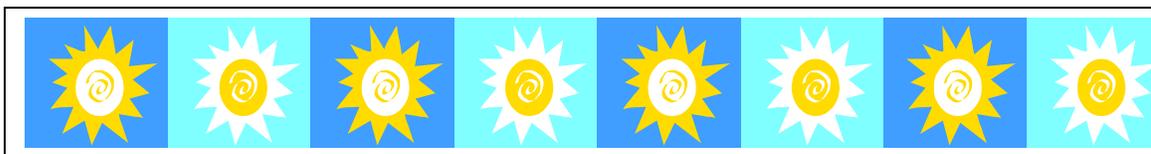


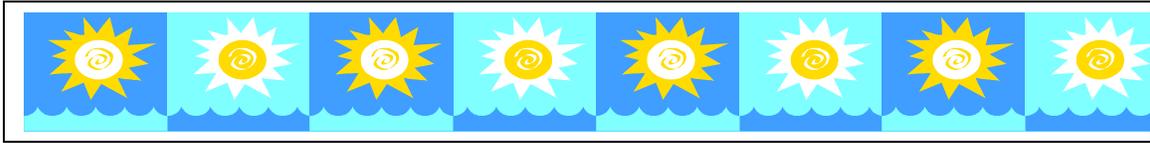
Teachers Learning Together:

Classroom Management Techniques for the Short Term Teacher

ETFO Niagara Occasional Teachers through

(Sponsorship by the Ministry of Education, support by the
ETFO, and Brock University)





Action Research Final Report:

Project Title: “Successful Classroom Management Techniques for the Short Term Occasional (STO) Teacher.”

Research Team Members: Kristia Riddell, Justyna Kusmierz, Shannon Bigford, Vera Hunter, Jerry Gibb, Gary Anderson

Associates: Ethel Brandenhorst, Randy Barnes, Kevin Reed

District School Board: District School Board of Niagara

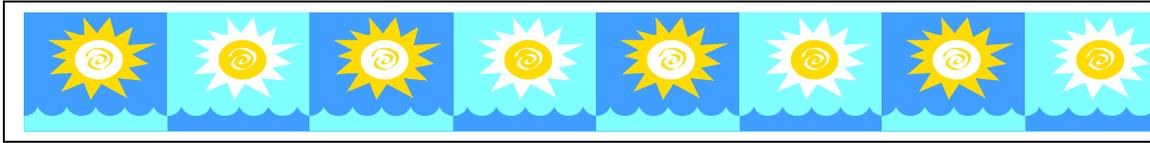
Faculty Liaise: Kamini Japal-Jaipal PhD. & Candace Figg PhD. from Brock University

Project Rationale: The decision to focus on the Short-Term Occasional Teacher (those working the same assignment for less than 10 or 15 days) meant that the research would impact those new to the profession as well as those for whom classroom management was a constant source of professional discouragement.

Research Question: “What is the impact of specific classroom management techniques in a Short Term Occasional Teacher’s classroom?”

Project Overview: Researchers have suggested an area of opportunity to improve teaching is to provide occasional teachers with training on topics such as discipline and classroom management. Therefore, the purpose of the following study is to examine effective classroom management techniques from the viewpoint of the occasional teacher. To attain this goal, team members analyzed disruption types and accompanying misbehaviours from a personal, theoretical, and strategic viewpoint.

Team members chose a specific division, (Kindergarten, Primary, Junior and Intermediate) and used a “Behaviour Tally Chart” (Kagan, Kyle, and Scott, 2002) to record all disruptions seen in a typical period of teaching (Appendix 1). The Tally Chart, modified for this research, allowed Team Members to categorize and consequently focus on two misbehaviours from each of four disruption categories (Aggression, Breaking Rules, Confrontation, and Disengagement), that were the most *commonly* observed in the chosen division. To help validate the data gathered by each team member, Gary Anderson and Justyna Kusmierz independently observed and tracked the observed misbehaviours using the behaviour tally chart as well. The final component of the data collection centred on personal reflections written in each Teacher’s Journal on the



particular day's classroom experiences. This gave the Team Member the chance to enhance the observations that the tally sheet recorded with the descriptors needed to contextualize the data and provide a tertiary means of data validation. Associate Team Members provided some extra data collection in order to give a broader context on the behaviours observed so that the general observations would not be those necessarily of a single teacher, and this helped the Team, especially in the early stages, giving support the initial context for the literature review.

The subsequent literature review provided Team Members the chance to see what classroom management techniques may have been supported by previous research and to then search for and attempt to use techniques that would appear to have the most chance for success.

Principal Findings: (see Appendix 2 for Summary of Behaviour Disruptions & Appendix 3 for an Overview of the Strategies Employed)

Shannon Bigford - Kindergarten

Kindergarten behaviours, teacher reaction, strategies, and research

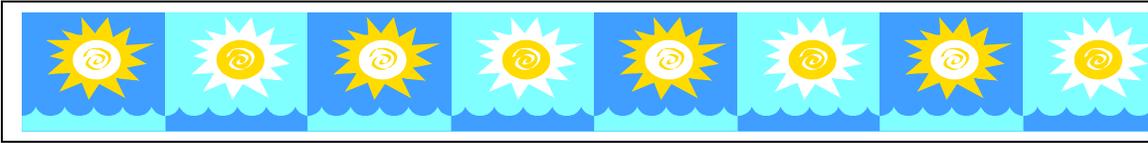
The Kindergarten student's developmental state

In order for an occasional teacher to effectively teach and manage a kindergarten classroom, they will need to understand the child's development at this stage in life. "Kindergarten children often enter school at three years of age" (Johnson, J., Myers, J., Pollock, K., & Zoet, C, 2007, p. 47). According to Ellsworth (2007), they are very energetic, love to play, and are creative in replicating real life experiences. They are very egocentric and competitive. They are developing social skills and are forming closer friendships with classmates. They do not have a well formed concept about limitations. They enjoy testing authority and rules. They are inquisitive and ask questions about everything. Their expressive vocabulary is developing rapidly and their interest in written language is growing. "Many kindergarten children enjoy testing authority and testing the rules, but at the same time they are eager to please adults and classmates" (Jonson, J., Myers, J., Pollock, K., & Zoet, C).

AGGRESSION- Kindergarten

Behaviour: *Poking*

Teacher reaction: After reviewing my journal, I found that I was frustrated with this student as he was disrupting four students around him, which ultimately interrupted my lesson.



Strategy: Ignore

Research support:

Webster-Stratton and Reid (2006), suggest that minor inappropriate seeking behaviours such as whining, arguing, poking and pouting can often be eliminated if they are ignored. If teachers consistently ignore particular behaviours, students will eventually stop engaging those behaviours. Furthermore, if students receive praise and encouragement for the opposite pro-social behaviours they will learn it is more beneficial to behave appropriately.

Effectiveness of strategy: Before finding this research, I would stop my lesson and confront the misbehaving student. I now realize that the purpose of this behaviour is to get my attention. If the student gets the attention for his/her misbehaviour, then they are temporarily satisfied. I however, found that the child will often want more until it reaches the point that the only time they are getting attention is when they are misbehaving.

I found this to be an excellent strategy as it worked six of the eight times used. By ignoring the students' misbehaviour and focusing on their appropriate behaviours I was able to decrease my feelings of frustration throughout the day, and ultimately felt more satisfied at the end of the day.

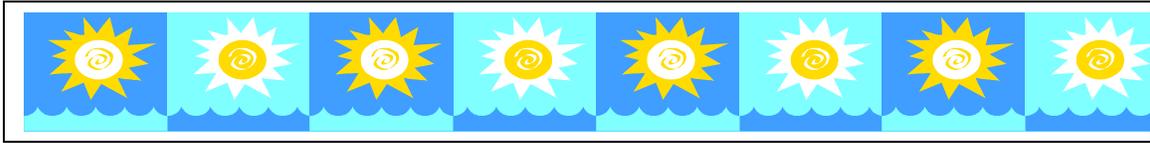
Behaviour: *Accusing others (verbal assault)*

Teacher reaction: Whenever accusing others happened, I felt frustrated as my intuition suggested that the student was guilty of the misbehaviour.

Strategy: Acknowledge the excuse given, but redirect the student to take action and responsibility to solve the problem.

Research support: Research indicates that young children often react to their problems in effective ways. Some cry, hit, tattle or lie. Webster-Stratton and Reid (2006) suggest that these responses do little to help children find satisfying solutions to their problems. In fact, they create new ones. Research however, also indicates that children use these inappropriate strategies because they have not been taught more appropriate ways to problem solve. There is evidence that children who employ appropriate problem solving strategies play more constructively, are better liked by their peers and are more cooperative.

Effectiveness of strategy: It is easy to assume that children are equipped with problem solving strategies. As a teacher, I have to remember that kindergarten students are just beginning to form their self-concept which involves problem solving strategies. By using



this disruption as a learning opportunity rather than disciplining the student, I was able to provide the student with appropriate problem solving strategies, which in turn, ultimately decreased the misbehaviour.

BREAKING RULES- Kindergarten

Behaviour: *Talking/blurting out*

Teacher reaction: Based on my journaling notes, I felt annoyed as student was disrupting my lesson.

Strategy: Non-verbal cues

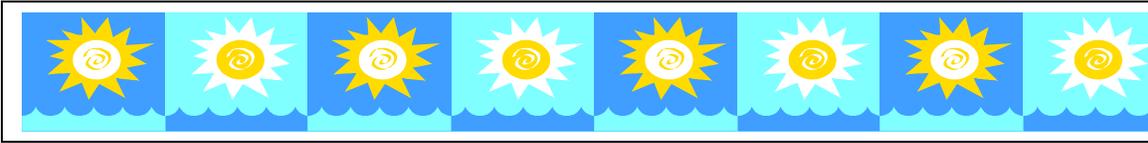
Research support: Tomal (1999) suggests that the use of non-verbal cues can be an effective means of keeping a student on task, as the seeking misbehaviours.

Effectiveness of strategy: Most of the talking/blurting out happened during circle/carpet time. Instead teacher can walk close to the student and give the student more eye contact. Normally, the purpose of such behaviour is that of gaining attention. Generally, reversing the situation can help the student. If the student receives little or no attention when he/she misbehaves but does get their share of positive attention when they are following the rules they will stop the attention of interrupting the lesson, I was able to make eye contact with the child. This stare allowed the student and I to make a visual connection without interrupting the lesson which allowed the student to understand that what they were doing was not acceptable at that time. This strategy proved to be successful as it worked the majority of the time.

During my action research journey, I stumbled across some eye-opening research. I previously mentioned that most of the talking/blurting out happened during circle time. I therefore looked a little deeper into my journal notes and noticed that this misbehaviour mainly occurred during read-alouds. Research suggests that this so-called misbehaviour is actually very beneficial to the students, as it is called *expressive engagement*. Research suggests that expressive engagement improves student's comprehension and vocabulary, increases fluency and builds motivation. Sipe (2002) suggests that there are five types of expressive engagement: dramatizing, talking back, critiquing/controlling, inserting and taking over. Sipe (2002) states "students talk back to the story or characters by providing advice to the characters, or expressing an opinion about the actions of the characters". Wow, and I thought this was a misbehaviour!

Behaviour: *Yelling*

Teacher reaction: Looking back on my journal, I felt annoyed and thought of the student as a nuisance who constantly interrupted my lesson.



Strategy: Ignore the attention-getting yelling.

Research support: By ignoring the attention getting activity and giving no reinforcement for the negative behaviours the student will eventually realize that yelling is not the way to get your attention. If you make requests or demands, the student usually stops, but only for a short time, and then repeats the behaviour. Only action helps, not words. The student needs to learn to feel good from accomplishment and contribution.

Effectiveness of strategy: This strategy was not as successful as I thought it would be. It worked well for talking and for blurting out, but not for yelling. I feel that there was more behind the yelling than simply gaining attention. I definitely feel that there is a better strategy to deal with a yelling kindergarten student!

CONFRONTATION- Kindergarten

Behaviour: *Blaming others (after-the-fact, centres on non-physical)*

Teacher reaction: I felt frustrated that the student could not work her problems out and was quick to transfer the responsibility of misbehaviour to another student.

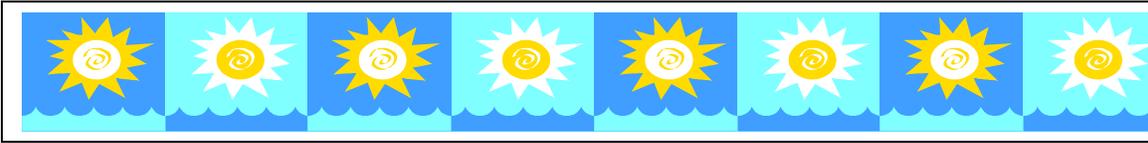
Strategy: Acknowledge the excuse given, but redirect the student to take action and responsibility to solve the problem.

Research support: Research indicates that young children often react to their problems in ineffective ways. Some cry, hit, tattle or lie. Webster-Stratton and Reid (2006) suggest that these responses do little to help children find satisfying solutions to their problems. In fact, they create new ones. Research however, shows that children use these inappropriate strategies because they have not been taught more appropriate ways to problem solve. There is evidence that children who employ appropriate problem solving strategies play more constructively, are better liked by their peers and are more cooperative.

Effectiveness of strategy: By modelling appropriate strategies, such as accepting the blame then apologizing, to the misbehaving student I was definitely able to see a decrease in them blaming others. Again, as educators, we must remember that not all students are capable of effective problem solving however, by taking your time and demonstrating what effective problem solving looks like and sounds like, the student will have the opportunity to learn appropriate problem solving techniques.

Behaviour: *Interrupting teacher*

Teacher reaction: I felt angry and frustrated because my authority was being challenged.



Strategy: Nonverbal Cue

Research support: Miller (2008) states that “teachers trained in non-verbal classroom management spend more time on content, less time on management, and have more energy at the end of their work day” (p. 7). DiGiulo (1995) suggests that simple eye contact will deter the student from interrupting the teacher.

Effectiveness of strategy: I found that this strategy was not as successful as I thought it was going to be. In most cases, the student was not trying to be disruptive, rather they only wanted clarification. Therefore, I took that opportunity to model how they should ask for help. I looked at the student and raised my hand.

DISENGAGEMENT- Kindergarten

Behaviour: *Not listening*

Teacher reaction: I felt upset that the student was not engaged with the lesson.

Strategy: Engage the student by asking a direct question, speak to the student directly or give the student a specific task.

Research support: Smith (2002) suggests that often the best way to deal with a disengaged student is to capture and redirect the student’s attention.

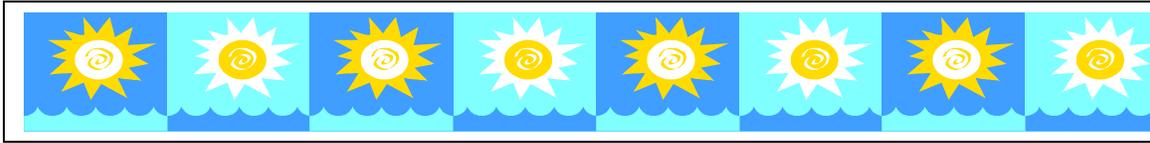
Effectiveness of strategy: It is not easy for a student in kindergarten to listen to the teacher one hundred percent of the time. It is however, easy to get the student back on task by stating their name in a question. Since they like to be the centre of attention, hearing their name will quickly bring them back on task! This strategy was extremely successful as it worked 8 out of the 9 times used.

Behaviour: *Socializing during instruction*

Teacher reaction: I felt annoyed as the students preferred to socialize during my lesson, rather than listen to me.

Strategy: Proximity

Research support: According to Smith (2002) the easiest and most effective strategy for keeping students on-task is for the teacher to walk around the classroom in a random pattern. By moving around the room, the teacher can observe the progress of students, acknowledge and reinforce positive behaviour, and manage off-task behaviours, such as



socializing, with proximity. Research suggests that there is a direct relationship between how close a teacher is to students and how well students behave.

Effectiveness of strategy: This strategy proved to be extremely successful. I found that every time I got close to the social student, the off-task conversation ended. By maintaining close proximity, I was able to complete my instruction without further socialization.

Principal Findings: (see Appendix 2 for Summary of Behaviour Disruptions & Appendix 3 for an Overview of the Strategies Employed)

Primary (Grades 1-3) - Vera Hunter

Seeman (2000) noted that discipline problems in Grade 1 are often disruptions to procedures.

Teachers in Grades 1 and 2 generally establish two or three behavioural expectations and spend much time reminding students of rules and proper behavior. Students gradually learn to raise hands, stand in line and wait patiently. Students in Grades 1-3 are generally eager to learn, open and honest. Student attention span is gradually increasing. They respond well to personal attention. At this level students are generally well behaved and follow the rules. They accept authority without question, although they may try to circumvent it (Charles, 1999).

Most like to “dramatize whenever possible” and will absorb their classmates with theatre or skits (Redwine, MCMLXX).

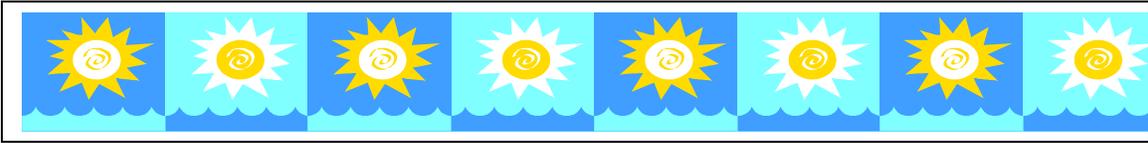
You will need to be flexible. Even if the classroom teacher has left a lesson plan, you might still find time on your hands. Be prepared to read stories and have discussions, do projects and play games (Greenburg, Early Childhood Today, Jan/Feb 2007).

AGGRESSION - Primary (Grades 1-3)

Behaviour: *Pushing*

I have observed this behaviour most frequently during transitions from one activity or class to another. Sometimes it has proven to be intentional but usually it has been non-intentional.

Teacher Reaction: When students appear to be rushing, my response depends on my previous experience/knowledge of the class routines. I try to review some of my expectations at the beginning of the day. Then, I give the students the opportunity to



introduce me to their classroom rules and any reinforcement system currently being implemented: tokens, points, consequences, prizes, activities. I try to reinforce positive transitions and behaviors. When I witness pushing it frustrates me because it shows disrespect for the rights of others which can result in hurt feelings and/or injury.

Strategy: In some classes, verbal and visual cues serve as reminders of expectation. I say, “STOP, ALL EYES ON ME”. This gives them a cue to stop and a task to show listening/compliance. I tell them, “Let’s try that again” and direct everyone back to their previous location. If this is accompanied by complaining..... we do it again. Students quickly get the message that I am aware of the expectation and will not tolerate non-compliance. Computer, gym, favored activity or recess are natural reinforcers for compliance.

I try to make the transition as quick as possible. I count backwards in English or French while observing student behaviour. I vary my counting to enable the maximum compliance to the assigned task.

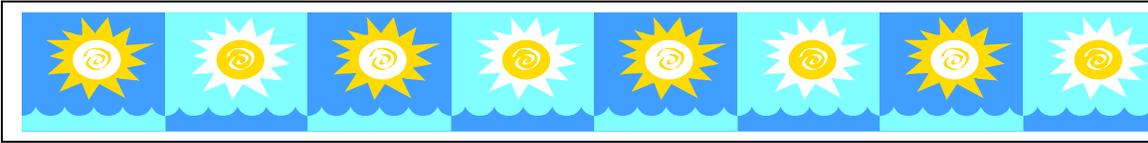
Research Support: Make the transition as quick and smooth as possible. The longer the transition the more likely you will be dealing with misbehaviour. Establish smooth, efficient classroom routines (Sprick, 1998,) Sometimes we create the discipline problem. (Seeman, 2000,) identifies calling attention to a behaviour that is not noticed by classmates or disruptive to the other students as a miscall. We want to avoid making miscalls and prevent or deal with real disruptive behaviours.

Teacher Reflection on Strategy: While we can sometimes be guilty of creating a discipline problem (see above paragraph), I have found that sometimes asking, “What did I see?” may provide me with additional information which in itself may dissipate the disruption. This would avoid the “miscall” noted above.

Behaviour: *Throwing Things*

While working as an occasional teacher, I have observed a variety of objects being thrown. These items are usually items such as erasers or pencils being thrown across the room to a friend, throwing garbage into the litter basket from their seats, and throwing items such as paper or books on the floor.

Teacher Reaction: I find that throwing items in the classroom is a concern when it is dangerous or interfering with class learning. Allowing anything to be thrown in the classroom sends a message of tolerance. I find this behaviour annoying but usually not disruptive. Often following transitions and before or after breaks, I have found items that have been thrown or dropped on the floor, such as small pieces of paper, pencil shavings and crunched paper.



Strategy: Depending on the situation, what is thrown, and when, I may give eye contact only and/or say “Should you be doing that?” or “What would your class teacher say if he/she saw you doing that?” Any attempts to make excuses or signs of disrespect result in removal from the situation and/or further discussion during “their” time.

If a student throws something to another student, I make eye contact while moving closer to the student and continuing the lesson/instruction

If throwing something such as scissors or any object at a person occurs I tell the student to see me in the hall and ensure the safety of the class. I report any dangerous/injurious behaviour to the office for follow up. This gets them out of the environment, shows the other students (especially the one that something is being throw at) that the behaviour is not tolerated. I continue with the lesson/instruction and at a natural break go to address the issue quickly with the student in the hall. I reiterate the class/school rule and the potential danger. I end my conversation by telling the student to talk to me at break and then have them return to the assigned task. Sometimes this involves me asking the student beside them to explain the assigned task to them. If it is a group task I simply have them return to their seats and sit quietly.

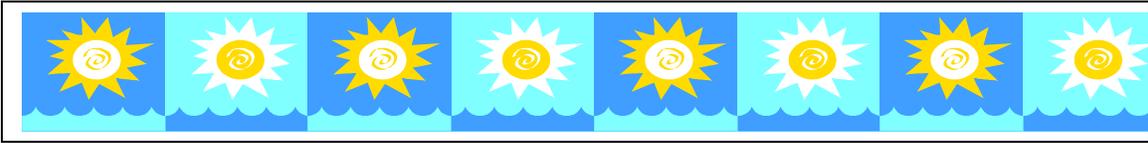
Research Support: An effective way to address student’s throwing things is to use minor interventions of verbal and non-verbal cues. For example, a simple reminder to students to stay on task while re-directing behaviour is a signal for the entire class to maintain focus. If this does not seem to work with particular students, the teacher should speak directly to the student who is throwing things asking them to stop and provide them with a choice (Santrock, Woloshyn, Gallagher, Di Petta & Marini, 2004). For example, “Please put the pieces of paper into the garbage and when you get back you can choose to finish your assignment here or at the back of the room where there is less distraction”. Non-verbal cues are also effective in minimizing this type of behaviour. Moving closer to the students who are throwing things and providing assistance with the assignment will re-direct their behaviour to the lesson (Santrock et al. 2004).

Waiting and boredom often cause misbehaviour. Be flexible and not chained to lesson plans or discipline methods (Jardine and Shallhorn, 1998).

“Intelligent creatures” like to have something to do. They will do anything to keep from getting bored, including things we would consider silly or destructive (Gordon, 1996)

Teacher Reflection on Strategy: Eye contact and proximity usually terminate this behaviour/disruption.

If a task appears too difficult, I arrange for students to support each other.



I try to be proactive, providing activities for “quick finishers” that prevent boredom. Activities that I carry include word searches, creative doodle or colouring sheets and math/language puzzle sheets. I try to add to lessons by sharing concrete materials, photos, books, personal experiences to add to student interest and engagement.

BREAKING RULES- Primary (Grades 1-3)

Behaviour: *Talking/Blurting Out*

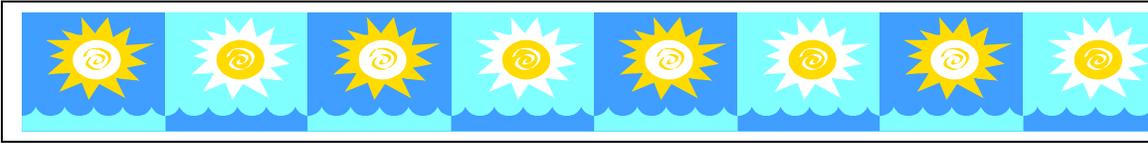
Teacher Reaction: Some students have difficulty with impulse control and are identified in the classroom teacher’s notes. I try to identify them before class and tell them that I would appreciate their help today. I find it frustrating when students are “blurting out”, since it prevents others from active participation. Just because someone is “blurting out” doesn’t mean that they are off task. Often they are providing correct answers to questions asked.

Strategy: I give a nonverbal cue by putting my hand up, palm out, indicating to stop. I avoid eye contact and tell the class that I am looking for someone sitting quietly with their hand up. When a student “blurts out”, when another student or myself are talking, I simply ask, “Who is talking?” If I get a response, I consider this to be a “teachable moment”. I explain that it is a rhetorical question, a question that does not require a response, only action. This cue appears to remind them quickly of the classroom expectation to raise their hand. When the talking stops and the student is attending to expectations I call on them and thank them for helping us.

When there is a situation of non-stop talking between a group of students, and reminders do not seem to improve the situation, I move students to either a different group or to a separate area depending on the situation. I tell the student(s) that they will remain separated until they can follow the classroom rules responsibly. I tell students, that I am going to have a good day and their day depends on them and their behaviour.

Research Support:

A strategy that research suggests in regards to non-stop talking is to remove the student away from the distraction (Retrieved from: <http://www.district17.otbu.com/survivalskills.pdf>.) Research also suggests introducing your rules at the beginning of the “first” day. Use a Go and Stop signal such as a silent command consisting of pointing at the child who was disruptive or talking out and pointing at the door. Research shows that you should not respond with your voice or your eyes (Morrish 1999). Get the student’s attention before giving instructions. Move constantly around the room to keep students on task (Morrish 2000).



When you are fair, firm and honest with students, they will come to your aid (Jardine and Shadhorn 1998)

Provide reteaching and practice of class rules and procedures for children in grades K-3 (Sprick, Garrison and Howard 1998)

Teacher Reflection on Strategy:

Using a Go and Stop signal such as a silent command may work in a classroom that you are familiar with or where the classroom teacher uses this strategy. As an occasional teacher I tend to follow the pre-established rules of the classroom. If students are aware that you know the routine, then it may be successful. I tend to use eye contact and proximity as deterrents. I have found it seldom necessary to separate or remove students from group situations.

A brief explanation for needed rules helps students to make attempts to manage or minimize disruptive behaviours of peers. The whisper of students saying, stop, be quiet or “shhhhh” can be the most successful tool to prevent /minimize disruptions. When students are attempting to assist with classroom control in this way, it could be a miscall to consider this a disruption.

Behaviour:

Sharpening Pencils at Inappropriate Times

Teacher Reaction:

If a student is quietly sharpening a pencil at their desk while listening to instruction I ignore this behaviour unless someone brings it to my attention. If a student brings it to my attention then I consider it to be a disruption and tell the student to sharpen his/her pencil when I am finished. When a classroom pencil sharpener is being used, students have to leave their desks, which means that they are not focused on the task at hand. I find this irritating since if students are not focused, instructions will require repetition from myself or a peer which can be a disruption to others who are on task.

Strategy:

The classroom pencil sharpener is usually noisy and distracts others, including myself. I direct the student to return to their desk and give a quick reminder that everyone is sitting and listening because I will not be repeating instructions. I carry sharpened pencils and while circulating around the classroom, if I see that someone is using a small pencil or a dull pencil I ask if they would like to trade pencils. I also bring a couple of hand held pencil sharpeners with me which I sit by the classroom sharpener. This avoids a group gathering around the pencil sharpener at “appropriate” times.

Some classes have containers for pencils that are dull/broken and sharpened. Students are usually happy to help sharpen pencils during their breaks.



Research Support:

Students sharpening pencils when they are supposed to be listening is identified as one of the most common misbehaviours in the classroom. Let students know how you expect them to behave and when pencils can be sharpened. Specifically define your expectation, monitor behaviour and give feedback to students concerning their implementation (Sprick 1998)

Prevention for the supply teacher could be to bring in a box of spare pens, pencils, rulers, paper etc... (Rogers 2003)

Teacher Reflection on Strategy:

I carry extra pencils and hand held pencil sharpeners. This strategy works well for me. Having additional sharpeners allows student to sharpen their pencils quickly at appropriate times and return to task, thus helping to alleviate sharpening pencils at inappropriate times.

CONFRONTATION- Primary (Grades 1-3)

Behaviour: *Interrupting Teacher*

Teacher Reaction:

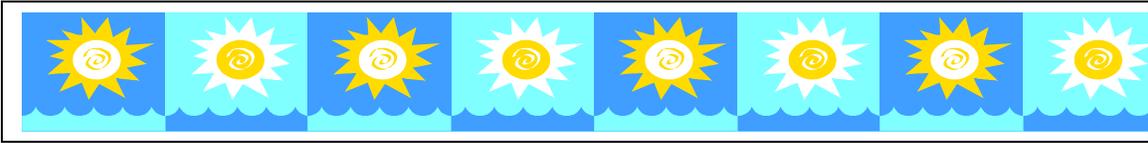
I find it very disrespectful to be interrupted when I am talking and also inconsiderate of others who are attentive.

Strategy:

I stop the lesson. I say, "I'm waiting". I tell students that I refuse to talk over someone else. I have found that students pick up on this cue quickly and conversation stops. If conversation continues I count 3, 2, 1. If conversation doesn't stop then I identify those students who are talking by name and tell them to talk to me at break.

Research Support:

Maslow's concept of the Hierarchy of Motives outlines the reason for certain behaviours. Maslow suggests that individuals need to be "satisfied" in this order: physiological, safety, love and belongingness, self-esteem, and self-actualization (to develop to one's fullest potential) (Santrock & Mitterer 2001). When one of these needs is not met, the individual's priority is to satisfy and changes their behaviour to accomplish that particular step. For example, a student who is seeking attention, whether good or bad, often lacks self-esteem. By clowning around when a supply teacher is in, or causing disruptions and mischief, is an attempt to improve their self-esteem and get a positive reaction from their



classmates. Some students do not seem to care how much trouble they get in, as long as they get a chuckle from the class.

Research indicates that giving direction or a reminder, removing eye contact and providing spatial proximity convey expectation and minimize unnecessary confrontation. Be positive in intent and form, block and redirect if necessary. Be brief; do not start discussions, debates or arguments (Rogers 2003).

When a student is confrontational, research advises that teachers first handle their own reactions. Keep calm, be aware of language and nonverbal messages. When students are disengaged it is helpful to ask yourself if you have made the learning relevant, given clear directions and expectations and used a variety of teaching strategies (Charles 2002).

Teacher Reflection on Strategy:

Brief, positively stated direction minimizes disruptions. It is helpful to ask myself if the student recalls the rule, understands the rule and can he/she apply the rule.

After giving initial instructions, I repeat a summarized version of the instructions. I place instructions on the blackboard (questions and page numbers). If a student requests instructions again, I ask a peer to remind the class of the instructions. This helps me to see if my directions are clear and understood.

Behaviour: *Blaming Others*

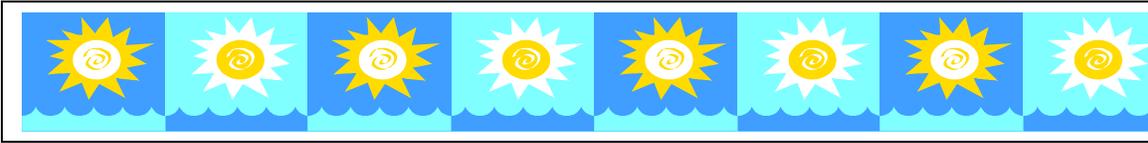
Teacher Reaction:

I have found that some students tend to blame others, thus diverting responsibility and attention from themselves to someone else. I liken this to a trap, where I as an occasional teacher can easily be placed in the middle of a debate, resulting in hurt feelings, raised voices and loss of instruction time.

Strategy:

I state what I have seen and acknowledge that I may require further information which the student(s) can provide to me at break. If the behaviour continues I would direct them to the hallway, thus removing them and the distraction from the classroom.

If there is no seating plan I devise one prior to students entering the classroom. Knowing student names and locations in the room tends to convey a message to the students that I am in control.



Research Support:

It is important not to waste energy, effort or time addressing secondary issues. “Command the student, repeat if necessary and ‘calm’ the rest of the audience, ‘all right everyone (scan the group) the show’s over” and direct everyone back to work (Rogers 2003). Acknowledge the excuse, redirect and allow the student to determine the consequence (Johnston, Myers, Pollock, and Zoet 2007).

Teacher Reflection on Strategy:

I attempt not to prolong the disruption. I redirect to task. If the disruption continues I offer a choice, they can discuss later or leave and sit at the office. Most students prefer to remain in the classroom environment.

DISENGAGEMENT- Primary (Grades 1-3)

Behaviour: *Off Task Behaviour*

Teacher Reaction:

My goal is to complete any work or assignments left by the classroom teacher. As an occasional teacher I try to disperse “fun” activities throughout the day. Fun activities include games of around the world, hangman using spelling words or silent ball given varied rules and instructions. I find that these activities help me to build a rapport with the students while teaching functional/academic skills. When students are off task this prevents the accomplishment of assigned tasks and my ability to incorporate “fun” activities.

Strategy:

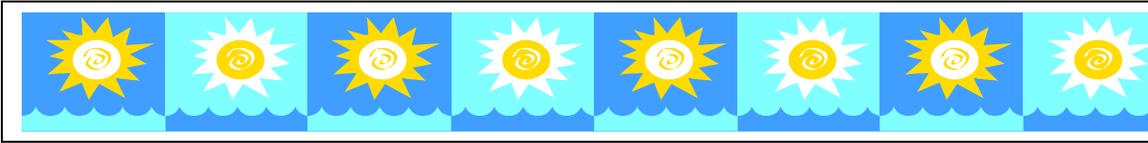
I ask, “What are you suppose to be doing?”. Frequently this cue will allow the student to return to task. If necessary I redirect to task and check for understanding.

One classroom rule that I usually identify at the beginning of the day is that if I find people playing with things that are not allowed in the classroom they will be removed.

I bring a variety of materials with me to my daily assignments such as joke books, copies of a blank template for word searches, soft balls of varied colors available for silent ball, and math flash cards.

Research Support:

Research shows that many students display off-task behaviours, particularly in the areas of socializing during instruction, wandering around the classroom and laughing out loud.



A successful strategy to minimize off-task behaviour is to introduce an incentive. The incentive does not necessarily have to be a material possession, but can be a fun educational activity such as: Math Around the World, Trivia based on questions from the assignment or a Spelling Bee. Older students enjoy team-based game activities that are competitive. By encouraging students to complete their assignments so that they have time for an educational game, off-task behaviours are reduced as the students seek to end the class with “free time”.

Asking closed-ended questions such as, “What are you suppose to be doing now?” or “What is our rule for...?” is extremely effective. Direct closed-ended questions promote responsibility for individual behaviours and respect for mutual rights. Avoid arguing or “snatching” a distracting item, instead give a directed choice (put it in your backpack or on my desk) or a deferred consequence (If you choose not to put it away I will have to follow up with you at break). Survival strategies such as rewards of sweets, activities, and games may be the “most reasonable way to cope with a very fractious class for a single day” The problem comes when supply teachers frequently, easily and characteristically use such strategies (Rogers 2003).

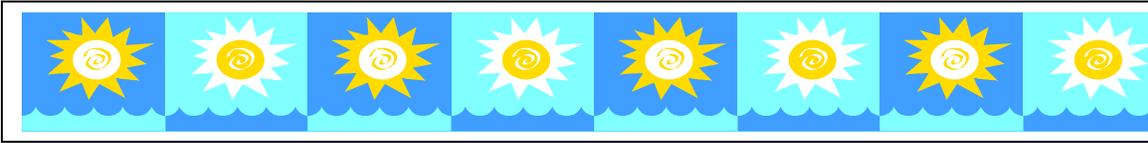
Rewards help keep students on task. (Johnson et al. 2007).

Teacher Reflection on Strategy:

Students usually make appropriate choices when asked, “Where should that be?” If they choose to put it in their desk or pencil case, I simply say, “If you feel it will not distract you there, that is fine, but if I see it again I will be requesting it.” In my experience students usually choose to put the item out on sight, either on the teacher’s desk or in their backpacks.

Removing an object may cause further disruptions, especially if students do not know what you are going to do with the object or if they will get it back. Letting students know that the object will be placed on the teacher’s desk and returned at the end of the day can prevent further disruptions (arguing, complaining...) If a student continues to complain I give them a choice to pick it up from the teacher’s desk at the end of the day or from the office.

Rewards are immediate and send a clear message. If providing treats it is necessary to check school policy and be aware of allergies. Some students may react to smell and touch of certain treats. I have found that “rewards” are most effective if used on occasion and not on a regular basis. Reinforcers like special pencils, erasers, and pencil sharpeners can be purchased at a dollar store at minimal cost. A little can go a long way!



Behaviour: *Rush Work*

Teacher Reaction:

I am disappointed when work is sloppy or little effort is shown in completion of the task.

Strategy:

Some students tend to rush through work for the satisfaction of being finished and having free-time (often a classroom rule implemented by the classroom teacher). It is difficult at times to know the standard of work completion based on student skill/ability. After scanning the completed work, I ask, “Would your teacher be happy with this?”, “Is this your best work?”, “Can you do better?” If I feel that I am getting the wrong message, I may ask the person sitting close by to assist in evaluating the work completion. While circulating around the room, if I see what I consider to be “good” work, I get the class’s attention and share the completed expectation which could be neatness, content or appropriate use of strategies (word wall, dictionary).

Research Support:

Clear expectations when presenting an assignment are imperative. Grasp the class’ attention and create a verbal contract or agreement on the expectations for the seatwork. Lay out expectations and let students know you will be looking for these expectations when they say they are finished (e.g., neat writing, not skipping lines, full sentences and most of all effort at their grade level) (Santrock 2004 <http://www.district17.otbu.com/survivalskills.pdf>). Tell students that if they do not follow the guideline, they will have to restart the assignment and finish at recess if not completed during the allotted time.

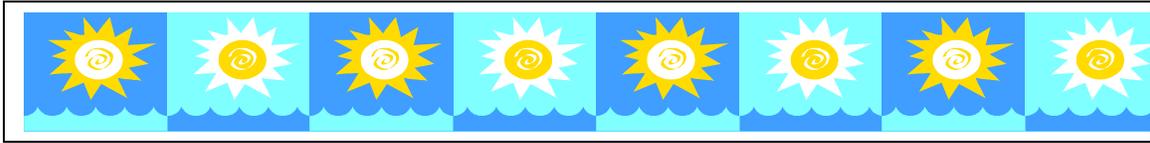
Give task focus instructions visually not just orally. It is important to limit the number of instructions given. What is crystal clear to us may not be clear to all of our students (Rogers 2003)

Teacher Reflection on Strategy:

I find that students are usually aware of expectations and can recognize when they have put reasonable effort into an assignment.

I look through previous assignments (bulletin boards, note books) to have a general idea of student ability. I usually write instructions on the blackboard and if students question what they are to do I can cue them to the written instructions or example. I attempt to review submitted work prior to allowing students to engage in a different task. If I am unable to review the assignment I inform the students that I will be reviewing it at another time, (i.e. during a preparation period).

If I find that students are rushing and not putting forth reasonable effort in an assignment I may change the classroom routine of having free time on completion and assign an additional academic task. Some additional tasks many include looking up words in the



dictionary, writing a different ending to a story, choosing a character they would like to be and explaining why.

Principal Findings: (see Appendix 2 for Summary of Behaviour Disruptions & Appendix 3 for an Overview of the Strategies Employed)

Junior (Grades 4-6) - Jerry Gibb

The Junior student's developmental state

Johnston, Myers, Pollock and Zoet (2002) noted that children in this division are usually seeking identity, and may feel the need to test limits in the classroom and elsewhere. They are starting to become more adaptable to change. Physically, they are growing fast, and can be literally hungry and restless. Shaffer, Wood and Willoughby (2002) reported on various developmental psychologists' assessments of junior age children. These students belong in Piaget's Concrete Operations stage of development, which means they can focus on more than one aspect of a situation when trying to solve a problem.

Initially a child's social interaction with others promotes learning, which only gradually comes under the child's control, according to Vygotsky. Bronfenbrenner reported that children with secure and positive parental relations are more likely to be accepted by their peers and have close and supportive friendships during their school years. Erikson contended that students between the ages of 6-12 spend much time comparing themselves to their peers, and try to acquire the necessary social and academic skills to feel self-assured.

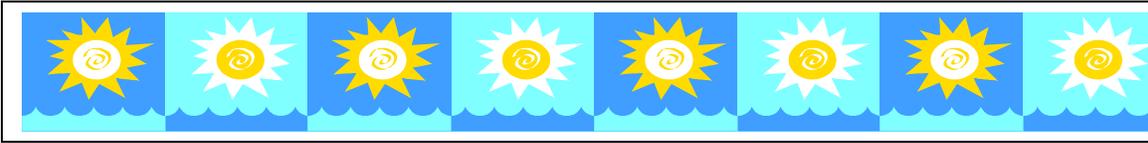
Merrett and Wheldall (1984) investigated which behaviours at the junior level teachers found most prevalent. The four that caused teachers most problems, and hence used up the most instructional time, were talking, non-attending, disobeying and disturbing others. Two thirds of teachers surveyed reported that they were spending more time than they should on establishing order and control in their classroom.

AGGRESSION - *Junior (Grades 4-6)*

Behaviour: *Arguing* (with other students)

Teacher reaction:

When one student starts to argue with another, however minor the conflict, I know that it can quickly become a disruption to the rest of the class, and therefore reduce total time on task. Therefore it is necessary to end the dispute as quickly as possible to allow for the class to continue working effectively.



Strategy:

Remove the student (the initiator of the conflict) from the situation. This should end the disruption to the other students. It is also helpful to acknowledge any positive behaviour displayed by the student, either before or after the conflict.

Research support:

Teaching non-aggressive conflict resolution, using “I messages” and allowing each student the chance to speak in turn is a valuable strategy, which could be done at the end of the period. (educationworld.com) This kind of behaviour may be shown by a student because he or she lacks the social ability to deal effectively with others. Often a brief time-out will allow the student to calm down and return to a more passive and manageable state (Johnston et al 2002).

Effectiveness of Strategy

I usually find this to work quite well as it takes away the audience, but I try to return the student as soon as possible, so that he or she can attempt to demonstrate the desired and appropriate behaviour. If a student has to be isolated for a long period of time because of inappropriate behaviour then I feel I have not managed the situation properly.

Behaviour: *Throwing things*

Teacher reaction:

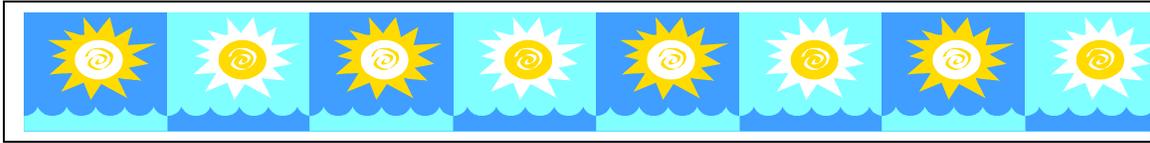
This is often a sign of boredom, rather than outright aggression. Usually small pieces of eraser or paper are the objects thrown. While this is not usually dangerous, it can create a distraction, and can escalate into something more serious. It is very annoying, and it can be difficult to identify the offending student(s). I feel frustrated because this problem wastes my time and prevents me from attending to other students who are working on task and may need help.

Strategy:

Have the student state the class expectation for keeping hands, feet and objects to themselves (or stress it yourself if not one of the class’s own) and explain the reasons for this expectation. The student could also write out this expectation in his/her organizer.

Research support:

Successful teachers do not just post and repeat their class rules, but allow their students opportunities to think about, discuss and reflect on the need for these rules. Some also include formal lessons and activities on the rules to help reinforce and internalize them (Myers 2007). Charles (1999) described the “assertive” style of responding to student behaviour as one in which expectations are clearly, confidently and consistently expressed. Student co-operation is encouraged and an understanding of which behaviour is acceptable and which is unacceptable is promoted. Teachers should review and reinforce the rules, especially those related to any form of aggressive behaviour,



throughout the year and be sure that all students are aware of the consequences.
(educationworld.com, as cited above)

Effectiveness of Strategy

This hasn't always been successful because although the student will usually comply with this request, it doesn't necessarily eliminate the behaviour. I am still looking for a better response to this problem.

BREAKING RULES- *Junior (Grades 4-6)*

Behaviour : *Interrupting learning*

Teacher reaction:

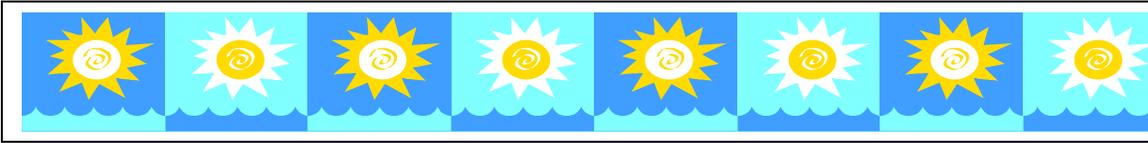
This can be very frustrating, depending on the scale of the interruption. The behaviour may be only visual or verbal or both, and is often to attract attention from peers. Clearly, the more disruptive the behaviour, the quicker and more successful the teacher's response needs to be.

Strategy:

Stop speaking temporarily, while looking directly, but impassively, at the offending student. A second strategy is to use the student's name in the middle of your sentence.

Research support:

Adler (2000) advises that attention-getting activity may be ignored, providing it is inconsequential. Teacher actions, not words, are likely to be more successful. Seeman (2000) maintained that preventing disruptive behaviour is achieved through five types of teacher-student interaction. These are: avoiding miscalls, following through and being consistent, appropriate and fair. By miscalls the author means overreacting (or reacting too soon) to problems which are not discipline problems. They do not disrupt any other student and may be handled at a later time. In this way the teacher is not creating a new problem. ETFO (2000) described the first strategy outlined above as "doing the unexpected." Shapiro and Skinulis (2000) commented that students who receive attention from the teacher in a way that highlights their unconscious goal for attention (for example when the teacher inserts the child's name in his sentence) stop enjoying it. Attention-getters should be encouraged and praised when they manage to do their work and stop or reduce the amount of disruption they cause. Blaker and Bennett (1970) observed that a student who is prone to disruptive behaviour and interrupting other students' learning may be quick to criticize others but will not accept responsibility for his or her own behaviour.



Effectiveness of Strategy

This has been very successful for me all year. It is non-confrontational and usually catches the student by surprise. I feel that it is one of my most effective strategies in several situations.

Behaviour : *Socializing inappropriately*

Teacher reaction:

This behaviour overlaps with the one discussed above, and is not usually tough to manage. It may also be just another form of disengagement. It does not create much frustration on my part unless it becomes ongoing to the point of being a significant distraction to the other students.

Strategy:

Provide opportunities for positive attention, e.g. assisting the teacher, running an errand, sharing individual work, working as a peer tutor or performing a brief skit (at a suitable time).

Research support:

Adler (2000) stressed that this type of student needs to feel good about his or her contribution. Shapiro and Skinulis (2000) agreed with this and stated that the student should receive significance and support from helping others, instead of distracting them. Attention-seeking children who interrupt often should be given opportunities for positive attention and responsibilities that assist the rest of the class.

Effectiveness of Strategy

This strategy has also worked consistently well, and I enjoy using it as it turns a negative situation into a positive and can boost a student's self-esteem.

CONFRONTATION- *Junior (Grades 4-6)*

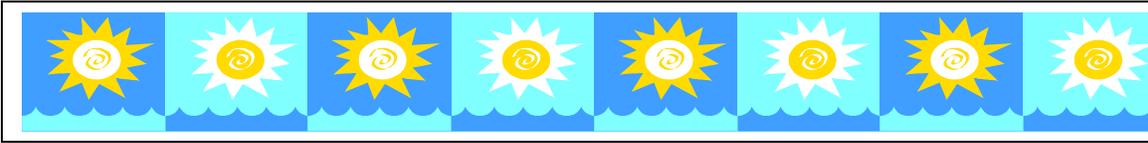
Behaviour : *Whining about assignment*

Teacher reaction:

This problem often exists just to "test the supply" and is really irritating. I do not appreciate my time being diverted away from other on-task and compliant students, who may need some direction or further explanation.

Strategy:

Explain to the student that they can choose when to do the work, but not whether they can. If the assignment is not completed in class (within a reasonable time), it will have to be done at another suitable time of the teacher's choice: e.g. at recess or during computer time, while others have free time.



Research support:

Building self-esteem by acknowledging past successes and what the student can already do is valuable when dealing with this situation (ETFO 2000). Johnston et al (2002) presented the “I understand” technique. If a student whines and complains about the work assigned, the teacher responds with “I understand that you might feel this way, but you still need to have it done for class tomorrow.” The teacher is seen as sympathetic to the student’s feelings, but makes it clear that the work must be completed for the regular teacher’s return the next day. In this way the student’s feelings are validated but not his behaviour.

Effectiveness of Strategy

This is usually successful, and often results in the student getting down to work, rather than having to work during a period of free time or a break. Another response is to explain that the assignment is for the regular teacher but my job is to give the directions and answer any questions the students may have.

Behaviour : *Ignoring directions*

Teacher reaction:

The student who does this is probably acting in such a way because they think they can get away with it in the absence of the regular teacher. I always try to respond quickly and consistently, and then move on.

Strategy:

Have the student repeat the instruction for the assignment in the current lesson.

Research support:

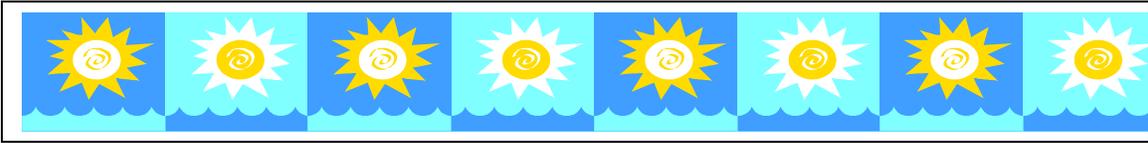
Rhode et al (1992) commented that a teacher should give a request only twice, and avoid the “nagging effect” which reduces compliance. If the student still ignores the instruction, the teacher should follow through with a pre-planned consequence, such as owing time at recess. Johnston et al (2002) suggested four steps to use when giving instructional expectations:

1. Give the instruction.
2. Allow an appropriate wait time.
3. Look for appropriate behaviour (compliance).
4. Acknowledge the appropriate behaviour.

The success of this practice is enhanced by the teacher’s stance, speech and eye contact.

Effectiveness of Strategy

This is usually successful, but I have to avoid falling into the trap of “nagging”. I often follow up by praising a nearby student who has complied with my directions.



DISENGAGEMENT- *Junior (Grades 4-6)*

Behaviour : *Inattentiveness*

Teacher reaction:

This doesn't bother me as much as other behaviours because if only one or two students are not attending it doesn't usually affect the rest of the class. Less total instructional time is lost. Also, this problem can be dealt with more quickly and discretely than others.

Strategy:

Provide more opportunities for student-centred learning and hands-on activities (e.g. use students at the front of the class to demonstrate patterns in math, distribute materials or write answers on the board or overhead). Proximity or eye contact may also help students to return to task.

Research support:

ETFO (2000) considered that boredom, which often leads to inattentiveness, may be combated by empowering the student and building student-teacher rapport. McCown, Driscoll, Roop, Saklofske, Schwean, Kelly and Haines (1999) contended that children in Piaget's concrete operational stage learn abstract concepts (such as in math) best when using concrete materials and manipulatives. By giving the student a specific task and providing opportunities for leadership, the boredom is likely to diminish rapidly, and the student feels valued. I have often used this strategy at various grade levels and it always helps! Finn, Pannozzo and Voelkl (1995) emphasized that failing to attend to the teacher and being actively engaged in academic work are associated with lower academic performance even more significantly than "acting out." The authors noted that even though a student's behavior may disrupt the flow of learning in the classroom, that student can still achieve academic success.

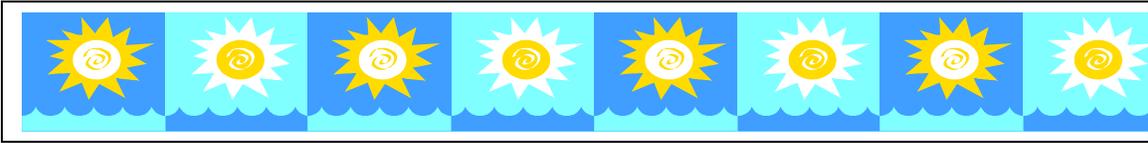
Effectiveness of Strategy

Although this can work well with junior students, it is most successful with primaries. Often though, junior students love to write answers on the board or overhead, so this specific idea can be very useful. A few juniors are too immature to handle the extra responsibility of being a "teacher's helper".

Behaviour : *Rushing work (to get free time)*

Teacher reaction:

My main concern in this situation is that my time assisting other students who need some extra help can be interrupted. As well, work which appears rushed could be seen as evidence of poorly-taught lesson or unclear instructions. Again, it doesn't usually disrupt the rest of the class and so doesn't cause me much frustration.



Strategy:

Remind the student of their teacher's expectations for finished work. They are the same as mine. Ask the student to show that the work has been checked for completeness, neatness and editing? (Could allow for peer editing). Then say "What would your teacher think of this work?" Have an appropriate curriculum-related activity for those who finish early, and have done an acceptable job, rather than announcing that free-time will be available when students are finished (except perhaps in early primary grades).

Research support:

Students who rush through their work are often poorly motivated, or motivated for the wrong reason, according to McInerney (2000). Among the negative forms of motivation are motivation to avoid failure, motivation to increase stimulation through activities other than the one that should be the focus of attention, motivation to resist and not to participate, and motivation to cause distractions to others.

Effectiveness of Strategy

I usually feel this is an appropriate strategy, as there are almost always several ways to improve the work. Junior students do not often take the time to check or edit their work, and even if they do, they can still improve it. Peer editing with a reliable student provides an academically sound but enjoyable extension for both the students.

Principal Findings: (see Appendix 2 for Summary of Behaviour Disruptions & Appendix 3 for an Overview of the Strategies Employed)

Intermediate (Grades 7 – 8) Kristia Riddell

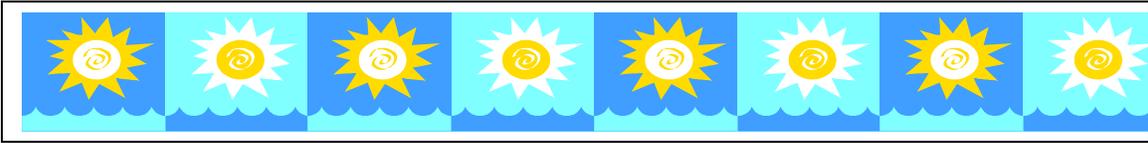
AGGRESSION - Intermediate (Grades 7 – 8)

Behaviour: *Bullying*

Teacher Reaction: It is shocking to witness accounts of bullying because the consequences of these behaviours can last a life-time on a child. As an Occasional Teacher, it feels impossible to properly intervene and discuss bullying behaviour and its consequences; we can only offer band-aid solutions. It is also difficult to prevent bullying situations since the climate and relations of the class are often unknown.

Strategy: Stay calm and use the instance as a learning experience. Have students generate their own solutions to the problem as an alternative to the behaviour that was displayed.

Research Support: The best strategy for bullying behaviours is to stay calm and use the instance as an instructional opportunity (Sprick, Garrison & Howard, 1998, p. 4). When ignoring these aggressive behaviours, students will continue with more intensity.



Research also suggests that teachers should encourage students to assume responsibility. When students collaborate and discuss problematic behaviours, together they can generate positive solutions. This also creates a sense of trust within the classroom (Santrock, Woloshyn, Gallagher, Di Petta & Marini, 2004, p. 393).

Teacher Reflection on Strategy: Having students generate their own solutions to the problem appears to be more effective than simply ignoring the problem and expecting students to get back to work.

Behaviour: *Throwing Things*

Teacher Reaction: When students are throwing things, I feel annoyed because I know they are off task and not listening. These behaviours also interrupt other students who are trying to pay attention and instigate others to join in on the disruption. I also feel frustrated when school materials are the objects being mistreated and thrown. This is an illustration of the lack of respect towards other people's property. When objects are being thrown at other students, such as spit balls, it is embarrassing for those students who are subject to the ridicule. Lessons often have to be put on hold to address these situations and take time away from the overall learning opportunity.

Strategy: Verbal cues

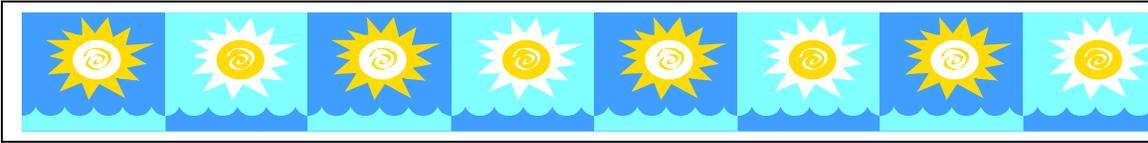
Research Support: An effective way to address student's throwing things is to use minor interventions such as verbal cues. For example, a simple reminder asking students to stay on task while re-directing behaviour is a signal for the entire class to maintain focus. If this does not seem to work with particular students, the teacher should speak directly to the student who is throwing things asking them to stop and provide them with a choice (Santrock, Woloshyn, Gallagher, Di Petta & Marini, 2004, p. 406). For example, "Please put the pieces of paper into the garbage and when you get back you can choose to finish your assignment here or at the back of the room where there is less distraction".

Teacher Reflection on Strategy: I find that using verbal cues is most effective when students are throwing things. By speaking one-on-one to the student, they realize that what they are doing is inappropriate and will not be tolerated.

RULE BREAKING- *Intermediate (Grades 7 – 8)*

Behaviour: *Non-Stop Talking*

Teacher Reaction: As an Occasional Teacher, I become annoyed when the class is caught up in the latest recess gossip rather than listening to what I am trying to teach. It results in breaks from the lesson to intervene with particular students and takes away from the overall learning environment.



Strategy: Remove student from the distraction

Research Support: A strategy that research suggests in regards to non-stop talking is to remove the student away from the distraction (Retrieved from: <http://www.district17.otbu.com/survivalskills.pdf>.) When there is a situation of non-stop talking between a group of students, and constant reminds do not seem to improve the situation, ask the student to take their belongings with them and move them to either a different group of students or to a separate area depending on the situation. Let the class know that this is a consequence for his/her behavior and that they will remain separated until they can follow the classroom rules responsibly.

Teacher Reflection on Strategy: Through my experiences, by removing students who are talking non-stop from the distraction, the problem resolved immediately. Students who like to talk instigate others to talk as well, so when they are moved to a separate working area in the classroom, it minimizes the distraction.

Behaviour: *Interrupting Learning*

Teacher Reaction: When students are engaging in behaviours that interrupt learning, as a teacher it makes me feel angry because they are not being considerate for others around them. Unfortunately, students who are distracting to the rest of the class get the most attention from the teacher, and it takes away from the learning opportunities that the other students could be receiving.

Strategy: Use a deterrent system (verbal → remove student from the situation → penalty → detention or note in agenda)

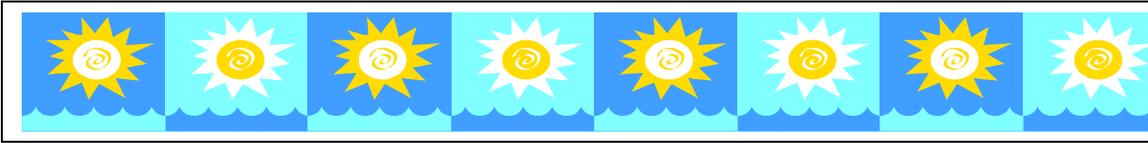
Research Support: Research shows that consistency across discipline practices results in better classroom management. For example, a deterrent system allows for student to take responsibility for the consequences of their behaviour (Santrock, Woloshyn, Gallagher, Di Petta & Marini, 2004, p. 406).

Teacher Reflection on Strategy: I have found deterrent systems that are clearly explained to students to be very effective. When students know what to expect as a result of certain behaviours, they will self-regulate their actions because the consequences are known and consistent.

CONFRONTATION- Intermediate (Grades 7 – 8)

Behaviour: *Ignoring Directions*

Teacher Reaction: When students are ignoring what is being asked of them, I feel intimidated because there is a lack of respect between teacher and pupil. When students ignore directions, others are watching your every move, and every reaction to assess the



situation and see if they too can take advantage. Within that fraction of a second, the Occasional Teacher has to come up with a plan and implement it, or else.

Strategy: Provide student with a choice

Research Support: Research recommends that when faced with confrontation, the teacher should give the student a choice. By placing responsibility in the student's hands, they can take the next step towards behaving appropriately or following through with a negative consequence (Santrock, Woloshyn, Gallagher, Di Petta & Marini, 2004, p. 406). For example, "Remember that if you do not complete the assignment by the end of the period, you will have to stay in and miss recess".

Teacher Reflection on Strategy: As an Occasional Teacher, I find myself using this strategy a lot. By giving students a choice and reminder, they know that you are observing their progress and the choice is theirs whether they get their work finished or not. I have observed that students like being given a choice rather than being directly told what to do, especially in the intermediate grades where independence is a critical stage of development.

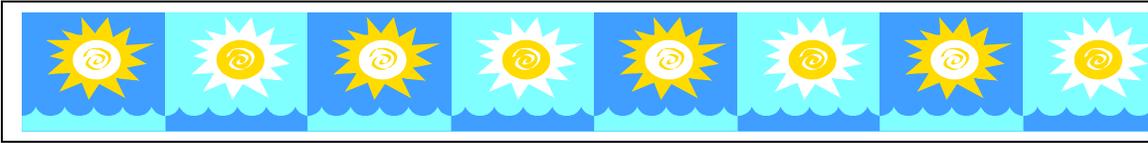
Behaviour: *Interrupting Teacher*

Teacher Reaction: In situations where students are causing interruptions such as shouting out or chatting to others when they should be listening, I feel that there is a lack of respect from students towards their teacher. Occasional Teachers arrive early to class everyday in order to plan an exciting day for a new group of students, only to be treated unfairly and not shown proper respect when being constantly interrupted during lessons.

Strategy: Use challenging students as helpers or "mini-teachers"

Research Support: Students who are consistently interrupting the teacher are usually attention seekers. Research suggests that instead of focusing on the negative behaviours, allow the student to be a class helper (handing out papers or in charge of setting up gym for Phys-Ed) (Johnson, Myers, Pollock & Zoet, 2007, p. 109). By acknowledging and praising the appropriate behaviours, the student will continue helping rather than resorting to misbehaviours.

Teacher Reflection on Strategy: I have found that using challenging students as "mini-teachers" to be every effective for the student as well as the teacher. When assisting the teacher, the student receives praise and better understands the lesson being taught. As for the teacher, it is always helpful to have a student to make your job easier when multi-tasking. This also eliminates problems that arise from attention seeking behaviour that is negative.



DISENGAGEMENT- Intermediate (Grades 7 – 8)

Behaviour: *Off-Task Behaviour*

Teacher Reaction: On many occasions in an intermediate classroom, it feels almost impossible to get students at this age group to stay seated and focused on the task. I am sure most of us can agree that we spend most of the period telling students to stay in their seats, keep focused on task and to save the gossiping for recess.

Strategy: Use educational incentive

Research Support: A strategy to try to eliminate off-task behaviour in the intermediate classroom is to introduce an incentive. The incentive does not necessarily have to be a material possession, but can be a fun educational activity such as: Math Around the World, Trivia based on questions from the assignment or a Spelling Bee (Infantino & Little, 2005, p. 488-500). Older students enjoy team-based game activities that are competitive. By encouraging students to complete their assignments so that they have time for an educational game reduces off-task behaviours in order to have free-time with their peers.

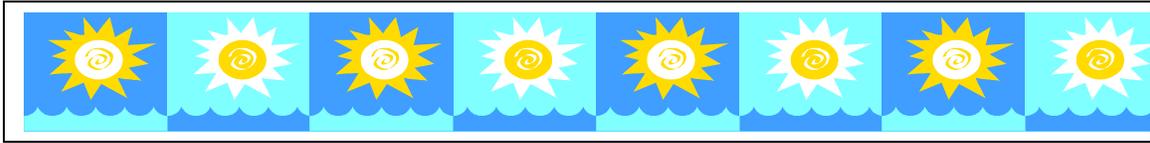
Teacher Reflection on Strategy: I find that incentives that are educational to be a great motivator for students who are off-task and do not want to complete their work. By promising a fun math game or trivia competition, students immediately focus on work and encourage each other to finish the assignment. Once finished, students are practicing math skills or basic subject knowledge in a fun way, instead of being off-task.

Behaviour: *Rush Work*

Teacher Reaction: As an Occasional Teacher, it is often frustrating when students rush through their work. I feel as if students are not trying when they have the potential to get a level 3 or 4. I also feel that students are taking advantage of the presence of a new teacher who they know is only temporary.

Strategy: Verbal contract/agreement

Research Support:
When you notice students are rushing to finish work, it is best to use a preventative strategy instead of waiting for the whole class to rush through the assignment and do it incorrectly. Grasp the class' attention and create a verbal contract or agreement on the expectations for the seatwork. Lay out expectations and let students know you will be looking for these expectations when they say they are finished (e.g., neat writing, not skipping lines, full sentences and most of all effort at their grade level) (Santrock, Woloshyn, Gallagher, Di Petta Marini, 2004, p. 406-407)(Infantino & Little, 2005, p.



488-500). Tell students that if they do not follow the guideline, they will have to restart the assignment and finish at recess if not complete by the end of the period.

Teacher Reflection on Strategy: I find that this strategy works because even though students are rushing through their work, they do not want to re-do it again properly. By creating the agreement with students to follow a set of expectations and knowing that the teacher will be enforcing them, they tend to follow the guidelines to avoid starting over.

Impact and Implications of the Research

Overall

Team Members found that virtually no research has been done that focused on specific disruptions in concert with the developmental stage of the child. There were times when the Team Member had to evaluate the stage and then provide the Team with a “best guess” as to what might promote the best learning outcomes for an entire class of these children.

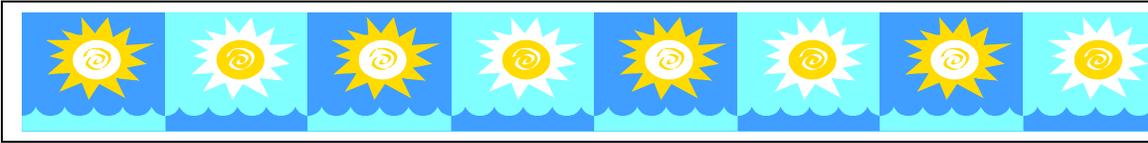
Kindergarten (Shannon Bigford)

Student Learning

I was quick to find my original strategies used to deter misbehaving students proved to be inadequate. I however, found that by understanding the underlying cause of the misbehaviour proved to be beneficial. Therefore, the implication of the action research could be using the misbehaviour as a teachable moment, rather than finding a strategy to temporarily stop the misbehaviour.

Teachers as Professionals

The implication from this action research could be that professional growth provides access to sources of ideas, materials, feedback and encouragement crucial for survival in the classroom. The impact of professional growth is evident from the strategies used, both successful and unsuccessful. Furthermore, what originally was thought to be misbehaviour, turned to be an extremely beneficial learning strategy for children. For this reason, we should embark on the challenging yet rewarding professional growth journey as occasional teachers.



Primary (Vera Hunter)

Student Learning.

In the Primary grades the prominent distracting behaviour appeared to be associated with rushing. Students rushing to get from one task to another, rushing to get work completed and providing their ideas/input without following established guidelines (hand up, turn taking). Reviewing “classroom rules” and teacher expectations reminds students of the need for safety and teamwork.

Students at this age like and appreciate structure. Posting a schedule of classes/expectations is one way to use a nonverbal cue. Simply point to the schedule when appropriate.

Quick transitions keep children focused and attentive to teacher requests. Being attentive to potential disruptions and cueing students with proximity, nonverbal cues and positive reinforcement help students to remain focused.

Teachers as Professionals.

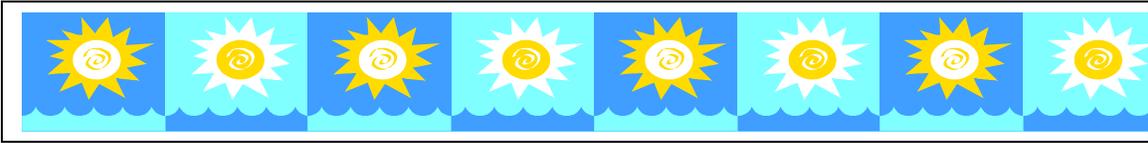
Teachers need to be flexible. Even if the classroom teacher has left a lesson plan, you might have time to fill. Be prepared to read stories, have discussions, do projects or play games that add to the curriculum.

Generally at this age, students are trying to please. Attending to positive behaviours reinforces the expectations for the entire class. Give clear requests and wait for compliance.

Junior (Jerry Gibb)

Student Learning:

Of the eight strategies that I have described above and used on a regular basis, three have been consistently successful, four have been usually successful and one was only moderately successful (having the student state the expectation for his or her behaviour in the specific situation). As far as improving the conditions for student learning, I feel that my strategies have helped to create and maintain a positive learning environment for most of the students I have taught this year. I recognize, however, that I do have areas of need in terms of classroom management in certain situations and with certain types of challenging students. The behaviour that I had only moderate success in managing was “throwing things”. This was never a major disruption or compromise of student safety, and so while I wish I could have handled this problem better, I do not feel it was a serious classroom management issue.



Teachers as professionals:

This action research study and the data that was collected identified several student behaviours that occurred consistently across all four divisions: for example “interrupting the teacher” and “throwing things”. These actions frequently disrupted the teaching/learning environment. As previous research has shown, there are many behaviours which occur often in a classroom which may be considered “inconsequential” and not a major concern to the teacher, whether an occasional or regular teacher. Even these minor incidents of disruptive behaviour reduce the productive learning time in the classroom and diminish the “educational efficiency” of the teacher as a professional. Thus teachers must continue to collaborate and support each other as they implement, modify and create strategies to minimize disruptions in their classrooms, and hence maximize student learning and achievement.

Intermediate (Kristia Riddell)

Student Learning

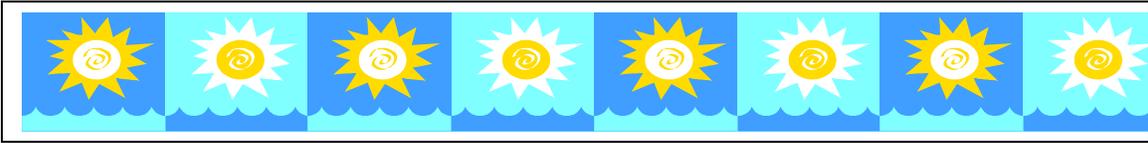
With regards to student learning, the main distracting behaviour in the intermediate grades is socialization. During this time in development, adolescents are going through changes and trying to discover their role in the world. As an Occasional Teacher, it is important to minimize these disruptions as much as possible to create the best learning environment. Preventative strategies such as: reviewing expectations, creating a class agreement and changing seating arrangements prove useful in reducing excessive talking.

Teachers as Professionals

As professionals, learning is a life-long process in order to provide students with the best learning opportunities. Research and experience has shown that older students benefit from having choice. During this phase of development, students are gaining a sense of independence, are creating new identities and taking on responsibility for their actions. When managing behaviour, Occasional Teachers should create opportunities for students to make positive moral decisions by encouraging reflective thought about actions and consequences.

Next Steps/New Questions:

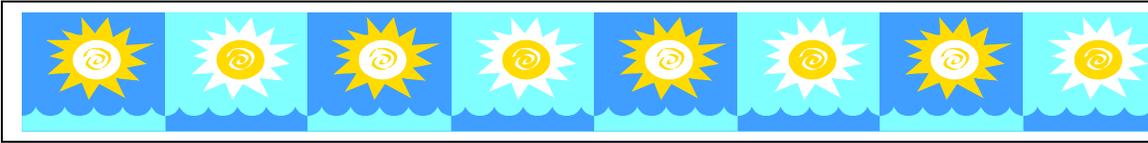
1. This research seemed to break into truly new territory, which, for our Team became an extremely exciting discovery. We realized that there isn't actually specific research that had endeavoured to answer the questions and respond to specific divisional needs for children before! Far from reviewing and simply putting into practice some of the tools identified by other researchers for Occasional Teachers to use in classroom management, the team relied on Child



Development Theorists and other classroom management literature, along with their own practice to try to articulate, for the first time, age-specific practices needed to be successful in managing an Occasional Teacher's classroom. There is a need to investigate the developmental stage of the children and then further the development of the strategies that will have the biggest impact on learning outcomes. Much work and great opportunities exist within this area to bolster the research and extend the work started herein.

2. Understanding the impact of Mental Illness on children and developing specific coursework, both at Faculties of Education and in Professional Development/Post – Graduate to educate and train to ensure successful, supportive outcomes for students who suffer from some form of mental illness. According to the Conference on Children's Mental Health in Kingston this past year, untreated mental illness affects about **20%** of all children in an Occasional Teacher's classroom, and many of these may not be receiving treatment or reported within the school board. Occasional Teachers, and by inference all new teachers, should become adroit at both recognizing the broad range of mental illness and the strategies they can engage, even if the Occasional Teacher is present for a short duration, to support a particular child or group of children. Brock University's new mental health database (coming online in Fall 2008) should play a vital role in this regard, and may provide a child in the expertise of the Occasional Teacher a "fresh face" that may be a key catalyst to getting the all important treatment that individual child so desperately needs!
3. The creation of a template. The tables used in the appendix are begging to be laminated and distributed to Occasional Teachers in both Great Britain and North America.
4. Professional Development for Occasional Teachers by Occasional Teachers should include this work, and if possible, should access some of the actual members of this research team to present and support further insights into the Teaching Profession as it impacts on Occasional Teachers.
5. Occasional Teachers are exposed to a great deal of danger and stress that is both qualitatively and substantively different than their permanent teacher counterparts on a day-to-day basis. Because every day is another informal assessment as to the merits of their work without adequate job protection there is a tendency to stay silent in issues that need to be addressed within this community of professionals.

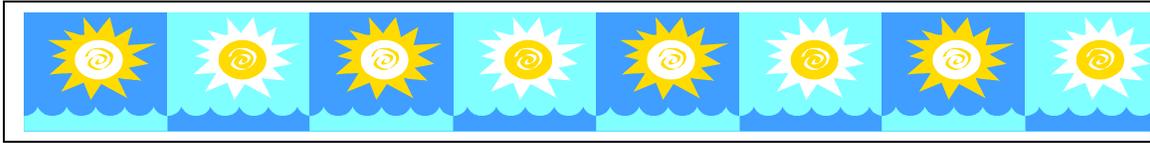
Every day the administrative decisions are made as to whether to allow an individual teacher to return to a particular school for the future. This reality in school boards across Ontario does not provide protection for the Occasional Teacher to disclose situations that are occurring in classrooms that are dangerous to their mental or physical well being. There is a critical need to provide real



safety, not just on paper, for an Occasional Teacher who feels threatened but is fearful of losing the opportunities to teach both for the particular day. There is far too much fear of what one day's health and safety disclosure could have on an Occasional Teacher whose Principal then can make a life-altering difference by blocking a permanent employment opportunity by simply negatively speaking to peers about the individual who was doing nothing more than to protect themselves!

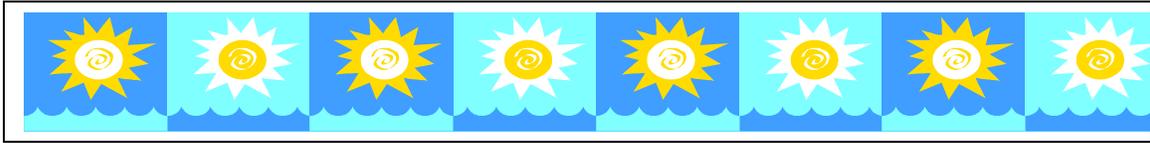
For those Occasional Teachers that have no interest in permanent jobs, this lack of neutral reporting mechanisms and lack of training that the rest of Board employees often enjoy hurt their effectiveness and the respect afforded them in the classrooms, since the students themselves understand the culture around the classrooms and teaching profession and often, in the classroom experience, increase the disruptions in a classroom in part due to their awareness of the lack of respect afforded Occasional Teachers.

6. More effort must be used to lessen the impact of a growing segment of students who are legally savvy enough to know that Occasional Teachers are virtually unprotected as they stand on their own in front of a classroom of students. Occasional Teachers need much more awareness of the ways that they can be protected from the students that they teach. ETFO has been leading the way in some measures of support. Careers have been ruined by students who know that accusing an Occasional Teacher of some action is the "best way" to deflect the atrocious classroom behaviours they exhibited throughout the day. Principals must be trained differently, to support Occasional Teachers, not to simply "push the panic button" and set in motion a stream of actions that can destroy an innocent teacher just trying to do an effective job! "A teacher is a teacher is a teacher" is an adage thrown around the Province, but there are many places that the Occasional Teacher is suffering from a differentiation that should not exist.
7. Finally, much more work needs to be done to help educators bring Classroom Management as an Occasional Teacher into the Faculties of Education, addressing our particular needs, and helping the entire Educational Community realize that the one year of a student's life that is spent in front of Occasional Teachers needs more support in order to be as successful as the rest of a student's education.



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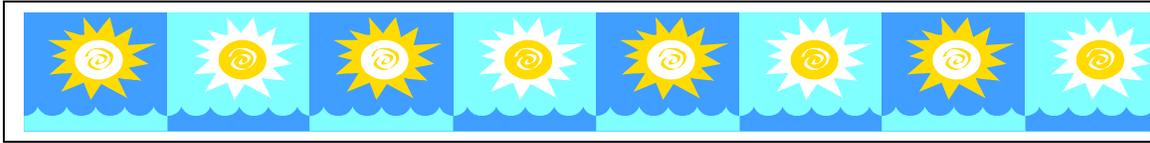
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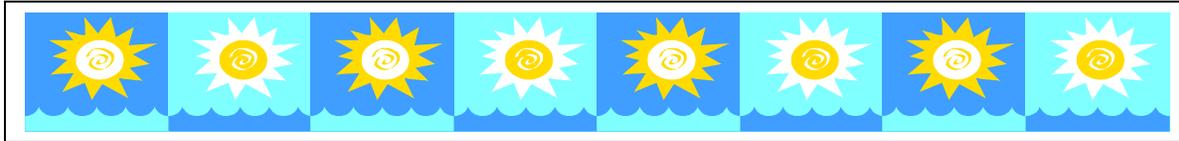
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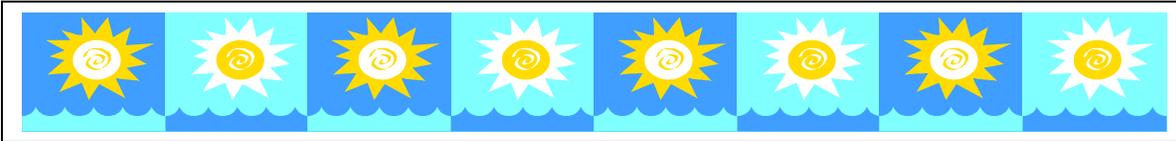


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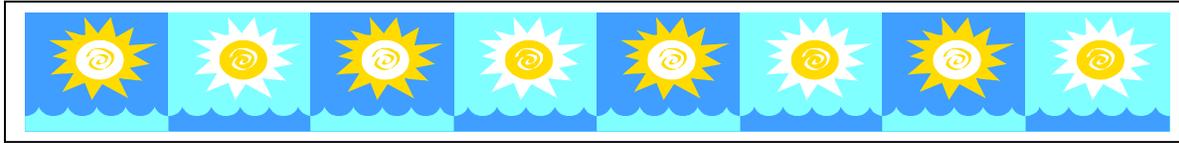


Appendix 1

AGGRESSION	TALLY	BREAKING RULES	TALLY	CONFRONTATION	TALLY	DISENGAGEMENT	TALLY
BANGING ON DESK ACCUSING OTHERS BULLYING		ABSENT NO EXCUSE FORBIDDEN ITEMS TO SCH. CHEATING		ARGUING WITH TEACHER ASKING PSEUDO QUEST. ATTEMPT TO TAKE CHARGE		ASK ASSISTANCE BF TRYING OFF SUBJ QUESTIONS BREAK PENCILS-OUT OF S. CLOWNING AROUND DAYDREAMING	
DESTROYING THINGS PROFANITY		CHEWING GUM EATING IN CLASS		BLAMING OTHERS COMPLAINING CONTRADICT TEACHER DENY MISBEHAVIOR DO OPP. OF REQUESTED		DOODLING EXC. RESTROOM BREAKS	
FIGHTING HITTING		GIGGLING GRAFFITI		WHINING ABOUT ASSIGN IGNORE DIRECTIONS INAPPROPR ANSWERS INCITE OTHERS TO DISOBEY		FIDGETING GROOMING HORSEPLAY	
KICKING		HUMMING INAPPROP. LANGUAGE		INSOLENT FACIAL EXPRESS INTERRUPTING TEACHER		HYPERACTIVITY INATTENTIVENESS INCOMP WORK OR HW LAUGHING OUT LOUD	
MAKING FUN OF OTHERS		INAPPROP. NOISES FALLING OUT OF CHAIR INTERRUPTING LEARNING LATE OR MISSING HW		LYING		NOT DOING WORK NO BOOKS/MATERIALS	
NAGGING		LEAVING W/O PERMISSION MAKING NOISE IN HALL MESSING CLASSROOM MISUSING EQUIPMENT		MAKING EXCUSES		NOT LISTENING NOT PARTICIPATING OFF TASK OFF TASK BEHAVIOR PASSING NOTES	
NAME CALLING ARGUING PLAYING ROUGH POKING OTHERS		NONSTOP TALKING PASSING NOTES		MUMBLING			
THREATENING		RUNNING IN CLASS SCREAMING		POINT FINGER AT TEACHER QUEST. TEACHER ABIL/KNOW. ***REFUSE TO COOPER ***REFUSE TO OBEY			
PUSHING							
SHOVING							
SWEARING AT OTHERS TEASING TEMPER TANTRUMS VERBAL ABUSE							



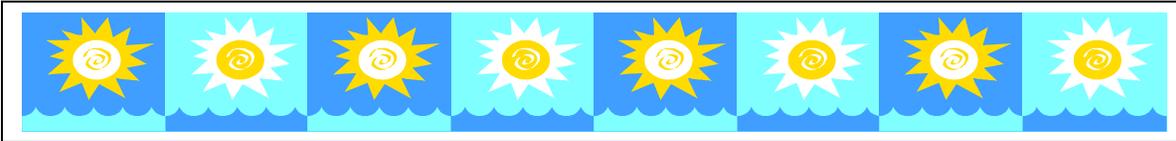
AGGRESSION	TALLY	BREAKING RULES	TALLY	CONFRONTATION	TALLY	DISENGAGEMENT	TALLY
THROWING THINGS		SHARPEN PENCILS INAP TIME		SLAMMING BOOKS		PLAYING WITH MATERIALS	
TRIPPING		SHUFFLING		SWEARING AT TEACHER		PRETENDING TO WORK	
OTHERS		SINGING OUT		TALKING BACK		RUSH WORK - FREE TIME	
VIOLENT OUTBURSTS		SOCIALIZING INAPP.		TELL OTHERS WHAT TO DO		SOCIALIZE DUR. INSTRUCT.	
OBSCENE GESTURES		SPITTING		GESTURE DISGUST (Teacher of Assignment)		WANDER AROUND ROOM	
		STANDING ON FURNITURE					
		STEALING					
		STICKING FEET OUT					
		TALKING/BLURTING OUT					
		TAP/DRUM ON THINGS					
		TAPPING FEET					
		TARDINESS					
		TIPPING CHAIR					
		UNNECESSARY MOVEMENT					
		WHISPERING INAPP. TIMES					
		WHISTLING					
		YELLING					



Appendix 2

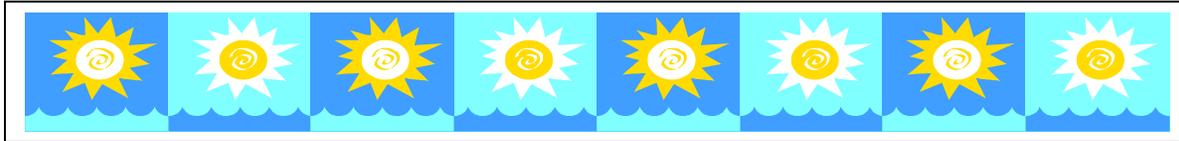
Summary Table of Behaviour Disruptions from Tally Sheet used in Research

	Aggression	Breaking Rules	Confrontation	Disengagement
Kindergarten	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Poking 2. Accusing Others 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Talking/Blurting Out 2. Yelling 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Blaming Others 2. Interrupting Teacher 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Not Listening 2. Socializing during instruction.
Primary (Gr. 1-3)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pushing 2. Throwing Things 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Talking/Blurting 2. Sharpening Pencils @ inappropriate times. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Interrupting Teacher 2. Blaming Others 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Off – Task Beh 2. Rush Work/Free Time
Junior (Gr. 4-6)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Arguing 2. Throwing Things 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Interrupting Learning 2. Socializing inappropriately 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Whining about assignment 2. Ignoring Directions 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Inattentiveness 2. Rush Work/Free Time
Intermediate (Gr. 7-8)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bullying 2. Throwing Things 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Non-stop talking 2. Interrupting learning 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ignoring Directions 2. Interrupting Teacher 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Off Task Beh 2. Rushwork/Free Time



Appendix 3 - Strategies for Aggressive Behaviour

	Behaviour	Strategy	Teacher reaction to strategy
Kindergarten	1. Poking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ignore 	The purpose of this behaviour is to gain teacher attention. Therefore, stopping a lesson to address the behaviour has proven to be ineffective.
	2. Accusing others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acknowledge and redirect behaviour 	It is important to remember that kindergarten students are just beginning to form their self-concept and problem solving strategies. Use the disruption as a learning opportunity.
Primary (Gr.1-3)	1. Pushing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Verbal/Visual cues 	Sometimes we create a discipline problem. Asking, "What did I see?" may provide the teacher with information that may dissipate the disruption.
	2. Throwing things	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eye contact, proximity, discussion with student 	Eye contact and proximity usually terminate this behaviour. Being proactive is very effective – e.g. providing activities for those who finish early decreases boredom.
Junior (Gr. 4-6)	1. Arguing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remove the student from the situation 	This strategy is effective because it takes the student away from the audience. The student should be brought back to class as soon as possible to show proper behaviour.
	2. Throwing things	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask student to restate the expectation for acceptable behaviour 	Although successful at times, this strategy does not guarantee that the behaviour will be eliminated.
Intermediate (Gr.7-8)	1. Bullying	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stay calm and use the situation as a learning experience 	Having students generate their own solutions to the problem appears to be more effective than simply ignoring the problem and expecting students to get back to work.
	2. Throwing things	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Verbal cues 	By speaking one-on-one to the student, he/she realizes that what they are doing is inappropriate and will not be tolerated.



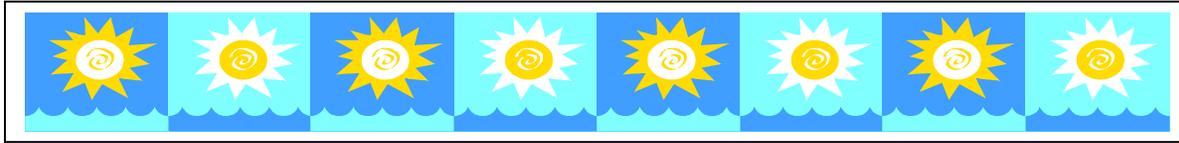
Strategies for Breaking Rules

	Behaviour	Strategy	Teacher reaction to strategy
Kindergarten	1. Talking/blurting out	• Non-verbal cues	When students are talking or blurting out, they are trying to get attention. Using non-verbal cues does not disrupt the lesson and minimizes the misbehaviour.
	2. Yelling	• Ignore	This strategy works great for talking or blurting out, but not for yelling. There is more behind yelling than gaining attention. There is a better strategy to deal with a yelling kindergarten student.
Primary (Gr.1-3)	1. Talking/blurting out	• Non verbal and verbal cues, separate talkers	As an occasional teacher, it is valuable to follow pre-established classroom rules. Eye contact and proximity are great deterrents.
	2. Sharpening pencils/inappropriate times	• Sharpened pencils and hand held sharpeners	This strategy works well as having additional pencils and sharpeners enables students to quickly exchange their pencils or sharpen them at appropriate times.
Junior (Gr. 4-6)	1. Interrupting learning	• Stop Speaking temporarily and use student name in between instruction	This strategy works very well as it is non-confrontational and catches the student by surprise.
	2. Socializing inappropriately	• Provide opportunity for positive attention (e.g. teacher helper)	This strategy works very well as it increases the student's self-esteem and turns a negative situation into a positive one.
Intermediate (Gr.7-8)	1. Non-stop talking	• Remove student from distraction	Students who like to talk instigate others to talk as well. Therefore, the problem is resolved when the student is removed from the distraction.
	2. Interrupting learning	• Use a deterrent system	Deterrent systems that are clearly explained are very effective. When expectations and consequences are known, students tend to self regulate their own behaviour.



Strategies for Confrontation

	Behaviour	Strategy	Teacher reaction to strategy
Kindergarten	1. Blaming others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledge and redirect 	By modeling appropriate strategies to misbehaving students, there is a decrease in blaming others. We must remember that not all students are capable of proper problem solving.
	2. Interrupting teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nonverbal cue 	This strategy is not always successful. In most cases, the student is not trying to be disruptive. Rather they only want clarification. Model how students should ask for help.
Primary (Gr.1-3)	1. Interrupting teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Let the students know that you are “waiting” and are not willing to speak over others 	Brief, positively stated directions minimize disruptions. Repeating a summarized version of the instructions is also beneficial.
	2. Blaming others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State what is seen, ask for further information 	It is important to not prolong the disruption. Redirecting the task is beneficial.
Junior (Gr. 4-6)	1. Whining about assignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide choice for when the work is to be completed (e.g. now or at recess) 	This strategy is usually successful because most students do not want to give up their free time.
	2. Ignoring direction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask the student to repeat the instructions 	This strategy is successful especially if followed by praising compliant students.
Intermediate (Gr.7-8)	1. Ignoring direction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide choice 	By giving students a choice and reminder, they know you are observing their progress and the choice is theirs as to whether work is completed or not.
	2. Interrupting teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use challenging students as helpers or “mini-teachers” 	When assisting the teacher, the student receives praise and better understands the lesson being taught.



Strategies for Disengagement

	Behaviour	Strategy	Teacher reaction to strategy
Kindergarten	1. Not listening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage, ask direct questions, assign tasks, speak directly to student 	It is not easy for students in kindergarten to listen to the teacher one hundred percent of the time. It is however easy to get the student back on task by stating their name in a question.
	2. Socializing during instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proximity 	This strategy proved to be extremely successful. By maintaining close proximity, the teacher is able to complete instruction without further socialization.
Primary (Gr.1-3)	1. Off task behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask student to restate the instructions, redirect 	Rewards are immediate and send a clear message, but must be used occasionally. Removing an object may cause further disruption if the student does not know whether he/she will get it back.
	2. Rush work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stating expectations and the resulting disappointment if work is rushed 	Students are usually aware of expectations. Write instructions on the blackboard and cue students to those instructions. Review submitted work.
Junior (Gr. 4-6)	1. Inattentiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide more student-centred or hands on activities 	This strategy usually works well with junior students. Junior students enjoy writing on the board and enjoy activities that are away from their desk (e.g. out in the hallways)
	2. Rush work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review homeroom teacher expectations 	This strategy usually works well as there is always room for improvement in student work. Peer editing can be a learning activity that is enjoyable.
Intermediate (Gr.7-8)	1. Off task behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educational incentives 	By assuring a fun educational game at the end of a lesson, students immediately focus on work and encourage each other to finish quickly.
	2. Rush work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Verbal contract/agreement 	By creating an enforced agreement with set expectations, students tend to follow guidelines to avoid starting over.