

Notes on “The Discipline, A Total Approach” Resource Book by Terry Alderman

Contents

Changing our Expectations	2
Skills most important to teacher success in preventive problem solving.....	4
Resolving Conflicts	5
How and why to do rewards (“Positive Group Contingencies”).....	6
Managing Student Behavior	7
Transitions.....	10
Attention control	11
Loss of Teacher Power	11
Behavior Problem Solving	14
Rewards	14
Some Language Thoughts	15
Dispelling Myths about Negative Consequences.....	15
Hard Truths – consider and beware.....	16
Remedies to Hard Truths	16
Easy to use, convenient consequences for minor disruptions	17

Changing our Expectations

Teachers cannot punish their way to success.

Most students will accept discipline. However, they will not accept disrespect/ Students will accept discipline if they respect you.

The more you use negative consequences, the more you lose them.

The teacher cannot successfully use problem solving strategies with large numbers of students.

The teacher's success with prevention, positive intervention, and assertion will reduce the number of students who are chronically or severely disruptive, thereby enabling the teacher to be more successful with problem-solving measures.

Discipline decisions must be based on goals, not feelings.

It is precisely when the teacher runs out of options that power struggles between the teacher and student are most likely to surface. The more response options a teacher has, the more power he possesses (p. 9)...One of the simple secrets to success in discipline is *knowing what you will do next*. (p. 20)...The major problem is our tendency to begin doing the "wrong" things when the "right" things don't work. (p. 21)

Low key interventions safeguard the teacher's options, protecting her power.

Difficult classes require more of both preventative and reductive measures...The key is understanding and accepting the fact that high-adversity classes are more difficult to manage and that they require a carefully controlled balance of powerful preventive measures and firm reductive measures.

If you tolerate discipline behavior day after day, you teach it day after day.

Teachers who succeed DO NOT blame students for their difficulties – they continue to search for successful techniques.

A written plan of action will not guarantee consistency, but it will increase its probability.

Students who experience the most difficulty with self-control often react solely on the basis of how they feel. Management practices which foster self-control, as well as self-worth, are usually more effective.

The Achilles' heel of far too many teachers is their inability to develop and sustain effective relationships with students. <In a situation where I have 15 classes, the relationship must be good during class – there will be infrequent opportunities to have relationships with all those kids.>

Emphasizing the positive attributes of students is one of a teacher's most accessible and effective tools in developing working relationships with students. <Points for doing things right. But what is the reward for reaching a particular amount of points?>

Belonging, power, freedom, security, and fun are the most commonly recognized psychological needs of students.

Students who have strong power needs usually generate feelings of frustration in teachers. In responding, the teacher's best options are usually preventive, including: **giving students choices, using contracts, acknowledging success, allowing students to earn responsibilities and privileges, reinforcing student effort, and modeling mutual respect.**

Courtesy counts in the classroom. The strength of a teacher's discipline is not measured by the harshness of her language. In fact, there appears to be an inverse relationship between the two.

High Expectations: Teachers with casual attitudes about student learning often have low expectations for themselves as well as low expectations for students. The result is often boredom and apathy on the part of students, which precipitate discipline problems...Being accustomed to a casual climate in which misbehaviors are commonly ignored, students are likely to feel resentment if the teacher corrects them.

Teachers who lose their **enthusiasm** lose one of their most powerful preventive discipline tools – student attention. In contrast, the teacher who is alert and energetic appears to the students as someone who cares about students, the profession and the subject matter.

Predictability is essential in teaching responsibility. Without the ability to predict the consequences of one's actions, the individual experiences a sense of powerlessness – a lack of control. When students feel a lack of control and powerlessness they often resort to *irresponsible* means of establishing their control or power.

Consistency on the teacher's part is essential in order to provide a predictable environment.

Students are not likely to feel that they belong unless they feel successful. Teachers, therefore, need to increase the probability that students will be right (successful) more often.

Teachers usually establish better management if during the beginning of the year they refrain from using instructional approaches that encourage student social talk and make teacher monitoring and supervision more difficult.

As educators, we have important responsibilities to students. However, we are not responsible for them...we are not responsible for their behavior. They are.

Just because a behavior is to be expected does not imply that it should be accepted.

Teachers and administrators can **“mean business”, without “being mean.”** One of the simple secrets to success in discipline is *knowing what you will do next*...In well-managed classrooms and well-disciplined schools, fairness and goals drive discipline decisions, not feelings.

The major problem is our tendency to begin doing the “wrong” things when the “right” things don’t work...If we continue to do the right things, even though they don’t always work as well as we want them to, our track record of success will improve.

- If your management system does not result in an organized classroom experience in which students feel secure and accepted, the students will begin testing your management system.
- The most basic type of conflict is when individuals fail to get information, or when they are unclear about what is expected.
- Preventive problem solving won’t work unless the teacher is skillful in developing and maintaining relationships with students based on mutual respect... Teachers who develop effective relationships with students encourage personal responsibility, cooperation, and self-discipline.

Skills most important to teacher success in preventive problem solving

- High but realistic expectations for self and others
- Positive regard for self and others
- Discipline decisions based on goals instead of feelings
- Willingness to “share” power
- Ability to listen, not just hear
- Ability to postpone judgment and avoid blaming
- Faith in the efficacy of individual problem solving
- Willingness to consider causes without accepting excuses
- Sensitivity to individual needs and willingness to make appropriate accommodations
- Professionalism

My favorite Sample Student Contract discussion questions:

- Think about the best class you have had. What made it so special?
- As your teacher, what must I do in order for this class to be one of the best?
- What basic agreements must we agree to in order for you to succeed as a member of our class?
- Conflicts, problems, disagreements occasionally occur in every class. What problems or conflicts in school have caused you the most frustration?
- When a conflict does occur, what steps do we need to take to keep it from getting worse?
- Should we be rewarded for trying hard? If yes, how should we be rewarded?

- Which is more important: How a person *feels* or what a person *does*? Explain.

If failure becomes chronic, students begin to feel alienated. Feelings of alienation are usually manifested in one of three ways: 1) The student gives up; 2) the student begins to exhibit passive aggressive behavior; or 3) the student becomes overtly disruptive, defensive, and defiant.

Listening is the “Supreme Court” in discipline problem solving; i.e., it is usually ultimately responsible for the outcome.

Resolving Conflicts

Procedures for resolving conflicts successfully:

- Respect the ground rules: e.g. don’t interrupt, listen, decide who talks first, seek help if necessary, be honest, etc.
- Identify (try to define) the problem.
- Name the issues (pertinent facts)
- Look for commonalities
- Clearly state the needs of each person
- Generate possible solutions
- Select a solution
- Make a commitment
- Follow through.

The goal is to teach the steps until students “over learn” them. If students do not overlearn the steps, they are less likely to use them.

In cases where students cannot resolve the conflict and require help, teach students the peer mediation process and train students as mediators.

- Clarify the ground rules; e.g. – the mediator will not take sides, no name calling, no interrupting
- Each individual tells his/her side of the story. Facts and issues are disclosed.
- The mediator summarizes what each person has said and focuses on defining the problem.
- The parties, with the mediator’s help, search for solutions. Brainstorming may be used.
- Discuss, revise and decide on a solution.
- Ask each person to explain their actions should the problem occur again
- Make a commitment (written agreement is recommended)
- Follow through.

Conflict is a natural part of life. Resolving conflicts successfully (without violence, threats, force, etc.) is not natural...teachers experience greater success if they acknowledge the following points:

- It takes time to acquire the necessary skills
- It takes regular practice for students to continue to use their skills
- Skills have to be over learned to be used
- The skills need to be applied in a variety of situations
- It is not sufficient to teach conflict resolution skills. They must also be modelled.
- Using all three Preventive Problem Solving techniques is recommended: Joint Problem Solving, Class Problem Solving and Peer Problem Solving
- Explicit skill instruction, modeling, and opportunities to practice the skills are especially important for elementary students. Rule of thumb: The younger the student, the more opportunities for practice.
- Success with Preventive Problem Solving usually comes in small increments. i.e. overnight changes are unlikely
- Some conflicts cannot be solved by students themselves or through peer mediation. The goal of Preventive Problem Solving is not to take the teacher out of the picture. Actually, the opposite is closer to the truth. The teacher is involved more, but in a different way.

How and why to do rewards (“Positive Group Contingencies”)

1. Establish a system for visually representing (displaying) behavior infractions.
2. Decide what your success criterion will be.
3. Determine the length of your time interval
4. Visually represent the progress of the class
5. Determine rewards.
6. Answer the key implementation questions:
 - Will you incorporate a “consequence buffer” feature? <reduces excessive reliance on consequences, making their occasional use more effective>
 - Will you focus on specific infractions or will all infractions be addressed? Also, will you target only overt disruptions or will student motivation (completing homework, for example) and academic performance be included as improvement goals?
 - Will you use the approach throughout the day or for selected periods?
 - How will you respond to chronically disruptive students who may attempt to sabotage your positive group approach?
 - Will you also use the approach outside the classroom, and will you use the approach in conjunction with special area teachers?

Class Friend Strategy – for chronically disruptive students

Each day, teacher selects a “Class Friend,” the student who improved the most and attempted to complete his or her work. When teacher identifies the Class Friend, the entire class would receive another link on the reinforcement chain. In addition, the selected student would enjoy certain privileges the next day.

One of the biggest problems we face in education today is that rewards are *not* a natural part of a child's life...with many of the students about whom we are most concerned, rewards seldom come – if they come at all...Being recognized (reinforced) for one's efforts contributes to one's success.

- Incorporate novelty into your reinforcement system (spot and highlight kids different ways)
- Use novel reinforcers as well
- Instead of “all or nothing” rewards, use timed rewards. The question becomes how long is our reward, not did we make it.
- Use a class-wide reinforcement system in addition to individual reward systems. Remember, you can “give to” an entire class safely; however, you cannot safely “take away” (punish) from the entire class.
- Use a visual representation strategy that displays the amount of progress the class is achieving.
- Scrutinize your system carefully. If most of your children are not receiving awards, adjustments may need to be made.

Use realistic rewards, not rewards that are hard to top.

- Students usually do not need daily rewards. However, they do need feedback about their progress. Have faith in effort and success will come. Reinforce effort and effort will come. Feedback about progress is an effective way of reinforcing effort.
- Exercise caution with free time rewards in the classroom.
- If a child's behavior does require the use of daily rewards, make sure they are earned, not gratuitous.
- Use academic rewards, especially those that strengthen the “right” cause-and-effect connections in a child's mind. (i.e. – “on task tickets”)
- Rewards should be contingent upon appropriate behavior
- Give reinforcement choices when possible. This increases the value of the reward to the student because he can select the reward that will benefit him most.

Managing Student Behavior

It is vital that the teacher model the following

- Organization
- Preparation
- Don't take it personally, take it professionally.
- Give yourself permission to be less than perfect, but not less than professional
- Use quiet, respectful interventions. Emotional control is a must in the classroom.
- Dress professionally.
- Avoid inappropriate self-disclosure. It is much more important for a teacher to be respected than liked.
- Avoid publicly criticizing other teachers or school officials.
- Communicate high and positive expectations.

Teachers with *High Expectations* “used time wisely, were well prepared, used effective and sometimes creative teaching techniques, etc.” Teachers who had *High Positive Expectations* “demonstrated all of the competencies <just> described...however, their classrooms were more cooperative. More encouragement was provided to students and teacher expectations were communicated in ‘we’ rather than ‘you’ terms.” (p.58)

Visuals are often more effective than voices in managing student behavior.

- Voice pollution – verbal discipline is used excessively. The more you use it, the more you lose it. “In the process of over-using and mis-using, the teacher inadvertently minimized the power of her verbal cues. Since infancy, children are conditioned to respond to verbal cues from adults. In this teacher’s classroom students were being *re-conditioned* not to respond...weakening one of the oldest control cues a child uses to monitor and correct his behavior – teacher voice.” (p. 77)
- Many students are concrete thinkers, and visuals have more lasting impact. Also, our society is becoming more visually oriented.
- Parents and teachers often do not follow through on their verbal warnings and threats. Students begin to learn at an early age that “words” don’t usually mean business. Compounding the problem is the fact that some teachers and parents only mean what they say when they are angry. The child begins to interpret adult behavior as follows: “I don’t need to respond to my teacher’s warnings, unless he/she is angry.” ...In order to change behavior, we often have to change the discipline “cues” to which we expect students to respond.
- Arguments and power struggles often result from verbal interventions, especially highly public verbal directives. Visuals often a silent alternative and a more private approach that often de-escalates potential problems.
- The use of nonverbal interventions also decreases the probability of student-teacher negotiating.

Sand Timer as visual management tool

1. The “ignoring” timer – Asking students in the room to ignore attention-seeking student for the duration of the sand-timer
2. Whisper timer – Sand timer is a visual cue for students to use a whisper voice.
3. The sand timer is sometimes effective with defiant students because it is a private, nonverbal intervention that leaves self-control in the hands of the disruptive student. The student understands, however, that he must regain control of his behavior before the timer finishes.

To avoid student confusion, the teacher has to decide how the timer would be most beneficial and limit its use accordingly.

Other visual cues

- Overhead projector with color areas depending on how they’re doing
- Noise temperature – students must keep their noise within a comfort level of 72° and 75°

- Behavior bracelets – three colors (green/yellow/red) on teacher's wrist. Remove one for each class infraction. Chart success over successive class periods.

Changing from time to time the way the success of the class is represented is also recommended.

Visual cues can be personalized for individual students – desk pad barometer. Student has 5 post-its on desk, which are removed one at a time for each poor choice. **If student has a post-it on their desk at the end of class, he will earn a reward for the entire class. His positive power is being used to help the class.**

After-Class Post Card – to give to student during poor-choice moments, asking him/her to see you after class. A visual, non-confrontational means of initiating a private intervention.

Be selective with what you are attempting to change. If you focus on it, you can usually fix it.

A good example of a tangible promise to a student

“Tony, a difficult to manage student, will probably not respond well to the statement: ‘If you are good this afternoon, I will send your mother a good news note.’ To Tony, two things are missing: (1) Exactly what do I have to do to be “good” and (2) the note. For better results, explain specifically what your requirements are to Tony; then write the note in advance. When Tony reads the note, it becomes a tangible, instead of an intangible promise.”

Create a class slogan with the students like “Working Together Means Winning Together.” Place the individual letters in a box. Using a 1-5 point barometer, the class draws the number of letters from the box that equates to their level of class success. Letters from the class slogan are posted, in order (or students can draw them from the box randomly) on the bulletin board. When the slogan is completely spelled out, the class receives its pre-determined reward.

With difficult classes, teachers should avoid the use of questions that may be answered by anybody or everybody. “Who likes pie?” Everyone wants to talk now.

Regarding questions used to address behavior in the classroom: “Effective questions emphasize choice, identify the behavior explicitly, and encourage the student to make a value judgment about his behavior.”

- When you choose to talk while I am talking, does that make it easier for me to teach?
- When you choose not to bring your math book to class, does that make it more difficult for you to keep yp?
- When you choose to talk to Sara during class, does that make it more difficult for her to pay attention? (p. 83)

These questions are most effective when used with proximity, not from across the room...the best teacher behavior by far is to ask the effective question, follow the question with the comment, "Think about it," then walk away.

Don't ask for more than you need and you'll probably get what you want.

Teachers who use shaping questions strategically are likely to meet with greater success when questions are posed which require compliance. "Ken, I need to look over all the math papers during lunch. Will you try to finish yours by 11:15?" (p. 83)

Comments like "Excuse me class," or "Let's get quiet," or "I want everyone's attention" are considerably less effective than they might be because they do not target specific groups, rows, tables or individuals...they have low feedback identity...they are less likely to be applied by individuals or groups. Examples of questions with high feedback identity: "Row one, I need your attention please." "Marlin group, Helen is sharing something with the class. What do you need to do so we can all hear?"

Transitions

"Teachers who continue to give instructions while students are inattentive and talking run the risk of establishing a climate of disrespect in the classroom...If you tolerate it, you teach it!" (p. 78)

Good transition activity: "After you have given explicit instructions and you begin monitoring student compliance, draw a circle on the board when you praise the first student for following your instructions. As you acknowledge a second student, put a dot (which will represent an eye) in the circle. When you verbally acknowledge the next student, put another dot in the circle. When the entire class has finished the transition, verbally acknowledge the entire class and complete the 'smiley face' by drawing a big smile in the circle." (p. 78)

The simplest and often most effective negative consequence is withholding the reinforcer that would have been earned through appropriate behavior.

When a minor disruption occurs: "Address it and drop it." Reduces the possibility of confrontational response.

Teachers who experience the most difficulty with discipline do not send clear messages to students that establish definite limits. They continue to warn without following through. One of the most effective practices a teacher can begin is to establish a clear Limit Message signal that unequivocally communicates to the class (or an individual student) that the behavior must stop...once it is issued, the teacher must be prepared to follow through if the student is disruptive again.

Attention control

- Become familiar with the research on global and analytic learners...advance overviews increase the attention levels of global learners in particular.
- Vary your instruction to appeal to different learning modalities.
- Teach hard every day.
- Exercise caution with free time rewards in the classroom.
- Be interesting.
- Capitalize on instructional approaches that encourage and elicit active student involvement
- Monitor student progress regularly
- Avoid relying too heavily on worksheet driven instruction
- Develop and use an “attention Call-Waiting signal. Explain what your signal will be and use it only when attention is the problem. Follow up with positive comments to students who respond to your request. NOTE: An “Attention Alert” signal is more effective if it is both auditory and visual; e.g. a hand clap followed by a “time in” signal.

Giving students freedom: The rule for them, “If you abuse it, you lose it.”

If teacher is going to make an error, it should be on the side of firmness, not fun.

When a teacher is using a system that establishes predetermined goals, the teacher’s emphasis should be on continuing the use of the system. **When establishing goal-based systems, always specify initial and continuing goals.**

Loss of Teacher Power

Positive management can be fun. Negative management is never fun. The more positive a teacher is with her management system, the more power (options) she has.

“<E>specially at first and second levels of consequences, consequences are more safely used when the teacher does something, not when the student is required to do something. This tends to de-escalate problems and is especially apparent when teachers are addressing minor disruptions. To be more explicit, Mr. James’ negative consequences consisted of the following: (1) sentence writing, (2) lunch detention, (3) after school detention, (4) parent contact, and (5) referral to the office. The first three consequences administered by Mr. James were largely out of his control because they were all based on something the student would have to do. He was locked into an escalating system because of the lack of consequence control at the first three levels.” (p. 97)

The more private the teacher is with discipline, the more power she retains in most situations.

Teachers also lose power when they “major in minors.”

- Teachers major in minors when they needlessly publicize a discipline problem
 - Teachers major in minors when they use consequences that are not directly under their control.
- (p. 100)

“Another costly mistake that results in a loss of teacher power is threatening students. I often say that using the “if” word is almost as bad as using the “F” word...Rules should be publicized to all students; however, discipline is usually more effective if it is privately administered. Threats also frequently rely on someone else’s power such as parents or the principal.” (p. 102)

Over-referral is another common way teachers lose power. For relatively minor infractions, the teacher should exercise his options instead of relying on the principal.

Unrealistic expectations can also lead to a loss of teacher power as well as a great deal of frustration.

“She said, ‘Dr. Alderman, I don’t believe in rewarding students for what they ought to be doing in the first place.’ After discussing Anton’s special needs and his ADHD diagnosis, I made the following comment in relation to her resistance to using a system that enabled Anton to earn rewards for appropriate behavior: ‘Ms. Thomas, it is really *not* about rewards. That’s just the tip of the iceberg. It’s about changing the cause and effect connections in his mind. Right now he has the wrong cause and effect connections established. They can be translated as follows: I can be disruptive, and I get attention.’ I continued: ‘We need to change the cause and effect connections in his mind so that he is aware that good results follow appropriate behavior.’” (p. 104)

Losing Power: The Teacher-Student Conflict Cycle

1. Common teacher mistakes – inconsistency, frequent verbal warnings with no follow through, ignoring behaviors that should be addressed
2. As teachers make the mistakes, students begin to disrupt, noise levels climb, physical behavior escalates, and teacher frustration begins to climb
3. Teacher warns more, threatens more. The follow-through, however, is still lacking. Teacher voice levels may begin to escalate.
4. Student behavior worsens. Students begin to see that the teacher does not have clear limits and that they can disrupt without clear consequences. Step two problems escalate. The teacher’s discipline can best be described as arbitrary...the teacher does not mean business.
5. The teacher loses his cool, begins to yell, expresses his anger, punishes some students or the entire class

6. Student behavior temporarily improves. This is the step that often seals the teacher's fate because the use of the mismanagement interventions used in step five (yelling, anger, punishing the class) are reinforced. Technically, behaviors that are reinforced are more likely to occur again; therefore, the teacher may be more inclined to resort to mismanagement practices in the future. Another part of the larger problem begins to appear at this step – student resentment...<at> loud, public or humiliating tactics...<which> translates into passive-aggressive student behavior...Teacher's relationship with the class is beginning to deteriorate.
7. With temporary improvement, teacher falls back on the same mistakes they made in step 1.
8. Student behavior problems gradually begin to increase again. In fact, high levels of student resentment from the teacher's mistakes in step **five** coupled with the growing awareness that the teacher does not mean business (limits are not clear) usually results in rapidly escalating disruptions.
9. Teacher continues to warn and threaten students.
10. Student behavior continues to worsen
11. The teacher "loses his cool" again, punishes some students severely, uses a public and humiliating intervention style, etc. Yelling becomes more apparent and sometimes the teacher's extreme frustration will result in the teacher physically controlling students.
12. Student behavior temporarily improves but resentment levels climb. The stage is now set for an array of future problems that will often involve parent complaints, principal complaints, etc. because the teacher-student conflict cycle begins to turn more frequently and the mistakes made by the teacher become more costly.

Using consequences that are incompatible with the child can lead to substantial reductions in teacher power and needless escalation of the child's disruptive behavior.

The "power to spare" in discipline is often derived from knowing what to do next.

For difficult-to-manage classes, it is usually necessary to have a discipline plan that provides the following coverage:

1. Class contingency – plan should include a positive component for managing entire class behavior. This positive component needs to include a provision which easily enables the teacher to provide feedback to the entire class about disruptive behavior...Note: While it gives the teacher positive and negative feedback capability, it is not punitive.
2. Group contingency – the plan should also include a positive component for shaping the behavior of specific groups or teams within the classroom.
3. Individual contingency – include positive and negative consequences that are designed to reinforce appropriate behavior and reduce disruptions. For best results, it should be used for all students, yet should give the teacher the capability of individualizing her responses for individual students.

The appropriate use of negative consequences (consequence management) is one of the most critically important skills in establishing and maintaining a well-disciplined but positive classroom.

Consequences may or may not work for a student; however, they must work for the teacher.

The decision to opt in favor of a continuation of verbal directives and warnings in lieu of following the consequences outlined in the teacher's management plan is one of the most serious errors teachers make. (p. 114)

The standard design of most classroom management plans includes a serious flaw – they do not include a built-in *restart capability component*...Designing this component is tricky. Teachers have to exercise caution when allowing students to “earn back” steps within the plan because of the manipulative tendencies of some students...Teachers who make discipline *negotiable* often end up in frequent arguments and power-struggles with students.

<This concept is used for severely disruptive students who may exhaust the steps of the plan early in the day – giving them something like a YES card, where they can earn their way back to some area of the on-task portion of their classroom plan (perhaps they can be placed back in “off task” instead of complete shut-down)...The Yes Card includes a built in limit of two uses with the same student in one day.>

Behavior Problem Solving

1. Identify the concern (with a particular student)
2. Define the problem (Soliciting the student's input at this step is essential. After some discussion, the teacher and the student may begin to see that the actual problem is not what they originally thought it to be.)
3. Explore both points of view and feelings.
4. Discuss potential solutions and interventions
5. Select the approach and work out the plan.

Rewards

Rewards that are earned are held in higher regard than gratuitous rewards.

Avoid unrealistic expectations for students to earn them. Reasonable, high expectations are best.

Avoid establishing standards that are so low that students are not required to expend significant amounts of effort to achieve the earned benefits.

Avoid earned benefits that dramatically increase a student's grade

Avoid earned benefits that may increase discipline problems

Avoid penalizing students academically. Rewards should be used only to improve a student's grade. They should never be used to lower a student's grade.

Using language that focuses on student effort (earned) is superior to language that implies a gratuitous reward structure (given).

Some Language Thoughts

With a difficult to manage class, the “Master Rule” should be clearly stated and assertively implemented: *When I talk, you don’t!* This is an essential rule for managing a difficult class and for “tightening up” with a class that is becoming more difficult.

The Language Ladder - With a class that has serious problems with mutual disrespect: “The language ladder is essentially a positive class contingency that highlights the importance of using respectful language and provides feedback about the progress of the class...if no violations of respect occur, the class moves up one rung on the ladder...the Language Ladder can also be used in conjunction with The Class Respect Contract which requires every student to sign a contract that they will treat the teacher and classmates with respect.

Emphasize the Rule, not the Problem

Dispelling Myths about Negative Consequences

- Consequences are not the driving force in good discipline. Rather, the key ingredient in behavior management is **prevention**
- Consequences do not have to be damaging. They have to be **definite**. Shift from severity to follow through.
- Students will accept discipline. They will not accept disrespect.
- Public consequences are less effective than private ones. Public rules, private discipline.
- One of the most powerful means of influencing students’ choices is not what you do to them, but what you change about the pay off they are receiving from the negative behavior.
- There is no one correct reaction. Some behaviors are to be ignored, some are to be addressed, and some are to be enforced with consequences.
- No negative consequence will work all the time for all students. They are just things to try. More important is that consequences work for the teacher (the teacher must philosophically agree with them, must be comfortable using them, they must be easy to use, not too time consuming), or the teacher will not follow through.
- “There is as much difference between consequences and punishments as there is between a night stick and a set of golf clubs.”

- Consequences are administered with **mutual respect**. Punishments are sometimes administered in demeaning ways.
- Consequences are administered in **a timely fashion**. Punishments are sometimes delayed excessively.
- Consequences are **appropriate** to the infraction – not too severe or lenient. Punishments may be too severe.
- Consequences are **established and communicated in advance**. Punishments often come as a surprise.
- Consequences are administered with reasonable **consistency**. Punishments are erratic and unpredictable.
- Consequences are administered **calmly**. Punishments are administered with anger, sarcasm, etc.
- Consequences are administered **fairly and objectively**.
- Consequences are **not often delegated**.
- Consequences are administered in an **orderly progression from less severe to more severe**.
- Consequences are **presented as a choice**.

Hard Truths – consider and beware

- No consequences work all the time for all students
- Teachers, because of their frustration over the fact that some consequences don't work, stop using the consequences altogether.
- Many negative consequences become positive consequences and, as such, the student is actually rewarded for disruptive behavior (put student in hall, some out-of-school suspension, admonishing students in front of other students)
- Consequences can easily snowball if they are not directly under the teacher's control.

Remedies to Hard Truths

- Avoid using consequences that accumulate unnecessarily, especially for minor disruptions
- For minor infractions, try to use consequences that are directly under the teacher's control.
- Minimize the use of loud consequences.
- Escalation of consequences is not always necessary.
- Give yourself permission to use different consequences with different students. Consistency with individual students is more important than always following the same consequence sequence with every student in the class all the time.
- Avoid punishing the entire class. You can give to an entire class; however, you cannot take away from an entire class. (Taking away from an entire class destroys the sympathy of the students who were already on your side, which is often a majority!)
- Try to use consequences that are resilient. Resiliency refers to the degree that the same consequence retains its impact over time with continued use. When consequence control increases, consequence resiliency tends to remain higher.

- Use consequences wisely. The teacher student relationship often suffers when negative consequences are misused or overused.

Easy to use, convenient consequences for minor disruptions

- Ignoring
- Proximity
- A concrete “limit message” (picking up the “red clipboard” to write a student’s name)
- A verbal “limit message”
- Giving an “apology slip.”
- Showing consequences with a visual barometer (a poster with points on the board that students lose or gain)
- Time out
- Silent Lunch
- Courtesy questionnaire

Save hard-to-use consequences that are often more difficult to administer, time consuming, and less under your direct control, for more serious or chronic offenses.

When intervening, the teacher may find it useful to ask himself the following question, especially if strong negative emotions begin to surface: “What is my goal?” The teacher’s goal will always be either prevention or de-escalation -- ALWAYS!

Out-of-control requests for control won’t work, especially with hard to manage students.

Teach and manage for success. We do not teach personal responsibility through failure; we teach it through success. Indeed, failure is one of the biggest reasons students become chronically disruptive. It’s impossible to feel like you belong as a student if you do not experience success as a student.

“You can’t give students roots; when they come to you, they already have roots. And although we can’t give a student roots, sometimes, with the right help, we can give them wings!”