

Teacher **Leadership** and **Behaviour** Management



Edited by

B I L L R O G E R S

Teacher Leadership and Behaviour Management

Edited by
Bill Rogers



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'A teacher should have maximal authority and minimal power'
Thomas Szasz

'Never mind the trick. What the hell's the point?'
(p 122 in Joseph Heller's *Catch 22*).

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Introduction

Our aim in this book has been to address current trends and approaches in behaviour leadership in terms of practical considerations about behaviour management and discipline in today's schools. The emphasis on teacher leadership is purposeful; we believe that the kind of teacher leadership significantly impacts on the effectiveness and humanity of discipline and management.

Although the term 'current' is utilised, I believe that some aspects of teacher leadership behaviour and practice are unchanging and axiomatic – not dependant on time, place, age, context or culture. I have sought to address these discipline and management practices in the first essay. This essay addresses the issue of 'what changes' and 'what stays the same' with respect to teacher leadership and behaviour as it affects discipline and management in today's schools.

While there have obviously been significant changes in society in the late 20th century, some aspects of humane, constructive, positive discipline do not fundamentally change, even in a so-called 'post-modern society'.¹

The contributors to this book know schools well; they have a considerable and wide experience in education that they bring to the concerns and challenges of today's classrooms. Their professional 'currency' is widely respected in the areas addressed by the essay topics in particular and the topic of the book in general.

While they are mostly working within universities they all have a teaching background and are all directly involved with schools in research and consultancy. In my own case I also engage in peer-mentoring – working with teachers as a coach/mentor in classrooms.

What my colleagues share in these essays comes from a commitment to supporting their teaching colleagues with practical, action-research focused in areas such as: teacher leadership; effective teaching; colleague support; discipline and behaviour management; and working with students who present with emotional-behavioural disorders.

All these facets of *practical* research are here shared with insight, understanding and awareness of current trends and needs. Their focus is firmly grounded in the 'humanist' tradition – not uncritically but with a teacher's eye for balancing research with *realpolitik*. Each writer in their own way addresses changes to the nature of teacher leadership in areas such as 'discipline', 'punishment', 'power', 'control', 'hierarchy', 'rights and responsibilities',

‘challenging behaviours’ and ‘behaviour’ arising from emotional and behavioural disorders.

The aim of all behaviour management and discipline is to enable students to take ownership of their behaviour in a way that respects the rights of others. This aim is a constant challenge for teachers when they discipline and manage; each writer seeks to develop management and discipline practices, approaches and skills to enhance that leadership aim.

Dr John Robertson explores teacher leadership from the perspective of ‘boss’, ‘manager’ and ‘leader’. He contrasts these management styles and practices in a practical and engaging way. John’s essay is enhanced by the many typical classroom scenarios teachers face each day when they have to deal with distracting and disruptive student behaviours.

Dr Chris Kyriacou has written widely on the issue of effective teaching and student management. He clearly and helpfully illustrates the link between discipline and ‘good teaching’ and how any sense of ‘effective discipline’ is linked to the building of good relationships between a teacher and a class group.

Christine Richmond explores the nature of language in behaviour management, contrasting the differences and effect of teacher language in teacher management. Christine presents a positive and challenging model for teachers to re-assess their management and teaching language.

Tim O’Brien has an amusing title for an empathetic essay on working with students with emotional and behavioural difficulties. Tim has long experience of working with such students and in this essay he explores the key skills and attributes essential to successful and positive practice.

Lynne Parsons shares current trends in the management of emotional and behavioural difficulties. Lynne has wide experience consulting with schools and in this essay shares practical, ‘hands-on’ strategies to support teachers who work with students who present with emotional and behavioural difficulties through her work in a learning centre with students ‘at risk’.

Dr Lorelei Carpenter has addressed an issue of wide concern in schools today – the most ubiquitous behavioural-disorder ADD/ADHD. Many children in our schools now take medication (such as Ritalin or Dexamphetamine) to address this ‘condition’. Lorelei helps us to understand and appreciate this (at times) controversial issue. Her response is both humane and helpful to teachers and enables an understanding from which we can more effectively support such students.

Dr Glenn Finger addresses the interesting connection between student behaviour, information technology, and teacher management. He provides a challenging insight into the integral nature of IT and student motivation and behaviour.

Colleague support is crucial to the overall organisational health of a school and, as importantly, to the coping ability of teachers. In this last essay I have addressed the culture of support in schools and developed a framework to both understand and evaluate colleague support in schools.

I want to thank all my colleagues who have contributed their time, energy,

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knowledge and experience to these issues and topics of current concern. I trust that their professional reflection will encourage and support your own teaching journey.

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ENDNOTES FOR INTRODUCTION

- 1 This is not the text to debate the meaning(s) of 'post-modernism' and 'post-modernist' as they relate to behaviour management. In fact one of the problems in defining such terms is the wide variability in their usage and application – it is as if it depends on who one listens to at any given moment what 'relative' meanings the term (post-modernist/modernism) can contain. I have let my colleagues address the 'current' situations on their terms.

1

What changes and what stays the same in behaviour management?

Dr Bill Rogers

It sounds trite to say that 'schools change and behaviour management must change with it' – there are certainly many books that have that motif somewhere in their text.

We are experiencing the 'IT revolution'; computers will revolutionise the classroom, we are constantly told. Even if we do use computers widely we still have to BUTIC as I've discussed with many students – 'Boot up the *internal* computer'. The first computer created was *the* 'computer' that conceived *and* designed *and* made the computer. Of course it's one thing to 'boot it up' it's another to STBS (surf the brain space) – individually and collectively. Woe betide us if we ever conceive of education (in schools) as merely a 'log on' to a physical computer and then get the information 'on-line' as if that is all that 'education' (as knowledge) is about. Schools are also communities – *local learning communities*. Children do not merely learn content off a screen, they learn *in relationship* to others: their peers; their teachers and their local community. Computers can tap into a 'world wide graffiti board' as well as a 'world wide web' but students will need teachers (on the ground) to enable the contextualisation of information *and learning*. As Dewey (1897) has said, 'all education proceeds by the participation of the individual in the social consciousness...' (p77).¹

Society has changed significantly since post-war Britain when I was white, skinny, freckled, knobbly-kneed (in 'daggy' shorts and cap) and sometimes scared of some of my teachers who smacked, hit and caned me and sometimes pulled my ear (ouch!). No doubt they thought they were doing 'good discipline'.

Good teachers then – as now – rarely needed to use corporal punishment; they eschewed calculated anxiety or fear as a 'technique'; they avoided public embarrassment and shaming as a 'device'; they made an effort to keep the dignity – at least the respect – of the individual intact. I remember such teachers with gratitude and affection.

Schools – thankfully – are generally happier places these days for teachers *and* students. Class sizes are smaller (they need to be!); heaters generally work; some schools even have air conditioners.

TV was a tiny black and white screen just four decades ago; essays were handwritten (even at university); the teacher was almost always ‘revered’ and addressed as ‘Sir’ or ‘Miss’. If I ‘talked’ in class it was very ‘serious’, if I was late for no good reason it was ‘serious’, if I answered back it was a major crime. We were – almost universally – biddable. The hierarchies were well established – you ‘did as you were told’. There are teachers who still pine for those halcyon days. Although I did have a teacher we called ‘the fat Welsh git’ (no offence to the Welsh you understand) who pushed me too far. I was talking in class (at high school aged 14½). He walked across to my desk and jabbed his index finger roughly in my shoulder – ‘Listen Rogers – were you brought up or dragged up!’ Well – no one (even a teacher) was going to insult my progeny. I stood up and, heart thumping, said ‘It’s none of your bloody business!’ and walked out to stunned silence (both teacher and class). As I walked past the last row some of my classmates looked up and engaged an eye-contact that said, ‘Thanks for being our Trojan Horse . . .’ I walked into town, got a delicious cream bun and tea (to calm my nerves) and got a bus home. He never pulled that stunt again. I think – even in 1961 – he realised he might have pushed it a bit too far.

The worm had turned. I mostly got ‘in trouble’ or ‘had detentions’, or ‘got the cane’ for answering back and I only ‘answered back’ when I thought the teacher was unjust, petty or pathetically trivial (at least in my adolescent perception). Even in primary school I had the ruler across the knuckles and on one occasion had to wear a ‘dunce’s hat’.² In schools today children still ‘talk in class’, ‘talk out of turn’, avoid tasks or refuse tasks and answer back and they certainly still bully their peers.

Whenever a group of students meets with their teachers some aspects of behaviour management and discipline should not change. When you get 25–30 children in a small room, with the widest variation in personality, temperament and ability, there are natural energies at work that can significantly affect group dynamics and productive teaching and learning. Those energies are present in behaviours that are distracting, attention-seeking, disruptive or (at times) seriously disturbing. All teachers, at all times, in all contexts have needed to address the dynamics of teaching and learning *and* management *and* discipline as they interact with group dynamics. In this sense there is ‘nothing new under the sun’. While society has changed, some features of children’s behaviour – particularly in school settings – have not changed. It is my view, my belief, that the discipline and behaviour management of a school community should be based on core values and practices that do not change (despite social and technological changes and new social mores). A teacher – or a community of teachers – never disciplines in a value vacuum. At some stage teachers need to reflect on the values and aims of behaviour management and discipline whether it is addressing typical behaviours such as ‘calling out’, ‘butting in’, task-avoidance, overly loud communication or whether it is issues such as verbal or physical aggression, bullying or substance abuse.

Whenever we ‘manage’ student behaviour we communicate certain values: Do we keep the fundamental dignity, and even respect, of the individual in

mind? (That would mean – one hopes – that we would avoid sarcasm, ‘cheap-shots’, put-downs of any kind when we discipline.) Do we value, and aim for, behaviour ownership when we discipline? A cursory example here may illustrate. When a child has an *object d’art* that interferes with instructional or on-task learning some teachers will walk over to the student’s desk and merely take (or snatch) the cards, the mini skateboard, the toy, the secreted Walkman. Other teachers will seek to give some ‘behaviour ownership’ back to the student: e.g. ‘Paul – you’ve got a mini skateboard on your table...’ (sometimes an ‘incidental direction’ is itself enough for some students. The teacher ‘describes’ what the student is doing that is distracting, leaving the ‘cognitive shortfall’ to the student – the description can act as an *incidental* direction. Younger children would need a *specific* direction or reminder about behaviour or rule.) The teacher may then extend the ‘description’ to a ‘directed choice’: ‘I want you to put it in your locker tray (or bag) or on my table – thanks.’ (I’ve never had a student yet put a distracting *object* on my desk... as an ‘option’.) You can imagine what will probably happen if a teacher over-vigilantly snatches a high school student’s secreted Walkman, key ring or mobile phone: ‘Hey give my **** Walkman back; give it back, you can’t take that!’ A small discipline issue now becomes a major issue: ‘I will have it now *thank you!*’ ‘No way – no way known’ (the student values his Walkman). ‘Right! (says the teacher) out – go on, you get out of my classroom...!’

Of course any ‘discipline language’ depends on factors such as what the teacher has established with the class group in terms of shared rights and responsibilities, core routines and rules for the fair, smooth running of the classroom; the teacher’s characteristic tone and manner when they discipline (as above); how they follow-up with students beyond the more public setting and (most of all) the kind of relationship the teacher has built with the class group and its individuals.

CORE ‘PREFERRED’ PRACTICES OF DISCIPLINE

The following practices of management and discipline have their philosophical and moral genesis in the values discussed earlier; their ‘utility’ is not separate from their purpose. Teachers need to ask on what basis do they *characteristically* discipline in terms of what they believe, say, do. A teacher’s practice needs to be based in principle as well as pragmatism. In those schools that seek to develop a whole-school approach to behaviour management and discipline, staff critically, and professionally, reflect on and appraise their policy and practice in light of their espoused values. The basis for behaviour management and discipline – in terms of school-wide teacher management and discipline behaviour – are here, discussed in terms of *preferred* practices. The term ‘preferred’ is not accidental; the things that really matter in education cannot really be mandated as if by *fiat*. In this sense our *preferred* practice is based on what we value.

Professional collaboration, shared professional reflection and practice based in colleague support and on-going professional development need to characterise these practices, particularly those that address the discipline behaviour of teachers. These practices reflect unchanging features of good discipline. The broad evaluative qualifier 'good' is not based in mere utility but in the values and purposes on which such discipline is based.

1 The aims of discipline

All management and discipline practice is a teacher's best efforts (bad day notwithstanding) to enable the individual and the classroom group to:

- ▶ *take ownership of and accountability for their behaviour*; to enable students to develop self-discipline in relationship to others.
- ▶ *respect the rights of others* in their classroom group/s, and across the school; the non-negotiable rights, in this sense, are the 'right to feel safe', the 'right to respect and fair treatment' and (obviously) the 'right to learn' (within one's ability, without undue or unfair distraction from others, with teachers who reasonably seek to cater for individual differences and needs).
- ▶ build workable relationships between teacher and students.

In seeking to support the aim of discipline that enables the conscious respecting of others' rights, teachers often develop whole-class student behaviour agreements that specifically address core rights and responsibilities (Rogers 1997 and 2000). Each grade teacher (at primary level) or tutor teacher (at secondary level) will address such fundamental responsibilities such as respect for person and property expressed in basic civility and manners, such as 'please', 'thanks', first name (rather than 'him', 'her', 'she', 'he'), 'ask before borrowing', 'excuse me', etc.; *teaching* basic educational and social considerations such as 'partner-voice' (Robertson and Rogers, 1998, 2000) and 'co-operative talk' during class learning time, how to fairly gain teacher assistance time during on-task learning, etc. Thoughtful routines and rules enable the smooth running of a busy, complex, learning community like a classroom. Teaching routine, and 'making routine routine' (Rogers, 1995) gives direction, focus and security to learning and social interaction.

2 Student behaviour agreements

The rights noted earlier are meaningful only in terms of their responsibilities. Teachers need to discuss these rights *and* responsibilities with their class groups in the establishment phase of the year (Rogers, 1998, 2000). A student behaviour agreement discussed with the class group forms a basis for *any* behaviour

management generally – and discipline in particular – as it outlines rights and responsibilities, rules and consequences and a commitment to support students in their learning and responsible behaviour.

Such a student behaviour agreement is published within the first three weeks of the school year and a copy sent home to parent(s) with a supporting letter from the headteacher. Each class thus communicates the whole-school emphasis on behaviour, learning and positive discipline in a document that is *classroom-based* and classroom-focused, in terms of language, understanding and development. A photo of the grade class – with their teacher – can give a positive contextual framework between home and school (see Rogers, 1997 and 2000).

3 The practice of discipline

When engaged in any management and discipline teachers will – wherever possible – avoid any unnecessary confrontation with students. This preferred practice will exclude any intentional, easy, use of put-downs, ‘cheap-shots’, public shaming, embarrassment or sarcasm (tempting as it might be at times!). Humour (the *bon-mot*, repartee, irony, even farce) will often defuse tension, ease anxiety and reframe stressful reality. Sarcasm, and malicious humour is the pathetically easy power-trip of some teachers and is always counter-productive to co-operative discipline.

A student comes late to class and a teacher asks him why he is late. Apart from the unnecessary and unhelpful interrogative (‘why?’), if the teacher’s tone is overly, or unnecessarily, confrontational it can lead to adverse outcomes.

It is the second occasion in this high school class that the student has arrived late. The teacher is engaged in whole-class teaching:

T: ‘Why are you late?!’ (It often doesn’t matter – at this point in a lesson – *why* the student is late.)

S: (A little ‘cocky’; his body language is a little insouciant.) ‘People are late sometimes you know . . . gees!’

T: (The teacher doesn’t like his attitude, he senses a ‘need to win’ here.) ‘Don’t you talk to me like that. Who do you think you are talking to?!’

S: ‘Well you don’t have to hassle me, do you?’

T: ‘I’m not hassling you! I asked you a civil question – I’m not arguing with you . . . right, go and sit over there.’ (He points to the two spare seats left.)

S: ‘I don’t want to sit there. I sit with Bilal and Troy down the back.’

T: ‘Listen; I don’t care who you sit with. Did I ask you who you wanted to sit with? If you had been here when you’re supposed to you could have sat there but you can’t – sit over there.’

S: (The student folds his arms.) ‘No way – I’m not sitting with Daniel and Travis – I told you I sit with . . .’

T: (The teacher is angry now.) ‘Right get out! Go on, get out. If you’re late to my

class and you can't do as you're told you can get out! – and you'll be on detention!!'

S: 'Yeah well I'm going anyway – this is a sh*t class. I don't give a stuff about your detention!' (The student slams out of class muttering *en route*.)

It can happen that quickly, that easily. Unfortunately this is not a manufactured example. This is not a 'bad' teacher – as such – but it is an example of unnecessary confrontation.

Same 'discipline' – different teacher, different practice. Student arrives late during instructional time.

T: 'Welcome Jarrod. I notice you're late.' (Her tone is confident, even pleasant.)

S: 'Yeah I was just hurrying and that.' (At this point it doesn't matter if Jarrod is being 'creative' with the truth.)

T: 'I'll have a chat later. There's a spare seat over there.' (Incidental language – she doesn't *tell* him – she describes the 'obvious reality' as it were. Her tone conveys expectation as she turns away from him, giving him 'take-up-time'. She is about to resume whole-class attention – *thus getting the focus back to the teaching and learning* – but he isn't quite finished.)

S: 'I don't want to sit there. I sit with Bilal and Troy.'

T: 'I'm sure you do – those seats down the back are taken. (More, brief, 'description of reality'. The teacher *tactically* ignores the student frown, the low level sibilant sigh, partially agrees with Jarrod and refocuses briefly to the main issue.) 'For the time being there is a spare seat over there. Thanks.' (She adds a future 'choice' as she reads his body language.³) 'We can organise a seat change later in the lesson. Thanks.' (She turns away from Jarrod, to convey expectation, confidence and 'take-up-time' [Rogers, 1998]. As she re-engages the class group Jarrod walks off with mild attentional gait which the teacher [wisely] *tactically* ignores at this point [Rogers, 1998].

This 'management transaction' took less time than the example noted earlier. Even in this deceptively fundamental practice of avoiding unnecessary confrontation there is a significant aspect of conscious *skill* in language, tone and manner. It is one thing to state a *preferred* practice in discipline; it is quite another for that practice to be normatively realised in day-to-day teaching. The skills inherent in these 'practices' require conscious reading of management transactions and dynamics in a group context. And in all discipline contexts there is that balance of 'relaxed vigilance' with professional flexibility.

There are occasions when it is appropriate, necessary, to confront a student about their behaviour; *assertively* in tone, manner and language. If a student abusively puts another student down in class, or swears *at* a student or teacher, or engages in sexually harassing communication it is essential the teacher uses appropriate assertive language as a key feature of their discipline – hopefully with confidence and skill. Because the need, and expression, for such teacher behaviour is not normative such assertion can be quite significant in its use.

4 Focusing on primary behaviour

Wherever possible, and wherever appropriate, the teacher will keep the focus of management and discipline on the 'primary behaviour' or issue. Some students are past masters at engaging teachers in 'secondary behaviours' (Rogers, 1997, 1998): the pout, the attentional gait, the skewed eye-contact, the overly ebullient sigh, the time-wasting 'filibuster' ('Other teachers don't care if we chew gum' or 'wear our hats in class' or 'play down-ball in the infant area' or 'ride our bikes across the playground' or 'dance on the tables').

When teachers consciously keep the discipline focus on the 'primary' behaviour or issue, they avoid getting drawn in by the 'secondary' sighs and pouts and re-engage the student on the issue that is relevant and important *now*.

A student secretes his Walkman in his bag (or pocket) during on-task learning time. Instead of taking it off the student and confiscating it the teacher acknowledges its presence and uses a direct (imperative) question (avoid asking *why* – it is often not important, or relevant, why he has a Walkman); imperative questions raise some 'cognitive shortfall' in the student and direct them to *their* responsibility (Rogers, 1998, 2000).

T: 'Paul what's the school rule for Walkmans?'

S: 'Gees – other teachers don't mind if we have them long as we get our work done and that.'

The teacher *tactically* ignores the insipient whine and doesn't get drawn on the relative merits of other teachers' 'justice' ('I don't care what other teachers do ...' or the pointless discursive: '*which* other teachers let you have Walkmans on in class?') Instead she refocuses:

T: 'Even if other teachers do (brief partial agreement) what's the school rule for Walkmans?' (The teacher puts the focus back onto the main – the primary – issue.)

S: (Moaning) 'It's not fair'.

T: (The teacher begins to turn away) 'It may not seem fair to you Paul, it is the school rule. You know what to do.' (She walks away leaving him with a task reminder.) 'I'll come back later to see how your work is going – thanks.'

By giving the student 'take-up-time' the teacher conveys confidence and trust in the student's common sense and co-operation. If he chooses not to put the Walkman away the teacher can give a *deferred* consequence expressed as a 'choice': 'If you choose not to put it away (the teacher is not drawn by his protestations) Paul I'll have to ask you to stay back for "time-in".' This is the known 'follow-up' where the teacher follows up the incident and discusses behaviour with the student.

This discipline approach puts the responsibility back on to the student –

without arguing, without unnecessary drama. The key, of course, is the *certainty* of the consequences if they choose not to co-operate (see later). The ‘tribal tomtoms’ will soon convey the justice of this approach! No ‘choice’ in such a context is a ‘free choice’, it occurs within the framework of the published student-behaviour agreement and – of course – the fair rules and routines established by the teacher with the class group.

It will be important for the teacher to follow up some aspects (or ‘displays’) of ‘secondary behaviours’ beyond the classroom context, either in an ‘after-class chat’ or an interview. Away from the ‘audience’ of their classroom peers a student is often amenable to a discussion about their ‘secondary’ as well as their ‘primary’ behaviour.

5 Least intrusive intervention

Use a least-to-more intrusive intervention approach to management and discipline where possible and where appropriate. The few examples noted thus far illustrate how teachers can often address discipline incidents in a ‘least intrusive’ way both in discipline language and manner.

THE LANGUAGE OF DISCIPLINE

This is not the text to give extended examples of teacher language and behaviour redolent of positive, co-operative, discipline (see Rogers, 1997, 1998 and 2000; Robertson, 1998; O’Brien, 1999 and Richmond – later in this text). It will be important for teachers to reflect on, and discuss with their colleagues, the nature and purpose of the *language of discipline* with special reference to common values and aims. In many schools colleagues share features of common practice (in discipline) that embrace common aims while allowing professional discretion *within* those aims noted earlier.

RELAXED VIGILANCE

When teachers are engaged in out-of-class duty-of-care (e.g. corridor supervision, playground supervision, ‘wet-day’ and ‘bus duty’) it is important for teachers to be ‘relaxedly vigilant’ regarding thoughtless, inappropriate, disruptive or hostile student behaviours (Rogers, 2000). Even here the aims and practices of respectful discipline can be realised.

When students are running in the corridor there are many ways in which teachers can be ‘least-intrusive’ in their discipline.

Teacher (A) calls the students over. They reluctantly come, she *tactically* ignores their demeanour, their low-level whining (the ‘secondary behaviour’). She smiles and says, in a quiet confident voice, ‘Walking is safer, thank you.’