



A Conceptual Analysis of Difficult Behaviours in Classroom for Addressing the Problems

KEYWORDS

difficult behaviours, classroom, challenging behaviours, difficult learners, teacher.

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ABSTRACT *The paper is about addressing the difficult behaviours and difficult children in a classroom. It defines difficult behaviours, how teachers perceive difficult behaviours. It is found that difficult behaviours is a generic term, overlapping with many terms like disruptive behaviour, challenging behaviours, deviant behaviours, aggressive behaviours and the like. Teachers perceive difficult behaviours from normal disturbance to challenging his/her authority to threatening in nature. This opens different dimensions of the concept inviting for research to be done for classification of difficult behaviours exhibited by learners in the classroom. Investigator put some rules to be observed by the teacher to deal with the problem, irrespective of its origin. These rules are just workable adjustment rather than relieving the individual from the problem*

All teachers are confronted with students who engage in behaviors that are disruptive to the educational process. Students may be late for class, leave early, talk inappropriately, or sleep during class. If ignored or handled poorly a single act of incivility can have a long terms effect on life of a student, a teacher, classroom atmosphere and finally culture of a school. Better the class management, congenial is the environment for teaching and learning, consequently good results are inevitable. Teachers have an important role to play in managing difficult behaviour of the adolescents and in modeling problem-solving behaviour. Thus the issue at hand is significant not only for the sake of child, teacher or school, but has scope to cover whole gamut of social structures.

What is a difficult behaviour?

The term difficult behaviours is synonymous to challenging behaviours, disruptive behaviours, aggressive behaviours, deviant behaviours and the like. All the terms have potentially to go beyond classroom. For instance disruptive behaviour, aggressive behaviour are negative in nature and have notion of 'acting out' domain. Author believes difficult behaviour is the most suitable term for classroom scenario. In literature we don't find an objective definition of difficult behaviour thus it is thought to develop one by reviewing definitions of challenging behaviour. Challenging behaviour is any form of behaviour that interferes with children's learning or normal development; is harmful to the child, other children or adults around him; puts a child in a high risk category for later social problems or academic failure (MacFarlane, 2007). Any repeated pattern of behavior or perception of behavior that interferes with or is at risk of interfering with optimal learning or engagement with pro-social interactions with peers or adults. (Smith & Fox cited in Dunlap et al (2006). In a school setting, challenging behaviour is acknowledged to be any form of behaviour that causes concern to teachers. It can range from talking in class and not settling to work, to verbal and physical abuse, destruction of property and bullying.

A difficult behaviour should be categorised so after ascertaining its nature, frequency, intensity, consistency and pattern to decide the existence and nonexistence of a particular behaviour.

Teacher's Perceptions

Balson (1992), Walker, Ramsey, & Gresham (2004) conclude that when teachers complain that they do not understand particular children's misbehaviour, and they are not aware of the purpose or the goal of the child's behaviour. Balson (1992) and Rogers (2000) teachers create injustices for all students when they concentrate on student behaviour rather than talking with children about what is important to them by building a good relationship with them. Prochnow & Bourke (2001) claim concentrating on exhibited physical behaviour alone does not take into account those individuals who present withdrawn, depressed, anxious and docile behaviours, who are often over looked by educators as they focus on dealing with the behavioural challenges of louder and more aggressive types of behaviours in nature. Walker et al (2004), Watkins and Wagner (2000) believe that it is a common practice for teachers to develop a negative focus on the unacceptable behaviour which leads to a 'punishment that fits the crime' approach, when dealing with challenging behaviours in their classrooms. Kauffman et al (2002) claim there is much greater agreement among teachers about what behaviour is prohibited that what is demanded. That is, teachers find it easier to specify what they will not tolerate than to specify the appropriate behaviour that they demand. Perhaps this is a result of our culture's focus on punishment as the primary means of behaviour control. MacFarlane (2007) believes confronting an angry or distraught student in public who is attempting to deal, however imperfectly, with an incident they created, may "merely serve to further damage their self-esteem and self-efficacy".

There has been considerable research undertaken suggesting that how teachers conceptualise the causes of behaviour they see as worrying and disturbing, bears a strong relationship to their own emotional and cognitive response to the behaviour (Chesebro & McCroskey, 2002; Wearmouth, Glynn, & Berryman, 2005). Brophy & Good (1984) further suggests that teachers' actions toward students may be reactions to the students' behaviour and this means that the teacher may often respond in a "knee jerk" reaction.

Kroeger & Bauer (2004) suggest a teacher can often create a classroom environment in an image of their own childhood experiences and cultural influences. Thorsborne & Vinegrad (2006) suggests that behaviors are contextual of

culture, situation and purpose. Thus difficult behaviours are needed to be standardized in reference to the population on which research is being done.

According to Weinstein (2002) most students respond positively to a well-organised classroom led by an enthusiastic teacher who is willing to understand their students and be flexible in their approach. Teachers who show a genuine interest in students and what they learn and do are more likely to build strong positive relationships with their students and as a result are better able to manage challenging behaviours in their classrooms. Walker and Whitaker (2004) state that teachers need to identify their individual perceptions of challenging behaviour and reflect on their own personal beliefs and the beliefs of others regarding the understanding of challenging behaviours. Dhaliwal (2013) indicate that teachers need to discuss with colleagues their current perceptions and attitudes towards working with those students who present challenges and investigate ways of working positively with these students. School management and teachers need to work collaboratively in order to minimise the occurrence of and impact of challenging behaviours in classrooms. Findings also indicated some issues raised by teachers that were not viewed in the literature reviewed.

It is suggested that every teachers should have a personal definition of challenging behaviour and reflect on their own personal beliefs/perceptions and the beliefs according to some rules. Investigator calls these as rules for a class which could help teacher dealing with the problem.

Rule #1: Avoid Questioning the Difficult Child

Teacher needs to avoid direct confrontation with the learner by means of questioning; rather an indirect strategy works more effectively.

Rule #2: Avoid Arguing With Child

Arguing puts the difficult child on equal footing with you, creating a "your word against theirs" situation. This negates the effects of accountability. It also opens the floodgates: everybody will be arguing with you.

Rule #3: No Need to Lecture, Scold, or Yell

Lecturing, scolding and yelling are all instruments of annoyance; it makes the teacher unpopular among the students. It creates friction between teacher and his/her most challenging students virtually guarantees that their behavior will worsen.

Rule #4: Refrain From False Praise.

Praising a difficult child can also backfire; it will be like punishing by rewards. They are difficult not foolish, that they can't compare their performance with other classmates. Instead, give only meaningful, heartfelt praise based on true accomplishment.

Rule #5: Don't Have Grudge for a Difficult Child

Keeping the problem in focus, gives solution one day, but keep the problem agent in the mind aggravates the prob-

lem. Teacher should not developed hatred for the difficult child, rather should strive to find out strategies for dealing the difficult behaviour.

Rule #6: Keep Patience

Teacher should remember that s/he is not difficult teacher, only the student is a difficult child. S/he should keep control over his/her emotions while dealing with a difficult child. A confrontation should be avoided at all costs, and once it is allowed to happen it will happen frequently.

Rule #7: Don't ignore misbehavior.

Small things grow larger, if ignored at first instance. Make a classroom management plan, devise some rules, make it popular among students and implement it religiously. Enforce the plan and don't let a child break classroom rules, how small it may be. This will stop further degradation of classroom environment.

Rule #7: Be consistent in your behaviour

An inconsistent teacher is in danger to encounter behavioral problems of students in the class. In fact some children become difficult by virtue of partial and biased behaviour of teachers towards students and events. Students must know strictly when they will get punishment and what can fetch them praise of the teacher.

Rule # 8: Develop Genuine Relation with Students

As a first rule of teaching, relation comes earlier than task. Acceptance of teacher is far more important than hi/her teaching. Relation building is most important to build trust and a sense security among the learners. They can open up only in front of a person whom they trust well. A child labeled as difficult child might actually be suffering from non-attention and rejection by parents, peers and even teachers. This simple formula can solve a big problem of teacher and might help the child avoid spoiling.

Conclusion

Every child may have unique story behind their difficult label, but teacher needs to explore this story. S/he just needs to be a good relation manager story will unfold automatically. When teachers continue to think that disruptive behaviour is "that which disrupts others' learning", they do not appear to acknowledge what the student may be trying to communicate and what the student understands about why the behaviours have occurred. Rules are just the guidelines needed to be modified as and when required for context and situation. It is the responsibility of teachers as professionals to be more able than children to maintain control of their own behaviour in challenging situations, and to model more appropriate behaviour to their students. Thus teacher should work as a practitioner rather than just as an academician to identify pattern and characteristics of difficult learners and should work for classification of such children so that specific strategies could be applied to address the problem.

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