

Better Behaviour Better Learning
Essential Skills for
Classroom **Management**

Facilitator's notes



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For the facilitator

The Essential Skills for Classroom Management program is part of the Better Behaviour Better Learning professional development program designed to help teachers enhance their knowledge and skills in behaviour management, and foster positive teacher–student relationships.

It comprises a three-hour, core-learning component, which offers a minimum standard of knowledge about some fundamental principles of classroom management, and five one-hour, follow-up sessions.

Your primary goal in facilitating this program is to help participating teachers understand the Balance Model, as described by Dr Christine Richmond (c. 2007) by encouraging them to:

- reflect on their classroom practice
- consider their use of the Essential Skills for Classroom Management.

In introducing the information in this package, it is important that you help participants understand the significance of:

- clearly stated expectations regarding learning and behaviour (i.e. the language of expectation)
- the crucial role of acknowledging appropriate behaviour, both verbally and non-verbally (i.e. the language of acknowledgment)
- the correction of inappropriate behaviour in a timely, least-to-most intrusive manner (i.e. the language of correction).

Use the information provided in the facilitator's notes to supplement your own understanding, and feel free to bring your knowledge and experiences to the presentation to enhance the learning. Don't feel that you have to pass on all the information here to the participants. It's up to you to make professional judgements about what additional information from the supplementary notes should be included in the sessions.

After developing an understanding of the essential skills, participants may explore, refine and practise a wide range of pedagogical approaches and their associated class management strategies.

Any examples of less effective teaching practice are presented only for the purpose of professional learning and do not reflect general teacher practice.

For additional resources, visit the Better Behaviour Better Learning Professional Development Suite <http://www.education.qld.gov.au/studentservices/behaviour/docs/pdsuite.pdf> and the Better Behaviour Better Learning Online Course <http://education.qld.gov.au/learningplace/onlinelearning/courses/course-calendar.html>.

Teacher language in the classroom

The diagram on page 3 of the core learning component represents the time spent on 'learning conversations' (curriculum based) and 'managing conversations' (behaviour based) in the classroom.

The goal of implementing the Essential Skills for Classroom Management is to increase the time spent on learning conversations and decrease the time spent on management conversations.

This is represented in the diagram by a downward shift in the line across the rectangle.

Questions to provoke thought

1. What constitutes a learning conversation (curriculum based) in the classroom?
2. What constitutes a management conversation in the classroom? Remember that in having a 'management conversation' students may in fact be learning about their behaviour and related issues.
3. How much lesson time is used for learning conversations and how much is used for management conversations?
 - a) Ask participants to estimate how much time is spent on each type of conversation in one of their typical lessons. (During the core learning presentation, they may only need to think about this. Further discussions could be a part of a follow-up session.)
 - b) Suggest to participants that they could record this time more precisely in one of their lessons through an observation and coaching session or classroom profiling session.
4. During what phases of the lesson/session are management conversations more likely to take place and why? For example, if unclear expectations are set at the beginning of a learning session, within a few minutes of being set to task, it is more likely that a 'management conversation' will need to take place because students do not know what to do. Participants could be asked to think about how to best prevent this kind of 'management conversation' from taking place.

Checking for understanding

Highlight the importance of checking for understanding after a teacher has explained instructions, content or expectations. Encourage participants to question their students to ensure that they understand these explanations before moving on in the lesson.

The Balance Model

In balance

Discuss with participants the ways in which language is used in a positive learning environment. Include the following strategies.

Clear expectations

Emphasise the importance of articulating clear expectations in the classroom regarding learning and behaviour. Expectations about learning should relate to the specific tasks in which students will be engaged during the lesson, not just behavioural expectations of a general nature.

Teachers often think they have set clear expectations when in reality they have not. They may have expressed their expectations in a vague or complicated way. It may be useful to think of the non-verbal cues teachers use to articulate expectations such as:

- clearly written brief instructions on task sheets and on the board
- rule posters
- pictures of students engaged appropriately in class activities. (This strategy is also supportive of students with speech-language difficulties, auditory processing difficulties or short-term memory difficulties.)

The language of acknowledgment

Acknowledgment can be verbal or non-verbal and teachers should use it more often than the language of correction.

Suggest that teachers find a way to prompt themselves to maintain an effective acknowledgment rate. For example, they could place the word 'acknowledge' or 'remember' as a small poster on the back and front wall of a teaching area as a visual prompt. If students ask about the sign the teacher can simply reply, "That is there to remind me of something I need to do."

The language of correction

Encourage teachers to use this language in a timely and strategic manner by:

- responding minimally with clear intent
- redirecting to the learning as the initial response
- modelling a respectful manner in their interactions.

Pace of the lesson

It is particularly important to move quickly from the expository phase of the lesson to the 'pupil do' (on-task) phase of the lesson.

Initial tasks should allow all students to achieve a successful outcome without the need for extensive teacher direction. Teachers can then take advantage of opportunities to acknowledge students when they are on-task.

Planning for student management

Remind teachers that just as they plan for curriculum, they should plan for student management. It is important to have a clear idea of the possible need for correction in the lesson and what range of corrective strategies, least-to-most intrusive, could be employed (Rogers 1995, p 24).

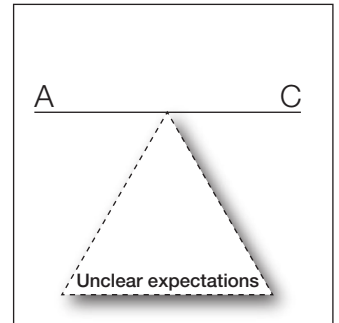
By considering these issues before they arise in the classroom, teachers can be better prepared to respond to disruptions.

Increasing self-awareness

Encourage teachers to become more aware of their acknowledgment and correction rates by participating in peer coaching or classroom profiling.

Imbalance 1 – unclear expectations

1. **Expectations** regarding learning and behaviour are not clearly expressed to students.
2. **Acknowledgment (A)** may be used effectively.
3. **Correction (C)** is used in an appropriate manner. By clearly articulating expectations, instances of correction will be reduced. There is often obvious confusion in the classroom about what should be happening. Students may start to overtly misbehave to compensate for the lack of clear directions given.
4. It is imperative that teachers use some form of 'checking for understanding' in their instruction.



'Checking for understanding' is the step used to verify that students have understood:

- the concepts covered in the previous lesson
- the basic concepts of any new material the teacher has introduced during the lesson
- the instructions for any tasks the student is expected to begin immediately and complete.

Without checking for understanding, students will frequently ask questions of the teacher or their peers to seek clarification.

This can manifest as disruptive behaviour (interjections directed at the teacher or calling out across the room) and may be seen by students as being justified because of their positive intent to seek clarification about expected on-task activity.

5. Because of unclear expectations, episodes of disruptive behaviour requiring correction may increase.

Teachers should consider how to clearly express expectations related to:

- the specific class rules and expectations related to behaviour
- general school rules and expectations referred to in the Code of School Behaviour as they apply to the classroom.

The class teacher's specific expectations related to learning include:

- how students will engage with the curriculum presented, how efficiently they will complete learning activities, and the quality of the work produced
- the social outcomes from student–student and student–teacher interactions after engaging with the curriculum.

Imbalance 2 – too much acknowledgment

1. **The language of expectation** may be clear or unclear in this imbalance.
2. **The language of acknowledgment** is used more often than the language of correction.
 - There may be inadequate monitoring of the environment.
 - Individuals and groups displaying frequent and/or high-level inappropriate behaviours may only have their appropriate behaviours acknowledged.
3. **The language of correction** is used infrequently.

Situations requiring correction may often be inappropriately ignored.

The language of correction may:

- be used in an untimely manner
 - be used with little consideration, having little effect
 - be used with emotional engagement
 - be used with ineffective tone and manner.
4. In this situation it is possible that expectations are clear; however, it is more likely that they are unclear or have been expressed vaguely.
 5. The language of acknowledgment is used frequently despite the obvious need for greater instances of correction.

Often, in an effort to maintain positive teacher–student relationships, inappropriate student behaviours are ignored.

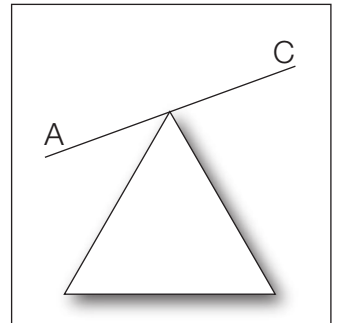
When teachers continue a pattern of acknowledging any appropriate behaviour while the student continues with a litany of inappropriate, disruptive behaviours that are not corrected, students may be confused as the teacher is giving mixed messages.

Sometimes teachers do not correct inappropriate behaviour because they may not see or hear disruptions.

This may inadvertently signal to students that disruptive behaviour is acceptable.

Tactical ignoring or selective attending is a valid student management strategy. However, the ongoing, unconsidered use of selective attending contributes to a disruptive classroom environment.

It is possible that the teacher is unaware of the optimum learning conditions in the classroom perhaps due to low expectations and/or an emphasis on being a friendly, non-challenging teacher who fosters positive student relationships at the expense of directing students to engage with the curriculum.



For example, a teacher may think:

- “These students are incapable of demonstrating appropriate behaviour.”
- “These students can’t achieve high standards of learning.”
- “If I have high expectations of behaviour and learning the students may not like me or think I am mean.”

Suggest to teachers that they need to consider what appropriate behaviour and learning their students could be capable of.

Examine the values and beliefs underpinning expectations.

Acknowledge that behavioural change is often related to changes in pedagogy; however, regarding student management, pedagogy is not always the key element requiring attention from the teacher.

Acknowledge that behavioural change is an ongoing process for students and that shaping appropriate behaviour is an integral part of student management.

Behavioural change can be a slow process.

6. The language of correction is not used adequately. Sometimes correction is given long after a disruptive incident, which may confuse students as they find it difficult to link their inappropriate behaviour to the corrective strategy used by the teacher. To overcome this:
 - Ensure that school procedures pertaining to student management reinforce a prompt response to correction. This is particularly significant with younger students.
 - Avoid referring low-level inappropriate behaviours to other staff for a response.

If corrective responses are given in an emotionally engaged manner, they will be less effective and may encourage further disruptions.

Beginning teachers particularly need advice and information to help them:

- establish appropriate relationships with their students
- understand how appropriate student management contributes to building positive learning relationships.

Sometimes, beginning teachers believe that by managing student behaviour they weaken learning relationships because students will not like them. This is not the case. Beginning teachers can effectively manage student behaviour and strengthen learning relationships at the same time.

7. It is possible that little correction is given to students because the teacher does not have an adequate knowledge of the range of strategies that could be used. Simply, a person cannot do what they do not know.

This principle carries with it a ‘no blame’ philosophy – important, particularly for beginning teachers.

Once a teacher becomes aware that classroom situations could be improved, they can gain the skills required.

Imbalance 3 – too much correction

Too much correction is the most common ‘imbalance’ in classrooms where additional intervention is required.

1. **Expectations** may be clear or unclear in this imbalance.

When questioned, students often do not know what they should be doing in the classroom.

If they do know what tasks they need to be engaged with, they may not believe that there is an expectation that they need to apply themselves consistently to the tasks.

2. **The language of acknowledgment** may be used, but it is not used generously or strategically.

In some instances, the language of acknowledgment is not used at all.

The language of acknowledgment is used conditionally.

For example: “Jason, you are on-task and working well, it is a shame you weren’t yesterday.”

Teachers may over estimate their use of the language of acknowledgment during a lesson.

3. **The language of correction** is used far more frequently than the language of acknowledgment. It can be ineffective if:

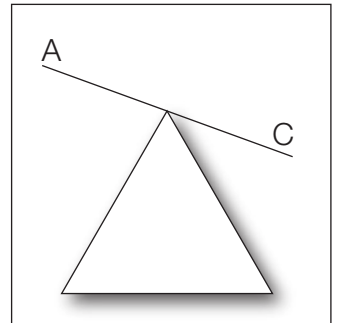
- correction is not given at the appropriate time
- correction is given with emotional engagement
- corrective responses are often unconsidered reflex reactions
- over correction (harsher correction than is necessary) is used
- correction is used frequently in a sarcastic manner.

It is important to encourage teachers to think about the possible affects that too much corrective language in the classroom will have on the teacher and on the students.

4. **Timing:** Correction can be used too quickly or too slowly. By correcting too quickly:
 - students may perceive that the teacher is nagging or unfair, leading to resistance and disruptive behaviour
 - teachers may not allow students ‘take-up time’ after giving an instruction.

Sometimes, teachers respond in a more intrusive manner when a less intrusive response is appropriate.

By using low-level verbal and non-verbal corrective cues such as proximity, a teacher can convey a clear message about behavioural expectations without increasing a negative tone in the classroom.



5. **Unclear expectations:** as previously discussed, still apply in this situation.
6. **Values and beliefs:** it may also be relevant to discuss these in relation to acknowledgment and praise.

These issues include acknowledging students for:

- doing things that meet expectations
- doing what they should be doing
- demonstrating basic manners and regular on-task behaviours.

Discussing these issues will raise a variety of opinions and beliefs.

It is useful to mention that many adults value and appreciate simple acknowledgment for fulfilling their basic responsibilities; especially in the workplace.

For example, many teachers appreciate a kind word from the Principal regarding their punctual submission of reports even though submitting reports on time is a 'basic responsibility' in teaching practice.

While children are physically and cognitively different to adults, acknowledgment is important for their development as this will assist them to evaluate their behaviours now and in the future.

7. **Emotional engagement:** Ask: "Is it possible to effectively correct students with a less emotive manner?"

By relying too much on emotional engagement in correction:

- Teachers may send the message to students that they control the teacher's emotional disposition.
- Students will be placed in an inappropriate position of power over the teacher.

By using less emotionally laden language in the classroom, teachers will contribute to student perceptions that they are a fair, calm, decisive and measured leader in the classroom.

8. **Reflex reactions:** Discuss the concept of working counter-intuitively (Richmond 2005, p 9) to solve problems.

A counter-intuitive response to a situation is one that goes against what your normal response would be. You can train yourself to do this, and teachers at the beginning phase of their teaching careers will find this especially useful.

Consider: If what you usually do intuitively was effective, would you continue having to deal with problems?

As you experiment with new ways of responding, you will develop a more effective set of strategies and, over time, will be able to respond more intuitively.

9. **Voice:** Teachers can form the habit of constantly using a loud voice or aggressive tone. This can be interpreted by students as constant correction, which prompts resistance and disruptive behaviour.

Encourage teachers to become aware of and monitor their use of voice.

10. **Over correction:** Encourage teachers to think about how they can least intrusively deal with a variety of situations.

Ask teachers: "Is the corrective response or consequence intended to punish the student or to assist them to modify their behaviour and engage with the learning?"
What is the more appropriate goal?

11. **Sarcasm** can be a powerfully negative force in the classroom. Students may not perceive the 'humour' that is often intended with the use of sarcasm. Use other forms of humour in the classroom.

Demonstration: Briefly demonstrate the following dialogue using a measured, firm, directive voice, then an emotionally charged, angry or annoyed voice in response to the same situation.

Negative: Emotionally charged language damages relationships.

"David, I am sick and tired of you rocking on your chair. Can't you just follow the rules once? How many times do I have to tell you? It is driving me crazy!"

Positive: Respectful, firm, directive language maintains or builds relationships.

"David, what is the rule about sitting safely in your chair? ... Thanks."

or

"David, put the chair safely on the floor ... thanks."

Ask teachers to evaluate whether the firm directive voice can be as or more effective than an angry annoyed tone. Why?

Management focused language: Essential Skills

1. Reinforce the basic structure of the Balance Model.

Effective classroom teaching is underpinned by:

- **clearly articulated expectations** related to learning and behaviour
 - **generous use of the language of acknowledgment** (verbal and non-verbal) in a considered manner
 - **considered use of the language of correction** (verbal and non-verbal).
2. Reinforce that, by expressing your expectations clearly and using the language of acknowledgment appropriately, students will reduce inappropriate behaviours, resulting in less need for correction.
 3. In behaviour management, teachers should consider what they do to:
 - reduce students' inappropriate behaviour
 - maintain the appropriate behaviour already demonstrated
 - shape inappropriate behaviour.

Active student management

The word 'active' implies that classroom management is a purposeful process requiring intent and effort.

Even when students are on-task and behaving appropriately, there is still a behaviour management role for teachers in the classroom.

Teachers should pay attention to their use of the language of acknowledgment to reduce inappropriate behaviours.

Teachers can reduce students' inappropriate behaviour by pro-actively encouraging those who may be making small positive changes in their behaviour.

Behavioural change is often a slow process.

An initial response to inappropriate behaviour could be correction involving selective attending. Subsequently, the teacher could redirect to the learning and/or offer assistance. This is a powerful strategy as the teacher talks about the learning first as a redirection, rather than the inappropriate behaviour.

A redirection to the learning that offers teacher assistance creates a positive interaction rather than a negative one, as addressing inappropriate behaviours would.

Examples of redirecting to the learning

If a student is off-task and talking to a classmate, the teacher could say:

- "Shane, what question are you up to?"
 - "Shane, have you begun to read the passage yet?"
 - "Shane, are you working on the writing task now?"
 - "Shane, do you need some help with the task?"
- } **Redirecting to the learning**
- "Shane, would you like me to come over and work with you?"
- } **Offer of assistance**

These should be said with no intention to embarrass or belittle the student, and offers of assistance should be given in a measured tone.

Be aware of how tone of voice can change the meaning of words.

Be aware of how cultural differences can impact on communication between teachers and students.

A redirection to learning or an offer of teacher assistance can also be made non-verbally through body language: proximity, gesture and facial expression.

Take-up time is the time teachers allow for students to respond to instruction before a redirection or corrective action is taken (Rogers 1995, p 109). The length of take-up time may be significantly influenced by the teacher's emotional state. For example, if the teacher is stressed and in a hurry, take-up time may be shorter than normal.

Essential Skills for Classroom Management

There are 10 Essential Skills for Classroom Management. Each has been defined in simple terms.

To avoid anxiety about learning new information, inform teachers that there is no need to memorise all of these terms and definitions.

Point out that understanding the essential skills for classroom management is a gradual process.

Advise teachers that the essential skills could be consciously applied one, or a few, at a time in the classroom during their initial use. Other Essential Skills can be used incidentally in the classroom.

It may be useful to ask teachers if they are familiar with any of these terms.

Acknowledge that many teachers use these skills intuitively in their teaching; however, it is the conscious application and refinement of the skills that makes them more effective.

Skill 1 Establishing expectations

Stress the importance of establishing expectations in the 'establishment phase' of the learning relationship, often at the beginning of the school year or during initial teacher–class contact.

Initial teacher–class contact is when students are most receptive to the development and enforcement of expectations (Rogers 1995, p 30).

During the first hour on day one of teacher–student contact, basic expectations should be established, and students should begin on-task activity as soon as possible.

Teachers must make it clear to students that there are specific expectations about engaging with the learning and behaviour.

Mention that there are various ways of expressing these expectations. Ask participants to think about how they specifically articulate expectations.

Teachers can use specific verbal and non-verbal cues.

Many teachers believe that they set clear expectations; however, there is great variation in what this means to different teachers.

Ask the teachers if they articulate clear expectations for each day, task, and learning context.

Ask the teachers if they continually refer to expectations articulated when they first met their class or when they initially introduced a new context.

Teachers can reflect on student conduct at the end of the learning session/lesson. In doing so, they can draw attention to behaviours, either for positive reinforcement or shaping. This is a proactive way of establishing expectations for the next learning session/lesson.

Negotiating rules versus imposing rules

Rules should observe the 'five word rule' i.e. no more than five rules with no more than five words in each.

Ideally, teachers should negotiate classroom rules or expectations with their class. This may give students a sense of ownership and encourage them to adhere to the rules.

If students do not have the knowledge, skills or maturity to negotiate rules with their teacher, then it is better to initially impose some basic rules. Teachers can then teach students the skills and content required to negotiate rules at a later time.

Other circumstances where the class teacher should initially impose rules

Such circumstances may include but are not limited to:

- A teacher has recently been assigned to a class with a history of frequent disruptive behaviours.

However, if the previous class teacher used extreme forms of authoritarian control, it may not be wise to impose rules. It is possible that the disruptive behaviour has been a response to an extreme lack of freedom in the classroom. If this is the case, it may be appropriate for the newly appointed teacher to undertake some form of negotiation/consultative process with the class to allow for some freedom in an attempt to reduce inappropriate behaviours.

- The socio-cultural context of a class or school has disempowered the teacher or teachers.

For example, a class that is dominated by a group of students who have well-established power and authority within their peer group.

Teachers need to use their professional judgement when meeting their class, and seek advice from colleagues to ascertain if rules are best negotiated or imposed.

Emphasise the importance of appropriate modelling of behaviours by teachers.

Mention the strategy of talking to individual students or classes about how they are following the rules, rather than how they are not following the rules.

At the end of a particularly settled session, teachers should discuss with the class how they met expectations and how they have benefited from meeting them. This is a particularly effective strategy.

Skill 2 Giving instructions

1. In order to provide clear instructions, teachers need to know in advance precisely what they want their students to do in class. This requires careful planning and preparation.
2. Class procedures such as entry and exit routines, methods of distributing learning material and recording student attendance all contribute to creating order in a classroom. These procedures also promote compliance with teacher instructions.

Therefore, teachers should evaluate their use of routines in the classroom.

3. It is imperative that teachers use a clear, attention-gaining signal before giving an instruction to students.

After teachers have gained their students' attention, it is essential that they wait and scan the class to signal the importance of what is about to follow, and only continue when the whole class is focused.

If teachers continue to teach when students are not focused, the teacher may be training their students to ignore them. This contributes to further disruptions and the need for correction.

Continuing to teach when a student or a small group of students is not focused would only occur as a deliberate use of selective attending.

This use of selective attending would require some follow up from the teacher to ensure similar situations do not occur.

Some strategies to consider:

- the use of verbal and non-verbal instructions
- simple instructions written on the board as a visual cue for students who display short-term memory lapses or auditory processing difficulties.

Keep instructions short and clear – no doubt or hesitancy in your voice

When giving instructions teachers need to speak with a tone that expects compliance. That is, a tone of voice that conveys to students that the teacher is assuming their directions will be followed. It is not an aggressive or authoritarian tone. It is calm but expectant (Rogers 1990, p 37).

Avoid giving instructions within curriculum/content talk. Keep instructions discrete where possible.

Be prepared to 'chunk' tasks to make them easier for students to complete. This involves breaking a task into smaller steps for students to complete.

Skill 3 Waiting and scanning

This is an effective strategy when trying to focus student attention.

The effectiveness of this strategy is underestimated by some teachers.

1. A clear instruction can be neutralised if the teacher does not wait and scan after its delivery.

Teachers who say that they give clear instructions and are confused by a lack of student compliance, may find that they do not wait and scan or do not wait and scan sufficiently.

2. Sometimes, beginning teachers particularly, will become concerned that by waiting and scanning, they will lose too much teaching time.

Remind teachers to consider that, if students are not attentive, teaching will be ineffective anyway.

Therefore, time spent waiting and scanning is time well spent.

Teachers need to learn how to deal with extended periods of waiting and scanning and gauge when it is appropriate to use some form of correction to focus or redirect attention, rather than just extending the waiting time, making it ineffective.

In other words, there are times when an 'extended wait' is not effective and teachers need to know what corrective action they can take to remediate these situations.

3. It is useful for teachers if someone observes their teaching and monitors instances of 'waiting and scanning' to assist the teacher to evaluate their effective use of this skill.

As a simple exercise an observer can provide feedback about how long, on average, the teacher waits and scans to focus student attention and how the teacher responds when waiting and scanning appears to be less effective or ineffective.

4. Teachers who do not wait and scan after giving an instruction may inadvertently signal to students that the teacher can be ignored.
5. If teachers do not wait and scan, it is likely that frequent instances of disruptive behaviour will occur, due to a lack of understanding about teacher expectations, particularly those pertaining to on-task behaviour.
6. The self-control plan for teachers is to use the time spent waiting and scanning to conduct positive self-talk, to think clearly and plan ahead.

Skill 4 Cueing with parallel acknowledgment

1. When used appropriately, this is an effective strategy for correcting inappropriate behaviour without negativity.

It can be used with students of various ages; however, be conscious of the use of appropriate tone of voice.

Suggestions that this strategy lacks integrity because it involves acknowledging one person with the intent to influence another should be critiqued in consideration of the following:

- the initial acknowledgment is legitimate
 - it may be more helpful for the 'target student' to be given the opportunity to self correct with a gentle indirect prompt, rather than a direct prompt that may be perceived negatively
 - it may be a useful strategy for the student who is prompted often, especially in a secondary school where there are multiple class teachers. This may reduce the number of negative statements the student is subjected to during the day.
2. This strategy may be used regularly, but if it is not used skilfully, it may become less effective over time.
 3. It is important to reinforce the idea that teachers should use a low-level form of acknowledgment when students become on-task.

However, teachers should carefully consider the timing of this acknowledgment.

- Given too soon, it may be perceived as overly manipulative or may prompt resumed non-compliance.
- Given too late, it may have little impact as a reinforcer for resuming on-task behaviour.

Remind teachers that developing these skills is an ongoing process and that they should be prepared to have varying degrees of success while practising.

A perceived lack of immediate success should not be construed as failure of, or as proof that the Essential Skills for Classroom Management are ineffective.

Encourage teachers to experiment, reflect and be persistent.

Skill 5 Body language encouraging

1. Body language encouraging is a highly efficient behaviour management strategy that requires effort and purposeful thought.

By moving around the room and actively monitoring the learning environment, teachers are presented with opportunities to increase acknowledgment and discourage future incidents of inappropriate behaviour.

2. If minimal classroom noise is necessary during a classroom activity, teachers need to be conscious of how they may inadvertently contribute to classroom noise by filling what would otherwise be quiet, on-task time, with unnecessary teacher talk.

In other words, if the students are relatively quiet, and maintaining a quiet classroom is conducive to the learning process, then do not fill the room with unnecessary teacher talk.

3. Consider that some students mirror teacher behaviour. If the teacher has a loud voice and/or talks too much during what should be quiet time, then these students are likely to increase their voice volume and also talk during quiet time.
4. Do not underestimate the effectiveness of a teacher's well-timed, non-verbal body language cues to encourage appropriate behaviour.

Proximity: The teacher's physical position in the classroom can influence student behaviour.

Adjusting the physical distance a teacher stands from a student of concern can influence behaviour.

Skill 6 Descriptive encouraging

1. This is an often underused but highly effective strategy.
2. The intention of this strategy is to acknowledge and encourage appropriate behaviour.
3. It is not a blatant attempt to manipulate students through praise.
4. Avoid linking descriptive encouraging with corresponding descriptions of teacher emotions or personal approval (see negative examples below).

At times it may be appropriate for the teacher to express their feelings or approval; however, they should avoid making a habit of this.

Teachers do not want to signal to students that students have direct, powerful control in the classroom.

This strategy is about 'de-personalising' student behaviour.

That is, the idea that the teacher is purposefully managing the learning and responding to student misbehaviour in a manner that is based on sound practice, rather than responding emotionally in personal conflicts with students.

It also signals to students that they are not directly responsible for adult feelings, removing guilt as a tool of influence.

Negative examples – less effective emotive language:

1. "Daniel is working quietly. I am so happy about that."
2. "Year four, you are all following the rules. I like that."
3. "You did not finish the task on time. That makes me feel sad."

Positive examples – more effective, non-emotive language:

1. "Daniel is working quietly."
2. "Year four, you are all following the rules. We are learning well."
3. "Let's talk about how you can finish that task."

Comments of a more personal, rapport-building nature are best made during the on-task phase of learning rather than in the instructional phase or when corrections are being made.

Skill 7 Selective attending

1. Selective attending is not an appropriate teacher response to unsafe behaviour.
2. It is important to reinforce to teachers that selective attending should be used when a student's off-task behaviour is short in duration or is not seriously disturbing to others.

If the student's off-task behaviour occurs over an extended period or is seriously disturbing others, it should be attended to in a least-to-most intrusive manner.

3. Developing this skill requires experimentation with the purposeful use of timing.

It is important to acknowledge a student who has resumed on-task behaviour.

If the appropriate behaviour is not acknowledged, then it is more likely that the student will continue to have episodes of off-task behaviour and/or escalate the severity of the behaviour.

4. Remind teachers that the Essential Skills for Classroom Management emphasise the importance of reducing, rather than correcting, inappropriate behaviour.
5. When prompting a student to maintain or resume on-task activity, consider the use of:

- a. **praise, prompt and push off**, for example:

"Steven, you have written a very clear sentence." (**praise**, given in close proximity)

"You only have two more to write." (**prompt**)

The teacher then moves away, to allow the student to continue work. (**push off**)

- b. **prompt, pause and push off**, for example:

"Steven, finish those last two sentences, thanks." (**prompt**, given in close proximity)

The teacher then pauses while standing near the student. (**pause**)

The teacher then moves away, to allow the student to continue work. (**push off**)

Either strategy can be followed by the use of the 'Vaseline eye' and/or a 'scan back'. These techniques involve the teacher looking away from the student for a short while, then looking back at the student to signal that they are still monitoring the student's activity.

Skill 8 Redirecting to the learning

1. To use this skill effectively, teachers need to be aware of their usual initial response to inappropriate student behaviour.
2. If the teacher is in the habit of talking about behaviour when redirecting, they need to consider how they could redirect to the learning.
3. By redirecting to the learning, the teacher redirects the inappropriate behaviour and simultaneously gives a powerful message about the importance of being on-task.
4. When redirecting to the learning is used, it assists to de-personalise student and teacher behaviour.
5. Redirecting to the learning signals to students that the teacher cares about their learning, not just about their behaviours.

Skill 9 Giving a choice

1. If teachers plan ahead and think about the types of choices they may be able to offer a student, group or class, they should make the process of giving a choice smoother for themselves and their students.
2. Teachers should not give a choice that they cannot or will not follow through with.
3. When giving a choice, teachers should consider a least-to-most intrusive approach.
Facilitator can discuss examples of least-to-most intrusive strategies.
4. When giving a choice, it is the certainty, not the severity of the follow through, that is important (Rogers 1995, p 99).
5. Staying calm and remaining positive are important, even when inappropriate behaviours are escalating.
6. Teachers can delay giving choice by saying, "We are not going to discuss this matter now, we will deal with it later."
7. Distinguish between **punishment** and **logical consequences**.

Punishment can be defined as consequences that:

- are not known in advance
- are overly harsh
- are not related to the behaviour of concern
- are not completed in a timely manner
- do not maintain or allow for the re-establishment of the working relationship
- are initiated and/or implemented by someone other than the immediate supervising teacher.

Logical consequences can be defined as consequences that:

- are known in advance
- are not overly harsh
- are related to the behaviour of concern
- are completed in a timely manner
- allow for maintaining or re-establishing the working relationship
- are initiated and implemented by the immediate supervising teacher.

Logical consequences as described in Skill 9 are the likely outcome of any choice given to a student. For example:

A student who is capable of completing a set task within class time, but does not, may be given the choice of completing the task during some of their lunch break, or the teacher may offer to tutor the student at the end of the school day.

The logical consequence of their choice not to complete the task in class time is to complete it during the lunch break or to stay back for a tutorial session.

When giving a choice it is important to make the consequence as closely related as possible to the behaviour of concern. For example:

Effectively using logical consequences:

- If students fail to complete work, then consequences should be related to completing that work.
- If students drop litter in the playground, then consequences need to relate to personal responsibility and/or maintaining a clean environment.

Using punishment or less effectively using consequences:

- If students fail to complete work, implementing consequences such as 'writing lines' or community service in the playground.
- If students drop litter in the playground, implementing consequences involving the completion of class tasks during a period of detention.

Skill 10 Following through

The most important advice about this skill is: ensure that due care has been taken when a choice has been developed and presented to students.

1. Teachers need to give time and thought when developing the various choices they can offer students.
2. Choices do not need to be complicated, harsh or intrusive.

Colleagues can offer useful information and examples of choices that can be given; observing colleagues teaching, and consulting with mentors is time well spent.

It may be useful for teachers to consult administrators, and heads of department and curriculum to seek advice about the scope of choices that can be offered and how the teacher will be supported by these colleagues.

When undertaking this consultation, it is important for teachers to consider how they can maintain their position as the leader in their classroom and signal to students that they will manage inappropriate behaviours, especially in the initial phases.

By referring on inappropriate behaviours too quickly, a teacher may inadvertently reduce their influence in the classroom by unintentionally signalling to students that other personnel are needed to manage lower-level inappropriate classroom behaviour. This could exacerbate student management issues.

3. Prompt teachers to be aware of their school's crisis management plan, including directions for removing classes from possible danger.
4. While following through, teachers must exercise a duty of care for all students.
5. Teachers may use the strategy of 'referring to a higher authority', for example, a teacher could say:

"Melissa, we can have a talk about this situation at the end of the lesson, sort it out and start fresh tomorrow. Or, we could go and speak to the Head of Department about it. I must let you know though, that once the Head of Department is involved, you will have to do what they say."

It is important that referring to a higher authority is not presented as a threat. It is merely another choice.

6. The teacher must be prepared to follow through on each option. Therefore, the teacher should be certain that all options are possible.
 - If follow through has been necessary, it is important for the teacher to consider the circumstances that were antecedents to the behaviour, how the situation developed, and how it was resolved.
 - This reflective practice will assist the teacher to continue to develop their skills.
7. Teachers also need to consider how they will restore the working relationship between themselves and the student (Rogers 1997, pp 84–89).
8. Teachers can expressly teach or shape the appropriate behaviours that they expect of their students to reduce inappropriate behaviours.

Debriefing

Debriefing information for the Small Group Facilitated Coaching Sessions

1. Emphasise that this skill is used to assist staff who have been involved in a traumatic experience, not to re-traumatise them or to reinforce feelings associated with distress.
2. Staff need to support those involved in the trauma. They will not help anyone by remaining scandalised or horrified by the experience, and may in fact prolong the trauma for those concerned.
3. If staff feel that the requirements of the debriefing task are beyond their skill level, then other personnel such as school guidance officers should be consulted, and distressed staff should be referred on for counselling.
4. A supportive school environment will provide for debriefing.
5. Time spent on debriefing is an effective use of time.
6. Immediately consult qualified personnel such as school guidance officers for highly distressing incidents.

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