# Assessment Two: Philosophy of teaching, and behaviour management plan

## Part One- Personal Philosophy

My own personal philosophy of teachings relates to classroom management in an extremely reflective, organised and flexible manner. I believe to efficiently manage a classroom a teacher must be prepared to not only teach their students but keep the lessons fun and lively in order to engage and motivate their students. I believe it is the teacher’s responsibility to gain the trust and respect from their students in order to form close relationships and make each individual feel safe and secure in the classroom. In order to achieve this I think it is important that teachers make the effort to consistently reinforce class rules and the notion of appropriate time and place for particular types of behaviour. If the teacher sets clear expectations and are consistent with consequences for misbehaviour the students will learn who holds the power in the relationship and form an element of respect. Students must understand that whilst you may be friendly towards them, you are not their friend.

When it comes to interacting with students I believe it is important to remember that each one is a unique individual who will require assistance and encouragement in different forms. I believe most students respond best to a series of reinforcements from the teacher to receive recognition for what they are doing. From what I have learnt so far in my degree I know there are numerous factors that affect a child’s attitude and behaviour. These factors can include family and their home environment, peers and past teachers, learner needs or disabilities as well as their physical surroundings. My personal view of students in general is that they are multi-ability group of children that are dependent on their teacher to teach, inform and motivate them in a way that will allow them to achieve to the best of their ability.

How students learn is a variable and complex topic with many interrelated factors involved such as different learner needs and styles, questioning techniques, social interactions and intrinsic and extrinsic motivation plus many more. In order to effectively cater for all the different ways the students within a class learn, teachers must plan a diversity of lessons that incorporate a range of teaching methods. I believe to teach every lesson using the same method and same resources would be boring, so it’s obvious that students would feel the same way. It is important not to be afraid to experience with creativity in lesson planning however, it is vital that teachers reflect and learn from each experience. Through gaining a greater understanding of what motivates students teachers are better able to provide a classroom environment that is flexible to student learning.

## Part Two- Theories

When it comes to dealing with student’s behaviour in societies today there are a range of theories that have been developed that relate human behaviour to the influences of cognition, emotions or relationships. There are two distinguishing features of every theory which are whether the theory aims to transform or conserve society and secondly if the approach is teacher directed or student centred (Porter, 2006). The four main theories of behaviour management that influence my philosophy are Jacob Kounin, Neo-Skinnerian, William Glasser, and Rudolph Dreikurs mistaken goals of misbehaviour. These theories will be further discussed to outline the relevance they hold in my own personal philosophy.

The first theory of behaviour management I draw on within my own philosophy is Jacob Kounin’s pedagogical approach of preventive discipline. The main focus of Kounin’s model is that appropriate behaviour is dependent on effective classroom management and preventing problems in the first place (Woolfolk & Margetts, 2010). Kounin describes that effective classroom management and minimising behaviour problems is achieved through maintaining focus, being aware of everything that is happening in the classroom as well as efficient time management (Woolfolk & Margetts, 2010). These elements fit into the four key strategies describes within the model which include the ripple effect, witnesses, overlapping and movement.

The first key strategy, the ripple effect, of Kounin’s theory involves consistently praising good behaviour or correcting bad behaviour in front of the surrounding students. The idea behind this strategy aims to have the impact of rippling through the target student and affecting the other students in the room to. In turn this strategy is preventing further behaviour problems through the students being able to acknowledge the expected way to behave. The second strategy of witnesses is an excellent tool for teachers being able to control behaviour as it involves having an awareness of everything happening in a classroom (Woolfolk & Margetts, 2010). If teachers effectively implement this strategy it will prevent minor disruptions from becoming major. This then leads onto the third strategy of overlapping which is the ability to attend to more than one issue at once. This strategy is reflected in my personal philosophy through ensuring that all students are motivated, engaged and on task throughout a lesson. Lastly is the idea of movement in the classroom which is built around time management. This means moving the students through lessons at an appropriate pace with effective transitions and momentum. This is similar to my own philosophy through having variety in lessons to keep them fun and lively and to prevent bad behaviour out of boredom.

The second model that has similarities linked to my personal philosophy is the Neo-Skinnerian model which is based on the work of B.F Skinner. Skinner maintains that learning is “an enduring change of behaviour resulting from external events, be they conscious or unconscious” (Churchill, et al., 2010, p. 74). The focus of this model is that human behaviour can be shaped by the systematic application of reinforcement. The use of reinforcements can be acknowledged to strengthen behaviour through consequences of an action, whether they are positive or negative. This can be reflected in my own philosophy as it shows students respond well to reinforcements as it satisfies their needs. By using reinforcers it shows that there are consequences for their actions and rules are expected to be followed.

This theory ties in with the Glasser model which assists children in making good choices and accepting no excuses for bad behaviour. Glasser’s theory reflects calm questions that allow students to own their choices take responsibility for their actions (Woolfolk & Margetts, 2010). Both Glasser and Skinner acknowledge that reasonable consequences should follow appropriate or inappropriate behaviour. This can ideally be achieved through setting and enforcing clear class rules that can be insisted upon through the use of a variety of reinforcers.

The last theory that my personal philosophy draws on is Rudolf Dreikurs four mistaken goals and how they lead to misbehaviour. Dreikurs identifies that children often make mistaken assumptions about how to gain recognition through wrongly believing that the goal will lead to a positive feeling. These four mistaken goals include attention seeking, power seeking, revenge seeking and to purposefully display inadequacy (Dreikurs & Cassel, 2004). In order to reduce the children striving to attain one of these mistake goals teachers should transform the wrong intention into a goal of striving to contribute in a cooperative way to the class rules and expectations ((Dreikurs & Cassel, 2004). This aligns with my personal philosophy as it recognises that children are not naturally inclined to misbehaviour but instead they make errors in judgement about the correct way to behave in order to achieve their emotional needs.

In conclusion I believe the theories of Kounin, Neo-Skinnerian, Glasser and Dreikurs are all excellent resources to link your own style of behaviour management back to. My own philosophy draws upon certain aspects of each of these models in order to prevent inappropriate behaviour and reinforce positive behaviour amongst students.

## Part Three- Behaviour Management Plan

The beginning step of my behaviour management plan is to form a set of class rules and expectations with the students that will be implemented throughout the year. The process of making the class rules will involve the contributions of the students in that particular age group and allow them the opportunity to state what they think are fair expectations of the class and themselves as individuals. This is for the reason that teachers need to communicate classroom rules clearly so children understand what they are and are not allowed to do. During the discussion of rules the concept of positive and negative consequences will also be raised and spoken about so the children are aware that consequences will follow both inappropriate and appropriate behaviour.

Following the completion of the class rules the ideas will be transferred into a visual resource and displayed around the classroom as a constant reminder of the standards to be met. The class will also be introduced to my developed approach of ‘Stepping Stones to Success’. This plan aims to act as a visual reminder for the students for the consequences of their behaviour. It features a big, blue pond in the centre with all students represented as ducks in the pond and three different coloured stones either side. The children begin everyday with a fresh start with all their ducks in the pond. When acting positively the students take steps forward and are closer to receiving awards or alternatively when acting inappropriately take steps backwards. However, the students have the opportunity to work their way back up through making responsible, positive choices.

This behaviour management plan of ‘stepping stones to success’ intends to reinforce the appropriate and expected behaviour amongst students in a variety of ways. The first is for the teacher to model the responsible and respectful behaviour that everyone should be displaying. In a similar fashion the teacher will consistently insist on the rules and remind students of appropriate behaviour. In addition to this the teacher must aim to praise genuine accomplishments amongst students for both social and academic achievements (Woolfolk & Margetts, 2010). Similarly students will receive praise for their behaviour in front of other students which will reinforce the behaviour and motivate surrounding students to behave appropriately. The main reinforcement for appropriate behaviour is through the use of contingency management. Students will receive concrete rewards when they are caught modelling the expected behaviour that they can eventually trade for a greater prize or privilege they desire.

In order to prevent inappropriate behaviour the teacher must have effective transitions, pace and momentum at all times to keep children motivated and know what is going on in all parts of the classroom (Woolfolk & Margetts, 2010). Teachers must also have the ability to attend to more than one situation at once and teach students strategies and skills to deal with and think through problematic situations cooperatively and not aggressively (Foster, Brennan, Biglan, Wang, & Al-Ghaith, 2002). This plan also aims for teacher to be consistent and confident in correcting behaviour before it escalates and provide firm guidance through offering alternative incentives to problem behaviour to reduce the issue before it becomes major (Weston, 1997). It is important to be aware that children who are more prone to undesirable behaviour may need extra reminders and cues to improve their behaviour. Lastly to prevent misbehaviour teachers must reflect on the situations and children to ensure they are not unknowingly feeding the behaviour by giving the student what they desired e.g. attention seeking.

This behaviour management plan has developed a series of steps to follow when addressing the inappropriate behaviour. When the students are initially displaying an appropriate behaviour the teacher will correct the behaviour, remind them of the class rule being broken and allow the student a chance to recover. If after a reminder the child continues to misbehaviour they will receive a warning and their individual duck will move to the ‘warning’ stone. If inappropriate behaviour further continues the child will consequently be removed from that situation, they will move backwards another step and isolated for a given amount of time. This has been proven to work well with most children as when they are isolated and asked to sit quietly they have a chance to reflect on their behaviour and how they should be acting. This may vary for different situations for example if the child can’t work with quietly in a group setting the child will have to complete the activity by themselves. When asked to re-join the group the child can redeem their behaviour and begin to work their way back towards success when they display appropriate behaviour. If however, the student continues to misbehave they will move back to the final stone and sent to an outside source, whether it be a buddy class or the principal’s office.

In order to efficiently monitor student’s progress and identify if the desired outcomes have been reached it is most important to constantly reflect on student’s behaviour and motives. Teachers will be able to gage if the approach is working with students or not through evaluating their motivation to ‘step towards success’. If majority of students are moving progressively forward and improving the approach is working but if majority of students are moving backwards then it isn’t. After reflecting the teacher may notice some children require additional support in striving to behave appropriately. In this instance contracts may be implemented as further support to help set behavioural goals and a timeline for them to be met. It is important to keep track of the problems to see if they decrease from the negative consequences and if they don’t then to try alternative approaches to handle the child’s behaviour. Teachers may seek further assistance from parents and principals to help improve the behaviour in all contexts.

When dealing with a crisis in the classroom it is important to be focused on putting a stop to the dangerous and potentially harmful situation as the health and safety of not only the other students but also yourself should be the primary concern. In a crisis it is vital to understand that the proactive ways of dealing with inappropriate behaviour do not apply in this situation and you need to enforce new reactive strategies (EDAC314 Lecture 5, 2011). Therefore once the trigger has been pulled and the child is agitated and distracted you must proactively try to get them back to baseline before a major crisis occurs. If the attempt fails and the behaviour escalates into a crisis then the teacher must state the child’s name is a firm, confident tone to gain their attention and give them a neutral and safe option to calm down. Ideally this would be to send them outside for a drink of water to end the situation. Once the child re-joins the class it is important to allow the child time to recover and back to the base line level before discussing the situation with them. If the teacher attempts to resolve the issue to soon and makes a new threatening situation of being in trouble the behaviour may re-escalate and form a new crisis. After the child has recovered back to base line level the teacher has a few options of how to reflect on the issue. If it was an individual problem the teacher will be more inclined to have a one-on-one discussion with the student about their feelings and behaviour. It is important to be calm and keep the discussion brief. However, if the situation involved a group of students the teacher may decide to hold a class meeting about the problem.

In order to integrate this plan as a whole school approach, all classrooms can feature the same ‘Stepping Stones to Success’ model in their classroom. Other classroom teachers can ask the students if they are making choices that step them towards success or not which will consistently reinforce the rules in all areas of the school. This is important as it helps create a school environment that is warm, welcoming and responsive .

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