

From curriculum delivery to quality education:

Know your students to improve (e)quality of learning through effective teaching and classroom management



DISCUSSION PAPER



Save the Children

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- a world which respects and values each child
- a world which listens to children and learns
- a world where all children have hope and opportunity

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Successful teachers know that behavior problems are far less common in classrooms where children are actively involved and interested. Particularly when they are understood and appreciated for who they are irrespective of where they come from and what they are able to contribute. Effective teachers have also learned that they need to value their student as a 'Whole child' and be aware of their background to be able to understand non-academic factors that may impact behaviour, participation and learning.

Motivation to learn and to behave well is largely contingent on interest. If a teacher's teaching can harness the curiosity of children, he can also elicit a willingness of students to learn and behave. Interest-satisfying teaching motivates children far more effectively than coercing them into tasks they consider irrelevant and boring.

Teachers are responsible for guiding the holistic development and meaningful learning of every student in their classroom. This paper discusses issues around how children feel and behave in relation to their teachers' ability to create positive learning environment which supports participation and learning based on modelling and mutual respect

Classroom management is an integral part of effective teaching. It helps to prevent behaviour problems through improved planning, organizing and managing of classroom activities, better presentation of instructional material and better teacher-student interaction, aiming at maximizing students' involvement and cooperation in learning. Equally important is the modelling and promotion of good behaviour.

Background and context

In order to promote changes towards positive, child-friendly educational practices and understand how physical and psychological punishments (including e.g. ridicule; name calling) are addressed within the education system, in children's school experience, it is vital not to single out punishment from the overall context of effective teaching and classroom management.

As one outcome of the UN Study on Violence against Children, Save the Children (SC) has focused on banning corporal punishment and other forms of violence against children. Often the remedy for behaviour and learning problems has been reduced to notions of 'positive discipline' as stand alone interventions, separate from everyday classroom teaching and classroom management activities. However, it is important to focus on classroom management and effective teaching through existing pre-service and in-service teacher training programmes. Teachers need to better understand the diversity of their learners and the non-academic factors that impact learning. This needs to be the approach for professional development and support programmes designed for teachers or professionals working with children outside the school system.

1

Recognising that children learn differently

Though teaching in general is a group activity, learning is very individual. Each student is different and learns differently. Effective teachers realise this and take actions to celebrate and accommodate the differences. They ensure optimal learning experience for each child.

Knowledge about how children learn, and understanding about what constitutes effective teaching and classroom management has increased considerably over the past decades. Schools and teachers can dramatically influence the extent and quality of learning for all students. The emphasis must be on success and building the existing strengths of children rather than on failings and shortcomings. To enable this, a supportive learning environment needs to be created in which all children feel safe, recognized and understood for what they are with scope to reach their optimum potential.

Effective teachers and classroom managers address the needs of students both in terms of what they teach and how they teach.

- What do I want my students to learn?
- How do I enable them to learn successfully?

- What do I learn from the way they learn?
- How I can improve myself based on my learning?

To develop such a learning environment it is important that education managers, planners, officials, school administrators, teachers, students, parents as well as parent teacher associations and school management committees reflect on quality indicators.

An example below from a study where students stated what their teachers did well¹:

- Creation of a relaxed and enjoyable atmosphere
- Sustained positive management of students and activities
- Presentation of work in a way which interests and motivates students
- Providing conditions so that students understand the work
- Making clear what students are to do and achieve
- Judging what can be expected of a student
- Helping students with difficulties
- Encouraging students to raise expectations of themselves
- Development of personal and respectful relationships with students
- Communication between teachers and pupils-room for pupils to express themselves

Children do not learn at the same pace or in the same way. Schools and teachers must be sensitive to this reality. They have to be cautious so that education policies and practices do not label children as 'slow learners' or promote the view that learning abilities are limited or fixed. The syllabus and the language of instruction are factors that decide whether children effectively participate and behave in an expected manner within the classroom; Children will respond positively while receiving education that is relevant to their lives in their own mother language. Whole education focusing children's academic, social and emotional needs is in itself an important goal of education. Teachers enable whole education by taking into account the whole child.

¹ *Brown and McIntyre (1993: 28-9)*

2

Linking behaviour and learning outcomes

How a teacher perceives behaviour management depends on how he² perceives his job, behavior as a teacher and to what extent he believes that all children can learn. Learning outcomes and behaviour are aspects of education very much influenced by teaching quality. Teachers have control over many factors that significantly influence the motivation, achievement and behaviour of students in schools. However, having influence on students is not the same as controlling them. It is the student who ultimately determines the degree to which (s)he will be involved in learning, while a teacher's attitude and behaviour can either enhance or impede such involvement. Factors such as a classroom's physical environment, a student's level of psychological comfort in the classroom, and the quality of communication between teacher and students will affect such an involvement.

² Though 'he' is used throughout this paper, it applies to both male and female teachers

General principles:

1. Children's behaviour is central to the learning process and is an intrinsic element of education. Equally important is the teachers' behaviour.
2. Problems in behaviour in educational settings are usually a product of a complex interaction between the individual, school, family, community and wider society.
3. Social interaction based on mutual respect is the foundation of an optimal educational environment.

Practical principles:

A. *Equal opportunity and inclusion*

- * Children's learning needs and difficulties vary over time and differ in different settings. Thus, schools and teachers should avoid any forms of 'labelling' (positive or negative) of children and young people.
- * All children must have access to the mainstream curriculum and classroom activities, providing opportunities for cooperative learning that respects and makes use of difference and diversity amongst learners.
- * Policy, planning and action in the

field of behaviour management should be anti-discriminatory and conform to the principles of equal rights and opportunity.

B. *Respect for all*

- * All persons involved in difficulties around behaviour have a right to have their views and feelings taken into account at all times.
- * Policy and practice should actively promote mutual respect for parents, teachers and children without any prejudice.

C. *Positive approaches to behaviour*

- * In all circumstances positive approaches to behaviour issues must be used, while making an effort to understand the root causes for behaviour from all perspectives.
- * Interventions in response to unwanted behaviour should be the least intrusive.
- * The 'behavioural environment' should be evaluated at the starting point of all interventions. Work to improve the 'behavioural environment' should be accorded the highest priority.

D. *Consistency and improvement*

- * Clearly stated and shared values and beliefs which underpin expected

standards of behaviour, empathy and quality of relationships are important and schools need to recognise this. Transparency could be ensured through the dissemination and display of these accepted standards.

- * All involved in the school organisation (including children-remembering their age and evolving capacities) should be included in the process of determining and reviewing values and beliefs.

E. Involvement of children and parents

- * The views and wishes of the child (keeping in mind his/her age and evolving capacities) are of critical importance. Listening to children and taking their views into account are vital.
- * Working around behavioural difficulties should be done in partnership with parents/care givers keeping in mind the 'Best interest of the child'.

F. Appropriate and effective responses

- * Provision for emotional and behavioural difficulties should be made by the most appropriate agency, in most cases the mainstream school working in partnership with parents.

- * In the best interests of the child, there must be close cooperation and agreement in working practices between agencies.
- * Instantly rewarding and reinforcing positive behaviour through appreciation and encouragement should be the guiding principle for all agencies.

To be able to manage students facing difficulties in participation, learning or behaviour requires insight into where these difficulties may come from and why and when they arise. A teacher has to care for many different students, including those from poor, disadvantaged families, students who may have to work before or after school, children from different ethnic, religious or language minority groups and those with a variety of learning difficulties or disabilities. Children may come to school hungry or tired, or they may not be able to do homework because of lack of electricity or parents who are not able to help them with their assignments. It is important for a teacher to know a child's socio-economic and family background to be able to understand non-academic or social factors that influence learning and behaviour. These factors cannot directly be altered, but understanding them will

enable a teacher to place a student's "learning difficulties" or "perceived misbehaviour" in perspective. Creating learning environments that reduce rather than increase the effects of such hidden factors would be a proactive step. Children's school experiences may get negative and meaningless if a teacher does not understand the whole child and his or her background. Being responsive to individual needs of children and tuning her / his instruction and classroom strategies marks an effective teacher.

Organising and managing classrooms for better learning:

Teachers decide where children sit in the classroom. This is an important decision as the seating arrangement in a classroom can enable or disable interaction, as well as impact student behaviour and attitudes. Thus, it is important to decide who will sit where and during which activity, based on the teacher's knowledge of his/her students.

Research shows that children sitting farthest away from the teacher have the fewest interactions with them, are the least involved in classroom activities, and have the lowest achievement scores. Implications of

such findings are obvious: teachers need to find ways to be physically close to their students, especially those who experience problems with learning. A teacher who manages his classroom by walking around can be close to every learner at different times, while strategies such as small group teaching in large classes, children moving from one learning "station" to another, or group work with freedom of movement and access to different classroom resources also provide opportunities for responsive and differentiated teaching-learning activities and classroom management.

A teacher must however not only look at social backgrounds, but also at what happens inside the classroom. How students behave is often a reaction to factors within the school. A teacher needs to reflect on the learning environment he has created and whether this engages all children actively and meaningfully. Problems may be caused or reinforced by teaching or disciplinary procedures, by policies or curricula that students experience as problematic, meaningless or boring. It is also important to investigate how teaching styles can affect progress and behaviour, not only in disruptive

students, but in all students.

When seeking explanations for lack of achievement or for behaviour problems, a teacher needs to be prepared to consider inadequacies in the learning content, process and environment rather than inadequacies in the child. A teacher needs to reflect on what he teaches and how he teaches. What does he say and do in the classroom to develop understanding? How does he introduce a new topic? How does he check whether children understand? Does he spend enough time explaining purpose and relationship to previously taught information and skills? Successfully linking enhances and ensures meaningful learning.

Teachers plan and organise the environment of the classroom. They determine the detailed curriculum to be presented to the students, as well as its sequence and pacing. They also plan the overall structure of the lesson (how much and what kinds of students are listening and the activities) and the feedback mechanisms to know how each child is 'getting on' and the correctives to be taken. Timing, pacing and sequencing of different teaching-learning interactions is an essential part of classroom management and many behaviour problems can be avoided through improved management of the classroom environment and activities.

3

Teacher perceptions and expectations

Apart from imparting knowledge and skills, teachers also help children to define their self image. From daily interactions with teachers, children learn whether they are considered important or insignificant, bright or slow, liked or disliked. Teachers transmit these messages by the way they speak to children, their facial expressions and gestures, and by the amount of time they devote to each individual learner. Often teachers point out students' deficiencies more than praising them for their efforts and noting improvements, however small. For many children this is very discouraging, and may result in feelings of inferiority and failure. From the messages that students receive, they decide whether they are willing to risk participation in classroom activities or not. Effective teachers recognize that such involvement does not always come easily - it requires a trusting, psychologically comfortable learning environment.

A quality which is essential to a psychologically comfortable classroom is mutual respect. Too often, discussions related to respect focus mainly on the necessity of students respecting teachers. However, teachers and students must respect each other and respect has to be earned by both and this happens through the way teachers and children interact.

Students may have negative classroom experiences because they are ridiculed by teacher or peers, or they repeatedly hear that they are disruptive or slow or “stupid”. These and other negative messages telling children that they are not valued or respected, often result in children giving up on classroom participation.

Research on teacher-student interaction shows that teachers often behave differently towards individual students based on their own perception of what a student can or cannot do. Students labelled as “low-achievers” get less opportunities to participate, and those seen as “disruptive” are perceived to be behaving badly, even when behaving well.

Teachers can learn from students. To be successful a teacher must attend to what students do, what they say and how they perform. He should observe children’s reactions in class to find out whether he is ‘getting across’ to them. Thus, teaching is not a matter of reading from a textbook, or dictating notes, but a participatory process. Teachers rely on a variety of ‘signals’ from their students. For example ‘eyes on’ behaviour in most cases means students are paying attention. Squirming behaviour may mean they are tired or bored. Affirmative nods of the head mean they follow and understand, while puzzled looks mean they are confused. These are situations where teachers must double check and reflect on whether they reach all their students, and possibly decide on alternative approaches and activities.



Photo: J. Beyer

The major decision that teachers make on the basis of their observations of children is when it is appropriate to move on to the next topic, problem or issue. Some teachers though are 'clock or calendar watchers' more than 'student watchers' and feel compelled to cover a certain amount of material within a certain time. Teachers need to reflect on their assumptions and expectations by asking children for feedback on the teaching-learning process and on what happens in the classroom in general.

It is important for teachers to understand what makes a good teacher

in the eyes of his students. Such characteristics of quality teachers almost always have to do with a teacher's ability to relate to students as individuals in a constructive way, treating them with respect, making lessons interesting and varied, providing encouragement and telling them to believe in themselves and their own abilities. For teachers who care, the student as a person is as important as the student as a learner. Caring teachers know their students in both ways. Such teachers model understanding and fairness. These are qualities most often mentioned by students in their assessments of good teachers.

4

Managing positive and diversity responsive learning environments

Motivation to learn and to behave well is largely contingent on interest. If a teacher's teaching can harness the curiosity of children, he can also elicit a willingness of students to learn and behave. Interest-satisfying teaching motivates children far more effectively than coercing them into tasks they consider irrelevant and boring. This implies that the execution of the tasks of a teacher and what a teacher models is crucial in the prevention of misbehaviour. Research shows that teacher behaviour which keeps students focused on learning reduces disruptions in the classroom. Effective teaching and classroom management prevents discipline problems or disruptions before they distract from the learning process. The following teacher behaviours are effective in creating and maintaining a positive learning environment:³

³ Based on: Cotton, K (1990) *School-wide and Classroom Discipline*

- High expectations for student learning and behaviour: these expectations are communicated to students in a warm and encouraging way. It is important that students know they are expected to learn well and behave appropriately. Teachers clearly communicate to students that they know what is happening in the classroom all the time.
- Classroom rules and procedures which are clear and fair: all students know and agree with the rules and consequences. Teachers need to teach behavioural rules and classroom routines in much the same way as they teach learning content. The rules need to be reviewed regularly throughout the school year. In primary classrooms such rules are also to be posted on the wall.
- Discussing and agreeing on consequences: effective teachers explain the connection between students' misbehaviour and consequences carefully. This connection is taught and reviewed as needed.
- Rules enforced promptly, consistently, and equitably: effective classroom managers respond quickly to misbehaviour, respond in the same way at different times, and impose consistent consequences regardless of gender, race, socio-economic status or other personal characteristics of students.
- Sharing with students the responsibility for classroom management and organisation: effective teachers aim to develop in students a sense of belonging and self-discipline, rather than viewing discipline as something imposed from the outside.
- Providing stimulating seatwork activities: effective teachers provide students with stimulating seatwork activities which are varied and challenging. These activities keep students' interest on learning and reduce the likelihood of misbehaviour.
- Maintaining a continuous pace for learning and smooth transitions: effective teachers keep things moving in their classrooms, while providing continuous activity signals or cues to ensure inattentive or potentially disruptive students are engaged in learning, reducing the likelihood of misbehaviour.
- Involving non-participating students: effective teachers keep all students focused on current activity or task.
- Monitoring classroom activities and providing feedback and reinforcement: effective teachers observe and comment on student participation and behaviour, and they positively reinforce efforts to participate and behave well.

Despite efforts to be effective classroom managers, behaviour problems may occur. Most children do not intentionally misbehave, but there is usually a reason for their behaviour. Some common reasons contributing to children misbehaving are that the work a student has to do is too easy or too hard, the student is bored because the learning activities are not interesting, the teaching methods do not match the learning style of the student or the teacher's expectations are not clear to the students or unreasonable.

A teacher needs to be prepared for this with techniques ranging from a counseling approach, focusing on understanding and mutually solving a problem to behaviour. Modification or ignoring inappropriate, as well as reinforcing appropriate behaviour is also an effective technique. What is crucial though is that teachers always clarify that it is the behaviour that is unacceptable, not the child. These are

the times that count most. After all, the teacher is the adult! The issue here is that the teacher must look beyond a student's immediate misbehaviour and see a person worthy of respect. Passing such a test will make teachers more credible in the eyes of their students, not only as teachers but also, and more importantly, as genuine caring human beings.

Some schools have found it useful to develop a School Behaviour Policy or Code of Conduct for students and teachers. This helps teachers and students understand what is expected of them, what constitutes appropriate behaviour, and what happens if things go wrong. One of the elements of a successful policy is a review of the school environment, especially in terms of classroom organisation and management. Teachers have also found their unique ways to make changes in their teaching and learning environment, to make a difference in children's behaviour.

Conclusion

Teachers tend to focus on what to do when children misbehave and therefore often perceive discipline techniques as something separate from teaching, only to be employed if and when problems arise. However, classroom management is an integral part of effective teaching, as it helps to prevent behaviour problems through improved planning, organising and managing of classroom activities, better presentation of instructional material and better teacher-student interaction, aiming at maximizing students' involvement and cooperation in learning. Equally important is the modelling and promotion of good behaviour. Disciplinary or behaviour control techniques are in the end less effective as they do not promote the development of a self-concept or a degree of responsibility and autonomy. Students do not become self-disciplined by means of rewarding, controlling or coercion. Values and social skills have to be taught and modeled by teachers. Learning to become responsible human beings and make responsible choices requires practice, including making mistakes to learn from without punitive consequences. That is what quality teaching and classroom management is about. And that, rather than just delivering a curriculum, is the purpose of education!

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6. Pellicer, L.O. & Anderson, L.W. (1996) A Handbook for Teacher Leaders
7. Save the Children (2001) Ending Corporal Punishment: Making it Happen
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For further reading, see also:

www.responsiveclassroom.org (especially the newsletter articles, which can be adjusted to teacher capacity building needs in other places, e.g. on “Teaching children to care”; “The power of Teacher Language”)

www.ascd.org (search for: “Classroom management that works”; Educational Leadership articles e.g. “The Positive Classroom”; “Managing Diverse Classrooms”)

<http://www.f4i.org/> This “Framework for Intervention” helps teachers tackle concerns about students’ behaviour in schools, using school improvement, staff empowerment and environmental change. It works for all ages and in all settings, while promoting ‘learning behaviour together’.

www.msu.edu/user/chatter8/gradworkpdfs/CEP%20841%20Course%20Project1.pdf Chatterjee M. (2003) “Democratic Classrooms: A base for preventing classroom behavior problems”

www.tolerance.org/teach/activities/activity.jsp?ar=921 “The ABC of Classroom Management”

http://education.alberta.ca/media/513151/e_chap4.pdf “Creating Supportive Classroom Environments”

<http://education.qld.gov.au/corporate/newbasics/html/pedagogies/social/soc.html> “Supportive classroom environment”

www.ehow.com/how_2241604_create-positive-classroom-atmosphere.html “How to create a positive classroom atmosphere”

www.unedoc.unesco.org/images/0011/001112/111227eo.pdf Harber c. (2005) “School effectiveness and education for democracy and non-violence”

ANNEX

Knowing How to Teach

As she stood in front of her 5th grade class on the first day of school, she told the children something that was not true. Like most teachers, she looked at her students and said that she liked them all. However, that was impossible, because there in the front row, slumped in his seat, was a boy named Kamal.

Ms. Anu had watched Kamal the year before and noticed that he did not play well with other children and that his uniform was messy. In addition, Kamal could be unpleasant. It got to the point where Ms. Anu would actually take delight in marking his papers with a thick red pen, making bold Xs and then putting a big “F” at the top of his papers.

At the school where Ms. Anu taught, it was required to review each child’s past records. She put Kamal’s off until the very end. However, when she reviewed his file, she was in for a surprise.

Kamal’s first grade teacher wrote: “Kamal is a bright child with a ready laugh. He does his work neatly and has good manners. ... He is a joy to have around”.

His second grade teacher wrote: “Kamal is an excellent student, well liked by his classmates, but he is troubled because his mother has a terminal illness and life at home must be a struggle.”

His third grade teacher wrote: “His mother’s death has been hard on him. He tries to do his best, but his father doesn’t show much interest and his home life will soon affect him if no steps are taken.”

Kamal’s fourth grade teacher wrote: “Kamal is withdrawn and doesn’t show much interest in school. He doesn’t have many friends and he sometimes sleeps in class.”

By now, Ms. Anu realized the problem and felt extremely uneasy and ashamed of herself. She felt even worse when her students brought her birthday presents, wrapped in beautiful ribbons and bright paper, except for Kamal. His present was clumsily wrapped in the heavy, brown paper that he probably found somewhere lying around. Ms. Anu took pains to open it in the middle of the other presents. Some of the children started to laugh when inside she found a bracelet with some of the stones missing, and a perfume bottle that was only half full. But she stifled the children's laughter when she exclaimed how pretty the bracelet was while putting it on, and dabbing some of the perfume on her wrist. Kamal stayed after school that day just long enough to say: "Ms. Anu today you smelled just like my mom used to."

After the children left, Ms. Anu cried. On that very day she decided to stop just teaching a reading, writing and arithmetic curriculum. Ms. Anu decided to try to understand her children as individuals and as she did so she became a different person. She talked and joked with them and in particular applauded Kamal's achievements. She spent time talking to him and soon he began to respond to her loving care. By the end of the year, Kamal had become a more confident learner.

A year later she found a note under her door from Kamal telling her that she was the best teacher he ever had.

Six years went by before she got yet another note from Kamal. He wrote that he had finished high school, stood third in his class and she was still his best teacher. Four years after that, she got another

letter, saying that while things had been tough at times, he had held on and would soon graduate from college with the highest honors. Ms. Anu was still his best teacher!

Then four years passed and yet another letter came. This time he explained that after he got his Bachelors degree, he decided to go a little further. The letter explained that she was still the best and favorite teacher he ever had. But now his name was a little longer. The letter was signed, Kamal Mashal M.D.

The story does not end there. You see, there was another letter that spring. Kamal said he met a girl and was going to be married. He explained that his father had died a couple of years ago and he was wondering if Ms. Anu might agree to sit at the wedding in the place that was usually reserved for the mother of the groom. Of course Ms. Anu did. And guess what? She wore that bracelet, the one with several stones missing. Moreover she made sure she was wearing the perfume that Kamal remembered his mother wearing on her last birthday.

They hugged each other, and Dr. Mashal whispered in Ms. Anu's ear, "Thank you, Ms. Anu for believing in me. Thank you for making me feel important and showing me that I could make a difference."

Ms. Anu with tears in her eyes whispered back, "Kamal, you have it all wrong. You were the one who taught me that I could make a difference. **I did not know how to teach until I met you.**

[Author unknown]

ANNEX 2

Prevention of discipline problems

Developing positive teacher student relationships and rules that are fair and make sense to both teachers and students

Facilitate student reflection: there are many creative classroom activities to encourage students to begin to explore their own experiences and ideas about behaviour, values, social principles and rules and approaches to discipline. Such activities serve to place the immediate problems of classroom discipline into a wider context.

Classroom code of conduct: at the start of a school-year, facilitate a process to collectively identify the ‘rules of the game’

Step 1: Ask students to draw (individually or in small groups) an ‘ideal’ (or ‘dream’) classroom. Ask them to think about a time in the past when they felt that they learned a lot. What was the environment like? What was the teacher like? What else was special about this time? How could these things be incorporated into their ‘ideal’ classroom? Ask each person or group to present their drawings to the class. When everyone has had a turn, ask the class to look at all the drawings and think about what they tell us about an ideal classroom. If you want make a whole class mural showing an ideal

classroom. Identify common ideas across students. Allow students to discuss the issues that emerge.

Step 2: Ask all students to write down the principles or rules that they believe are important to build this sort of classroom. Students do not have to write their names. Collect all papers and write them on the board. Identify common themes and principles. (For young students you can do the same exercise verbally).

Step 3: Draw up a code of conduct together. Make the principles and expectations clear. Do not make too many rules. Challenge students - is this rule needed, or is it covered by other principles? Make sure rules are stated clearly and concisely. Formulate 'rules' in positive language.

Step 4: Once you have developed a code of conduct, share it with other stakeholders - parents, the principal, and other teachers. (Students could even do this exercise at home as home-work, asking their parents what would be the 'ideal' classroom and bring back those ideas the follow day to be included).

Step 5: Write the code of conduct in large print and in a 'nice' way. Hang it where everyone can read it. Have everyone sign it to indicate their agreement. Leave space for additions and modifications. When problems arise during the year, that are not covered by the code of conduct you can revisit and change the code of conduct. It is always a 'work in progress'!

Privileges and consequences: agree together on consequences for good and bad behaviour. Emphasize positive reinforcement

Step 1: Facilitate a discussion with your students to identify the ideas for special things your class can do when the class behaves well. These will be determined by the nature of your class, as well as the interests and personalities of your students. You could decide to dedicate 20 minutes on a Friday morning for students to tell stories and jokes. You could decide to spend extra time reading from a special book of interest, doing a joint project, solving fun math problems, etc. You could decide to have a special time for an art project or games. Think of fun special things you could do as a class to celebrate the achievement of a peaceful and happy classroom.

Step 2: Discuss when these privileges may be taken away from a student or the class as a whole. Perhaps you want to adopt the 'yellow card/red card' system of football. When a child gets a yellow card, (s)he getting a warning, when (s)he gets 2 yellow cards or a red card the consequence is applied. Remember these should only be given in reaction to problems that cannot be solved through communication and positive reinforcement - these should be the 'last resort' times. They should not be applied in response to small behavioural problems, but in response to behaviour that contravenes core principles.

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