

CLASSROOM DISCIPLINE



***A POSITIVE
APPROACH***

Second Printing

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By

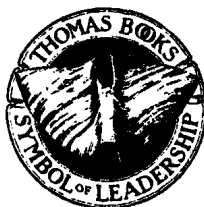
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PREFACE

When teachers are asked to indicate the problem they consider most important in their teaching, discipline is mentioned with greater frequency than any other (including salaries). One reason is that classroom control is a prerequisite to classroom learning. Children and youth who are well-disciplined will direct their interests, efforts, and abilities toward greater achievement. Those who are not disciplined waste their new opportunities, making learning difficult for themselves, for their classmates, and for the teachers [Marie, 1967, p. 50].

C *CLASSROOM DISCIPLINE: A Positive Approach* was written to provide specific guidelines for the prospective and beginning teacher concerning techniques of classroom control as well as to provide a helpful reference for the experienced teacher. The major focus is toward a concise compilation of discipline techniques that have been found to be effective through practical application. These techniques can be used to humanize classroom management since they offer a viable alternative to outmoded techniques of classroom control such as physical punishment.

The impetus for the book's development was the result of the authors' experiences in working as supervisors of beginning and experienced teachers. Considerable difficulty was experienced in suggesting a straightforward, practical book on how to maintain classroom control. This text is an attempt to fill this void in the literature.

It is recommended that the book be read during university or college courses on methods of teaching, during the student teaching experience, or by teachers in the field encountering discipline problems. It is also suggested as a handy reference for elementary and high school principals as well as supervisors of teachers.

The book is unique in that it integrates the best of the old, established techniques (e.g. individualization of instruction, well prepared lessons) for classroom control with new techniques emanating from operant conditioning principles.

The text is divided into four sections. Section One presents three distinct strategies for educating children who exhibit disruptive behavior. The purpose is to provide a brief comparison of the operant conditioning strategy adopted by the authors, with two other popular strategies.

Section Two includes preventive techniques for maintaining classroom discipline. It also suggests measures to employ *after* the disruptive behavior has occurred. These are practical techniques that can and should be implemented in almost any classroom.

Section Three provides two specific plans, based on operant conditioning principles for modifying the behaviors of extremely disruptive students. Also included in this section are a discussion of various items that can be used as reinforcers in a school setting and the presentation of ethical issues involved in the use of an operant conditioning approach.

Section Four consists of supplementary selected articles that outline ways of preventing and/or handling discipline problems. Only articles written specifically for classroom teachers are presented here.

A set of multiple choice questions is included at the end of each of the four sections. The purpose is to provide the reader with an instrument for self-evaluation on the major points presented therein.

S.B.S. and W.C.S.

REFERENCE

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ADVICE TO THE READER

FOR the reader to read material that he already clearly knows and understands is indeed frustrating and generally a waste of precious learning time. It is unfortunate, however, when new, important material with which the reader is unfamiliar is allowed to “slip by.” This book attempts to eliminate this problem by following what might be considered a *competency-based format*. In essence the text is so arranged that the amount of reading required of the reader is based on his demonstrated knowledge of the material presented.

Classroom Discipline: A Positive Approach is divided into four sections with a test covering the material at the end of each respective section. Progressing through the book can occur in *either one of two ways*. The first way is recommended for those familiar with classroom management techniques and their application. The second is recommended for those who are novices in the area of classroom management.

The two approaches are as follows:

1. Turn to the test immediately following Section One and respond to each item. The number of items to be correctly answered to achieve a score considered passing, is noted on the answer key at the end of the book. Compare the answers selected with the answer key at the back of the book and if the test is “passed,” continue with the remaining three tests in the same way. If, however, more than the designated number of items are missed, read the preceding section and re-take the test. When the test has been successfully completed, continue on.
2. Read Section One and respond to the test items immediately following it. The number of correctly answered items considered *passing* is noted on the answer key at the end of the book. Compare your answers with the key

and, if the test is “passed”, continue with the remaining three sections in the same way. If, however, more items than the number allowed are missed, re-read the entire preceding section, or those parts of the section that were not understood, and re-take the test. When the test has been successfully completed, continue on.

It should be noted that there may be some individuals who are quite knowledgeable with regard to classroom management techniques and therefore may pass most, if not all, of the tests without reading any of the material presented. For these individuals as well as those who do read the material, this book should be kept as a handy reference for future review and as a possible source for others less well versed in classroom management techniques.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

PARTS of Sections One through Three are based on information presented in articles written by the authors. Thanks are due the editors of the publications in which the articles appeared or will appear for permission to reprint portions of them.

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S.B.S. and W.C.S.

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CLASSROOM DISCIPLINE

Section One
INTRODUCTION

Educators are a diverse group of individuals who typically disagree on many aspects of handling children. This disagreement is particularly apparent in discussions concerning the control of maladaptive behavior in children. The variation of approaches ranges the spectrum from focusing predominantly on the psychological causes of behavior, to studying physiological differences within the individual, to stressing present behavioral manifestations in members of a group. These differences in focus result in widely differing techniques for dealing with maladaptive behavior in the classroom.

It is the purpose of this first section to examine briefly the most common approaches and then provide some insight regarding the behaviors of educators based on their theoretical orientation. Hopefully, by having these variations presented to them, teachers can more objectively evaluate, in terms of their own personal attitudes, the point of view adopted by the authors of the present volume.

The three strategies here examined encompass the major points of view concerning behavior held by educators. The first, the psychodynamic strategy, focuses on the underlying psychological causes of behavior. The second, the sensory-neurological one, deals primarily with the physiological causes of behavior. The third, operant conditioning, examines present behaviors in terms of the immediate operating variables in the environment. This last point of view dominates, as we shall see, the "positive approach" set forth in these pages.

Chapter 1

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STRATEGIES FOR EDUCATING CHILDREN WHO EXHIBIT MALADAPTIVE BEHAVIOR

.....

AS an individual's behavior deviates from what is expected for his age, sex, and status, it is maladaptive and he may experience serious difficulties in getting along [Hewett, 1968, p. 3].” Recently, there has been a growing interest in strategies for educating children who display mild maladaptive behavior. Any effort to categorize and briefly examine these strategies often leads to oversimplification of what is involved. Nevertheless, an attempt is made to outline the major characteristics associated with three of the more commonly known strategies. The strategies are: (a) psychodynamic, (b) sensory-neurological, and (c) operant conditioning.

Psychodynamic

Psychiatrists, psychologists, and educators, who advocate the psychodynamic strategy, view behavior from a psychoanalytic framework. In this group of professionals there is a tendency to concentrate on *abnormal*, or maladaptive, behavior rather than so-called “normal” behavior. The role of defense mechanisms, symptoms of underlying conflicts, sexual impulses, and unconscious motivations are stressed. The psychic origin of the behavior is considered extremely important. What has occurred in the past psychological history of the individual that is causing the present behavior is investigated. As a result of such an investigation, it might be hypothesized that a behavior is being caused by a past traumatic experience, such as, for example, the child witnessing

the brutal death of his mother.

In this strategy the teacher is perceived as an *educational therapist* who is well trained in child development and psychology. Awareness of psychological factors is more important to such a teacher than teaching competencies. It should be emphasized, however, that this teacher is *not* thought of as a person qualified to conduct psychotherapy.

In the classroom the goal is to establish an emotionally healthy climate. A permissive classroom environment is usually provided wherein children can express their inner hostilities. The development of a positive, trusting relationship is stressed. It is thought that this can best be accomplished when the teacher's role is that of an accepting, nondemanding person. The instructional program may even be set aside for a time, while the teacher concentrates on the development of a trusting relationship and a therapeutic environment.

Sensory-neurological

Maladaptive behavior is here viewed from a sensory-neurological base. It is generally considered organic or functional in origin. In fact, an attempt is usually made to relate the behavior to some type of cerebral dysfunction. The child is often referred to a neurologist to determine the neurological basis of his behavior. Along with being given an electroencephalogram (EEG) examination, he might be assessed in terms of the presence or absence of established eye-hand dominance, degree of laterality, spatial orientation, and fine and gross motor coordination.

From this point of view the role of the teacher is that of an *educational diagnostician and program designer*. He must be able to (a) interpret diagnostic information supplied by the psychologist, neurologist and other specialists; (b) integrate the information supplied with his own educational diagnosis; and (c) plan an effective educational program for each child.

A highly structured classroom environment with a reduction in stimuli and emphasis on order and routine is established. Especially in the earlier grades the instructional program is usually designed to give the child skills in directionality, eye-hand