

# Classroom Management Strategies

# The Theory of Bumps

A proactive approach to positive discipline in the classroom

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There are many situations that can occur in a classroom that could change the tone of the environment. *Classroom Management: A Thinking & Caring Approach* (by Barrie Bennett and Peter Smilanich ISBN 0-9695388-1-2) is a fabulous resource that helps teachers design a well-structured course of management in the classroom. As student's behaviours escalate, it's the teacher's response that will increase or decrease the chances that the defiance will continue. Teachers need to recognize how to match the student's behaviour with the most appropriate response to de-escalate the situation, keeping the locus of control within the classroom and the student back on-task. Bennett and Smilanich call this the "Theory of Bumps".

<p><b>BUMP 1</b> <b>Low-Key Responses</b></p> <p><i>Ch: 10 pgs.</i> <i>186-220</i></p>	<p>The student's behaviour could be attention seeking such as: call outs, tapping, playing with toys, playing with velcro, tattling, talking while teacher's talking, making funny noises, passing notes, rocking in the chair, class clown burping, getting up and walking around, always using the washroom.</p> <p><b>Essential Low-Key Preventive Techniques</b> Teach the students ahead of time <b>WHAT</b> to do, <b>WHEN</b> to do it; and <b>HOW</b> to do it appropriately with regards to transitions (ie: between lessons, activities, and moving between classes), your rules and expectations (ie: what being respected looks like and feels like, being quiet in class appropriate to activity), dealing with allies in the classroom (ie: when more than one student is misbehaving). Use humour and enthusiasm in the lessons through facial expressions, gestures, voice intonation and develop a good rapport with your group of students.</p> <p><b>Teacher's Response to Misbehaviour</b> The teacher should try to meet their needs to belong to feel included, to learn meaningfully and actively and have control over their own learning. The teacher's response should involve non-verbal or minimal-verbal responses that do not stop the flow of the lesson. They are quick, quiet and do not invite escalation. These low-key responses can work in conjunction with one another for greater effectiveness:  <b>* Proximity * Touching desk or object * Mentioning student's name * Gesturing * Giving the "look" * Pausing your sentence * Ignoring behaviour * Using a signal to begin/or give a signal for attention * Dealing with the problem directly - not the student *</b></p>
	<p>The student's behaviour could be a continuation of their attention-seeking behaviour or asserting their power over you such as: talking back, throwing a tantrum, getting the last word in, ignoring teacher's instructions, doing the opposite of what's been asked of them, making statements such as: <i>"You can't make me!"</i> or <i>"This class is boring!"</i>. If interventions are not put into place at this point, their actions could escalate to seeking revenge as in: hitting others, tattling, spitting on others, name calling, fighting, put-downs, wrecking things, biting or pushing others.</p>

<p><b>BUMP 2</b> <b>“Squaring off”</b></p> <p>Ch: 11 pgs. 221-226</p>	<p><b>Preventive Strategies</b> Be consistent with your expectations and delivery of instruction. It’s important to create an environment where students feel they belong, where they are safe, where their voice is respected and where they are encouraged to learn. When students are not involved and believe the teacher doesn’t care, they are more likely to misbehave. Keeping your voice calm, and showing no emotion is a difficult task when the student is engaging you in a power struggle. However, if the consequences of actions are clear to the students ahead of time, even posted inside the classroom, then you can empower them to make the right choice to comply with your request with simple re-direction.</p> <p><b>Teacher’s Response to Misbehaviour</b> The teacher should use minimal words to prevent slowdowns or interruptions in the lesson. With these squaring off responses, the teacher is intensifying the communication with the misbehaving student, making them aware of their actions and your desired action: * <b>Pause</b>* <b>Turn towards student</b> * <b>Give verbal request to stop misbehaviour</b> * <b>Thank them for their compliance</b> *</p>
<p><b>BUMPS 3 &amp; 4</b> <b>Making Choices</b></p> <p>Ch: 12 pgs. 227-253</p>	<p>When the teacher asserts bumps three or four, it’s when the student has continued the misbehaviour despite (or in spite of) several low-key redirections. Their actions could demonstrate the following: continually forgetting their work, refusing to get started on task, sitting doing nothing, won’t complete homework, or blames everything on somebody else. **It is important for the teacher to understand the extent of the refusal, as sometimes these actions might imply learned helplessness, or may indicate a weakness with the understanding of material.</p> <p><b>Preventive Strategies</b> Making choices empowers the student to accept responsibility for their actions. When the student chooses not to comply, the teacher’s response goes to bump four, where they experience that you mean what you say. <u>Consistency is the teacher’s most effective technique.</u> The teacher should have a system in place to allow for less verbal and more visual cuing of chances. Perhaps a number system on the board, or a show of fingers allowing three chances to comply. This will help the teacher keep a calm demeanor to rely on visual cues to help deescalate the behaviour and help maintain a positive learning environment.</p> <p><b>Teacher’s Response to Misbehaviour</b> The teacher should move closer to the student to give the choice as quietly as possible to keep the situation calm and under control, not allowing others to get involved, and allowing the student to “save face”. The teacher can present options to the student that will be desirable to attaining a common goal such as: <i>“You may choose to continue working together quietly or separate and work at your own desks quietly.”</i> As bump three involves the student making the desired choice on their own; bump four is when the teacher ups the ante and will follow through with the “<u>or</u>” part if the student doesn’t comply as in <i>“You can choose to work quietly and not disturb others <u>or</u> complete the assignment at 3:30.”</i></p>

<p><b>BUMP 5 Defusing the Power Struggle</b></p> <p><i>Ch: 13 pgs. 255-277</i></p>	<p>The general characteristics of a power-oriented student could be as follows: a natural leader who has influence on others, he/she may have only a few friends due to manipulation of relationships, are intelligent but behind academically, verbally advanced, very observant of what buttons to push, or one who generates anger easily. Often this power struggle is about a series of events, or other interactions, not just the one at hand.</p> <p><b>Preventive Strategies</b> There are some outside factors that might hinder our ability to sense and prevent a power struggle and might quicken our response such as: lack of sleep, not eating properly, past experience with the student or having external problems to deal with. In addition to our own experiences, we need to consider the life of that particular student as it relates to their actions. If their life is full of strife, they may resort more easily and quickly to power as that is what they do at home. It is our role to teach them to respond appropriately, while keeping decorum and positivity inside the classroom. When the teacher is involved in a power struggle with one student, they may have to assign a task for the other students to complete on their own and deal quietly with the student who is misbehaving to encourage the right choice.</p> <p><b>Teacher's Response to Power Struggle</b> The teacher should move closer to the student to keep the situation calm and deescalate voices and behaviours: * <b>Stop teaching and pause instruction</b> * <b>Square off</b> * <b>Make eye contact</b> * <b>Take one or more deep breaths</b> * <b>Deal with any allies</b> * <b>Do or say something that shifts the locus of control</b> * <b>Pause and allow the student to save face</b> * <b>Describe the situation and ask that disruption not continue</b> * <b>Up the ante and state your consequence</b> * <b>Bring closure to the interaction with an appropriate statement such as "thank you" or "I appreciate it" / or follow through with consequence*</b></p>
<p><b>BUMP 6 Informal Logical Contracts</b></p> <p><i>Ch: 14 pgs. 279-291</i></p>	<p>Setting up an informal contract signifies that the student's behaviour has not improved despite several redirections, consequences and home contact. By having an informal chat with the student about their misbehaviour, it shifts the responsibility to the student, allowing the teacher to deal with the problems by use of a proactive responses to actions, and minimizes the time spent dealing with misbehaviour during instructional times. It also allows an opportunity for the student and teacher to work together to develop a positive plan of action, and offers them the chance to re-establish a more positive working relationship (which may be what the student wanted in the first place).</p> <p><b>Preventive Strategies</b> Prior to its implementation, the teacher should have discussed the necessity for an informal contract with the student's parents. The teacher should have maintained records of incidents and telephone calls with home. By analysis of these records, the teacher should be able to recognize a pattern of actions (ie: regularity of subject/time of day, frequency following unstructured times such as recess or transitions, placement near or with other students, or following events happening outside of school.) Before chatting with the student, decide on three main behaviours you would like to stop. Focus on specific actions instead of just asking the student to stop disrupting the class. Review classroom rules and expectations with them. Discuss logical consequences to this student when/if they occur, that may be different than rules already established with others. Inquire about positive</p>

	<p>reinforcement opportunities to employ at school and at home for improvement of behaviour. Plan a separate tracking sheet to record frequency of compliance as well as non-compliance. Schedule another meeting to review goals.</p> <p><b>Teacher’s Response to Contract</b>          Be consistent with your consequences as they may differ for this specific student than from the others in the class. The teacher should focus on only the three main behaviours and try to ignore other behaviours, as can be tolerated. Should the student not demonstrate sufficient improvement over time, the move to a formal contract should be discussed which would involve other staff members or administration who are able to bring additional skills into the process of conflict resolution.</p>
<p><b>BUMPS 7, 8, 9 and 10</b></p> <p><b>Formal Contracts, Informal and Formal Suspensions</b></p> <p><i>Ch: 15 pgs. 293-307</i></p>	<p>A formal contract is a last response by a school staff and parents to assist the student to take action about whether or not to be part of the school’s learning environment. It’s a written document that is signed by participating parties: the teacher, the student, his/her parents, the administrator, and other support staff. In order for this contract to work, all parties must agree to give support and reinforcement.</p> <p><b>Preventive Strategies</b>          Prior to making a formal contract, the school team should have reviewed teacher’s records of incidents, their analysis of behaviours, strategies employed in class, student’s attendance and academic records, and specific behaviour tracking sheets from the informal contract stage. They should discuss an action plan that consists of specific consequences for persistent behaviours that may include leaving the classroom to work in another room, or resulting in documented formal suspensions.</p> <p><b>Teacher’s Response to Formal Contracts</b>          The intent of the formal contract is to remove the teacher from the position of controller to one of the implementer of the terms of the contract. Over time, this frees the teacher to concentrate on the positive aspects of the student’s behaviour. It is crucial that the teacher be consistent with the structure and management strategies as discussed in the contract. The teacher is also the one to make the decision to move to the formal consequence as agreed upon at the meeting and should maintain strong communication with all involved parties as to the success of the student.</p>

Bumps 3, 4 and 5 are often used with our “tough kids”. The wording from this document should help you create the wording for your Safety Plans.