Character Education, Classroom Management, and Student Discipline: Putting it all together

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The view from here: 1974-2015 =41 years in Education

• Character Education has to do with the role of the school in the development of children’s characters.

• Classroom Management is the method by which the teacher structures the classroom environment in order to proactively impact students with positive routines and habits.

• Student Discipline is the system of reactions to student behavior after misbehavior has occurred.
Interdependent and Interrelated
What is Character?

Head, Heart, and Hands

“Good character consists of understanding, caring about, and acting upon core ethical values”

Character Education Partnership
(www.character.org)
What is character education?

Character education is the school’s intentional and strategic fostering of good character in students.
Character education is.....Personal.

Interpersonal: between people

Intrapersonal: within the person
Character Education is...Developmental

- Age appropriate approach and systems
- Social and emotional learning
- Differentiated approach to motivation and self-regulation
Classroom Management: How do you know what you know about students and learning?

- Many of us learned what we know about child development and motivation from a behaviorist perspective – B. F. Skinner and others.
- Rewards, Punishment and Ignoring
- Behavioral techniques now formalized into PBIS, RTI
What is Classroom Management?

1. Facilitating the use of time for optimal student success.

2. Facilitating the use of spaces and materials for optimal student success.

3. Facilitating relationships between people for optimal student success.
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Facilitating Relationships

In Marilyn Watson’s model of Developmental Discipline, classroom management is the building of warm, caring, trusting student-teacher relationships and the support and encouragement of friendly relationships among students.

Classroom Management is........Proactive

- Fair, orderly, and predictable systems
- Routines and Procedures designed for fairness, courtesy, and success for all
- Relationships based on care for the well-being of children
What about PBIS?

Many schools, and districts participate in Positive Behavior Intervention and Support.

Understand the origin of this method

Ask yourself if you or your child would benefit from this method -
At home?
At work?
In graduate school?
From Classroom Management to Student Discipline

• The difference between a classroom management issue and a discipline issue that needs to be dealt with by an administrator is determined by many factors: severity, frequency, impact, and history.

• Teachers and Administrators see it somewhat differently

• Not every action can be foreseen, therefore rules must be broad so that procedures and routines supply the specificity but do not carry the weight of rules.
Student Discipline is...

Using student misbehaviors as opportunities for social, moral instruction

- Kids need to develop social and emotional skills for developmental discipline to work
- Also directly teach social-emotional competencies
Discipline Policy

Student Discipline Is Reactive

Discipline policy should be just and consistent and collaboratively created.

Acknowledgement that misbehavior will occur and is a learning opportunity.

Courtesy and respectful restoration of class membership after consequences.
Does student discipline mirror our system of Justice: Should it?

- Do we believe that……
- 1. A person is innocent until proven guilty?
- 2. Citizens have the right to due process?
- 3. The punishment should fit the crime?
- 4. Once a person has paid their debt to society they can re-enter the community?

Do we really believe these statements where children are concerned?
"People in democratic societies have a right to expect their schools to be guided by moral principles such as justice, fairness of treatment, liberty, honesty, equity in the distribution of resources, and respect for differences."

My model of student discipline
Misbehavior as an opportunity for learning:

First:

Listen to the Kid!
Have the kid write what happened, dictate what happened, draw what happened – from their own perspective.

*Only after that can you question, probe, offer alternate theories/perspectives and/or question other participants.*
Analyze and Learn

Using the child’s account of the incident, ask for explanation of feelings at critical points. Then ask for or suggest alternate responses.

Don’t ask, “Why?”.

If clear account is still in doubt, call witnesses, but keep identities confidential if possible.

During this de-construction, the answer to “Why?” usually is revealed.
Review

“What if everyone did what you did?”
“Was it helpful or hurtful?”

The GOAL is growth in Perspective Taking and Empathy
Rewind

Apply the new learning.

“Where did you go wrong?”
“Who was hurt?”
“If you had it to do over again, what would you do?”
Repair

Repair relationship

Range of ways to do that

Restore what was lost/damaged

Make amends
Record

Keep a log or record of incidents.
Use the written incident as a record.
Periodically graph the incidents on a calendar to show growth or lack of growth and your own internal consistency.
Through the eyes of the Teacher:

1. The focus on high level instruction and student academic outcomes leaves little time to devote to students who repeatedly disturb and disrupt their own and others’ learning. Teachers must be prepared with their own power of persuasion in order to achieve academic goals.

2. The variety of parenting competencies and family and cultural norms and expectations increases the likelihood that school and home will experience conflict about student behavior.

3. The discipline system is confusing and appears inconsistent over time and across students.

4. Student rights seem to assume a higher priority than the authority of the teacher.

5. Teachers seem to want, need, and believe that more and greater punishments will change children’s behavior, but the teacher doesn’t want to do it.

6. Teachers want: acknowledgement, internal consistency, investigation, follow through, and communication.
Through the eyes of an administrator:

The school administrator plays multiple roles in the discipline process: This is a legal obligation to the child:

1. The school administrator is required to safeguard the student’s legal rights during the investigation of and administering of discipline.

2. The school administrator also typically assumes the role of investigator, prosecutor, and judge.

3. School administrators who endorse or ignore harsh or unfair practices of teachers without questioning will find themselves legally liable.

1. Students and parents perceive schools and teachers and administrators as part of a bureaucratic system that doesn’t “see” individual students.

2. Parents want and need help with parenting.

3. Students want and need limits.

4. Students want to belong.

5. Students and parents want justice and fairness.

6. Parents and students want guidance that will lead the student to success.
Tips from the Trenches:

• Acknowledge that students want and need relationships.

• Rule out organic and maturational issues.

• Remove the audience

• Use age norms-they are meaningful to children (“Ten year olds don’t do that”)

Parents can help – really!

- Enlist parents as your partners and validate their knowledge of their child.
- Realize that behavior patterns may be learned at home. Adults model behavior, like being disorganized, that works for them, but not for their children.
- Understand that many, many adults have a dislike and distrust of school teachers because of punitive and demeaning behavior by their teachers. Help break that cycle!
The children thank you for your interest and attention.