

Module Summary

In this module, teachers will:

- Explain the relationship between rules, behavioral expectations, and consequences.
- Describe the criteria for effective consequences.
- Create logical consequences to address breaches of classroom rules and expectations.

Module activities:

Teachers will learn a process for creating logical consequences that are aligned to classroom rules and behavioral expectations. They will also practice creating consequences for some common classroom misbehaviors, and comparing their consequences against a set of criteria (as well as exemplars).

**This module is part of a three-part series that includes the modules “Understanding Consequences” and “Delivering Consequences”*

Key Takeaways

Essential knowledge:

Consequences are behavioral interventions that are directly related to a misbehavior, and designed to promote student responsibility (Shindler, 2010). The purpose of using consequences is to create an environment that supports student learning and safety. By contrast, punishments are usually disconnected from the problem behavior, and their purpose is to create discomfort or pain so that students will not commit the behavior again. Punishments can erode teacher-student relationships, and are rarely effective in creating long-term, positive changes in behavior (Milner & Tenore, 2010; Noguera, 2003).

Essential skill:

Teachers will learn a five-step process for creating logical consequences:

1. **Define classroom rules and behavioral expectations** - A student behavior can only be called *misbehavior* if it represents a violation of established, agreed-upon norms for classroom conduct.
2. **Identify potential misbehaviors** - Brainstorm the behaviors that represent breaches to one or more of the rules or expectations.
3. **Consider the criteria for effective consequences** – Consequences should be logical and proactive, they should promote student responsibility, and they should increase in intensity with repeated misbehavior (Shindler, 2010).
4. **Develop consequences** – Keep in mind that some consequences (e.g. a warning, a meeting with the teacher) could represent a logical response to multiple misbehaviors. See the resource attached at the end of this document.
5. **Check consequences against the criteria** – Compare a consequence against the criteria (from step two) one final time to ensure that the response represents an effective consequence, and not a punishment.

Essential mindset:

Children should receive consequences for misbehavior, but these consequences should be logical and designed to support responsibility and growth. Most importantly, they should be administered with sincere caring and a commitment to helping the student. Teachers should not use punishment to control behavior and enforce compliance; doing so can have a toxic effect on the classroom environment. Logical consequences help students address and solve whatever problem their misbehavior is creating (Shindler, 2010).

The Skill in Action

When observing classrooms, consider these questions:

- Does the teacher have an established set of rules or behavioral expectations? Do the students know what they are?
- Are the consequences aligned to the rules?
- Do the consequences that a teacher gives for a misbehavior actually address the misbehavior?
- How do students respond to the consequences? Do the consequences accomplish their intended effect (i.e. stopping or solving the misbehavior)?

Again, some consequences can apply to multiple misbehaviors. For example, an appropriate first consequence is often a verbal redirection or warning. Similarly, if a student commits the same misbehavior three or more times in a given class session, an appropriate consequence would be a private conference with the teacher. This would take place before or after class, during lunch, or during independent work time. The purpose would be to understand why the student is committing the behavior and how the teacher and student can work together to solve the problem.

The “second offense” is usually the teacher’s opportunity to create a consequence that is uniquely aligned to whatever the misbehavior is. For example, if the misbehavior is inappropriate cell phone use, the sequence of consequences might look like this: verbal warning → power off the device and put it in your backpack → private meeting with teacher to discuss the problem. In this example, each escalating consequence is linked to the misbehavior, and designed to help the student solve the problem.

Be aware that some teachers can get locked into a pattern of assigning punitive consequences (like detentions, demerits, etc.) that do not actually address the problem, and that foster resentment among students. Also consider that misbehavior can arise not just due to ineffective consequences, but other factors as well (e.g. poor organization, lack of engagement, etc.).

Questions for Discussion

The following is a list of suggested questions for engaging in a reflective dialogue with the teacher, either before or after he or she attempts to implement the skill.

- How are consequences different from punishments?
- What is the relationship between classroom rules and consequences for misbehavior?
- What are your classroom rules or behavioral expectations? Have they been taught to students?
- What consequences do you use? Do they meet the criteria for effective consequences?
- How do students typically respond when you give a consequence?
- Are there any consequences that you think you should modify? Explain.
- What help do you need?

Standards

InTASC:

3k – The teacher knows how to collaborate with learners to establish and monitor elements of a safe and productive learning environment including norms, expectations, routines, and organizational structures.

Use this resource as a worksheet for brainstorming classroom rules and behavioral expectations, and creating logical consequences for breaches of those expectations.

Step 1: Define classroom rules and behavioral expectations

These rules and expectations should be designed to promote the academic success, safety, and well-being of all members of the classroom community.

Statement of Rule or Expectation	Explanation of Purpose

Step 2: Identify potential misbehaviors

Brainstorm the behaviors that represent breaches to one or more of the rules or expectations listed above.

Rule or Expectation	Associated Misbehavior(s)

Step 3: Consider the criteria for effective consequences

✓ Logical, and related to problem behavior	✓ Proactive
✓ Promote student responsibility	✓ Increase in severity with repeated misbehavior

In the table below, create logical consequences for the misbehaviors that you brainstormed in Step II. Keep the following things in mind:

- Some consequences can apply to multiple misbehaviors. For example, an appropriate first consequence is often a verbal redirection or warning. Similarly, if a student commits the same misbehavior three or more times in a given class session, an appropriate consequence would be a private conference with the teacher. This would take place before or after class, during lunch, or during independent work time. The purpose would be to understand why the student is committing the behavior and how the teacher and student can work together to solve the problem.
- The “second offense” is usually the teacher’s opportunity to create a consequence that is uniquely aligned to whatever the misbehavior is. For example, if the misbehavior is inappropriate cell phone use, the sequence of consequences might look like this: verbal warning → power off the device and put it in your backpack → private meeting with teacher to discuss the problem.

Step 4: Develop Consequences		Step 5: Check Against Criteria
Misbehaviors	Consequences	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Logical <input type="checkbox"/> Promote responsibility <input type="checkbox"/> Proactive <input type="checkbox"/> Increase in severity
		<input type="checkbox"/> Logical <input type="checkbox"/> Promote responsibility <input type="checkbox"/> Proactive <input type="checkbox"/> Increase in severity
		<input type="checkbox"/> Logical <input type="checkbox"/> Promote responsibility <input type="checkbox"/> Proactive <input type="checkbox"/> Increase in severity
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