

## MAINTAINING DISCIPLINE IN A SOCIAL STUDIES CLASSROOM

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**ABSTRACT:** *The sole purpose of education is to provide students with basic educational foundation from which they can build a successful career and independent lives. However, indiscipline in social studies classroom causes barriers to students' academic achievement. Thus, teachers' long-standing goal is to maintain discipline in social studies classroom helping them to govern their behavior. Thus, this paper highlights the different types of discipline and ways of maintaining discipline in social studies classroom. The paper concludes by stating emphatically that effective maintenance of classroom discipline is a pre-requisite for smooth delivery of social studies curriculum.*

**KEYWORDS:** Maintaining, discipline, social studies, classroom.

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### INTRODUCTION

Maintaining discipline in the classroom is vital to teaching and learning. The classroom is considered as an experimental lab for children, this is because the major formative years of children is being spent in the classroom and when discipline is not inculcated into them at this stage they grow up to misbehave. The role of classroom discipline in social studies is an important dynamic experience that will enhance their academic achievement and a successful career. Rose & Gallop (2003) maintain that both public and private school teachers agree that the major challenges schools have is lack of discipline in the classroom, Montague (2006) added that discipline most problems in the classroom are not major catastrophes, but they often constitute such things as students coming to class late in some cases leaving the classroom early, reading news or pressing phone which are not relative to the activities in the classroom at that moment.

### CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

#### **The meaning of Discipline**

The definition of discipline is multidimensional because of the fact that the word is used in a variety of ways (Arum 2003). Glasser (2001) see discipline as conforming in totality to laid down norms or rules and as complete obedience to orders. Darch & Kameenui (2003) see discipline as simply punishment and control. Chambers Universal Learners' dictionary defines discipline as a way of training a child in orderly manner of life. When a child is being regulated or control in a setting way to help check his or her activities in class the teacher is in a way discipline the child.

Hanna (2015) not that Classroom discipline is more than the following. It is more than the power the teacher exercises over his students, mere maintenance of law and order in the classroom or the right method of dealing with offenders in schools, punishment and occasional praises and rewards, mere stillness and quietness in the classroom, Discipline according to scholars, it is the application of all those influence which secure or at least try to secure proper conduct in schools. Classroom discipline

is the training that lead to students self restraint, orderliness, good conduct, cooperation and the habit of getting the best out of themselves. It involves intellectual and moral education as opposed to mere order and instruction. Discipline is more than simply getting students to behave the way one expects them to or stopping them from behaving the way one does not want on a specific occasion. Discipline is a continuous process of positive instruction and negative correction through which students are taught to act within specified rules and values. The teaching of social studies can be use to inculcate discipline that will not be restricted in the classroom but the society in general. Though discipline is different from punishment, discipline teaches a child in social studies classroom on how to act. Weiner (2010) note that discipline in social studies classroom setting gives the child a chance to correct his mistakes. While punishment tells the child that he or she is wrong or bad putting pains to the child.

### **Maintaining discipline**

This refers to keeping check of the activities of students in the classroom, to control their behaviour in good manner in the classroom. Also it is important to draw attention to the different between classroom discipline and classroom management, although classroom discipline and classroom management are interchangeably used. Classroom management refers to how things are generally carried out in the classroom, while classroom discipline is the specific management of students' behaviour (Martella & Marchand-Martlla 2011). Marshall (2003) maintains that classroom management has do with how procedures, routines and structure of the class is being carry out. Discipline is about impulse management and self-control in the classroom, while classroom management is the teacher's responsibility; discipline is the student's responsibility.

### **Social studies classroom**

Social studies classroom is a space of room where learning and discipline take place. Edinyang (2015:47) agreed that social studies classroom encapsulates the arrangement of contents, determination of set objectives, organizing learners activities and materials, evaluating and providing satisfactory learning experiences to stimulate learning and teaching processes for the realization of desirable change in learners behaviour. Mezieobi, Bozimo & Amadi in Edinyang (2015:57) noted that social studies classroom influence communication practice which is an inter process of mutual interaction. A good designated social studies classroom enable teachers and learners share meaningful thought and experiences on a given content which will inturn change the behaviour of the learner. Edinyang (2015:48) remarked that social studies classroom look up to a highly interactive environment that will enable effective learning where the teachers and students actively participate in the learning process.

### **Types of discipline**



#### **Preventive discipline in social studies classroom**

This refers to a situation where a teacher tried to put a stop on unaccepted behaviour being manifested by the student in the classroom. Preventing misbehaviour is absolutely preferable because its occurrence is being prevented. Jones & Jones (2001) contend that preventive discipline in social studies classroom misbehaviour is to provide a stimulating curriculum that will involves students in the process of learning so that they can spend no time thinking of misconduct.

**Supportive discipline in****social studies classroom**

This refers to when discipline is attached to learning. Hanna (2015) noted that all students may become restive and subjective to temptation at times when signs of incipient misconduct appear, supportive discipline should be brought to play at such time. Supportive discipline helps in maintaining a good classroom condition and instills self-control to students.

**Corrective discipline in social****studies classroom**

It refers to a discipline that is used to correct misbehaviour in social studies classroom. Hanna (2015) remarked that even when preventive and supportive discipline is the best measure, they cannot eliminate all misbehaviour completely; that corrective measure of discipline is necessary in social studies classroom.

Ways of maintaining discipline in social studies classroom

The main purpose of school is to provide students with educational foundation for which they can build a successful career and independent lives. However, misconduct in the classroom causes a barrier to students' academic achievement; maintaining discipline in social studies classroom is essential for effective curriculum delivery.

**Causes of indiscipline**

Fowers (2008), note that the following are the causes of indiscipline in schools.

- **Favoritism:**

Indiscipline may be caused by teachers who favor some students in their teaching and classroom management. The other students may see this as a sign that everything is allowed in spite of the rules. Other students may also see this favoritism as an offense against them which leads to rebellion.

- **The rules are not enforced**  
when a student is not punished for an offense she/he goes on to commit more offense.

- **Lack of Communication:**  
The rules are not clearly communicated

- **Teacher-student relationship**  
The teacher and students relationship is essential for any learning process. If there is a breakdown in this relationship, indiscipline emerges.

- **Lack of leadership:**  
When the teacher doesn't fulfill his role as a leader, there will certainly be students or students who will be glad to take this role. Thus indiscipline appears.

- **Lack of motivation:**  
When students are not motivated, they tend to work in an undisciplined manner.

- **Bad habit:**  
Some students may have acquired bad habits from previous teaching experiences. Once a student, for instance, has formed the habit of coming to school late, it will be hard for him or her to change this behavior.

### Ways maintaining discipline in social studies classroom

The following are ways to maintain discipline in social studies classroom:

➤ **Know school guidelines:** It is pertinent for a social studies teacher to know the school guidelines on how to discipline a student in the classroom.

➤ **Be fair, positive and consistent:** Maintaining discipline in social studies classroom the teacher must be a be a kind of person young people can have and must be a firm, fair, friendly, courteous, enthusiastic and confidence.

➤ **Keeping the classroom orderly:** The teacher must maintain a cheerful and attractive classroom rather than a disordered classroom which might encourage disruptive behaviour.

➤ **Know the names of students in the classroom:** When a teacher know the names of his or her student it makes it easier for the teacher to quickly pointed out any student misbehaving in the classroom, this will help the teacher maintain discipline in social studies classroom.

➤ Mezieobi, umoru-sule & mezieobi in edinyang (2015) noted that to maintain discipline in social studies classroom, social studies topics and concepts should be meant to focus value education. They maintain that this affective learning derived from social studies instruction induces good behaviour conduct application.

➤ **Increase Parental Involvement**  
Parents truly make a difference in student achievement and behaviour. Schools should institute a policy where social studies classroom teachers are required to contact parents periodically through the year. Half term or end-of-term reports are often not enough. A parent cannot help solve an issue if they do not know one exists. While home calls take time, in the end they can help provide solutions to very difficult classroom problem. This is not to say that all parent involvement will be positive or have a measurable effect on student's behaviour. Nevertheless, this is an area which many successful schools can make a huge difference.

➤ **Create and Enforce a School wide Discipline Plan**

Discipline plans are a way to provide students with a consistent and fair plan of what will happen if they misbehave. While some schools have a discipline plan on books, many do not have disciplinary plans on conduct/behaviour. Having it post in every classroom and in notice boards around the school compound is a good way to start.

➤ **Practice Effective Follow Through**

Social studies classroom teacher should follow thoroughly the discipline plan of the school that is posting in the school. The discipline plan is important so that all students are informed of the consequences for misbehaviour, followings through on the discipline plan is the key to truly fostering discipline in schools. In the

classroom, if a teacher does not follow through and deal with misbehaviour, it will increase. School-wide, if administrators do not follow the discipline plan and support the teachers, it would easily lose control of the situation.



Build a Reputation for Fairness

Hand in hand with effective

leadership and school-wide, social studies classroom teacher should be consistent follow through the belief by students that teachers and administrators are fair in their disciplinary actions. While there are sometimes making circumstances that require administrator to make adjustments for individual students, overall students who misbehave should be treated similarly. Teachers must act fairly for all students if they expect to be respected. If teachers do not treat all students equitably, they will be labeled as unfair. Students will not be keen to follow their rules.



Maintain High Expectations

From administrators to

guidance counselors to teachers, schools must institute high expectations for both achievement and behaviour. These expectations must include messages of encouragement and means of support to help all children succeed. According to McIntyre (2005) Schools that foster high esteem and promote social and scholastic success reduce the likelihood of emotional and behavioural disturbance. Expect that students will behave, not that they will disrupt. Social studies teachers should reinforce this with the way they speak to their students. Teachers should begin the day by telling students their expectations. For example, a teacher might say, “for the duration of this class period, I expect you to raise your hands and be recognized before you start speaking. I also expect you to respect each other’s opinions and listen to what each person has to say.”



Deal with Disruptions with as

Little Interruption as Possible When teachers have classroom disruptions, it is imperative that they deal with them immediately and with as little interruption of their class momentum as possible. If students are talking amongst themselves and the teacher is having a classroom discussion, ask one of them a question to try to get them back on track. If the teacher has to stop the flow of his/her lesson to deal with disruption, then he/she is robbing students who want to learn of their precious in-class time. Sometimes all it takes is for everyone to have a good laugh to get things back on track in a classroom. Many times, however, teachers confuse good humour with sarcasm. While humour can quickly diffuse a situation, sarcasm may harm a teacher’s relationship with his/her students. Teachers should use their best judgment but realize that what some people think as funny others find to be offensive.



Avoid Confrontations in Front

of Students

Whenever there is a confrontation in class there is a winner and a loser. Obviously teachers need to keep order and discipline in their class. However, it is much better to deal with disciplinary issues privately than cause a student to ‘lose face’ in front of their friends. It is not a good idea to make an example out of a disciplinary issue. Even though other students might get the point, the teacher might have lost any chance of actually teaching that student anything in that specific period in class.

According Hanna (2015) the following are attributes a good teacher should possess to maintain discipline in social studies classroom.

A disciplined teacher is one who:

- ✓ Succeeds in getting children to learn in a meaningful, enjoyable and business like manner. He creates a learning environment that is stimulating and disciplined.
- ✓ Creates varied opportunities/learning experiences for children to learn.
- ✓ Always aims at achieving his/her lesson's behavioural objectives.
- ✓ Encourages his children to ask questions and talk about their experiences as they relate to the lesson.
- ✓ Holds the philosophy that all children can learn. He does all he can to ensure that each child has sufficient opportunity to learn something.
- ✓ Is patient with all students, He explains the same thing in different ways and exposes children to several modes of learning. They see, hear, touch etc.
- ✓ Uses class time wisely and efficiently. That is, children are productively involved in learning activities most of the time.
- ✓ Ensures that learning time is maximized and disruption of class time is reduced to the minimum.
- ✓ Ensures that a good percentage of the class time is spent doing things that have academic value.
- ✓ Establishes and enforces routine for time wasting chores such as, change of lesson, submission of assignment, class work etc.
- ✓ Has a clear purpose or objective for every lesson. He gives children explicit guidelines on how to perform each classroom task. He is goal-oriented. He introduces activities that match his objectives. He never digresses unreasonably from what he has set out to achieve.
- ✓ Personalizes his teaching. He treats learners as individuals and he is sensitive to their needs. He makes provision for individual differences by adjusting the pace of his instruction in such a way that the fast learners are not held back and slow learners are carried along.
- ✓ Always resourceful. Uses teaching aids to make lessons more meaningful. He/she is willing to go the extra mile to improvise as the need arises.

## Conclusion

The sole purpose of education is to provide students with basic educational foundation from which they can build a successful career and independent lives. Discipline is a core necessity in the classroom. Without discipline, the objectives of instruction may not be achieved. It is therefore imperative that the social studies teacher instill the spirit of discipline on the children. This paper has therefore been able to discuss the various types of discipline and how it can be maintained in the social studies classroom.

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