

# Considerations on Effective Teaching and Classroom Management

Anne BRASIER\*

*It is the view of many educators that effective behaviour management is closely related to effective teaching. Through investigating the methods and philosophies of various education researchers, one could go as far as to conclude that the relationship between effective teaching and effective classroom management is a symbiotic one; that one cannot exist successfully without the other.*

*In recent years in many countries including Japan, behavioural problems have become increasingly evident in classrooms at all levels within the education system. Additionally, as the result of recent integration policies, teachers have been increasingly called upon to teach students with a wider range of intellectual or physical disabilities, or identifiable behavioural problems within the mainstream classroom than ever before.*

*This essay sets out to investigate various research, in order to identify specific fundamental teaching practices that will enhance effective teaching and improve classroom management in order to provide a classroom environment in which all students, regardless of their background, can achieve to their best of their ability.*

## **WHAT IS EFFECTIVE TEACHING?**

Firstly, in order to describe the intrinsic relationship between effective teaching and effective behavioural management one must look to the literature for definitions or parameters of what can be termed good/effective teaching. 'Good Teaching' was traditionally an idealistic notion of a teacher centred, quiet classroom where diligent, obedient students listened intently, studied hard, achieved well academically while never daring to challenge the authority of the teacher. Traditionally classrooms were virtually devoid of pupils who did not fit such a mould, often not enrolled because of their having an intellectual or physical disability, or behavioural problem. "Such students were in the past referred to special schools, or not expected to attend school at all, in part because society often expressed disapproval of their participation in community life."

Elkins 1990:34

Society has come a long way in recognising the rights of all children, and the right of children whether intellectually or physically disabled, or in special need, to be educated alongside their peers, within regular community schools. Issues of funding for Education, and economic 'rationalisation' have also come into play, with many long established 'special schools' being closed. As a result, in Australia the number of students being integrated into mainstream classroom continues to increase yearly. Apart from students with

---

**KEY WORDS:** *Learning environment, behaviour management, classroom management*

---

designated disabilities, the number of students 'at risk' or 'underachieving' are, owing largely to innumerable social changes and pressures now becoming the majority or the norm, so to speak, in today's classrooms. Hence the old concept of the 'ideal class' and the ideal or stereotypical classroom has gone. Children with learning problems can no longer be put aside into a 'too-hard basket' so to speak.

Teachers today must adjust to these changing circumstances, and this has resulted in widespread research about teaching effectively and managing behaviour in a contemporary mixed ability classroom. Cannon, Idol and West (1992) produced a survey of educator's beliefs about practices that they considered essential for regular classroom teachers and Special-Ed teachers. They gave the participants a list of 125 statements about essential teaching practices that they had compiled through reviewing educational research literature.

Although the chief focus of this study was on practices for teachers working with mildly handicapped students, the result of the survey was that the participants considered 82% of the practices as being essential for both regular education and special education settings. This implies that there is an identifiable body of effective teaching practice that should, and in many places is, recognised in contemporary classrooms, catering across the board equitably for students of all backgrounds, needs and abilities.

The survey categorised the following as being the key areas for teachers to focus on in order to teach most effectively,

*Effective assessment/diagnosis*

*Instructional content*

*Instructional practices*

*Managing student behaviour*

*Planning and managing the teaching and learning environment*

*Monitoring/evaluation procedures*

It is interesting to note that 3 of the above 6 categories specifically relate to classroom/behaviour management issues, i.e. Instructional Practices, Managing Student Behaviour and Planning and Managing the Teaching and Learning Environment. This reflects again the intrinsic relationship between what is viewed as 'effective teaching' and 'effective behavioural management within the classroom'.

The authors of the study noted that, "Currently a merger of general and special education personnel preparation programs as well as general and special education services within all schools is being proposed as a means of developing a comprehensive education system to better meet the needs of all students, with or without handicaps. There is a need for co-ordinated and integrated staff development for general and special educators in the teaching practices identified and validated by this study as essential for the successful mainstreaming of students with mild handicaps." Canon, Idol & West, 1992:314

The authors repeatedly emphasised the need for professional development and in-service training

for all teachers that would focus on providing effective instruction in classroom settings, and by actively adopting such practices, provide a learning environment more likely to benefit all students within the class. Specifically, it is these aspects of effective teaching that I wish to focus on.

## **INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES**

Of the statements identified in Cannon et al's survey many points stand out as concurring throughout the literature. Also many of these concur directly with "Teacher-Learning Components of Tasks and Activities", discussed in Fields 1989.

According to Fields, "Learning occurs when these four variables are present in a teacher-learning situation and tailored to the particular needs of the children." In order to maintain pupil involvement or engagement in lesson tasks, and to encourage mastery of the lesson content, teachers should be aware of the importance of these variables.

The four variables are:

### **cues, participation, reinforcement, and corrective feedback.**

**Cues:** are described as being the components of instruction in what is to be learned. These include teacher explanation and direction. Research has shown that learning is related to the clarity, variety, and style of delivery and meaningfulness of the explanations and directions given by the classroom teacher. When instruction is delivered without clarity, students become confused and even frustrated as they are uncertain about how to proceed with the activity, naturally this often leads to unrest in the classroom – certain individuals may react badly, visibly displaying their feelings of confusion and frustration. Clear, concise directions are vital, particularly with younger students or those with learning problems.

**Participation:** a student's overt and covert involvement in lesson activities is related to learning. "Learning is greater when the children have an opportunity to actively participate through such activities as answering questions, writing assignments, listening to other children, responding or discussing, etc." Fields 1989:19 All students should feel that they are active contributors to the class group, and their input is valued and appreciated. Teachers must ensure that they encourage the responses of their students, by asking only one question at a time, phrasing questions clearly and at appropriate levels of difficulty, and most importantly, allow ample wait-time for a response, before calling on another student for an answer.

**Reinforcement:** involves acknowledging and rewards student appropriate behaviour, efforts, and responses positively, through praise, token rewards, access to desirable activities etc. Negative interactions with students should be minimised. Positive interactions strengthen a child's self-image and positive behaviour is more likely to be repeated if reinforced.

**Corrective feedback:** "Learning is maximised when error responses are corrected by the teacher." Fields 1989:19 Teachers should give appropriate feedback to student verbal responses, particularly if an obvious error or misunderstanding has occurred, for example by rephrasing, restating, or elaborating further upon a student's response. Identifying where a child's problem lies with a given task can allow for the use of remedial teaching to clarify the task for the child.

Not listed within the above four examples, but also a key to effective teaching, Kounin 1970, emphasised the importance of providing students with meaningful, challenging work. To put it simply, students will not and cannot become engaged in the lesson or motivated to master the skills being taught if they are bored. "Students need to feel that they are making progress in an activity and that the activity is worthwhile. It takes longer for students to become bored when they feel they are accomplishing something useful." Edwards 1992:233

When students become bored they are easily distracted and restless, meaning that they are not focussed on the learning task, and more prone to behaving inappropriately in the classroom. Teachers must strive to provide variety in the content, difficulty, presentation and materials used in the classroom. Students enjoy classes where teachers steer away from the set textbook etc. incorporate various types of media, role-playing, debates, guest speakers etc. Classrooms need variety, a breath of fresh air, so to speak, on a regular basis in order to keep the students (and for that matter, their teachers) interested and motivated.

Furthermore, particular attention also needs to be made to the actual structure of the lesson. There seems to be almost universal agreement on the essential components and order of standard academic lessons. Fields identified five components that any effective basic academic skills lesson would generally contain. These are an introduction, a development phase, guided practice, independent practice and closure.

If such components are introduced in a balanced sequential order, teaching and learning is purported to be further enhanced. I shall outline these components briefly:

**Introduction** : this is an important phase of the lesson because within the introduction the teacher can outline the activity and the purpose of the lesson. Prior knowledge or content acquired in previous lessons can be tied in with the new topic. It is important for students to be aware of the purpose for, and to have expected goals for the lesson set out clearly from the outset.

**Development** : the development component of the lesson is where the majority of explanation and demonstration by the teacher takes place. In primary classes in particular, this part of the lesson is best done with the class group gathered together on the floor - with their attention focussed on the teachers instructions. The function of the development phase of the lesson is to raise the children's understanding of the task in the most efficient and effective manner possible. The pace of this phase of the lesson is important - if too slow, one loses the attention and motivation of the students, but if dealt with too fast, many students may not be able to grasp the understanding required to go on with the following parts of the lesson successfully. The object of this phase is to impart to children the understanding of the lesson task; therefore this stage is probably the most critical. The clarity of the teacher's presentation and explanations is at all times vital, but particularly during the development phase.

**Guided practice** : the teacher provides supervised practice opportunities for the children on the task just demonstrated. The teacher must closely observe and guide the students during this phase, and provide corrective feedback when errors occur. Direct support is essential when students first approach a new task

or skill.

**Independent practice** : In basic academic skill instruction, mastery is typically reached after many opportunities for practice and application of the knowledge and skills recently required. Learning at this phase, while still being over-seen by the teacher, is primarily self-directed by the learner.

**Closure** : The closure of the lesson primarily serves the purpose of re-iterating the purpose of the lesson, providing a connection between this lesson and prior knowledge and perhaps a link towards future related lessons. Most researchers emphasise the importance of the closure component of the lesson in order to review or round off the lesson successfully.

In addition to focussing on these phases of the lesson, other specific teaching skills have been mentioned repeatedly in the literature. Through providing instructional assistance using such common sense procedures as the following, teachers can further assist their students understanding of the task and concepts at hand whilst at the same time minimise the occurrence of disturbances misbehaviour in the classroom.

**Teachers should strive to:**

- provide visual aids for the students
- give descriptions and instructions in clear, explicit terms
- organise what is to be learnt into small, easily taught and learned steps or 'chunks' of information teach for awareness, stress the nature of the task being taught, when it can be used and how it can be used. Stress the relevance of the knowledge to the student
- model new skills or techniques to demonstrate the behaviour that the child should later perform
- check pupil understanding through questioning and observation regularly throughout the lesson
- always try to stimulate interest and curiosity in a topic
- distribute questions evenly, not just to the students in the front of the class, or with their hands up first
- reinforce and praise students regularly for their efforts, particularly with low performing children
- give clear and reasonable limits for completing work
- when disturbances occur, do not disrupt the class to chastise the target pupil/s, be discreet, move to that part of the room and do not exacerbate the problem or have a 'stand-off' with the target pupils manage class time efficiently. Do not disrupt the flow of the lesson repeatedly for announcements, managerial matters etc

**MANAGING STUDENT BEHAVIOUR**

One of the landmark bodies of behavioural management research, and most widely adopted methods, is that of Jacob Kounin. The Kounin Model of classroom management evolved through a series of intensive

studies which initially set out to identify what teaching techniques 'good teachers' routinely use in their classrooms, and how these differed from those used in classroom where identifiable behavioural problems occurred.

Kounin and his colleagues pinpointed a number of specific and frequently occurring classroom management phenomena. Initially sparked by an incident that occurred in his own classroom, Kounin firstly researched the effect that teachers' efforts to maintain discipline in the classroom have upon other students as bystanders. "Their desists (remarks intended to stop misbehaviour) effected students who witnessed the event. The effect of the desist rippled out from the target student to influence the behaviour of others in the class." Kounin in Edwards 1997:220

This is a key cause of concern, having particular implications for teachers with specific students in their charge with learning problems or special needs. A teacher's remarks towards an individual student must be carefully considered, as they can and do effect the total learning environment of the classroom. Apart from the ripple effect of desists, Kounin and his researchers discovered that effective teachers displayed 'withitness', meaning that the teacher literally has eyes in the back of his/her head - acutely attuned to the goings-on and the dynamics of the group within the classroom. By displaying 'withitness' a teacher can be assertive, and make 'the limits' or boundaries for target behaviour known from the outset.

The maintenance of momentum throughout activities was also pinpointed. Keeping students alert and focussed on the task at hand was also recognised as being vital, having the two-fold effect of maximising affective learning and decreasing considerably the incidence of disturbances or behavioural problems.

The Kounin model of Classroom behavioural management is primarily concerned with preventing discipline problems from occurring. The overall philosophy is of creating a classroom environment and relationship with the students which minimises the incidence of inappropriate behaviour. It lacks however provisions for dealing with problems once they have occurred, thus the approach is best implemented when combined with elements of other approaches.

Kounin suggested order to develop 'withitness', the timing, targeting and delivery of desists is vital. With regard to using desists effectively, Kounin recommend the following:

**USE CLARITY** within the desist, clarify the nature of the inappropriate behaviour.

- specify the inappropriate behaviour
- provide instruction about how to stop the misbehaviour
- provide a reason for the desist

**FIRMNESS** (i.e. the extent to which teachers convey the message)

- firmness can be gradually increase if the teacher 1) make the desist more emphatic 2) stops talking and looks at the student 3) walks toward the student 4) touches or otherwise guides the student towards appropriate behaviour

**ROUGHNESS** has a very negative ripple effect and should not be used

**TIMING** to be able to deal with problems in a timely way, before they escalate and become more disruptive and difficult to correct

**TARGETTING** - be able to deal with the most critical issue in the class when several problems surface at the same time

- be very careful not to target the wrong child for misbehaviour
- show students that they can successfully deal with more than one issue in the classroom at once. Teachers should show that they are capable of continuing the instructional program while dealing with potential discipline problems.

“The most effective desist will show that the teacher knows what is going on in the classroom; it will be properly timed and targeted and have firmness and clarity. It will also not interfere with other tasks the teacher is performing.” Edwards 1992:225

## **PLANNING AND MANAGING THE TEACHING AND LEARNING ENVIRONMENT**

The following procedures, if implemented, allow the classroom to operate as a more stable, time efficient, well-managed environment. Accordingly this allows more time for on-task learning, avoids unnecessary delays and their subsequent behavioural problems, and provides a routine which students know, feel secure with, and can function well within.

Establishing rules- the majority of researchers concur that students should have a sense of ownership or input when classroom rules are being established. Rules must be established from the outset of the school year. Once a list of rules and consequences has been discussed and established, a copy should be posted in the classroom. Rules should be kept clear, concise and to a minimum. The most important factor is that the teacher reinforces and applies these rules consistently.

Time management and routines-the classroom should be managed as an efficient learning environment so that academic activities run smoothly, transitions are brief and orderly and little time is spent getting organised or dealing with inattention or resistance. Learning tasks should not be interrupted by announcements, role taking, or administration matters etc. Keeping students focussed on-task is essential not only for their behavioural management, but more so that they have maximum use of their learning time.

## **PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT**

Finally the physical arrangement of the classroom is of great importance. The classroom environment should be visually stimulating, attractive, and warm and secure for the students. Studies have shown that students in unattractive classrooms experience more feelings of fatigue and discontent. In arranging the physical environment to improve the effectiveness of learning and to prevent behavioural problems attention must be paid to the following:

- when arranging desks consider the dynamics of the class group. Does the arrangement facilitate for

- group work, pair work etc? Can all students see the board clearly from where they are seated?
- traffic patterns are critical when deciding classroom layout. The teacher must be able to have access to all parts of the room at all times
  - visibility – furniture should be organised so that the teacher can clearly see all goings-on within the room
  - the teacher's desk is often located at the front of the room. Edwards contends that the best location is near the back of the room. "Here teachers can conduct business with individual students in greater privacy, and students can share their feelings with teachers with less risk of embarrassment." 1992:394 Also, from the teacher's point of view it may be a better vantage point to observe the class when working on-task
  - the particular needs of integration students or special needs students must be catered for appropriately when deciding the classroom layout

From viewing a wide body of research and recommendations within the literature, it becomes clear that good teaching and effective classroom discipline/management go hand in hand. Effective teaching cannot be conducted when the classroom environment is constantly disrupted and students are not attentive. Conversely, when effective teaching strategies are not consistently applied, or even implemented at all, students will become alienated, bored – frustrated with what they perceive as a curriculum irrelevant or beyond their grasp – such a situation is a behavioural disaster waiting to happen. It is imperative that today's teachers become aware of many of the fundamentals mentioned above in order to better cater for students of all backgrounds, needs and abilities.

## REFERENCES

- Cannon, G.S., Idol, L. & West, J.F. 1992, *Educating students with mild handicaps in general classrooms: Essential teaching practices for general and special educators*, Journal of Learning Disabilities, May, vol.25. no.5, pp.300-17
- Edwards, C. H. 1997. *Classroom Discipline and Management*, Macmillan, New York
- Elkins, J. 1990 *Integration, Educating Children with Special Needs*, eds A.Ashman & J. Elkins, Prentice-Hall, Sydney
- Fields, B. 1989, *The Essentials of Teaching*, University of Southern Queensland, Toowoomba



## Considerations On Effective Teaching and Classroom Management

### 効果的な教授法とクラス運営に関する考察

アン・ブレイジア 外国人教師  
外国語教育センター

教室内部での生徒の行動を効果的に処理することが学習効果と深い関わりがあるということは、多くの教育者が述べているところである。多くの教育研究者が効果的な学習指導と効果的なクラス運営が互いに関連し合っており、どちらかが欠ければ、もう一方も効果がないという結論に達している。

最近、日本を含め、多くの国々において、教育システムにおける様々なレベルで教室内の「問題行動」が徐々に深刻なものとなっている。加えて、最近の統合化政策の結果、教師は以前にも増して、ますます教室の中で知的・身体的なハンディキャップや行動上の様々な問題をかかえる生徒を指導する必要性に迫られている。

この論文では、生徒の能力を最大限に引き出せる教室環境を整えるため、効果的な学習指導と教室運営を改善するための基本的な教授技術に関する英語圏の幾つかの研究を紹介し検討した。

**Key words:** *Learning environment, behaviour management, classroom management*