

## Disciplinary Interventions

Kathleen Cotton (1990) has estimated that discipline occupies about half of classroom time, with the other half remaining for instruction. Two primary goals for developing effective classroom management should be to increase time available for instruction and to reduce stress levels of teachers and students. Preventative activities like establishing clear guidelines for behavior, building community, and utilizing procedures to keep the operation of the classroom efficient can go a long way to reducing problem behavior. Acknowledging students who meet expectations send a clear message that we notice and appreciate student efforts, thereby encouraging students to meet the expectations. We also need to plan for interventions for rule infractions. It appears that how teachers deliver or assign reduction oriented consequences makes a huge difference in the effectiveness of consequences, including whether the consequence is perceived as punishing or helpful to student efforts to change. Further, we must overtly explore the possibility that our reduction-oriented consequences may, in fact, reinforce the very behavior we are trying to eliminate. The research shows that effective classroom managers utilize both reinforcement strategies and reduction-oriented consequences to encourage pro-social behavior.

**Action Step 1: Develop and use specific techniques that acknowledge and reinforce acceptable behaviors and acknowledge and provide reduction oriented consequences for rule violations.**

5 categories of disciplinary interventions that can be used to provide a balance of positive and negative consequences:

### A) Teacher Reaction

1. Eye contact and proximity (never do with your mouth what your feet and eyes can accomplish)
2. Use a silent signal
3. Privately offer a reminder or an initiating request
4. If a student is simply off-task, but not disruptive, provide a prompt, stating the desired behavior
5. If a student doesn't respond to these interventions, tell the student to stop the inappropriate behavior
6. Stimulus cueing. Provide a cue to the student before inappropriate behavior occurs.
7. Provide frequent physical signals and private acknowledgement for appropriate behavior. (When you accomplish this, simply withholding it is often an effective negative consequence)

### B) Tangible Recognition

1. Refers to any type of concrete recognition or reward offered by the teacher.

### C) Direct Cost

1. Strategies that involve an explicit and direct consequence for inappropriate student behavior
2. Token economies involve both tangible recognition and direct cost.



3. Time out—"chill chair"
  - Removal from activity
  - Removal from others
  - Very short—purpose is to regain control
  - Requires that students have a clear understanding of the behaviors that will lead to its use.
  - May inadvertently reinforce behavior that is escape motivated.
4. Loss of privilege
5. Isolation time out
  - Removal from room to a place reserved for **disruptive** students.
  - Requires that students have a clear understanding of the behaviors that will lead to its use.
  - May inadvertently reinforce behavior that is escape motivated.
6. Overcorrection
  - Useful when student creates damage, loss or destruction
  - Student is asked to overcompensate by making restitution.

#### **D) Group Contingency**

1. Concrete recognition techniques that apply to a pre-established group of students.
  - Interdependent—every student in the group must meet the established behavioral criterion for the group to earn credit
  - Dependent—a specific individual or set of individuals must meet the criterion for the group to earn credit.
  - Do not use group contingencies for negative consequences unless you wish to instill resentment, anger, and revenge

#### **E) Home Contingency**

1. Most basic—informing parents of BOTH positive and negative behaviors of their children
2. More detailed—parents collaborate to establish a system of positive and negative consequences enacted at home.
3. Requires face to face meeting to establish behaviors and contingencies
4. Requires record keeping and communication

Action Step 2: Be clear about limits for unacceptable behavior and an effective system to record these behaviors.

- A) **Limits** must be established, be realistic and meaningful
- B) Perfect opportunity to **involve students** in their own management
- C) **Simpler record keeping** formats are better
- D) Highly public record keeping runs the risk of detracting attention from the behavior to the record keeping.
- E) Involving students in their own record keeping is very effective for most students.

