Chapter ***25***

Teachers' Strategies in Managing Classroom Misbehaviours among the Basic 9 Learners of the 934 Education Systems in Nigeria

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Introduction

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Managing misbehaviours of students have become one of the greatest challenges of teachers in classroom learning particularly in 21st century Nigeria. Students and pupils seem to be getting more recalcitrant and unruly; a reflection of eroding morals in the society generally. More so, Nigeria has witnessed an influx of alien western cultures, some of which are at variance to the Nigerian culture and have adversely affected and lowered the moral standards in modern times.

This paper discusses strategies teachers can employ in managing classroom misbehaviours that could disrupt and forestall learning goals. It explains concepts of misbehaviour and classroom management strategies, it highlights some behavioural theories that explain disruptive behaviours, and how such behaviours can be modified and nipped at the bud in order to get students back on track and focus on learning activity in the classroom. It further identifies common misbehaviours peculiar to the Nigerian classroom setting, and provides teachers with strategies, coupled with teachers' preparation and setting right goals to promote and maintain appropriate behaviours and effectiveness in classroom learning.

Having a class full of kids who intentionally or unintentionally misbehave or play pranks could be teachers' worst nightmare, especially if such teachers are lacking in skills for managing a classroom. Unfortunately for the teachers however, the rate of learners' misbehaviours in the classroom seems to be on the increase and is a major cause of concern for teachers. Without the know-how on classroom management, huge time waste will be incurred by teachers on daily basis and this will hinder their ability to achieve their daily objectives and accomplish their goals. The ability to effectively manage the classroom and ensure that the goals and objectives of classroom interaction are achieved is the sole responsibility of classroom teachers. In addition, teachers facilitate learning and this cannot thrive in a chaotic environment. The classroom has

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got to be well organized and conducive for the desired learning to take place.

Before delving into classroom management strategies, a look at what classroom misbehaviour [271]
entails is of great importance. Classroom misbehaviour here refers to any behaviour by learners in the classroom that is capable of disrupting the order of the classroom and is likely to derail the class from its objectives if not attended to. More so, any behaviour that is conceived by the teacher and most importantly by the society as possessing a potentiality of harm to the learner, other learners, the property of the school or the society at large either in the present or in the future, is considered a misbehaviour. This is because the school also has a responsibility of moulding the character of its members. Sun and Shek (2012) posit that teachers perceive students' disruptive behaviours as those behaviours involving rule breaking, violating implicit norms or expectations and inappropriate behaviours in the classroom setting which upsets teaching and learning. This definition is all encompassing and gives a good description of what misbehaviour in the classroom entails. It is eminent to study classroom misbehaviours because if not promptly and properly dealt with, it will interfere with the teaching and learning process, threaten the safety of the learners and divert the energies of the teacher. Classroom disruptions have contributed greatly to teachers' stress and burnout. (Ghazi, Shahzada, Tariq and Khan, 2013). Ghazi et al. also reported that students in classrooms where disruptive behaviours take place get less learning time and perform poorly in achievement tests. Hence it is of necessity to find a solution to disruptiveness in the classroom.

Teacher's classroom management strategies involve any strategy employed by the teacher to contain classroom misbehaviour in such a way that the learner is corrected, the behaviour is modified, or in the process of being modified and the class is restored to a state where learning can continue both for the learner that misbehaved and other learners in the classroom. These strategies may include popular strategies or strategies invented by the teacher as long as these strategies have a positive effect. In other words strategies that leave the learner in a temporarily or permanently psychologically disabled state are not considered in this work.

Theoretical background

Principles borrowed from Operant conditioning by B.F. Skinner (1953) and Reality therapy by William Glasser (1965) is used to explain how misbehavior in classroom setting can be curbed. Skinner argued that behavior change is the result of response to stimuli which are events in the environment. He further argues that every behavior change has an antecedent and is followed by a consequence. Changes in the antecedents or consequences will alter the behavior and go a long way in determining the occurrence or sustainability of that behavior. For instance, the consequence of a child's misbehavior in the classroom will determine if the child will continue [272]
to exhibit that behavior that led to the consequence. Reinforcement is the key element in Skinner's theory; it is the use of consequences to strengthen behavior. Applying behavior analysis to the classroom situation will simply involve teachers reinforcing appropriate behaviors. Pleasant consequences strengthen behaviors, while unpleasant consequences weakens behaviors (Slavin, 2003 & Woolfolk, 2010)

Reality therapy is a type of psychotherapy largely developed by William Glasser (1965). It is classified among the rational approaches to therapy. The core of reality therapy is that it focuses on present behavior of the individual and the fact that all clients that come for therapy, are made to face the reality in order to achieve a success identity. The focus of this therapy is to make clients accept personal responsibility. Clients that present themselves for the therapy, either lack relationships with their fellow humans or are involved in unsatisfying relationships

and the function of the therapist is to help them develop satisfying relationships and to make the right choices.

According to Corey cited in Ian (2007) "we are responsible for what we choose to do. We may be the product of our past but we are not victims of our past or else we choose to be". Glasser (1965) believes that human behaviour is motivated by an attempt to meet their needs. These needs were classified into two groups the physiological and the psychological needs. While the physiological needs refer to those needs necessary for human existence like food, shelter etc. the psychological needs are basically the need to love and be loved and the need to feel worthwhile to self and others. He further upholds that humans all over the world irrespective of race, colour, and location have these needs in common. Corey in Ian (2007) States that humans are born with five genetically encoded needs that vary in strength from person to person. These needs are survival, love and belonging, power, freedom and fun.

Glasser in Hansen, Warner and Sevic (1977) believes that every individual is born with needs which if not satisfied could cause problems but we are not born with the natural ability to satisfy these needs. The ability to satisfy our needs within the confines of right and responsibility and develop success identities must be learnt. Individuals who possess success identities must be able to meet their needs within the three basic R's of reality therapy; Responsibility, Right and Reality. Responsibility - refers to the ability to satisfy one's needs without depriving others of their ability to satisfy their own needs. This leads to the formation of a success identity. Right is the belief that there is an acceptable standard or norm against which a responsible individual must evaluate his behaviour and means of meeting his needs. If he fails to do so he will not fulfill the basic need to be worthwhile and will suffer. Reality implies that people must understand that there is a real world and must meet their needs within that framework. If an individual either fails to fulfill his [273] needs or fulfills his needs irresponsibly; that is without the confines of right, responsibility and reality, he develops a failure identity.

Glasser (1965) believes that the basis for forming a success or failure identity is laid early in life. Those who develop a success identity do so through a loving relationship with responsible parents early in life in the preschool and primary school years. He stated that responsible parents are parents that establish an involvement with their children through love, teaching, discipline and modeling. The child in this relationship must feel loved for who he is. A child who will develop a success identity must also fulfill his need for a feeling or sense of worth and this will come from being able to carry out task to a successful completion. Only through interactions with parents and significant others who are themselves responsible and worthwhile can children learn to be responsible individuals.

Reality therapy provides in my opinion an acceptable explanation as to why misbehaviours in the classroom are so rampant in the present day Nigeria. Due to the poor economic state of the nation, mothers who in the past were available to be involved with children, interact with them and enable them develop responsibly are out on the streets trying to earn a living. This leaves us with a situation where children lack the involvement and interaction with responsible and worthwhile adults necessary for them to know the difference between right and wrong, acquire good behaviours, morals and develop into responsible adults with success identities. Most children these days have housemaids as the parent figure, and needless to say that most of these house maids do not satisfy the requirement of a responsible adult figure. Children are no longer raised as was the case in the past; they grow up on their own lacking the example and discipline of parents. Parents have neglected their roles in a bid to be western and most of them are permissive parents, allowing the children to do as they please without any consequence. These

children expect to be awarded the same freedom in the classroom and frown at any attempt to subject them to authority, or to make them abide to rules and regulations.

Children need attention from significant adults in their environment. Because of the lack of attention as a result of the absence of the parents from the home, the children crave attention. This explains the increase in the rate of misbehaviours or disruptive behaviours in the classroom. Some of the misbehaviours displayed by some learners are attention seeking behaviours. Teachers have to be very careful with their management strategies as some reactions of the teachers may be reinforcing to the learners and would rather increase the rate of misbehaviors than decrease it. In order for classroom misbehaviours to be properly handled the teachers have to work in collaboration with the parents, while the parents have to go back to the drawing board and establish a responsible relationship with their children. From the standpoint of educational psychologists, methods that will be successful will have to be more preventive than curative.

Common misbehaviours in the classroom [274]

Misbehaviours in classroom are quite common. There is a wide range of behaviours that can be considered as misbehaviours in the classroom. These behaviours may differ within cultures. Some behaviours viewed as inappropriate in certain cultures may be viewed otherwise in other cultures. Classroom misbehaviours are a cause for concern as they are said to possess the capacity to undermine the productivity of the teaching learning process if not properly handled. According to expert opinion there is a link between behaviour and learning, hence behaviour cannot be considered in isolation from learning, (Grigg in Dada & Okunade, 2014). Classroom misbehaviours have also been linked with young teachers' phobia for the teaching profession, eventual abandonment of the profession and teachers' burnout on the job, (Cruickshank, Jenkins & Metcalf in Dada & Okunade, 2014; Ghazi, Shazada, Tariq & khan, 2013).

There are a host of names used in referring to classroom misbehaviours such as disruptive behaviours, inappropriate behaviours, classroom misconduct, classroom problem behaviours, classroom abnormal behaviours etc. While these words may be used to represent the same thing, they could also have different connotations. Ghazi, Shazada, Tariq & khan (2013) attempted to distinguish between disruptive behaviours and inappropriate behaviours. The writers opined that disruptive behaviours include behaviours that negatively impact the efforts of the teachers to teach and the ability of the learners to learn. While inappropriate behaviours were simply inappropriate in the classroom. They stated however that inappropriate behaviours if prolonged could become disruptive hence they also have to be dealt with. Cultural differences will be more tied to inappropriate behaviours than to disruptive behaviours going by the above distinction. A distinction could also be made between disruptive behaviours that are non-violent and those that are violent and have the potential of physical or psychological harm to the perpetrator, other members of the classroom, and to property of classroom members or the academic community.

Ghazi et al (2013) and Sun And Shek (2012) found the following classroom misbehaviours among secondary school students, clowning, avoidance of classwork, daydreaming in the class, not completing homework, bullying, trying to gain influence among fellow students, threatening the teacher, entering the classroom with screaming sounds, sleeping during teaching, chatting during teaching, habitually coming to classes late, unnecessarily arguing with the teacher, bringing noisy electric devices in the classroom, blaming one another upon any mischief, initiating quarrels amongst each other, shouting loudly to create thrills in the classroom, wandering in the classroom to divert student's attention, answering questions before the teacher concludes asking, playing with hands, feet, pen etc., using unacceptable language (disrespectful, vulgar or

colloquial language) with classmates and teacher, reporting others unjustly and unnecessarily, [275]
deliberately destroying things and materials, challenging the teacher on certain concepts, discussing religious and sectorial issues, ignoring the teacher's directions, shifting from one chair to another, loosing temper on slight penalty given by the teacher, etc. One very vital misbehaviour outlined by one teacher in Sun and Shek's study was inactivity or passivity during lessons. The teacher indicated that when she has a number of passive students in her class she is unable to teach. Passivity is an inappropriate behaviour in the classroom because it definitely will lead to a non-achievement of the objectives of the learning process. Especially in this era of child centred learning. For a learner to learn, he must be an active participant of the teaching learning process.

These behaviours collated by Ghazi et al (2013) among secondary school students to a large extent overlaps with those exhibited by the basic 9 learners in the Nigerian education system. This is not strange however, calling to mind that the junior secondary students are subsumed among the basic 9 learner's. Most of the behaviours listed above are inappropriate, disruptive and even aggressive classroom behaviours.

However, attention must be drawn to the behaviour, 'challenging the teacher on certain concepts'. While it is more or less unacceptable for the learner to challenge the teacher on concepts, the socio-emotional climate of the classroom should be such that the learner is at liberty to draw the teacher's attention to mistakes made with respect to certain concepts introduced by the teacher. This is due to the fact that the teacher being human is not immune to mistakes. This becomes even more necessary because of the realities of the times. Some teachers may be ill prepared for classes and may make mistakes, while for some teachers the only reference materials they possess are their primary and secondary school teacher's notes. They may be unaware of recent trends and changes in the world as opposed to some learners from wealthy homes who are exposed to the internet and its limitless resources and to other current sources of information like information obtainable on cable TV, the likes of which are CNN, Nageo wild, National Geographic channel etc. Failure to allow the learner the freedom of expression where such issues are involved may lead to erroneous learning which is bound to have a rebound effect in the future.

Also, the issue of inactivity or passivity of the learners is one that can be handled quite easily by an innovative and creative teacher. When teaching strategies that promote interaction are employed and the lesson is designed in such a way as to make it interesting learners participation is enhanced except in very exceptional cases.

Sun and Shek (2012) noted that recent studies in China have added sleeping in class, peering out of the window, uncooperativeness, complaining and lack of independent initiative to the list. [276]
The list of behaviours considered to be misbehaviours in the classroom keep changing with time and culture. In the present era one might want to include sneaking in and playing with phones in the class to the list. Having taken a look at what the situation is outside the shores of our country it is imperative to take a closer look at the situation within the Basic 9 education system in Nigeria.

From a study carried out in Ado Ekiti Metropolis by Dada And Okunade (2014) the following classroom misbehaviours were outlined by teachers, bullying, excessive noisemaking, use of foul language, slandering, stealing, lying, fighting, truancy, disobedience to classroom rules, violent acts, disruptive acts, rudeness, destructive acts, and lateness were listed. This study provides an insight to the Nigerian situation. However, the list contains repetitions and some compound words that would have been better broken down. Disruptive behaviours for instance subsume most of the behaviours listed and so does destructive behaviours. A new behaviour, stealing has however emerged on this list. Stealing literally refers to taking hold of another person's pos-

session without the permission and knowledge of the owner. This behaviour could have some underlying causes and could be linked to the prevalent economic situation in the country. That is why it is important for teacher's to approach this behaviours from a standpoint of its function rather than by how it looks as suggested by Norona, Bicard and David (2005).

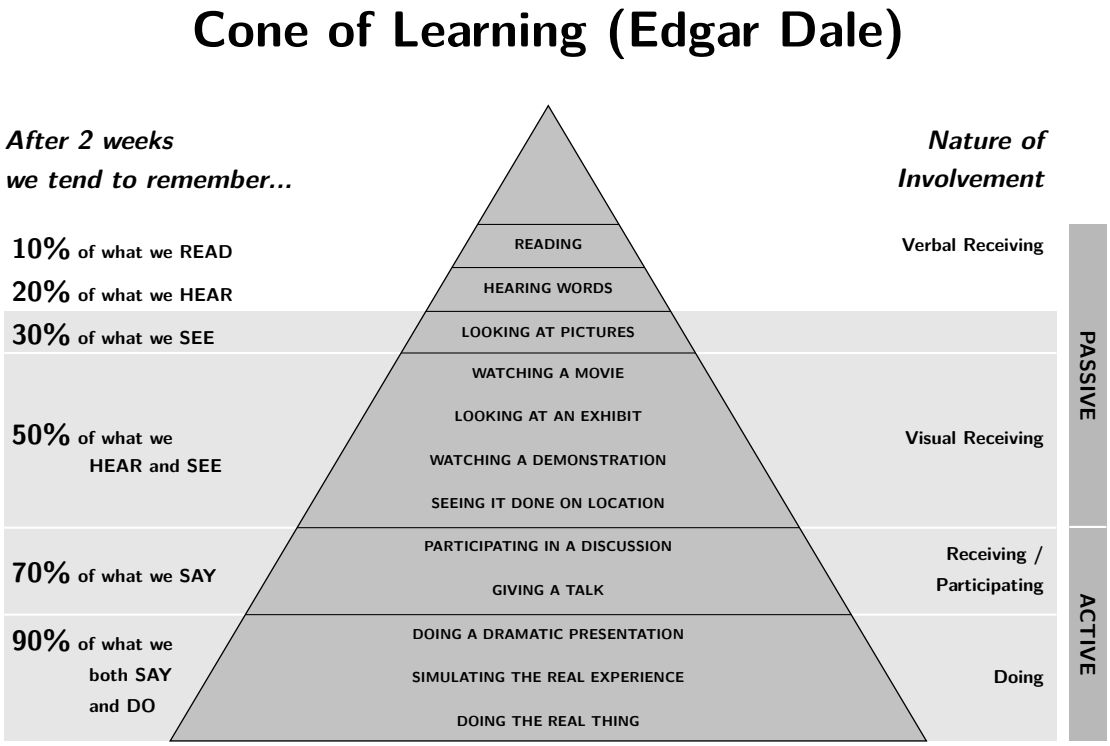
Effective strategies for coping with learners' misbehaviours in the classroom

It is essential for the teacher to maintain law and order in the classroom and ensure a conducive atmosphere for learning to proceed unhindered and without disruption. Maintaining law, order and a conducive atmosphere entails the employment of certain modalities by the teacher, some of which will of necessity be punitive. In curbing disruptive behaviours, Skinner (1953) reinforcement theory is relevant. It emphasizes reinforcing desirable behaviours and ignoring undesirable behaviours. Strategies to be employed by teachers should exclude punishment as much as possible, because learning includes trial and error. Making mistakes is therefore a part of learning and should be expected, be it academic or behavioural mistakes. The first approach should be to examine the cause of misbehaviour and teach appropriate behaviour. The strategies for classroom management proposed in this paper while being all inclusive is more preventive focussed than curative.

Classroom management is not an exercise that begins in class. There is a lot of planning that goes with managing and maintaining a conducive atmosphere in class. The following strategies are believed to be productive classroom management strategies.

1. Know your class – know the number of learners in the class, know the learners' characteristics such as their age, have an idea of their intelligent quotient, family socio economic status, [277]
   health status, disabilities, allergies, religion etc. This will give the teacher an idea of what to expect in the classroom and will provide an opportunity for the teacher to prepare to handle it.
2. Establish rapport – Hester (2013) opined that the most basic obligation of the teacher is to see the beauty that exists within learners and to communicate love and respect for learners. When the learners feel respected they will respect in return. It is also important for the teacher to understand the individuality of the learners and to treat them as such. The teacher should fully understand his role as a facilitator of learning and should be set to ensure maximization of students' potential. The socio-emotional climate of the class should be conducive. The teacher – student and student – student relationship should be cordial. The atmosphere in the class should be that of partnership. This is because the learners and the teacher are partners working towards a common goal. The teacher should avoid the use of threats in class as a behaviour management tool. It will only stimulate the learners to dare the teacher. The teacher should also avoid losing his calm and shouting in the class. When a teacher loses his calm it is an indication to the learner that he is winning and gaining advantage over the teacher and that can be reinforcing to the learner. When a teacher maintains his calm in the classroom it is a sign to the learner that the teacher is in control of the situation.
3. Equal treatment of every learner – The teacher should treat every learner with fairness. The law of equity should prevail in the classroom. The teacher should not favour some learners over others, in spite of their background, abilities or behaviour. Fairness to all and equal treatment of learners breeds respect for the teacher, while the opposite breeds disrespect and disobedience.

4. Setting the classroom rules 'Modus operandi and modus vivendi' – The world we live in today is largely democratic. Many of the world's greatest economy and power are ruled democratically, so should the classroom be. Many educators agree on the fact that if the learner's partake in the formulation of the rules guiding the classroom operations (modus operandi) and the behavioural expectations of the learners (modus vivendi) they are more likely to comply with the rules, because they can identify with the rules and own them. Norona et al (2005) propose the following guidelines for rule setting:
    i) The rules should not be too many. They should be about 4 to 6 general rules that can govern any class. If necessary, they could be some sub-rules.
    ii) The learners should participate in forming the rules. The rules should be set within the first few days of the term and the learners should be given guidelines they must follow in setting the rules. [278]
    iii) Classroom rules must be stated in positive terms not in negative terms e.g., 'Litter should be thrown in the trash can', not 'no one should throw litter on the floor'.
    iv) There must be consequences. These consequences must be commiserate with the offence and realistic.
    v) We should always remember to praise the learners when they abide by the rules.
    vi) Following through with consequences is a must.
    vii) The teacher must ensure that everyone understands the rules. There may be a need for role play, reviewing the rules from time to time and with younger learners the rules may need to be accompanied with pictures.
    viii) The rules must be stated unambiguously, simply and in measurable terms.
5. Classroom organization and arrangement – The organization of the classroom in terms of seating arrangement, organizations of activities and allotment of time to activities play a large role in maintaining order and discipline in the classroom. The classroom should be organized in such a way that it is easy for the teacher to access every learner in the class and every learner in the class is within the purview of the teacher. The classroom arrangement should also ensure that every learner can see and hear the teacher clearly and can also see the board clearly. The teaching period should be properly planned in order to keep the learner's engaged and occupied throughout the lesson. Poor classroom arrangement engenders disruptive behaviours. The teacher should also ensure that he is facing the learners for the most part of the class. When the teacher backs the class a lot it creates room for disruption and misbehaviour. Also, when learners are unable to see the board or hear the teacher clearly there are bound to be disruptions by the learners.
6. Lesson planning – Proper lesson planning is a very effective strategy for classroom management. When the lesson is planned in such a way that it is interesting, the class will be occupied and attentive. The teacher should employ an array of multimedia and relevant instructional aids. The teacher should endeavour to appeal to more than just the sense of sight and hearing in the class. For this group of learners colour can be employed to attract and sustain attention but not in excess, as to be distracting. When a teacher comes to class ill prepared then he hopes for disruption so that he can spend the time dealing with it. But a well-planned lesson leaves no time for disruption. While planning our lesson we should keep this in mind: [279]



Edgar Dale, *Audio-Visual Methods in Technology*, Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Source: Wagner (1970)

Edgar's cone of learning above emphasizes the importance of employing multimedia instructional aids, exhibitions, demonstrations, etc. Most importantly it shows that actively engaging the learners in the teaching learning process is highly beneficial. When the learners are actively involved in the learning process, there will be no room for disruptions and the rate of retention of what is learnt is significantly higher than when the learners are passive members of the class.

7. Avoid passing responsibility for discipline to superior authority. Some teachers use the Phrase 'I will report you to the principal' very often. This undermines the authority of the teacher and engenders disrespect. The learners should know that the teacher has authority and is able to exercise it in class. Only very extreme cases beyond the teacher's capacity should be referred to higher authority.

Having dealt with the first phase of classroom management which is preparatory and preventive, it is also important to look at some ways in which misbehaviours can be dealt with in the class room.

1. Understanding the motive - When dealing with misbehaviour, one very important principle is understanding the motivation for the behaviour. Two learners may engage in the same behaviour for different reasons. The key to changing the misbehaviour is understanding [280] the motivation behind the behaviour. Two students may talk without permission, while one student may be seeking attention, the other maybe frustrated by the disturbance of her seat partner. The two misbehaviours will require different approaches to address them.
2. Ignoring – Ignoring certain behaviours can be an important tool for behaviour management if properly applied. It is however important to ascertain which behaviour should be ignored and which should not be ignored. Behaviours that should be ignored are behaviours that are attention seeking behaviours by the learners; example, dropping a book on the floor,

smacking the lips etc. Ignoring should be used consistently and in combination with other behaviour building strategies. Norona et al (2005) states that ignoring should be used with, reinforcement of appropriate behaviours, teaching replacement behaviours and reinforcing other learners' positive behaviours. However ignored behaviours have a tendency to get worse before they improve and the teacher should be prepared for that. When the child cannot gain attention from the teacher he will go seek it somewhere else. Other learner's in the class could also be taught to ignore attention seeking behaviours in fact it could be a class rule. Behaviours that are not attention motivated, such as playing a game on a phone in the class should not be ignored because they will be sustained and will interfere with the objectives of the class which is to ensure that every learner interacts with the learning experience and learns.

3. Name calling – In this instance name calling does not imply using abusive names on the learners. It is a strategy for classroom management. When a learner is distracted or is chatting while the other class members are engaging in an activity, the teacher could softly call the name of the learner to redirect the learner's attention back to the class. Example if Maria is absent minded the teacher could say everyone bring out your maths workbook, Rita, Joe, Maria could you bring out your workbook please? In this way attention is not focussed on Maria, many class members may not even know that Maria was distracted. When this strategy is used, care must be taken not to gratify the learner's need for attention; it is usually more useful with younger learners.
4. Timeout – This is also a useful way to manage classroom misbehaviours. However this strategy is often misused. Timeout is the temporary removal of all forms of reinforcement; it is not a particular place. For timeout to thrive, the time out environment must be less reinforcing than the classroom environment, but this is most often not the case. A less stimulating corner could be partitioned in the class for time out and this could work. For mildly disruptive behaviour such as answering a question without the question being directed to the particular learner, the timeout could be done in the class. The learner involved could lose the right of interaction for a short period of time, one way to achieve this is planned ignoring; he can neither ask nor answer any question for the stipulated time. A second way may be removing the learner from an interesting activity and making the learner stay out of the group for a while. This way the learner can still observe and be a passive participant in the activity. Time outs might need to be explained, should be for brief reasonable periods and should be administered with calm. [281]
5. When one approach is not working, do not try harder, try another method – Because of the individuality of human nature a skill that worked with one learner may not work with another learner in a similar situation. When a skill does not work, we should change the method instead of trying harder with the same skill as that may only lead to frustration on the part of the teacher.

Some other practical methods that have been utilised and certified effective adapted from Hopkins (2015) include:

1. If the class is rowdy and everyone is talking at the same time, the teacher could either count from 1 – 5 or clap 5 times at the end of which if the class is not quiet there will be a consequence. The consequence could be losing part of the break period or doing some work which is not reinforcing. The teacher must however agree on the method and the consequence with the students beforehand.

2. Another method could be giving each child 3 obedience cards at the beginning of the week, whenever the child disobeys he losses an obedience card. He writes the offence he committed, the date and time and drops it a box that will be provided. At the end of the week students who still have all three obedience would be given a reward. Alternatively those who have none could be given some form of punishment.
3. Time out with exercise – This is a kind of timeout where by during the timeout, the child is given a piece of paper and is required to write elaborately what he did wrong, how it affected the class and what he is going to do to correct it. This method is however limited in use as it can be used with older learners who are able to articulate themselves on paper only.

There are several similar methods however every teacher must adapt the method to the specific group of learners involved.

Summary

Managing learner's misbehaviours in the classroom is a skill that must be acquired. Sometimes the teacher may have to learn on the job as no two situations are exactly the same. However, [282] with the required effort and application of psychological skills, the classroom can be a very pleasant place and misbehaviours may just be an opportunity for the teacher to display acquired skill. Teachers should invest time in reading materials on classroom management and implementing them in the classroom. In this work, many classroom management strategies that could improve classroom interaction have been proposed, teachers should experiment with these strategies.

Another solution to handling classroom misbehaviours is getting the parents involved in disciplining the learners and inculcating in them appropriate classroom behaviours. Teachers could hold individual meetings with parents of children with problem behaviours, the school could also use the Parents Teachers Association (PTA) meetings to create awareness among parents on how they can help curb classroom misbehaviours. When teachers and parents work together to achieve discipline in the classroom, the classroom experience is bound to be enhanced.

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