



**Laurentian**University  
Université **Laurentienne**



**School of Education**

A special thanks to The Knowledge Network for Applied  
Education Research (KNAER)  
for supporting this project.

And also to our partners for their knowledge and contributions:  
The Rainbow District School Board  
The Sudbury Catholic District School Board  
M'Chigeeng First Nation

# Homeroom: A Case-Based Toolkit for Classroom Management

Respect in the Classroom: Scenario 1	3
What the research says about respect in the classroom	4
Intervention: Scenario 2	6
What the research says about intervention	7
Progressive Discipline: Scenario 3	10
What the research says about progressive discipline	11
Differentiated Instruction: Scenario 4	13
What the research says about differentiated instruction	14
Disruptive/Disengaged: Scenario 5	17
What the research says about disruptive/disengaged behaviour	18
Lack of Home Support/Homework: Scenario 6	21
What the research says about lack of home support	22
Bibliography	25

# Scenario #1 Respect in the Classroom

## Summary of the Scenario

During a computer class where students are supposed to be engaging in an online discussion page, the teacher circulates the room noticing an inappropriate comment "...look what Johnny wrote, what a MORON...." The teacher thinks this may verge on cyber-bullying and approaches the student responsible for the comment. When the teacher reaches the student who made the comment to ask him to remove it, he quickly becomes defensive and agitated. He challenges the teacher saying "It was OBVIOUSLY a joke! Johnny thinks it's funny.... We have to do something to amuse ourselves in your stupid class. At least I wrote SOMETHING!"

To prevent the disruption of the lesson, the teacher attempts to de-escalate the situation and calm the student by talking to him quietly, telling him that this is something to be discussed one-on-one, and asking him to go to a desk at the back of the room. Although the student is very reluctant and comments under his breath, the teacher remains calm.

## *Discussion Questions*

What could Mrs. Ricketts do now? Discuss the "pros" and "cons" of each option.

- Simply let the issue go away
- Discuss it further with the student, perhaps requiring a written reflection on the incident
- Remove his computer privileges and send him to the principal's office
- Have a general classroom discussion about cyber-bullying and classroom rules

What other techniques could be used?



# Scenario #1 Respect in the Classroom

## What the Research Says

Respect is a vital part of promoting a positive school environment. In fact, as defined by the Safe Schools Action Team, a school climate is “the sum total of all of the personal relationships within a school. When these relationships are founded in mutual acceptance and inclusion, and modelled by all, a culture of respect becomes the norm” (Sandals et al., 2006). The authors further explain that creating such an environment is beneficial to the entire school community by allowing students, parents and staff members to feel safe, comfortable, accepted, and valued. Research done on school climate shows that not only do positive interpersonal relationships reduce negative behaviour, they also increase achievement levels of students from all demographic environments (McEvoy & Welker, 2000). This suggests that respect in the classroom directly influences student success as students not only progress academically but learn about themselves through their interactions with peers and school personnel (Manning and Saddlemire, 1996).

With the development of respectful school climates being so important to the success of students, there has been much research done on ways to improve school environments. Some school climate intervention strategies include providing a safe environment for students, treating students fairly, equally, and with respect, the use of violence prevention and conflict resolution curriculum, the use of bullying prevention and intervention strategies, and finally the promotion of fundamental moral values (Marshall, 2004). In the scenario on respect Mrs. Ricketts attempts to use some of these strategies to maintain the positive climate of her classroom.

Although cyber-bullying is generally difficult to detect or monitor by teachers because it often occurs outside of the classroom, the bullying relationships are often initiated and maintained in school and therefore such acts have an impact on the school climate (Media Awareness Network, 2010). Due to the impact this cyber-bullying could have on Johnny and the classroom atmosphere, Mrs. Ricketts has an obligation to intervene as outlined in her school board policy, which is directed by the Ministry of Education’s Bullying Prevention and Intervention Memorandum (2009). Because this incident appears to be isolated and not worthy of suspension, in accordance with the Progressive Discipline Memorandum (2009), Mrs. Ricketts chooses not to inform the principal. Instead she deals with the inappropriate comment on her own and documents the incident.

When Mrs. Ricketts responds to the behaviour and asks Thomas to remove the inappropriate comment, the issue then escalates from Thomas not only being disrespectful to Johnny through the act of cyber-bullying, but also to disrespecting Mrs. Ricketts as he challenges and insults her.

## Scenario #1 Respect in the Classroom

Before dealing any further with the bullying issue, Mrs. Ricketts first has to deal with the rudeness of the student in order to maintain the positive climate of her classroom. In a situation such as this, although the insult might be hurtful, it is important for the teacher to recognize the student's remarks as a venting of frustration, rather than something to be taken personally (Shore, 2003). When dealing with a student who is intentionally being rude to a teacher, it is imperative that the teacher models what is expected of students and remains calm and respectful by not using sarcasm or arguing with the student. It is then advised that the teacher inform the student that his or her behaviour is not acceptable since it conflicts with the classroom rule regarding the respect of others (Evertson, Emmer & Worsham, 2006). Burden (2009) suggests that if the student continues to act disrespectfully the teacher should take the student aside privately to discuss the causes of the behaviour and the potential consequences if the behaviour persists. It is important that this is done in private to avoid forcing the student to act out dramatically (Morrish, 2000).

If at any point the rudeness displayed by the student turns into defiance, Morrish (2000) explains that the goal of the teacher should be to diffuse the situation by using an assertive tone or humour to avoid any further unnecessary confrontation. It might also be beneficial to give the student options regarding how to deal with the issue, allowing the student to ultimately choose the consequence if his or her behaviour is not improved. The student should also be given time to calm down before the issue is dealt with further (Morrish, 2000).

In the scenario, Mrs. Ricketts chose not to take the insults personally and instead focused on de-escalating the situation by calmly, but assertively, telling Thomas that they will continue the conversation privately once he has calmed down. She then asked him to go to the back of the room for a cool down period, where he would be able to gather his thoughts about the incident and reflect upon the impact of his behaviour on his classmates. In this way Mrs. Ricketts effectively intervened in the bullying issue and dealt appropriately with a rude student, ultimately maintaining the positive climate of her classroom.



## Scenario #2 Intervention

### Summary of the Scenario

The scenario takes place in a grade nine science class during a debate regarding the Big Bang Theory as part of the Earth and Space Unit. The debate begins with appropriate arguments, but before long students stray away from the debate format and begin to argue. At this point the teacher steps in with a gentle reminder regarding the format of a debate. Initially, the students heed the teacher's comment and return to the debate format.

Before long, however, the students begin to steer away from the debate format. Instead of once again reminding the students verbally, the teacher moves in towards the center of the debate, using her presence as a reminder. When the presence of the teacher does not appear to be working the teacher simply waits for a pause and says "remember the format." This time, although the students acknowledge that they have heard the teacher, the debate becomes more heated and turns personal.

When it is evident that some students are getting upset and disrespectful comments are being made, the teacher decides to end the debate. The teacher then reminds students about the classroom rules regarding respecting other peoples beliefs and the rules of a debate. She then takes the students who were being disrespectful aside and has them write a reflection that requires them to outline the good points made by the opposing team and reflect on the importance of respecting other points of view.

### *Questions for Discussion*

What steps did Mrs. Smith take to intervene in the situation?

Were they effective? Why? Why not?

What might Mrs. Smith have done differently?



## Scenario #2 Intervention

### What the Research Says

During this scenario, the teacher attempts to use the principle of least intervention. The principle of least intervention states that when dealing with minor classroom misbehaviours the simplest and least intrusive intervention should be taken (Slaven, 2009). The purpose of using the principle of least intervention is to deal with misbehaviour effectively, without unnecessarily disrupting the lesson (Burden, 2009). Also involved in this scenario is the question of when intervention is warranted and necessary. Several authors, including Gordon (as cited in Larrivee, 2009), Redl (as cited in Larrivee, 2009), and Grossman (2003) provide guidelines for answering this question. Gordon (as cited in Larrivee, 2009), suggests that before the process of intervention is determined, the teacher first needs to evaluate who owns the problem; Redl (as cited in Larrivee, 2009), offers specific scenarios in which intervention is necessary; Grossman (2003), suggests that teachers determine when an intervention should be implemented based on the classroom context.

To determine who owns the problem, Larrivee (2009) further explains Gordon's guidelines stating that the teacher needs to first establish whether the problem is owned by the teacher or the student. If the problem is teacher-owned, the behaviour will have negative and concrete effects on the teacher. In addition, Wolfgang (1995) also gives examples of teacher-owned problems that involve the disruption to the overall climate of the classroom or the safety of the students. Situations students are incapable of solving are also teacher-owned.

The situations that Redl (as cited in Larrivee, 2009) suggests warrants immediate intervention fall into nine categories: reality dangers; psychological protection; protection against too much excitement; protection of property; protection of an ongoing program; protection against negative contagion; highlighting a value area or school policy; avoiding conflict with the outside world and finally protecting a teacher's inner comfort. Redl (as cited in Larrivee, 2009) explains that sometimes teachers run into intervention problems because - instead of addressing some of these issues right away - they wait until the situation has escalated and they begin to feel negatively towards the students, causing them to intervene using strategies that are much too severe for the situation. According to Larrivee (2009), the situations that warrant immediate intervention as outlined by Redl (as cited in Larrivee, 2009) all require surface management techniques, which entails immediate reaction regardless of the causes or motives behind the behaviour.

Instead of focusing on whether or not intervention is warranted, Grossman (2003) instead focuses on the appropriate timing of intervention. He explains that although there are many situations in which intervention is necessary, the effectiveness of the intervention is often dependent on whether or not the



## Scenario #2 Intervention

intervention is carried out immediately or is delayed. Situations in which Grossman (2003) claims intervention should be delayed include the teacher not having all the facts, insufficient time, disruptive effects of intervening, when students are too sensitive to be publicly exposed and, finally, when students are unable to deal with their behaviour rationally due to anger.

During the science debate Mrs. Smith takes multiple steps of intervention before finally deciding that it would be healthier for the classroom environment if the activity ended. In the beginning of the scenario when the students start with the second affirmative, they slowly begin to stray away from the proper format. At first Mrs. Smith decides to delay intervention, for fear that intervening will have disruptive effects on the participation of the students. Instead, Mrs. Smith makes eye contact with the students who are straying away from the format, making a mental note to discuss with them their behaviour at a time that would not destroy the debate. According to Grossman (2003) sometimes it is more effective to briefly signal disapproval to the student and deal with the behaviour extensively at a more convenient time.

As the debate goes on and becomes more like an argument Mrs. Smith decides to gently intervene to protect the activity itself by reminding students of the appropriate debate format. Larrivee (2009) explains that it is important to protect an ongoing program because once the whole class becomes motivated and has an investment in the outcome of an activity, it would only be fair for the teacher to intervene "in order to ensure that the enjoyment, satisfaction and learning of the group is not impaired" (p. 44).

Although, at first, the students heed Mrs. Smith's reminder, before long they begin to steer away from the debate format once again. At this time, Mrs. Smith intervenes by using body language and physically stepping into the center of where the debate is taking place, using her presence as a reminder. This time Mrs. Smith intervenes not only to preserve the activity, but also to protect the students against too much excitement, as well as for their psychological protection. Larrivee (2009) explains that it is important for teachers to intervene when students are becoming too excited, for fear that they may act out in ways they will regret later. He also explains that it is important to intervene when students are ganging up on one another or using derogatory language to prevent psychological injury (Larrivee, 2009). Mrs. Smith, however, soon realizes that some of the students are not reacting to the intervention strategy, and takes a more verbal approach. She waits for a brief pause, takes a deep breath, and reminds the students again about the format.

Although some of the students acknowledge Mrs. Smith's attempt to intervene, others have become too involved and the debate has become far too

## Scenario #2 Intervention

heated. At this point, because Mrs. Smith recognizes that some of the arguments are personal attacks and students are becoming emotional and angry, she decides it is time to stop the debate. It is unfortunate that the debate got to the escalation level that it did and had to be ended. Such a scenario highlights Redl's (as cited in Larrivee, 2009) point that sometimes teachers do not intervene to the extent that they should and instead wait until the consequence of the intervention is too harsh. Ideally, Mrs. Smith should have used more obvious methods of intervention, directly addressing the students who were causing the issue, eliminating the problem early on, while allowing the debate to continue.

## Scenario #3 Progressive Discipline

### Summary of the Scenario

During her lesson, Miss Land notices that instead of following along there are two students who, although silent, are nudging one another. At first, the teacher pauses and glances over to the students. She makes it known that she is watching them and that their behaviour is not appropriate. For a brief moment the students stop. A few minutes later, while her back is to the students, she hears a noise and some yelling and turns around to find one of the students grabbing his arm. The teacher directs the student's attention to the chart paper that lists the class rules, and asks the student about school rules and the consequences regarding horseplay.

The following day, a similar scenario ensues and again the students start playfully bothering one another. This time, the teacher tries to physically stop the problem by not only warning the students, but also by separating them and taking them individually outside the classroom to find out the cause of the horseplay. Following class that day, Miss Land makes phone calls to both Mario and Ken's parents to ensure they are aware of the situation.

Although speaking with the parents and changing the seating arrangement at first seems to solve the problem, near the end of the class the next day the students start silently motioning to one another. Eventually, when the teacher's back is turned, a soft eraser sails across the classroom and hits the other student. At this point, Miss Land calls down to the guidance office to have a mediation session organized immediately.

Nonetheless, a couple of days later Mario - when entering the class - pins Ken to the door frame in the hallway.

### *Questions for Discussion*

What are the issues displayed here?

How has the teacher addressed the issues using the principles of progressive discipline?



## Scenario #3 Progressive Discipline

### What the Research Says

The Ontario Ministry of Education (2009) defines progressive discipline as “a whole-school approach that utilizes a continuum of interventions, supports, and consequences to address inappropriate student behaviour and to build upon strategies that promote positive behaviours” (p. 3). The purpose of progressive discipline is to shift the focus of discipline away from one that is exclusively punitive to one that reinforces positive behaviour through being both corrective and supportive (Roher, 2008). This reinforcement of positive behaviour is achieved through the use of a stepped approach that consists of strategies of prevention and intervention. These strategies, as well as any disciplinary actions, are reflective of the student’s disciplinary history in addition to other mitigating factors (London District Catholic School Board, 2010).

The first step in progressive discipline is the implementation of prevention strategies. These can include, but are not limited to, anti-bullying and violence prevention programs, mentorship programs, student success strategies and character education programs (London District Catholic School Board, 2010). In the scenario, the situation at Ptarmigan School is presented in the voiceover, describing the various programs the school has in place as preventative strategies to address some of the issues existing between the students from Blueriver and Wingcrest Falls. Through implementing anti-bullying and healthy student relationships programs, the administrative staff and teachers are taking the first step in progressive discipline by using prevention strategies.

When Miss Land first notices the two students pretending to hit one another, her initial reaction is to use eye contact as an early intervention strategy. By doing this, the teacher is portraying the message that the behaviour is inappropriate and she wishes for it to stop. Miss Land uses this early intervention strategy after mentally evaluating the situation, the behaviour, the students involved, and their behavioural history. After evaluating the situation she decides that although the inappropriate behaviour should not go without acknowledgement, the situation itself does not warrant more punitive intervention because she does not have all of the facts. Intervening in that way might cause more disruption. There are several situations where immediate intervention can actually be counterproductive and thus intervention should be delayed. These situations include the teacher not having all the facts or not having enough time to intervene. Also the students could be in too sensitive a state or too upset to be open to intervention (Grossman, 2003).

When the situation escalates and there is physical contact between the two students, Miss Land’s evaluation of the situation changes. Upon becoming aware of the physical contact between the two students, Miss Land immediately verbally

## Scenario #3 Progressive Discipline

addresses the behaviour and, as a warning, points to the chart paper in the corner of the room that references horseplay. She then has the students involved explain the rules and consequences regarding their behaviour. In dealing with disruptive students, Glasser suggests that teachers ask students questions regarding their behaviour to direct them back to what is expected. By moving on to a mild verbal response, Miss Land gives the students a warning that their behaviour is not appropriate, and by making them reference the classroom rules, she makes sure they know *why* it is inappropriate and what the consequences might be.

The following day, when a very similar scenario ensues, Miss Land decides to move on to moderate intervention strategies. When the students are still bothering one another, Miss Land intervenes with a warning, as well as changing seating arrangement. Burden (2009) explains that sometimes problems occur because of conflicts with certain students, or simply because the seating arrangement allows for easy interaction. If the inappropriate reactions are a result of either of these causes, the most logical consequence would be to move the students (Burden, 2009). Miss Land also decides to speak to each student individually at a more appropriate time to find out the cause of the conflict. After giving her class direction to work independently, she meets each of the boys just outside the classroom door to discuss the issue with them privately. She then refers them to the conflict resolution program within the school as an ongoing intervention strategy. The purpose of ongoing intervention strategies is to address the causes of inappropriate behaviour and to sustain and promote positive behaviour (London District School Board, 2010).

Although the intervention strategies work for a short period of time, before long the students return to their inappropriate behaviour and Miss Land turns around to see a soft eraser sailing across the classroom, hitting one of the students. Miss Land decides that the students are not in the right frame of mind for class because they are distracted and disrupting the learning environment of the whole classroom. Miss Land decides that the two students could benefit from a mediation session with the guidance counsellor. She calls down to the guidance office to have the counsellor escort the students out of the classroom to the location where the mediation session will take place.

A few days later, upon entering the classroom, one of the students pins the other student against the classroom doorframe. Immediately the teacher steps in to end the altercation but decides that at this point - because she has already taken multiple steps of intervention including a non-verbal cue, a verbal warning, a physical separation, and a discussion of the underlying issues - the next step in intervention should be a referral to the principal. The teacher will provide the principal with the proper documentation showing all of the steps she has taken, and from there the principal will look at other mitigating factors before determining the consequences.

## Scenario #4 Differentiated Instruction

### Summary of the Scenario

Mr. Thompson's grade four classroom is set up with speakers around the room because he has a student in the class with a hearing impairment. Sally is not the first student Mr. Thompson has taught with a hearing impairment, although he has never had the opportunity to use the microphone system before. One technique he has used in the past, and continues to employ, is putting "key terms" on the board. He has also paired her with a strong student as a seat-mate, tried to use group work often, and placed Sally near the front of the class. The students in Mr. Thompson's room are also aware of Sally's hearing impairment and generally try their best to be supportive of her.

With his microphone Mr. Thompson carries on with his lessons the way he would teach any other class, but for some reason, Sally still can't keep up. When she is asked direct questions she responds, but she has difficulty with classroom discussions and delays in starting independent assignments because she often misses important details and has to watch the cues of her classmates. Although the key words help, Sally still struggles.

### *Questions for Discussion*

What steps did the teacher take to help Sally?

What **other** steps could the teacher take to help Sally?





## Scenario #4 Differentiated Instruction

### What the Research Says

In 2008, *Reach Every Student: Energizing Ontario Education* was released by the Ontario government and involved a plan to close the gap in student achievement by first raising the bar for *all* students. The mission states “Our commitment is to every student. This means ... [ensuring] that we develop strategies to help every student learn, no matter their personal circumstances” (Ministry of Education, 2008). Working towards this mission several guiding principles of *Education for All* (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2005) were developed. These principles outline the ideas that all students can succeed, all students learn differently, and universal design and differentiated instruction are effective ways to meet the different learning styles of these unique students. Differentiated instruction is “a systematic approach to planning curriculum and instruction for academically diverse learners. It is a way of thinking about the classroom with the dual goals of honoring each student’s learning needs and maximizing each student’s learning capacity” (Tomlinson and Strickland as cited in OSSTF/FEESO Critical Issues Series, 2009). Differentiated instruction then, is a key strategy used to assist students with different learning needs, as well as those with more obvious exceptionalities.

According to the Canadian Hearing Society (2011) hearing loss is the fastest growing disability in North America. This is problematic because not only are hearing disabilities widespread, they are also often unrecognized and misunderstood (Winzer, 2005). These misunderstandings stem from the belief that hearing impairments simply affect someone’s ability to hear when, in actuality, it affects their ability to communicate. In fact, hearing impairment for children is particularly threatening because hearing is so critical for learning in the traditional sense. To assist these students, various assistive technologies (AT) are used in conjunction with various strategies implemented by the teacher through differentiated instruction. The teacher also uses modifications and accommodations, as outlined by the student’s Individual Education Plan (IEP) to meet the student’s needs.

In the scenario, Sally is equipped with an assistive listening device in the form of an FM (frequency modulation) system that amplifies speech from a microphone worn by the teacher, to a speaker set up in the classroom. FM systems are useful because, unlike a hearing aid, which has a two metre restriction range, FM systems allow the student to hear the teacher clearly from anywhere in the classroom (Winzer, 2005). Although this form of assistive technology is beneficial to Sally, it does not provide her with an equal opportunity for learning without the utilization of various other accommodations and strategies. Due to the fact that Sally is hard of hearing, she also has been given an IEP. The IEP summarizes her medical

## Scenario #4 Differentiated Instruction

information, the assistive technology she uses, her areas of need, her areas of strength, the various accommodations being made to her instruction, assessment, environment, and finally, the special education programs in which she is involved in.

One of the major problems exhibited in the scenario is that Mr. Thompson relies too heavily on the assistive technology Sally uses and his own past experiences, without consulting the IEP. This is problematic because although Mr. Thompson may have experience with students who are hard of hearing, all students learn differently and have different needs.

Despite failing to initially refer to Sally's IEP, Mr. Thompson does make several attempts at using differentiated instruction to support Sally as well as the other diverse learners in his classroom. One of the areas in which Mr. Thompson uses differentiated instruction is through the learning environment. This involves making alterations to the layout of the classroom, involving aspects such as space or lighting, to make the classroom more supportive of all students (Alberta Education, 2005). Mr. Thompson does this by creating a seating arrangement that incorporates groups and allows students to collaborate. He differentiates Sally's environment specifically by not only sitting her beside a strong student, but by also placing her near the front of the classroom to have a better view of the teacher and the whiteboard during lessons.

Mr. Thompson also differentiates the various learning activities of his students. By doing so, teachers can adapt the ways in which students participate, the time frames they have to complete work, the materials they use, and the degree of structure that assignments have (Alberta Education, 2005). Mr. Thompson implements differentiated instruction by providing students with the opportunity to use various skills and by giving students multiple options for completing assignments. For Sally, he also tries to have times with different levels of sound to give Sally a sensory break.

Finally, the last way in which Mr. Thompson differentiates instruction is through the way he presents information to his students. Varying the way in which information is presented to students can help enhance students' interest and understanding by catering to their different abilities and learning styles (Alberta Education, 2005). Mr. Thompson implements this type of differentiated instruction by having instructions displayed in key words on the chalkboard, by having students repeat instructions, by making use of visual materials such as diagrams and charts, and by having lessons that are explained or presented as the students move around.

## Scenario #4 Differentiated Instruction

Although Mr. Thompson attempts to accommodate Sally by differentiating his instruction to involve seating arrangement in groups, sensory breaks, and visual instructions, Sally still falls behind partly because Mr. Thompson has not consulted her IEP. An IEP is “a written plan describing the special education program and/or services required by a particular student, based on a thorough assessment of the student’s strengths and needs – that is, the strengths and needs that affect the student’s ability to learn and to demonstrate learning” (Ministry of Education, 2004, p 6). Although the *Individual Education Plan Resource Guide* states that teachers should not feel restricted by the instructional, environmental and assessment accommodations outlined in the IEP, classroom teachers need to be aware of them (Ministry of Education, 2004). It is important for the classroom teacher to be aware of the different accommodations and strategies outlined in the IEP not only for implementation purposes, but also because the IEP is a working document that needs to be adjusted as new successful strategies are introduced and as strategies stop working (Ministry of Education, 2004).

By examining Sally’s IEP with the special education teacher, Mr. Thompson discovers that one of Sally’s strengths that he was not aware of is lip reading. Lip reading, or speech reading as it is sometimes called, is the skill that involves the understanding of speech through examining the movement of the lips and facial expressions (Winzer, 2005). Although lip reading is not an infallible technique for understanding speech because not all words are visible on the lips, if teachers are aware of a student’s ability to use the technique, they can use other adaptations to assist the students with their lip reading. By becoming aware of Sally’s skill in lip reading, Mr. Thompson will be able to make further accommodations for Sally’s learning environment by making sure he is facing Sally when he is talking, placing Sally’s desk near the front of the room where she will be able to see his lips better, situating himself in close proximity to the student when talking, and finally by speaking naturally (Winzer, 2005).

Other suggestions found in Sally’s IEP include instructional and assessment accommodations. An instructional accommodation that is mentioned in her IEP involves providing her with written instructions for her assignments. In addition, she should be provided with outlines of lessons and photocopies of notes. Students who are hard of hearing have difficulty taking notes while listening (Winzer, 2005) because they have to rely on their sense of sight for lip reading. In terms of assessment, Sally’s IEP states that she should be given multiple assignment options and extra time to complete the assignments. Sally is much more likely to be successful because the accommodation strategies are research-based and geared towards her particular needs.

## Scenario #5 Disruptive/Disengaged

### Summary of the Scenario

Juan is a student in Mr. Thompson's class who never volunteers to read, does not speak during classroom discussions, and who is constantly making noise by playing with things at his desk. When the teacher calls on Juan to read, or for an answer, the student regularly responds with a silly remark to get the whole class laughing in order to take the pressure off not knowing the answer. Although the teacher is initially shocked by the answer of the student, he ignores it and prompts the student toward the correct answer, giving him processing time and another prompt.

The video then skips to another scene where Juan is disrupting his fellow classmates by drawing a bat on his desk. To avoid disrupting the lesson the teacher walks by, silently takes the marker out of the student's hand, and decides to talk to him one on one after the lesson. The video skips to another scene where Juan is crumpling paper at his desk. To address this Mr. Thompson uses proximity and Juan puts the paper away.

After observing the multiple ways in which Juan was disruptive that day, Mr. Thompson decides to plan for the next week proactively by finding multiple ways to engage Juan more fully. First, Mr. Thompson decides to get Juan a tension ball, giving him something to fiddle with, while remaining quiet. He then tries to design lessons that have some kinesthetic element to them. Finally he finds a way to somehow include vampire bats (which are a strong interest of the student) into the lesson in hopes of grabbing his attention and allowing him to show his expertise.

### *Questions for Discussion*

What are the classroom management issues presented here?

Who owns the problem?

How might you as a teacher approach this problem?



## Scenario #5 Disruptive/Disengaged

### What the Research Says

Research on disruptive behaviour indicates that many students act disruptively because they are disengaged and unsure of what is expected of them. Thus, in order to prevent students from acting out and being disruptive, teachers need to proactively plan for misbehaviour and engage students rather than disciplining them reactively. In fact, in a study done by Jones and Jones (2007), they discovered that effective and ineffective classroom managers often times responded to misbehaviour in similar ways, but differed in that only the effective managers actively used a variety of teaching methods to prevent negative and disruptive behaviour from beginning. From this it can be concluded that the best way to stop or lessen Juan's disruptive behaviour in the classroom is to first deal with his issue of disengagement.

Research done by Willms, Friesen, and Milton (2009) suggests that engagement is reflective of the expectations placed upon students as well as the school atmosphere in which they learn. Students who attend school in a positive school climate where there are high student expectations are much more likely to display student engagement than those who attend school where there are low expectations or a negative environment. According to Willms, Friesen and Milton (2009), positive school and classroom environments that promote student engagement reflect effective use of time, high student expectations, positive student/teacher relationships, and appropriate instructional challenges. Assuming then that Mr. Thompson realizes that the reason for Juan's disruptive behaviour stems from his disengagement, the first thing he will need to do to change Juan's behaviour is to change the environment and the process by which he is learning.

In the initial part of the scenario it is obvious that Juan is disengaged through his day dreaming and inability to answer the question. Although Mr. Thompson gains Juan's attention briefly by prompting him for an answer, Juan quickly becomes disengaged again and starts playing with objects in his desk. To succeed in stopping Juan's distracting, disengaged behaviour, Mr. Thompson needs to find a way to intrinsically motivate him and bring his learning to life. According to Gagne et al., (as cited in Burden 2009), there are four elements to motivation: interest, relevance, expectancy and satisfaction. To engage Juan then, Mr. Thompson needs to find a way to arouse Juan's curiosity, make the information relevant to him, make him believe that he can succeed, and find a way to reward him either intrinsically or extrinsically (Burden, 2009). To fulfill these elements of motivation, after Mr. Thompson discovers that Juan has a strong interest in bats, he tries to fit bats into his lessons, not only obtaining Juan's interest, but also his expertise, making him feel as though he can be successful before he even begins his assignments. Mr. Thompson then carefully praises his success to extrinsically motivate him.

## Scenario #5 Disruptive/Disengaged

Unsure of all the causes of Juan's inattentive and disruptive behaviour, Mr. Thompson also attempts to use other strategies to focus his attention. Considering the possibility that Juan might be a kinesthetic learner, Mr. Thompson attempts to include kinesthetic elements into his lessons by having the students move around the room or temporarily get out of their seats. Another strategy he decides to try is the tension ball. Research done by Thickbroom et al. (2003) suggests that brain stimulation increases with finger movement, particularly if the students move their fingers willingly. By giving Juan the option to play with a tension ball during lessons, Mr. Thompson is providing him with a method to move in a quiet and non-disruptive way, appealing to his kinesthetic learning style. In addition to the cognitive benefits associated with a tension ball, Mr. Thompson is also addressing the issue of Juan's fidgeting as a disruption to his classmates. In a study conducted by Stalvey and Brasell (2006), students who used tension balls in the classroom experienced benefits including a decrease in inattention and distraction, an increase in writing scores, and also an improvement in peer interactions because they were not disrupting their classmates.

Although Mr. Thompson decides to use several strategies to engage Juan, which should reduce disruptive behaviour, he needs to implement several other classroom management strategies to deal with the behaviour until the engagement strategies work effectively. Some of these strategies include eye contact, proximity, and verbally signaling. The first strategy Mr. Thompson uses to address Juan's disruptive behaviour is eye contact. According to Wolfgang, eye contact is a very powerful technique and is used to reinforce power and authority. When a student breaks the visual lock with a teacher, it indicates their capitulation and subservience to the teacher, as well as their willingness to co-operate (Wolfgang, 1995). To intensify the effectiveness of the strategy, eye contact can be combined with proximity. Knowing Juan's nature and that his disruptive behaviour may not be intentional, Mr. Thompson is confident that Juan will acknowledge his look and cease the behaviour.

Another technique Mr. Thompson uses is verbal signaling. He verbally signals Juan by either calling out his name as part of the lesson to attract his attention, or directly gives him a reprimand. Burden (2009) explains that the benefit of using a student's name as part of the lesson is that it attracts the student's attention and lets them know that the teacher is aware of their behaviour. Burden (2009) warns, however, that teachers should not use a student's name as part of the lesson solely for discipline purposes because it might lead to resentment, as it may suggest that the teacher is waiting to catch the student misbehaving. In addition to calling out Juan's name, Mr. Thompson also gives him a verbal reprimand or direct appeal. Verbal reprimands are very straightforward as they simply direct students to stop their negative behaviour and are more effective when they are delivered in a



## Scenario #5 Disruptive/Disengaged

quiet manner. However, direct appeals are sometimes more effective in that they give students a sense of ownership of their behaviour (Burden, 2009).

The disengaged and disruptive scenario involving Juan and Mr. Thompson is multi-dimensional and there is no quick and easy solution. In order for Mr. Thompson to effectively solve the disruptive behaviour exhibited by Juan, he needs to deal with the issue using multiple steps. The first step he needs to take is to address the disengagement issue. Juan will be more likely to follow along and participate in classroom discussions if he is engaged. This will indirectly reduce his disruptive behaviour. However, being fully aware that the results of engaging Juan will not occur instantly, Mr. Thompson also uses classroom management strategies to address misbehaviour directly.

## Scenario #6 Lack of Home Support/Homework

### Summary of the Scenario

Concerned that Celine will fall behind in class the teacher pulls the student aside and asks her why her homework is never complete. She responds "I don't know, I just don't get it." Mr. Thompson has already created a sticker reward for homework completion but Celine rarely gets a sticker. The teacher eventually writes a note in Celine's agenda concerning this issue and explains to Celine the importance of someone from home seeing and signing it. The teacher also offers extra help to Celine following that day's math lesson.

The next day Celine again comes to school without her agenda signed. The teacher decides to give Celine one more opportunity to have the note looked at before he calls home.

The following day, after the note is again not looked at, the teacher calls home to discover a very defensive mother who does not believe it is her job to teach her child math, particularly when she works shift work and only sees the child in the mornings before she goes off to school.

### *Questions for Discussion*

What steps has Mr. Thompson taken to assist Celine?

What else could he do?



## Scenario #6 Lack of Home Support/Homework

### What Research Says

According to the research found in *School Improvement Planning: A handbook* (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2000), parental and home support is one of the most significant factors contributing to a student's success in school. When students have support at home, their achievement levels increase because they are more likely to have better attendance, complete their homework, and have positive attitudes towards school. This is problematic because this also means that if students do not receive adequate support at home, it may negatively impact their achievement.

There are many reasons that the lack of parental support influences academic achievement. In an article by James Kirkup (2008), he quotes Jim Knight, who explains that the strategy his school uses to narrow the gap in education is to focus on the parents. After studying the gap in education in their region, he was able to link the "attainment gap" with the level of parental involvement in education and found that there was a particular difference between students from lower income families and those who came from higher income families (Kirkup, 2008). He explains that in poorer areas, negative attitudes towards education are often passed down from generation to generation and this leaves children "to their own devices" when it comes to education (Kirkup, 2008). The goal then, to reduce the attainment gap, is to focus on the parents and increase their aspirations, in order to promote the success of their children (Kirkup, 2008). Kirkup also goes on to explain various other ways in which living in a low income family reduces parental support, stating that parents may not have time to help students with homework due to shift work or multiple jobs, they may not realize the impact their support has, they could be intimidated by the education system, they might not be able to help their children with modern-day homework, and finally those with limited education themselves may not understand the value of education (2008).

Burden (2009) also gives various reasons for the reluctance of some parents to become involved in their children's education, explaining that they may view school as being oppressive, they may have had school issues themselves in the past, they may have personal problems that interfere with their ability to communicate, or perhaps teachers or administrators have previously broken promises to them. Another issue, one more specific to homework, is the fact that many parents feel incapable of helping their children, and thus avoid the issue altogether. In fact, a survey done by the Canadian Council of Learning (2006) found that 65% of parents could not help their children with homework.

In the scenario Mr. Thompson deals with such an issue. Although Mr. Thompson makes multiple attempts to communicate with Celine's mother to develop a good rapport with her, none of his attempts prove successful.

## Scenario #6 Lack of Home Support/Homework

Upon first noticing a pattern with Celine's incomplete homework, he decides to use positive reinforcement to deal with the issue in class. At first, Mr. Thompson uses praise and recognition to internally reinforce homework completion. Burden (2009) defines recognition as a positive consequence for appropriate behaviour that may be expressed verbally, written, with facial expressions, proximity, or physical contact. As motivation, Mr. Thompson decides to try token reinforcers. By using a token reinforcer, the reinforcement is tangible and can be measured or cashed in for a reward (Burden 2009). Token reinforcers are often useful when praise and recognition have not worked because they are not only tangible, but a double reinforcer. The student is at first recognized by being given a token or sticker, and then later *all* of his or her hard work is recognized when the student has the opportunity to cash in the token for a desirable reward. Unfortunately, although Mr. Thompson makes numerous attempts to praise and recognize those students who have their homework complete, Celine's homework habits do not change. Finally, Mr. Thompson decides to contact Celine's home.

To inform Celine's parents or guardian, Mr. Thompson first writes a note in her agenda and asks Celine to have it signed by a parent. Unfortunately, the next day when she returns to school, the agenda is not signed. Upon discovering this, Mr. Thompson gently explains to her the importance of her parents seeing the note. He also takes the time to ask her why she has not had her agenda signed and why her homework is not complete. To this, she simply responds with, "I don't know, I just don't get it." Mr. Thompson then writes another note and leaves his phone number for the parents or guardian to reach him to further discuss the issue. By offering his number in a note, Mr. Thompson is leaving the issue open for further discussion at the leisure of the parent in an attempt to develop a relationship of open communication. He also offers Celine extra math help following that day's lesson to ensure she knows how to complete the homework before she leaves school that day.

Unfortunately, when Celine returns to school the following day, it becomes apparent that the parents have not responded to the note. This time Mr. Thompson decides to make a phone call home himself. When he talks to Celine's mother, he is told of the family situation that involves Celine's mother being a single parent. She then very defensively blames him for Celine's homework issue, stating that it is his job to teach her math because, after all, he is the teacher. After the conversation with Celine's mother, it becomes quite evident to Mr. Thompson that Celine is not able to receive the home support she needs with regards to homework. Thus, to help Celine succeed, he needs to find a way to deal with the homework situation in class.

The first change Mr. Thompson decides to make to better support his students during class time is to change the actual structure of his math lessons to make class time more meaningful. He does this by creating more opportunity for group work, particularly if something new is being introduced. In addition, he

## Scenario #6 Lack of Home Support/Homework

focuses on the relevance of work he is giving to students. Mr. Thompson decides to take the time to consider whether or not some seatwork or potential homework is actually beneficial to students or if it is simply redundant busy work. Through doing this Mr. Thompson is able to condense the workload of students, focusing only on what will be beneficial and conducive to learning, thus reducing or eliminating most homework. One final change Mr. Thompson decides to make is to introduce a margin system into his class, so that he is aware of how confident students are with their understanding of a lesson after completing some of their seatwork. Margin symbols allow students to indicate their thoughts to their teachers regarding their understanding of the lesson in terms of difficulty, their confidence in what they learned, whether or not they need the help of a partner, and if they need more time (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 1991). Through adopting this strategy, Mr. Thompson is constantly assessing his students' understanding of the content he is teaching, allowing him to be more aware of instances where he may need to revisit skills or concepts.

## Bibliography

- Alberta Education. (2005). Differentiated instruction. Elements of effective teaching practice. Retrieved September 29, 2011, from the Government of Alberta's Website: [http://www.learnalberta.ca/content/kes/pdf/or\\_ws\\_tea\\_elem\\_02\\_diffinst.pdf](http://www.learnalberta.ca/content/kes/pdf/or_ws_tea_elem_02_diffinst.pdf)
- British Columbia Ministry of Education. (1991). Thinking in the classroom. Victoria, British Columbia.
- Burden, P. (2009). Classroom management: Creating a successful K-12 learning community. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Canadian Council of Learning. (2006). 65% of parents can't help their children with homework, say Canadians. Retrieved October 11, 2011, from <http://www.ccl-cca.ca/ccl/Newsroom/Releases/20061010SCALStructuredLearning.html>
- Canadian Hearing Society (2011). Your donation changes lives. Retrieved October 20, 2011, from [http://www.chs.ca/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=664&Itemid=426&lang=en](http://www.chs.ca/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=664&Itemid=426&lang=en)
- Evertson, C., Edmund, E., Worsham, M. (2006). Classroom management: For elementary teachers. Toronto, ON: Pearson Education.
- Gagne, R.M., Wager, W.W., Golas, K.G. & Keller, J.M. (2005). *Principles of instructional design*. Toronto, ON: Thomson Wadsworth, in Burden, P. (2009). Classroom management: Creating a successful K-12 learning community. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Glasser, William. (1992). *The Quality School*. New York: HarperCollins.
- Gordon, T. (1989). *Teaching children self-discipline at home and at school*, in Larrivee, B. (2009). Authentic classroom management: Creating a learning community and building reflective practice. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.
- Grossman, H (2003). *Classroom behaviour management for diverse and inclusive schools* (3rd ed.). Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Jones, V., & Jones, L. (2007). Comprehensive classroom management: Creating communities of support and solving problems. Boston, MA: Pearson Education Inc.



- Kirkup, James. (2008). Children being let down by parents who don't take time to help with homework. The Telegraph. Retrieved October 11, 2011, from <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/3531340/Children-being-let-down-by-parents-who-dont-take-time-to-help-with-homework.html>
- Larrivee, B. (2009). Authentic classroom management: Creating a learning community and building reflective practice. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.
- London District School Board. (2010). Progressive discipline and promoting positive student behaviour. Retrieved September 27, 2011, from <http://www.ldcsb.on.ca/Policies/J-3-1-Progressive-Discipline.pdf>
- McEvoy, A., & Welker, R. (2000). Antisocial behavior, academic failure, and school climate: A critical review. *Journal of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders*, 8(3), 130- 140.
- Manning, M. L., & Saddlemire, R. (1996). Developing a sense of community in secondary schools. *National Association of Secondary School Principals. NASSP Bulletin*, 80 (584), 41-48.
- Marshall, M. L. (2004). Examining school climate: Defining factors and educational influences. University Center for School Safety, School Climate and Classroom Management. Retrieved September 7, 2011 from from the Ontario. Ministry of Education Web site: <http://education.gsu.edu/schoolsafety/>
- McEvoy, A., & Welker, R. (2000). Antisocial behavior, academic failure, and school climate: A critical review. *Journal of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders*, 8(3), 130- 140.
- Media Awareness Network. (2010). Cyberbullying Backgrounder. Retrieved September 14, 2011, from [http://www.mediaawareness.ca/english/resources/educational/teaching\\_backgrounders/cyber\\_bullying/cyberbullying\\_avatars\\_h1.cfm](http://www.mediaawareness.ca/english/resources/educational/teaching_backgrounders/cyber_bullying/cyberbullying_avatars_h1.cfm)
- Morrish, Ronald G. (2000). With all due respect: Keys for building effective school discipline. Fonthill Ontario: Woodstream Publishing.
- Ontario Ministry of Education. (2000). School improvement planning: A handbook. Retrieved October 11, 2011 from the Ontario Ministry of Education Web site: <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/reports/sihande.pdf>
- Ontario Ministry of Education. (2004). The individual education plan (IEP): A resource guide. Retrieved October 3, 2011, from from the Ontario Ministry of.

- Education Web site: <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/speced/guide/resource/lepresguid.pdf>
- Ontario Ministry of Education. (2005). Education for all: The report of the expert panel on literacy and numeracy instruction for students with special education needs, kindergarten to grade 6. Retrieved October 11, 2011, from the Ontario Ministry of Education Web site: <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/reports/speced/panel/speced.pdf>
- Ontario Ministry of Education. (2008). Reach every student: Energizing Ontario education. Retrieved September 19, 2011, from the Ontario Ministry of Education Web site: <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/energize/energize.pdf>
- Ontario Ministry of Education. (2009). Progressive discipline and promoting positive student behaviour. Policy/Program memorandum No.145. Retrieved September 19, 2011, from the Ontario Ministry of Education Web site: <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/extra/eng/ppm/145.pdf>
- Ontario Ministry of Education (2009). Bullying prevention and intervention. Policy/Program memorandum No. 144. Retrieved September 19, 2011, from the Ontario Ministry of Education Web site: <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/extra/eng/ppm/144.pdf>
- Redl, F. (1966). *When we deal with children*, in Larrivee, B. (2009). Authentic classroom management: Creating a learning community and building reflective practice. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.
- Roher, E. (2008). Progressive discipline: Totally rethinking safe schools. The Catholic principals' council of Ontario. Retrieved September 28, 2011, from <http://www.cpco.on.ca/LawLibrary/BordenLadnerGervais/safeschools.pdf>
- Shore, K. (2003). *Elementary teacher's discipline problem solver: A practical A-Z guide for managing classroom behaviour problems*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Sandals, L., Auty, S., Elliston, I., Hughes, R., Pepler, D., & Ziraldo, L. (2006, June). Safe schools policy and practice: An agenda for action. Retrieved September 7, 2011 from <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/ssareview/report0626.pdf>
- Slaven, R. E. (2009). Educational psychology: Theory and practice (9th ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Stalvey, S. & Brasell, H. (2006). Using stress balls to focus the attention of sixth-grade learners. The journal of at-risk issues. Retrieved September 9, 2011, from <http://www.eric.ed.gov/PDFS/EJ853381.pdf%20pg%202>

- Thickbroom, G. W., Byrnes, M. L., & Mastaglia, F. L. (2003). Dual representation of the hand and in the cerebellum: activation with voluntary and passive finger movement. Centre for Neuromuscular and Neurological Disorders, University of Western Australia, Australia. Retrieved September 12, 2011 from <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1053811902000551>
- Tomlinson, C. A., & Strickland, C. A. (2005). Differentiation in Practice: A Resource Guide for Differentiating Curriculum, in OSSTF/FEESO Critical Issues Series. (2009). Differentiated Instruction. Monograph #41. Retrieved September 20, 2011, from <http://www.osstf.on.ca/adx/asp/adxGetMedia.aspxDocID=8221,765,550,541,442,365,Documents&MediaID=2132&Filename=monograph-41.pdf>
- Willms, J., Friesen, S., & Milton, P. (2009). What did you do in school today Transforming classrooms through social, academic and intellectual engagement. Canadian Education Association. Retrieved September 20, 2011, from <http://www.cea-ace.ca/sites/cea-ace.ca/files/cea-2009-wdydist.pdf>
- Winzer, M. (2005). Children with exceptionalities in Canadian classrooms (7th ed.). Toronto, ON: Pearson Prentice Hall.
- Wolfgang, C. (1995). Solving discipline problems: Methods and models for today's teachers. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.