reasons we will be warned, we may be separated from other students, or asked to stay behind and explain our behaviour.

Our conflict rule

(with younger populations our 'fix-it' rule)
- In our room if we can't get on with each other, or have arguments, or can't agree we should try to talk it out. If we can't work it out together, ask the teacher to help.
- We should not fight in our room. If you fight you will immediately be separated and asked to stay back and explain your behaviour.

Well established rules give expectancy, clarity, and when fairly enforced give security to student and teacher alike.

6 MAKING AN ACTION PLAN

Effective behaviour change in our discipline practice requires a change in attitudes and behaviour and getting support once we commit ourselves to change.

|		
1	ATTITUDES	- about children - about disruptive behaviours - about emotional coping
2	Behavioural change SKILLS	- making a plan - testing the plan - evaluating the plan
3	Support	- peer support, administration support

All these elements are best developed within the context of peer support.

PEER SUPPORT

Peer support is simply peers getting together to discuss attitudes, discuss ideas, even role model new skills. Regular meetings are scheduled to work over management skills. It doesn't need a large group, 2-3 teachers can make a start. The emphasis is on sharing our ideas.

Some school have actually institutionalised peer support as a school focus for professional development - especially for first year teachers who are still coming to terms with both teaching and the *particular* school they have been sent to ("Oh no! Not Bogg Rd. Tech!")
- Remember, change takes time. An action plan will enable you to take change slowly. A support group made up of your peers will give encouragement and shared experiences ("Oh, you had trouble with that too! I thought I was the only one!")
- Set up a tentative plan. Trial some steps. Pick a few 'problem children' to trial it on. As yourself, and the group - faced with 'x' behaviour of Johnny, or Maria... what will I do first, second, third? What steps will I use?
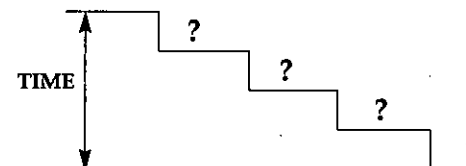
- Practise speaking out the assertive steps. If you can find a trusted colleague, trial it on them. Get some feedback about how you're going. Effective feedback simply sticks to 'what is heard', 'what is seen', 'what is felt'. "Dave, the words sounded right, but I felt they weren't assertive enough." Feedback from our peers is a valuable source of data for change.
- Invite a colleague into your room to observe your class (and you). In this way you can pick up some data about your own idiosyncratic practice which you may not be aware of... Sure it's risky, but because you've invited a *trusted* colleague, the risk is minimised. Set an agenda for what you'll observe (and vice versa) - use of voice, movement around room, lesson organisation. Be sure to visit *each other's* rooms.
- Use this book as a group discussion tool for developing a discipline plan. It can be used in a peer support group or workshop context as a guide for skill development, role play, or policy development.

- Don't take it all so seriously! It's important to have a bit of a laugh at our sometimes over-inflated profession. Of course we have a serious calling, even a 'noblesse oblige', but a good belly laugh about that time when Rodney dropped a meat pie on his foot (!), or when Denise tried her obdurate stance over the spit balls, is healthy. Peer support can enable a more effective level of coping by admitting we are in the 'same boat', recognising our common concerns about discipline and management, and resolving to develop more effective (and professional) practices by working at it together.

QUESTIONS TO ASK IN DEVELOPING OUR PLAN

1. What behaviours do I characteristically rate as disruptive? (low, medium, high)
2. How often do these behaviours occur in my classes? (be specific)
3. In dealing with such behaviour how do I characteristically behave? (be specific) What am I presently doing to manage, say, calling out, task refusal, procrastination? Our problem may be that we are simply not aware of what we characteristically say and do when we discipline. This is understandable because of the emotions we experience at the time of the disruption. A stepwise plan enables a conscious awareness of, and relative control over, our management behaviour. We ought to be able to say what we can and will do in discipline (what our actual steps will be.)
4. Have I made clear with the students what my expectations are regarding classroom procedures, behaviour, fair rules and consequences for rule breaking? How did I communicate such rules to my classes? Are the rules clear? Are they positive in their expression? How, exactly, do I enforce them?
5. Have I developed clear exit procedures for those rare times when disruptions can not be dealt with successfully at the classroom level? What are those exit procedures?
6. How does my discipline plan fit in with the school policy on discipline and welfare?
7. In what way am I able to share my concerns, problems and successes of discipline with my peers?

Remember a discipline plan is not a panacea. It is a useful tool through which one can improve one's verbal/non-verbal repertoire. Your plan has to be just that, *your* plan. These 'steps' are a guide. They are not legalistic stop-start mechanisms.

They describe that dynamic process that exists in the life of a classroom. In analysing our characteristic 'steps', our plan, we are often asking ourselves where we will need to change. So often we imagine that if only Johnny, or Maria, or Shane or 8D would change then things would be OK. In reality a teacher's behaviour has a significant effect on the nature and extent of disruption. Change is never easy.

DEBUNKING SOME COMMON EXCUSES ABOUT CHANGE

When faced with the need to change or the challenge to change it is common practice to raise inevitable excuses. It is natural when circumstances put pressure on us to change to fall back into old habits, natural excuses. We need to face our excuses squarely, recognising that they may be the roadblock to the changes we need to make. These are some of the more common excuses we make when change is in the wind:

It's hard to change...

"You can't teach and old dog new tricks." Maybe, but you're not a dog. Human beings can change if they choose to, if they know how, if they get some help. Time, effort, will and planning are all it takes.

"Been there, tried that, done that ..."

How long did you try? What did you try? What *exactly* did you do? I've been in many classrooms where teachers have embraced this 'myth' who can't recall what they said to deal with distuptions in the room, who under-report their style ("did I really say 'shhhh' thirty times ... I don't remember." "I don't remember telling him, 'That's the last time I'm going to tell you'..." "I remember *telling* him, I just don't remember what I said ...") Having a trusted colleague in the room to provide some non-judgemental feedback can be really useful in mapping out some of our idiosyncratic behaviour; to give us some data from which we can work - some data from which to generate needed changes.

Only male teachers can be assertive

You remember the 'kind', strong, teacher who came up to you at the beginning of term and said, "Heard you've got 8D. Don't let 'em faze you. Be tough. Sit on them... that's the way!" As he walks off to get his coffee you recall that when you walked past one of his Year 8 classes last year you heard him screaming at them, you saw him bail up Mick Patoula and give a barrage of sarcastic 'what for' ... What he models is the aggressive, demanding style, not assertion. *Assertion* is a skill that is learned. It involves reflective verbal repertoire in a context that maximises rights. It is no prerogative of gender.

"I've got no time for all this planning ..."

If we make time now we'll save it later.

"Sounds good, but, well ... I'm just one of those people ..."

You mean a special case? Well, no one denies that change, in the sense of new management skills, is difficult. Sometimes, however, our excuses may be a way of avoiding the need to decide. If something is clearly not working as it should it is in our best interest - and the student's - to work at change. We can condition ourselves, you know.

"I can't help my feelings ..."

Very few of us can. What we can do is learn to *use* our feelings rather than letting them use us. Choosing our responses by the way we think about things is a good starting point.

"Nobody cares..."

Really, nobody? Have you tried, have you asked? Are you prepared to seek out *one* person at your school who you could risk trusting a talk with over a cuppa? Care, reciprocal care, involves risk and trust. Isolate ourselves and not only do our problems seem worse (than they actually may be), more terrible; we may feel worse - alienated, hurt, rejected. There is no virtue in maintaining a position of isolation.

"We *must* make children respect us, behave ... dammit they *should* respect their teachers"

There is a sense in which we can't *make* children do anything. We can lead, guide, direct, call to consequences, question, re-state, assert ... If our internal dialogue is *inflexible*, raising 'Musts' all over the place, we'll feel more stressed. Stress is perceptual as well as situational. We often act more stressfully (self-defeatingly) as we believe more demandingly about things. Social reality (8D, your grade 3s) has no obligation to respect what you believe. We feel better when our beliefs are more realistic and flexible and less absolutistic.

"I'm bound to fail ... I'd better just keep going the way I am ..."

You're not bound to fail, even though you will. Failure is not end-of-the-world stuff, it's part of the learning process; a way of improving our practice. It can even be fun. No new skills are learned without some 'failure' - it depends on how we define it. "I must get it right first, and every, time" is the kind of internal dialogue that ends up with us saying not, "I have failed, what can I learn out of this? ...", but, "I *am* a failure - I knew I'd blow it!"

It's so difficult and tiring, so much to do!

In re-assessing personal style, in discipline, and embarking on a process of change there will be an initial phase of tiredness (yawn). It's a bit like learning to drive. You'll recall trying to remember half a dozen things at once: now the mirror, then the clutch, don't forget the indicators!, field of vision, gears now ... You were working ahead a few steps at a time, planning with some internal dialogue. It's a bit like that with a discipline plan. "Now I'm giving some questions to David, I'll need to get back to Sean with a bit of dynamic reinforcement in a sec., I'll continue tactical ignoring with Denise if she calls out again; I gave Paul and Dimi a simple choice earlier, if the noise level doesn't stop I'll need to go back. I'll quietly give Maria a rule-restatement in a moment ..." It's a matter of moving around with the plan in process. After a while, like driving, it becomes more or less 'habit'.

This discipline plan stuff is a bit like learning to drive.......

ROOM 17

EXIT

William Rogers
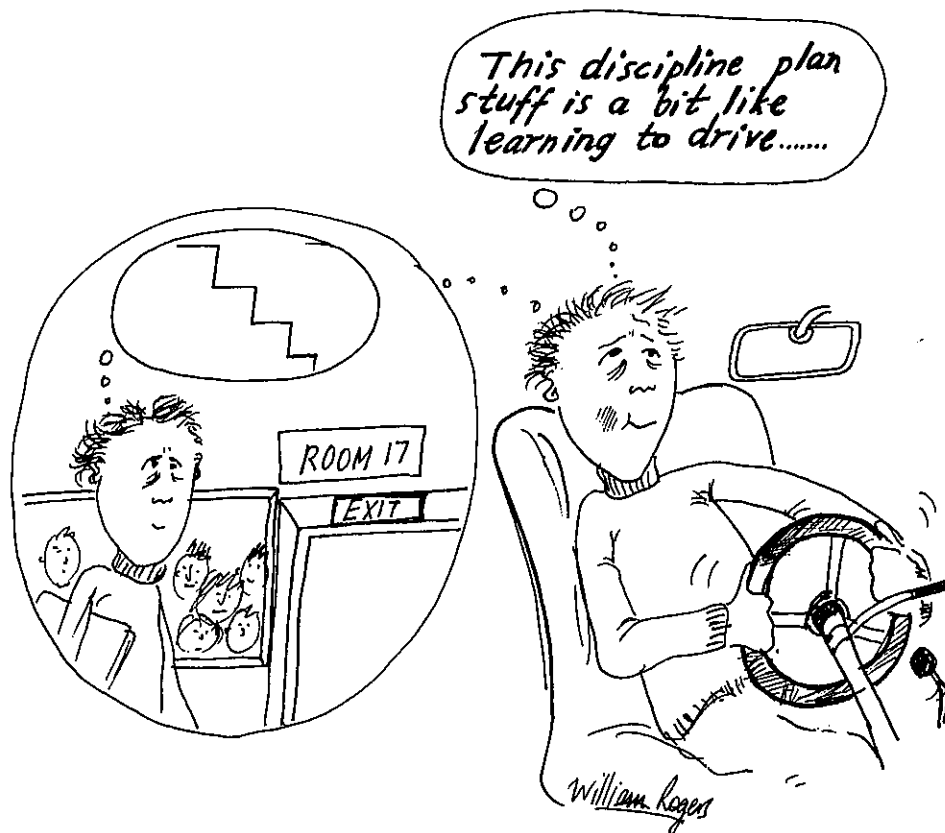
7 SUMMARY

PROTOCOLS OF DISCIPLINE

- Establish clearly the *rights, rules, responsibilities* with your class.

- Intentionally *minimise embarrassment and hostility.*

- Maximise students' *choice* over behaviour.

- Develop and maintain *respect.*

- Be aware that our *expectations* affect our behaviour as classroom leaders.

- Maintain a *judicious sense of humour.*

- *Follow up* and follow through (consistency).

- Utilise wide *support* (peers, admin, parents).

TEACHER BEHAVIOUR IN DISCIPLINE

- Maintain eye contact.

- Use a respectful voicetone (speak clearly, firmly).

- Watch proximity (not too close or overbearing in body language).

- Refer to the fair class rule. Avoid arguing, assert, take the student aside, give clear choice or follow up later.

- Use appropriate assertion (match teacher behaviour to level of disruption).

At the end of the day we need to be able to walk in through the classroom door confident that we have a plan we are comfortable with, a plan that will enable us to be as 'in control' as we can be in a profession like ours, a plan that will enable me to control what I do and say when I'm in the role of 'disciplinarian'.

Good discipline is all about creating a positive, respectful, classroom environment. As an essential feature of our leadership role as teachers we will need to sit down with our peers to generate plans that meet the criteria of positive but firm discipline, whose ultimate goal is to see self-discipline in our students.

As part of the school policy on discipline and welfare it is advisable that a general plan for classroom discipline be suggested; a plan featuring clear rules, professional protocols of teacher management, and clear support processes.

Such a plan will work well, except of course on those days that end with Y! If we can score 90% of the time, lose (or more correctly 'find') our temper infrequently, celebrate our small successes, get help when we struggle with the hard cases, we'll not only find discipline less stressful but we might even begin to enjoy teaching more.

All the best.

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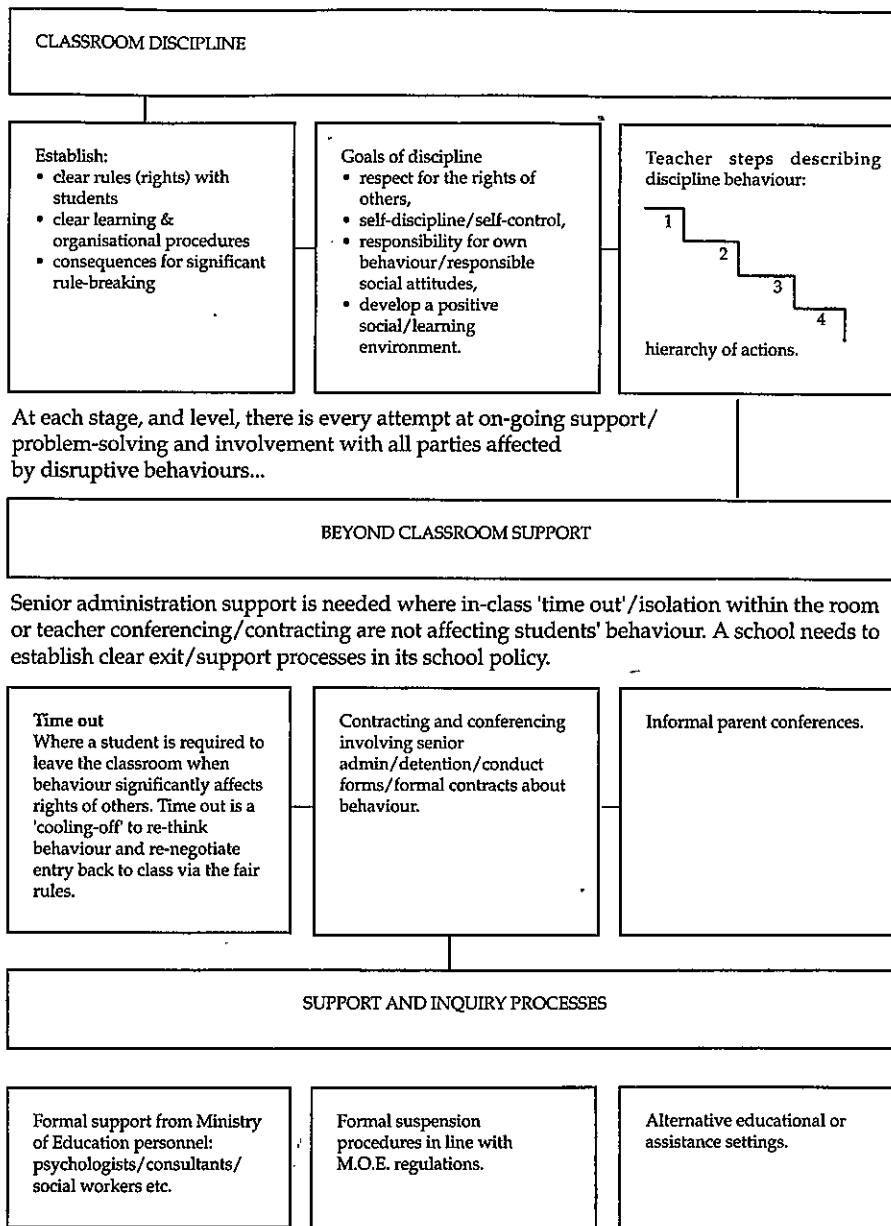
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APPENDIX

LEVELS OF SCHOOL DISCIPLINE

CLASSROOM DISCIPLINE

Establish:
- clear rules (rights) with students
- clear learning & organisational procedures
- consequences for significant rule-breaking

Goals of discipline
- respect for the rights of others,
- self-discipline/self-control,
- responsibility for own behaviour/responsible social attitudes,
- develop a positive social/learning environment.

Teacher steps describing discipline behaviour:
hierarchy of actions.

At each stage, and level, there is every attempt at on-going support/problem-solving and involvement with all parties affected by disruptive behaviours...

BEYOND CLASSROOM SUPPORT

Senior administration support is needed where in-class 'time out'/isolation within the room or teacher conferencing/contracting are not affecting students' behaviour. A school needs to establish clear exit/support processes in its school policy.

Time out
Where a student is required to leave the classroom when behaviour significantly affects rights of others. Time out is a 'cooling-off' to re-think behaviour and re-negotiate entry back to class via the fair rules.

Contracting and conferencing involving senior admin/detention/conduct forms/formal contracts about behaviour.

Informal parent conferences.

SUPPORT AND INQUIRY PROCESSES

Formal support from Ministry of Education personnel: psychologists/consultants/social workers etc.

Formal suspension procedures in line with M.O.E. regulations.

Alternative educational or assistance settings.

The following chart is a suggested guide for keeping a record of your discipline practice. It is helpful to observe our practice from time to time to see if we are meeting the goals we have set in our discipline plan.

STUDENT DISRUPTION	TEACHER ACTION	IN WHAT WAY WAS OUR DISCIPLINE EFFECTIVE? INEFFECTIVE?

You may want to keep such a record on a daily basis for a week or two to see if a pattern is developing (time of day, subject areas, day of the week etc.)

1   Under column 1 you may want to record male/female and time of day to assist analysis. List the disruptive behaviour concisely i.e. David called out six or seven times at the beginning of the lesson.

2   Under column 2 describe the action you took, specifically. This not only assists in reflection on our behaviour but such observation, over time, can chart the effect on student behaviour by a change in our approach.

3   Under column 3 describe how you believe your action affected the student's behaviour.

You could also try a personal audio-tape observation. Set a tape-recorder with a a 90 min. audio tape, turn it on, and forget it. Play it back (where no one can listen, unless of course you want to specifically share it with someone). Then ask yourself:
- How positive are my discipline statements? How directive?
- How often do I use encouraging statements? Do I encourage disruptive students when they come back on task, or do I just leave them?
- How decisive does my voice sound? How sure? What is the general *tone* like?
- Any humour? How situation specific is my discipline?

Such an exercise can have a positive effect on revising our plan by giving us an insight, some feedback, on our *characteristic* verbal behaviour.