

Teaching the Social Curriculum: Discipline as Instruction

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School-Wide Positive Behavior Support Forum
October 4, 2002 Naperville, IL



The biggest obstacle to changing the way things are is the way things are.



What is Discipline?

◆ The etymology of *discipline*:

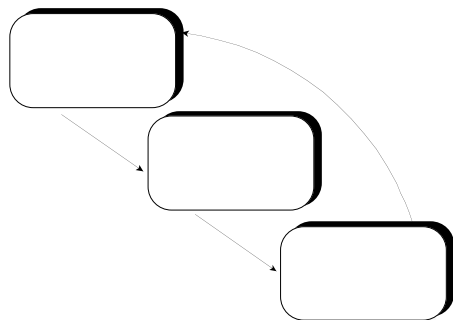
From same *Lat.* root as *disciple*:
discipere: "To teach or comprehend"



What is the Social Curriculum?



Components of the Social Curriculum



Who Needs Explicit Instruction in the Social Curriculum?

- ◆ All kids some of the time
- ◆ Some kids much of the time



"In order for changes in [contingencies] to affect behavior substantially, the person must recognize them."

- Mischel (1973)



Masters of Coercion

◆ Children from abusive/coercive families:

- Participate in escalating coercive cycle
- Advantage goes to whoever gets nastiest

What We Say:

"Take responsibility for your behavior!"

What They Hear:

"They're picking on me again!"



"I figure if I'm going to get in trouble, I'm going to annoy him as much as I can. I'm already going to get in trouble, he deserves it, if he's gonna keep singling me out, so I get on his nerves!...If you know you're already in trouble, why shut up?"

--Student in detention



Testing the Limits

◆ Children from chaotic environments:

- Face a high level of anxiety from never knowing where they stand
- Act out to learn limits, even if it means punishment

What We Say:

"One strike and you're out."

Response:

"What? What did I do?"



Social Understanding

◆ Children from unsafe homes and communities:

- Attribute hostile intentions to neutral interactions
- Strike first, ask questions later

We Say:

"Why can't you just get along?"

Response:

"In the 'hood, this is how I get along"



Academic Underachievement

◆ Children with conduct problems:

- Have academic problems, especially reading/language
- May learn helplessness

We Say:

"Why can't you just do your work?"

They Hear:

"Go ahead. Admit you're dumb!"



“The ‘maladaptive’ individual is behaving in accord with expectancies that do not adequately represent the actual behavior outcome rules in his current life situation.”

- Mischel (1973)



Why Your Kid Needs Social Instruction

- ◆ Media and the culture of violence & incivility
- ◆ The acceptability of violence for problem solving
- ◆ Relationship of day-to-day disruption and violence



Criteria for an Effective Intervention

- ◆ Treatment Integrity
 - Used as intended (e.g. based on behavior)
 - Used consistently
- ◆ Non-Discriminatory
 - Equal Protection Clause of 14th Amendment
 - Title VI of Civil Rights Act
- ◆ Positive Outcomes
 - Improved school safety or climate
 - Improved student behavior

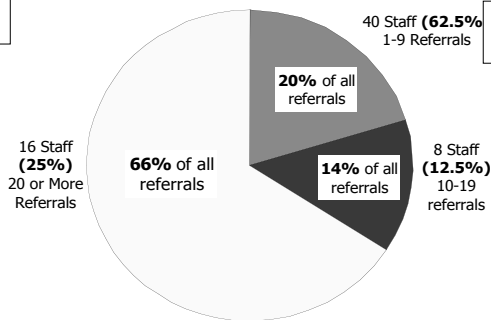


The Roots of “Zero Tolerance”

- ◆ Based in 1980’s Drug Programs
- ◆ Picked up in Schools in 1989-1990
- ◆ 1994: Gun Free Schools Act Becomes Law
- ◆ Has led to significant increases in disciplinary removal



of Referrals Made by Staff as % of All Referrals



School Contributions to Suspension (Wu et. al, 1982)

- ◆ Attitude and behavior contribute
- ◆ But so do:
 - Overall suspension rate
 - Teacher attitudes
 - Administrative centralization
 - School governance
 - Perceptions of achievement
- ◆ More influence of school than student factors



PERCENT OF REFERRALS LEADING TO SUSPENSION BY SCHOOL

School	Percent of Incidents Suspended
1	11.3%
2	13.9%
3	16.5%
4	17.0%
5	17.2%
6	23.3%
7	26.1%
8	30.3%
9	32.2%
10	32.9%
11	34.0%
12	35.0%
13	37.9%
14	38.4%
15	58.9%
16	86.5%

“One could argue from this finding that if students are interested in reducing their chances of being suspended, they will be better off by transferring to a school with a lower suspension rate than by improving their attitudes or reducing their misbehavior.”

--(Wu et al., 1982)



Is Disciplinary Removal Fair?

- ◆ Disproportionality among poor, minorities is consistent finding
- ◆ Not due entirely to SES
- ◆ Do African-American students misbehave more?
 - No.



What Behaviors are Students Referred For? *

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ White students referred/suspended more for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Smoking ● Endangering ● Obscene Language ● Vandalism ● Drugs/Alcohol | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Black students referred/suspended more for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Loitering ● Disrespect ● Excessive Noise ● Threat ● Conduct Interference |
|---|---|

* "The Color of Discipline": www.indiana.edu/~iepc



Improved Student Behavior?

- 30-50% of suspensions are repeat offenders
 - "Suspension functions as a reinforcer...rather than as a punisher" (Tobin, Sugai & Colvin,1996)
- Correlation of suspension and dropout
- Dropout or push-out?



Improved School Safety or Climate?

- ◆ Schools with higher rates of suspension have:
 - Higher student teacher ratios
 - Lower academic quality ratings
 - Pay less attention to school climate
 - Spend disproportionate time on discipline
 - Have less effective school governance



Is IDEA an Obstacle to Effective School Discipline?

- ◆ Students with disabilities over-represented in suspension
- ◆ 75% of principals: IDEA has positive/neutral effect on discipline (GAO)
- ◆ Will using ineffective practice for more children make discipline more fair?



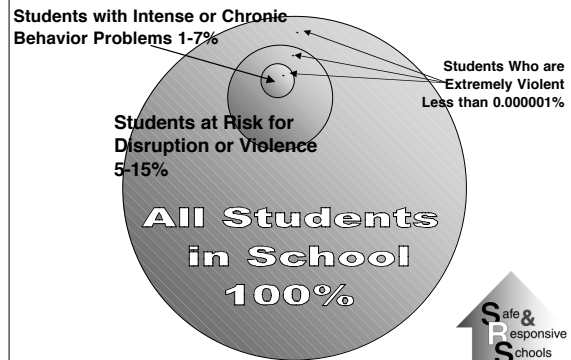
Criteria of Effectiveness for Disciplinary Removal

- ◆ **Treatment Integrity?**
 - Based on classroom, school rather than behavior
 - Very little consistency from school to school
- ◆ **Non-discriminatory?**
 - Consistently overused with minorities, low SES
- ◆ **Effective outcomes?**
 - Correlated with repeat offense, dropout
 - Correlated with poorer school climate

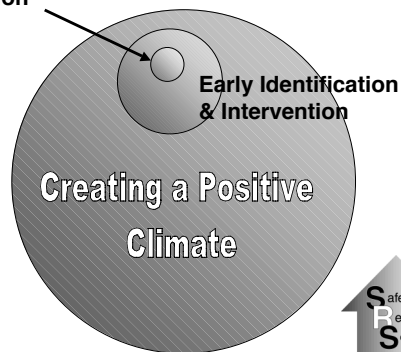


The Probability of Violence

- ◆ Cannot Know When Violence will Erupt
- ◆ Additive Nature of Risk Factors
 - Individual
 - Family
 - School
 - Societal
- ◆ SO... reduce probability by multiple increments



Effective Responses to Disruption



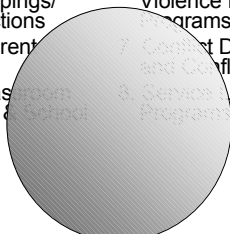

I. Creating a Positive, Welcoming Climate

Provide foundations for good behavior for all students





I. Creating a Safe & Responsive Climate

1. Programs to Improve School & Classroom Climate	5. Teaching School Values
2. Smaller Groupings/ More Connections	6. Social Skills Instruction/ Violence Prevention Programs
3. Increased Parent Involvement	7. Conflict De-Escalation and Conflict Resolution
4. Improved Classroom Management & Student Discipline	8. Service Learning Programs

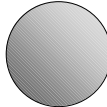

II. Early Identification & Intervention

Identify and serve “at-risk” students

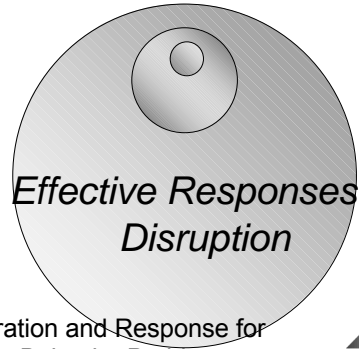

II. Early Identification & Intervention

1. Early Identification	4. Anger Management/ Counseling
2. Assess “Dangerousness”	5. Mentoring Programs
3. Plans for dealing with threats	6. Academic Support Programs



III. Effective Responses to Disruption

Preparation and Response for Serious Behavior Problems


III. Effective Responses to Disruption

1. Behavior Support Teams	5. Coordinate with Outside Agencies
2. Array of Disciplinary Alternatives	6. School Based Mental Health Services
3. Functional Assessment	7. Develop <i>Effective</i> Alternative Options
4. Involving Students in Choice and Decision Making	8. Emergency Preparation & Crisis Planning

Criteria of Effectiveness for Instructional Discipline

- ◆ **Treatment Integrity?**
 - Some evidence (e.g. Blueprints series)
 - Still under investigation
- ◆ **Non-discriminatory?**
 - Some programs specifically targeted at urban school problems (e.g. Hammond & Jung)
- ◆ **Effective outcomes?**
 - Effective, promising approaches identified
 - e.g. (Surgeon General, CDC)
 - Can schools implement these approaches?



The Safe & Responsive Schools Project

The Safe and Responsive Schools Project designed a process to enable schools to use our best knowledge to develop comprehensive and preventive plans to address violence and disruption.

Elements

- ◆ Three-tiered prevention model
- ◆ Aimed at increasing school options
- ◆ School-based needs assessment and team planning process



SRS Strategic Planning

◆ Problem Solving Process

- Needs assessment
- Identify best practices
- Develop school plan



I. Creating a Positive Climate

To what extent does your school have:

1. Programs for students who are struggling academically?

1	2	3	4	5
No awareness	Know of, but not used	Good awareness Beginning to use	Frequently used	Well-estab school-wide

Documentation:

2. One or more programs that focus on building a sense of community or a sense of belonging for students in your school?

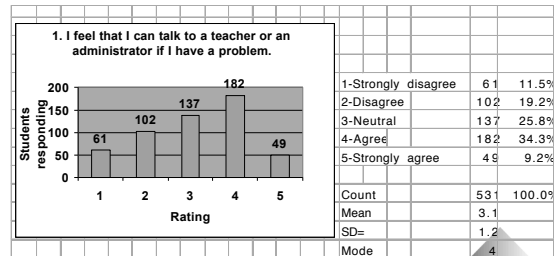
1	2	3	4	5
No awareness	Know of, but not used	Good awareness Beginning to use	Frequently used	Well-estab school-wide

Documentation:



SRS School Safety Survey

Sample Item Analysis



A Menu of Options for Safe School Planning

- Creating a Positive Climate
 - Conflict Resolution Curricula
 - Classroom Management
 - Bullying Prevention
- Early Identification and Intervention
 - Risk Factors & Threat Assessment
 - Mentoring, Anger Management
- Effective Responses
 - FA/Individual Behavior Plans
 - Crisis Intervention
 - Wraparound Planning
 - Alternative Settings



Team Plans

◆ Spencer Owen

- Intervention Room
- Safe Schools TV
- Bullying prevention

◆ RBB

- Code of Civility
- Alternatives to Out of School Suspension

◆ Beatrice

- Mentoring
- "Community Connections"
- Early identification and intervention



Project Outcome Data



School Team Evaluation--Process

	IN	NE	Total
Kickoff	4.03	4.17	4.09
Fact Sheets	3.78	4.04	3.89
NdsAsses Proc	4.21	4.06	4.15
NdAsses Res	4.16	3.95	4.07
Survey	4.29	4.00	4.17
Other data	3.88	3.86	3.87
SRS Staff	4.32	4.25	4.29
Plan	4.42	4.32	4.38
Team Discuss	4.45	4.05	4.28
Focus on Beh. issues	4.33	3.92	4.16



Greater awareness of options:

As a teacher I have some options now to work with kids, either the victim or the aggressor. Where before I didn't feel like it was really a valid issue that anybody was willing to talk about.. "Well you know if they didn't throw a punch there is nothing we can do" ... So I feel like now we are making valid the comments that kids are making to each other and realizing the effect that just comments can have on a person.

Elementary Teacher



Different views of students and problems:

We thought it was physical safety. We had several conversations about it, especially as it started... And I think shortly thereafter we kind of started making connections between those subtle behaviors that go on in the school and explosive school violence. It's not the one whose doing the picking on who's in danger to the school's outright safety, but it's more of who is receiving the brunt of all that...I can guarantee you that I watch those kids who were being pushed outside of the social circles more now than I ever would have thought of before.

Junior High Teacher



Increased Ownership:

I am much more conscious about the process of trying to help students solve the problems within my own setting. I tap into counseling services and occasionally use the intervention room. But again the heightened awareness has made me much more conscious about making that effort first.

HS Teacher



Changes in student behavior and attitudes:

Kids ...come into my office with a totally different way of behaving when somebody has started a rumor about them. I mean last year they physically got into fisticuffs. This year they have another way in approaching it and a lot of times it is to say " We need to talk to you".

Elementary School Principal

I like it when I hear kids referring to the "code" and they call their friends or classmates on some of their behaviors as not being in line with the code.

Junior High Teacher



More options to keep kids in school:

I just think that we work harder with individual students towards keeping them in school, and keeping them from dropping out or being expelled. I think that there are other options now that we look at and there's a larger range of opportunities for them to remain in school.
HS Teacher



Owen Valley High School: Changes in Disciplinary Data* from 1999/2000 to 2000/2001

	1999/2000 SCHOOL YEAR	2000/2001 SCHOOL YEAR	PERCENTAGE CHANGE (+ OR -) YEAR TO YEAR
Total Number of Suspensions	397	171	-56.9%
Number of In School Suspensions	115	13	-88.6%
Number of Out of School Suspensions	282	158	-43.9%
Number of Expulsions	27	7	-74.0%
Average Length of Expulsion (in days)	94.3	57.1	-39.4%
Number of Dropouts	15	12	-20.0%
Number of Students with an IEP Suspended	113	31	-72.5%
Number of Students with an IEP Expelled	5	0	-100%

Note: These numbers are based on figures reported to the state of Indiana.



Owen Valley Middle School: Changes in Disciplinary Data* from 1999/2000 to 2000/2001

	1999/2000 SCHOOL YEAR	2000/2001 SCHOOL YEAR	PERCENTAGE CHANGE (+ OR -) YEAR TO YEAR
Total Number of Suspensions	1015	687	-32.3%
Number of In School Suspensions	828	571	-31%
Number of Out of School Suspensions	187	116	-37.9%
Number of Expulsions	11	5	-54.5%
Average Length of Expulsion (in days)	43	57.6	+33.9%
Number of Dropouts	0	0	---
Number of Students with an IEP Suspended*	39	20	---
Number of Students with an IEP Expelled	95	112	---
Percentage of Students with an IEP Suspended	41%	17%	---

Note: These numbers are based on figures reported to the state of Indiana.
 *OVM consisted of grades 6, 7, & 8 in the year 1999/2000 but only grades 7 and 8 for the year 2000/2001.
 Thus the appropriate comparison figure for OVM to avoid compounding numbers of suspensions and numbers of suspensions is the last row. Percentage of Students with an IEP Suspended



Edgewood Junior High School: Changes in Disciplinary Data* from 1999/2000 to 2000/2001

	1999/2000 SCHOOL YEAR	2000/2001 SCHOOL YEAR	PERCENTAGE CHANGE (+ OR -) YEAR TO YEAR
Total Number of Suspensions	577	421	-27.0%
Number of In School Suspensions	425	360	-15.3%
Number of Out of School Suspensions	152	61	-59.9%
Number of Expulsions	6	1	-83.3%
Average Length of Expulsion (in days)	38.1	16	-58%
Number of Dropouts	0	0	No change
Number of Students with an IEP Suspended	28	12	-57.1%
Number of Students with an IEP Expelled	1	0	100%



Edgewood High School: Changes in Disciplinary Data* from 1999/2000 to 2000/2001

	1999/2000 SCHOOL YEAR	2000/2001 SCHOOL YEAR	PERCENTAGE CHANGE (+ OR -) YEAR TO YEAR
Total Number of Suspensions	205	179	-12.7%
Number of In School Suspensions	114	125	+9.6%
Number of Out of School Suspensions	91	54	-40.7%
Number of Expulsions	14	6	-57.1%
Average Length of Expulsion (in days)	55.2	116.1	+110.3%
Number of Dropouts	12	4	-66.7%
Number of Students with an IEP Suspended	4	6	+50%
Number of Students with an IEP Expelled	0	0	No change



Lessons Learned

- ◆ Respect teachers' time
- ◆ Student perspectives must be represented
- ◆ Process more important than content for front line staff
- ◆ Effective schools specialize



Conclusions

- ◆ A team-based, needs assessment approach fits school needs
- ◆ A team-based approach can change perspectives
- ◆ The process can impact important outcomes



Challenges in Implementing the Social Curriculum

- ◆ Behavior *can* be changed
"I failed to grasp the power that we had to change behavior. I am from the old school, you know, 'it's a privilege for you to be here with me'."
- ◆ Is Social Instruction a School Responsibility?
 - Misbehavior as an obstacle to instruction
 - vs.
 - An opportunity to teach important life skills



Instruction

=

Discipline



Safe and Responsive Schools Project Websites:

- ◆ www.indiana.edu/~safeschl
- ◆ www.unl.edu/srs



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