

11th Nordic Conference in Elementary Swimming Teaching

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Presentation Notes for Sessions Delivered by Dave DuBois:

- ◆ Carlile Swimming: A Look Inside One of the World's Most Successful Swim Schools
- ◆ Teaching Concepts
- ◆ Teaching Through Play
- ◆ Freestyle
- ◆ Backstroke
- ◆ Breaststroke
- ◆ Butterfly
- ◆ Class Management: Behavior
- ◆ Pool session



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 **CarlileSwimming**

About your presenter Dave DuBois:

With over 25 years in learn to swim, Dave has experienced all aspects of the industry from teaching, to management, to large scale systems development. However, he always considers himself a teacher at heart.

Dave's degree in Visual Communications has provided unique perspectives on the marketing and commercial side of the business, while also giving him the skills to produce training videos for various projects.

After 15 years with the Australian Swim Schools in Southern California, Dave worked as a consultant providing services to leading swim schools and swimming organisations around the world. During this period Dave travelled extensively, working with swim school clients in numerous countries each year. This experience provided an evolving archive of learn to swim solutions from around the world which Dave brings to each new project.

Also involved with the NSSA since its inception in the late 80's, now known as the US Swim School Association, he assisted in developing the Infant/Toddler Swimming Course, one of the first detailed education programs developed specifically for teachers of infant and preschool aquatics. He was also Chairman of the association's Infant Swimming Committee (1997 to 2003). Through this role Dave helped to promote aquatic education, especially in regard to infant swimming.

Dave also led the initial Swim Tour in 2001 sponsored by Swim Australia and continued as the featured presenter until 2007. This annual national speaking tour offered top quality professional development to swim schools around Australia. The event visited more than 18 cities and had thousands of attendees.

In 2003 Dave was recognised as a Guiding Light by the US Swim School Association, acknowledging his contribution and leadership in the industry. 2004 saw the Australian Swimming Coaches and Teachers Association recognise him as the first overseas recipient of the Meritorious Service to the Teaching of Swimming in Australia award.

In January 2008, after a long and successful consulting relationship, Dave accepted the role of Head of Learning & Development with Carlile Swimming. The Sydney, Australia based organisation was founded by international swimming icon Forbes Carlile and currently operates 11 locations in New South Wales and Victoria.

Dave loves being part of the learn to swim community, working to improve the experience for all those involved. Dave lives in Burleigh Heads, Queensland on Australia's Gold Coast with his partner Janine.



Carlile Swimming: A Look Inside One of the World's Most Successful Swim Schools

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First I will explain a little about my journey and how I can to join Carlile Swimming.

We will then discuss a little about Australian culture to help everyone understand the environment in which Carlile Swimming operates, including:

- How swimming permeates Australian culture, even extending into outback communities.
- The important of Surf Lifesaving as a sport, activity and the involvement of Nippers
- The role rock pools played in the development of swimming
- How School Swimming plays an important role

Next, I will talk about Forbes Carlile and the role he has played in the organisation.

And I will give you a profile of Carlile Swimming today:

- 11 locations, 10 are Sydney based and one in Melbourne (Altona).
- 9 locations are learn to swim focused
- 2 locations are competitive focused
- + Head Office
- Geography (distribution of locations around Sydney)

Types of locations:

- Owner/operator (Killarney Heights, Castle Cove, Cross Street, Norwest)
- Fitness Group (Carlingford, Five Dock)
- Council lease (Cherrybrook)
- Leisure (Lane Cove, Altona)
- Admin/Support (Brookvale)

What kind of program do we run?

- We will review the Carlile steps to success – these can be found at www.carlile.com.au
- Year round, closed only for public holidays
- Most attend 1 X week (more are offered)
- Charged monthly by direct debit
- Babies and Preschoolers attend weekday mornings (9:00am-12:00pm)
- School Age swimmers attend weekday afternoons (3:30pm – 6:00pm)
- Weekends offer a combined program (8:00am – 1:00pm)
- We don't offer make up lessons
- Prices: 1 X WK = \$99 AUD/month, 2 X WK = \$158 AUD/month

We will review the statistics to see how the numbers compare between our locations

Our Organisational Chart

Our Philosophies

- "To swim well is an asset for life"
- "Our aim is not to produce champions, but to create an environment where champions are inevitable"

Our Core Values: Communication, Teamwork, Integrity Respect, Quality, Consistency

We love what we do. We are passionate about doing it well and constantly improving

Teaching Concepts

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Importance of concepts that affect the way we teach all skills

Focus on the "core body"

- Competitive terminology
- Applied to learn to swim
- Focus on the "core" instead of the extremities
- Video example
- Learn to swim application

Importance of "balance & comfort"

- Demonstration
- Stability by balance: try new skill
- Stability by resistance: try new skill
- Balanced and comfortable =
 - Ready to try new skills
 - Ready to exchange air
- Key to long term progress

Channels of communication

- Listen (auditory learners)
- Look (visual learners)
- Feel (kinesthetic learners)
- Video example
- Learn to swim applications

Importance of the presentation and performance of the teacher/coach

Teaching Through Play

.....

A review of the compelling reasons to use play, games and fun in your teaching approach

As adults, sadly, we need to work at remembering how to play. It is the primary method of communication and learning for children; Play is important!

Perspectives

- Teachers perspective
- Parent's perspective
- Child's perspective
- The Playful Perspective
- If the child's perspective is a playful one, then one way to succeed with them is to have a playful approach

A demonstration will be used to show how a game or playful activity can be used to teach – Showing it can be a legitimate, effective and important way to teach!

Learning Through Games & Play

- It's all about the presentation; Methodology
- It is experiential and physical learning
- It is similar to how a child learns to walk
- And it's the best way to learn
- Motivated by curiosity, interest and fun = skills gained in the process

Some other reasons to use play, games and fun ...

- Another demonstration will show an activity done two different ways, one of them involving more play and fun.
- The intention is that the second way will be more memorable, more engaging and more motivating for future learning.

It's more than just a word, or description, can you build it into an experience? Can you tell a story? Can you go on an adventure?

Let's relate all this to swimming

A few ideas ...

- Kicks on side of pool (making popcorn)
- Over Arm recovery (painting rainbows)
- Kicking in side position (raining in the jungle)
- Each a little journey ...

Do you have a story to tell? (The group will be asked for some examples of games, stories or adventures they may take a class on that teaches something as well)

Get in touch with the child within, be present, be in the NOW!

When using games and play

- Games can be used as a transition or finish to the lesson
- Games can be used to teach specific skills, example – streamline / rocket ship
- It is helpful to involve the group, involve the water and provide movement
- The entire lesson can be a game or story; the essence of purposeful play
- When you're being creative, there's no limit
- Equipment is great when you have it, but you don't have to have it
- Believe it! If you do they will

Summary

- Teaching through games and play is important
- Learning through games and play works
- I hope you got some ideas to try
- Remember to have fun yourself!
 - When you play and have fun ...
 - You feel good
 - You enjoy yourself
 - And you are a better teacher!

Freestyle

.....

Simple Steps to Freestyle

Is there a right way to teach freestyle? Maybe they're all "right"! Consider the following progression for freestyle and compare it to what you use currently. Parts of it, or the progression as a whole may be useful in your teaching.

F.R.E.E.B.E. Freestyle

- **F** - Float
- **R** - Roll
- **E** - Elongate
- **E** - Establish
- **B** - Breathe
- **E** - Extend

Float

- Balance
- Comfort
- Feel the lift

Roll

- Body
- Back to front
- Bobbing
- Basic skill

Elongate

- Feet and kick
- Body position
- Distance

Establish

- Support for breath
- Kicks in side position
- Arms
- Body Breathing

Breathe

- Rhythm
- Review
- Release

Extend

- Opposite side
- Bilateral
- Bent elbow

What's the best thing you got out of Simple Steps to Freestyle?

Backstroke

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Simple Steps to Backstroke

- The big picture
- Layering skills
- Breathing

Make your backstroke shine "brite"!

"B.R.I.T.E." Backstroke

- **B** - Balance
- **R** - Roll
- **I** - Integrate
- **T** - Top-up
- **E** - Extend

Balance

- Feel the lift
- Balance/Comfort/Air
- Backfloat
- Starfloat
- Arms at side
- Gliding from side independently

Roll

- Body
- Back to front
- Bobbing
- Basic skill

Integrate - "to blend into a functioning or unified whole"

- Kicks
- On back - hands at side
- Kicks with roll - whole roll, half roll
- Kicks on back - one arm up
- Kicks on back - full streamline
- Kick hand, "toe touchers"
- Corrections
- Breathing, splash practice
- Correct head position with object
- Kicking on side w/ floatie/board
- Underwater start - initiated here
- Dips off wall
- Underwater progression

Top-up

- Arms
- Standing practice

- Ear rub - "itchy ears"
- Swim slow
- Teacher's hand under head

Extend

- Start/Finish
- Bent elbow - lane line, wall
- Drills
- One arm
- Object on head

What's the best thing you got out of Simple Steps to Backstroke?

Breaststroke

.....

Simple Steps to Breaststroke

"F.L.I.P.A." Breaststroke

- F** - Float
- L** - Legs
- I** - Initiate
- P** - Promote
- A** - Arms

Float

- Same as freestyle
- Balance
- Pop up (vs. roll over)

Legs

- Flex
- Flex with movement
- Flex with feel
- Sculling

Initiate

- Kick
- Hand positions
- Practice

Promote

- Kick
- Add sculling
- Add breath
- Rhythm

Arms

- Full stroke
- Recovery
- Rhythm & stretch

Hand positions for assisting with the kick

- Blade hand position – Build kinesthetic awareness of areas used for propulsion



- In-Step hand position – Build muscle patterning, amplified resistance



What the best thing you can take from the breaststroke highlights?

Butterfly

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Simple Steps to Butterfly

- General Concepts
- Fundamentals early
- Natural Rhythm
- Avoiding too much too soon

“**STELLAR**” – of or relating to the stars, outstanding

S.T.E.L.L.A.R. Butterfly

S – Start
T – Tail
E – Energy
L - Limbs
L - Link
A - Air
R - Refine

S – Start

- Float
- Body position
- Comfort
- Foundation

T – Tail

- “Tale of the tail”
- Symmetrical
- Feet on side
- Kick hands
- Kick water up
- Kickboard flips

E - Energy

- From the core body
- “Wall bumpers & tummy ticklers”
- Wave machine
- To teacher- arms at side
- To wall - arms in front
- Look for propulsion

L – Limbs

- Arms - separate/relaxed/slow
- Concurrent as kicks are learned
- Teacher assist - front/behind
- While standing/walking
- Arms only – don’t worry about how far/fast

L – Link

- Combine together (arms & kick)
- When each looks good separately
- Let natural rhythm develop
- Lots of head down - comfortable on one breath

A – Air

- Add breathing
- Bubble arm > breathing arm
- Only when head down fly is very good
- Even then intermittently

R – Refine

- Rhythm drills
- One arm fly (to side, to front, each side)
- Kicking work - 2 beat kick drills

Alternative Technique

- “Down - Up - Give it a throw”
- Good progression for adults
- Swim Freestyle, have not tried fly
- Needs fins
- Needs time to develop
- Video - Pool session
- “Slow motion butterfly”

What’s the best thing you got out of Simple Steps to Butterfly?

Class Management: Behavior

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The following pages include all the slides from the presentation on Class Management: Behaviour.

Following the slides are two articles that provided the foundation for this presentation.

Class Management #2

Behaviour



When you think of “behaviour”
what comes to mind?

What is misbehaviour?

Misbehaviour vs Mistaken behaviour

“Misbehavior” makes us think of punishing

“As classroom guidance continues to displace a reliance on traditional discipline, it is important that educators reevaluate other widely used terms and practices. One such term is misbehavior. Traditionally, misbehavior implies willful wrongdoing for which a child must be disciplined (punished).”

Dan Gartrell, Ed.D Bemidji State University, Minnesota
Excerpt from Misbehavior or Mistaken Behavior, Young Children, 50(5), 1995

“Mistaken behavior” makes us think of guiding and educating

In the process of learning the complex life skills of cooperation, conflict resolution, and acceptable expression of strong feelings, children, like all of us, make mistakes. The guidance tradition in early childhood education suggests that teachers who traditionally have considered problems in the classroom as misbehaviors think of them instead as mistaken behaviors.

Dan Gartrell, Ed.D Bemidji State University, Minnesota
Excerpt from Misbehavior or Mistaken Behavior, Young Children, 50(5), 1995

Mindset for our approach:

If we perceive “misbehaviour” =
more likely to punish

If we perceive “mistaken behaviour” = more
likely to assist and problem solve

A fundamental difference ...
Which do you think is more constructive in
our environment?

Tips for working with children in groups

- You don't have to yell; try using a soft voice, children will often try to hear you
- When demonstrating, make sure each child can see you or the child demonstrating
- Try to be at the children's level (water level)

Tips for working with children in groups

- Use positive language rather than negative
 - Tell children what to DO versus what not to do
 - "Let me see you kick your feet like this"
 - *instead of* "Don't kick your feet like that!"
- Make sure that you have the children's attention
- Use eye contact and interact with them

Although you may get frustrated at times and even feel angry, it's not appropriate to express that to your swimmers

So, let's discuss ...

Tactics / Strategies for when things get challenging

VIDEO: Keep them with you

VIDEO: Make them the leader

VIDEO: Make them the demonstrator

**VIDEO: Send them to the end
of the line**

Time-out:

- The purpose of discipline for young children is to teach coping skills and discourage inappropriate behavior.
- “Time-out” is not a first choice, but a last resort technique for a child who is harming another or in danger of harming herself.

Time-out:

- They should be used infrequently and for very brief periods (no longer than a minute or two)
- Time-out may give a child the opportunity to calm down and cool off after a frustrating situation.
- Used often or inappropriately, time-out may not only be ineffective - it may be damaging to the child.

Time-out:

- Time-out should not be used as a punishment.
- Time-out is an opportunity for a child to clear her mind and rejoin the group or activity in a more productive state.
- Teach a child how to solve her own problems with love and support, and time-out may no longer be necessary.

Exclusion / removal from lesson:

- In rare circumstances, we might expel a child from their lesson.
- Grounds for this might be a child who becomes violent or strikes out at another child
- The supervisor should be involved if that course of action is thought necessary.

**“An ounce of prevent is worth
a pound of cure”**

Set the tone from the start

VIDEO: Controlled entry and simple games

Provide clear and direct communication

VIDEO: Giving directions to the group

Keep the class active and moving

VIDEO: Slow triangle pattern, then good triangle movement

Maintain close proximity
to potential problems

VIDEO: Carrying on arms

VIDEO: Demonstration width

Engagement and positive
reinforcement

VIDEO: Engagement and
positive reinforcement

Ships & anchors:

- Addresses holding onto the wall and head up
- It's a concept, could be anything ...
 - ... like "walking the dog"
- Avoids punitive reaction
- Teaches consequence
- Teaches personal responsibility
- Achieves desired behaviour
- Does it in a fun, playful way!

Ships & anchors:

How does it work?

- Directions
 - Why is it important to keep head up and hand on the wall?
 - Explain the “game” version
 - Pretending to be boats (that float and have anchors)
 - Anchor could be hand on wall or back against wall

Ships & anchors:

How does it work?

- Start the skill
- First anchor break = reminder
- Second anchor break = On the dock
 - Important teacher is not mad
 - They aren't in trouble
 - Sitting on the side isn't punishment from the teacher
 - It's just a consequence

Ships & anchors:

How does it work?

- Over a few lessons you can start to see some impressive results ...
- Staying next to the wall with their head up

**VIDEO: Ships and anchors
in action**

Class Management: Behaviour

- Be proactive
- Prevent problems from occurring
- Have a variety of strategies in place
- Use them
- Ask for help ...

**What's the “best thing”
you will take away from
this workshop?**

II. Taking a Look at Behavior

MISBEHAVIOR OR MISTAKEN BEHAVIOR

Dan Gartrell, Ed.D
Bemidji State University, Minnesota

(Excerpt from Misbehavior or Mistaken Behavior, *Young Children*, 50(5), 1995, p. 27-34.
Reprinted with permission from NAEYC.)

A common situation in early childhood classrooms is when two children argue over use of a toy car. In this scenario two teachers handle the situation differently. **Teacher one** arrives, takes the car, and declares that because the children are not using it appropriately, they will have to find something else to do. One child sits on a chair and looks sad; the other child sticks up an index finger (wrong finger) at the teacher's back as she puts the car on the shelf (Gartrell,1994).

Teacher two arrives, gets down on the children's level and holds the car. She says, "We have a problem. Please use your words so we can solve this problem." With a bit of coaching, the two children determine that one child had the car first and the other wanted it. The teacher then helps the second child find "an almost new car that no one is using." The children play together using the two cars.

Traditional classroom discipline vs. conflict resolution and guidance

In their responses, the first teacher used traditional classroom discipline; the second used conflict resolution (Wichert,1989), an important technique in guidance. As commonly practiced, traditional discipline has failed to distinguish between nonpunitive teacher intervention and punishment (Gartrell,1987; Reynolds,1990). The effects of punishment—diminished self-esteem, loss of enjoyment of learning, negative feelings toward self and others— make its use inappropriate in the classroom setting (Bredekamp,1987).

The difference between these two approaches is that traditional discipline criticizes children—often

publicly—for unacceptable behaviors, whereas guidance teaches children positive alternatives, "what they can do instead." Traditional discipline punishes children for having problems they cannot solve, while guidance teaches children to solve their problems in socially acceptable ways (Gartrell,1994).

One of the joys of teaching young children, despite a continuing lack of resources in the early childhood field, is the capacity of the professional to be fully nurturing within the teaching role. The practice of guidance, the creation and maintenance of a positive learning environment for each child, supports the nurturing function. Guidance connotes activism on the teacher's part (Gartrell,1994). The teacher who uses guidance is not permissive; she does not let children struggle vis-a-vis boundaries that may not be there. Instead, she provides leadership so that children can interact successfully within the reasonable boundaries of the classroom community.

"Misbehavior" makes us think of punishing

As classroom guidance continues to displace a reliance on traditional discipline, it is important that educators reevaluate other widely used terms and practices. One such term is misbehavior. Traditionally, misbehavior implies willful wrongdoing for which a child must be disciplined (punished). . . .

"Mistaken behavior" makes us think of guiding and educating

. . .In the process of learning the complex life skills of cooperation, conflict resolution, and acceptable expression of strong feelings, children, like all of

us, *make mistakes* (Gartrell,1987). The guidance tradition in early childhood education suggests that teachers who traditionally have considered problems in the classroom as misbehaviors think of them instead as mistaken behaviors (MnAEYC,1991). . . .

. . .In the cognitive domain, a child who asks, “Is him going, too, teacher?” is not treated as though she has misbehaved. In an affirming manner, the teacher models the conventional usage, “Yes, Carlita, he is going, too.” In the realm of behavior, the teacher also uses a positive approach. Children are not punished for the mistakes of words or deeds; they are helped to learn from their mistaken behavior. The concept of mistaken behavior fits well with the guidance approach. . . .

Three levels of mistaken behavior

. . .From almost 30 years of teaching and observing in early childhood classrooms, I have identified three levels of mistaken behavior, based on Harlow’s writings (Gartrell,1987, 1994). . . .(T)he levels of mistaken behavior share motivational sources with the relational patterns. The levels of mistaken behavior identify the types of problems children in the various relational patterns are likely to experience.

Level three:

Strong-needs mistaken behavior

Children showing the survival relational pattern likely have experienced their environment as a “dangerous and painful place” over which they have little control (Harlow, 1975). The behavior patterns of these children tend to be rigid and exaggerated. To protect themselves, they resist change and continue the same behaviors in new situations, even if their patterns are extreme and inappropriate.

The child at the survival level is difficult for teachers to accept because of the nonsocial, at times antisocial, character of the child’s behavior. Yet it is necessary for the teacher to establish a productive relationship, built on trust, in order to empower the child to progress to a higher relational level.

Children at the survival relational pattern show *level-three, strong-needs mistaken behavior*. Wherever it occurs, this level of mistaken behavior is the most

serious. A sure sign that the mistaken behavior is at level three is that it continues over time. (Anyone, including teachers, can have an occasional “level three” day.) As Harlow suggests, strong-needs mistaken behavior results from psychological and/or physical pain in the child’s life that is beyond the child’s ability to cope with and understand. Often children show strong-needs mistaken behavior in the classroom because it is a safe haven in their environment. Through withdrawal or acting out, these children are asking for help in the only way they can (Gartrell,1994).

As the most serious level of mistaken behavior, the teacher takes a comprehensive approach with the child that usually involves other adults, especially parents or caregivers. The teacher

- intervenes nonpunitively;
- works to build a positive relationship with the child;
- seeks more information through observation;
- seeks more information through conversation with the child, other adults who work with the child, and parents or caregivers;
- creates a coordinated “individual guidance plan” in consultation with the other adults; and
- implements, reviews, and modifies the plan as necessary (Gartrell,1994).

Sometimes level-three mistaken behaviors are symptoms of such deep problems in the child’s life that the comprehensive guidance approach is not completely successful. Even when working with parents, the teacher cannot necessarily change life circumstances for a child, but he can make life easier—in ways that may have lasting beneficial effects.

Level two:

Socially influenced mistaken behavior

Children who show the adjustment relational pattern have an increased ability to adapt to situations. Their criteria for doing so, however, is the judgement of significant others. “New ways of thinking and behaving are first sanctioned by an individual or reference group representing authority, before they are considered by the adjuster” (Harlow, 1975, p.30). Children at the adjustment level seek high levels of teacher approval, put off completing tasks because “I can’t do it right,” and may involve adults or other

children in doing their projects for them. They lack the self-esteem and individual strength necessary to respond to a situation on its own terms.

Some teachers find gratification in the obedience and dependence of a child at the adjustment level.

They may be reinforcing long-term, other-directed response tendencies in the child, however, that inhibit full personal development (Harlow, 1975). Deprived of confidence in his own values and judgement, the child may continue to be influenced by others—especially peers—including toward self-destructive or oppressive mistaken behaviors (Gartrell,1994). With a child at the adjustment level, the task of the teacher is to nudge him toward autonomy (the encountering relational pattern) by helping him build self-esteem and proactive social skills (Harlow, 1975).

Children showing the adjustment relational pattern are subject to *level-two, socially influenced mistaken behavior*. Level-two mistaken behaviors are “learned behaviors,” reinforced in the child, intentionally or unintentionally, by other people important in the child’s life. A child who uses an expletive in a classroom exactly as an adult would is showing a socially influenced mistaken behavior. Likewise, children who join others in calling a child “poopy butt” or “dorky” have been influenced by peers into a level-two mistaken behavior.

In responding to level-two mistaken behaviors, the teacher notes whether one child or a group of children are involved. When a group of children are involved, an effective technique, even with preschoolers (Hendrick,1992), is the class meeting. Respecting the dignity of all concerned, the teacher points out the problem and, with the children, works out a solution. The teacher monitors progress and calls additional meetings, if necessary. If one child is involved, the teacher handles the situation privately; in a firm but friendly manner, explains what is unacceptable; and provides a guideline for an acceptable alternative. In either individual or group situations, the teacher follows up with encouragement and “compliment sandwiches”—two or three acknowledgments of progress along with one reminder of the agreed-to guideline (Gartrell,1994) (it is easier for us to change behaviors when others acknowledge our efforts).

By assisting children to learn alternatives to socially influenced mistaken behavior, the teacher helps them to understand that they have the capacity to evaluate, choose, and interact for themselves—essential life skills for a democracy (Wittmer & Honig,1994).

Level one:

Experimentation mistaken behavior

Harlow’s construct of relational patterns is built around the importance of autonomy—Piaget’s term for the ability of the individual to make intelligent, ethical decisions (Kamii,1984). Autonomy is the social relation pattern shown by children at the highest level, *encountering* (Harlow, 1975).

Children at the encountering level are learning most effectively about themselves and the world; yet, because they are so open to new experience and because they are young, they are susceptible to mistaken behavior—and vulnerable to teacher criticism. . . .

. . . Children at the encountering relational pattern show *level-one, experimentation mistaken behavior*. The term *experimentation* is used because the child is learning through full engagement in the experiment of life. To cite the previous illustration, the two children who argued over use of the toy car were totally involved in that situation; they were demonstrating level-one mistaken behavior. The experimentation can be “natural,” through full involvement in the affairs of the classroom, or it can be “controlled,” as in the case of a young child who, with a smile, uses an expletive in order to see the teacher’s reaction.

The teacher responds in different ways to different situations. Sometimes he may step back and allow a child to learn from the experience; other times, he will reiterate a guideline and, in a friendly tone, teach a more appropriate alternative behavior. With children at level one, as with those at two and three, the teacher uses guidance and avoids the use of traditional discipline.

Understanding mistaken behaviors

An occasional misunderstanding about mistaken behavior is that some mistaken behaviors occur at

only level one, others at level two, and still others at level three (Gartrell,1994). At each level, mistaken behaviors have distinct motivational sources. Behaviors that appear similar can be a result of

differing motivations, and so be at different levels. The teacher must observe carefully to infer the motivation and the level of mistaken behavior in order to respond effectively. Figure 2 illustrates how similar mistaken behaviors can be at different levels.

Figure 2. Classifying Similar Mistaken Behaviors by Level

Incident of mistaken behavior	Motivational Source	Level of mistaken behavior
Child uses expletive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wants to see the teacher’s reaction • Wants to emulate important others • Expresses deeply felt hostility 	One Two Three
Child pushes another off the trike	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wants trike; has not learned to ask in words • Follows aggrandizement practices modeled by other children • Feels the need to act out against the world by asserting power 	One Two Three
Child refuses to join in group activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not understand teacher’s expectations • Has “gotten away” with not joining in • Is not feeling well or feels strong anxiety about participating 	One Two Three

At any relational level, the cause of mistaken behavior is insufficient understanding about how to act maturely in the complex situations of life. With a child’s internal need to go forward and to learn—but limited ability to balance her own needs with those of others—mistaken behavior will occur. Knowledge of the relational patterns and the levels of mistaken behavior assists the teacher to understand and work with children when they make mistakes (Gartrell,1994).

The issue of intentionality

When people think about behavior, they may associate mistaken behavior with “accidents” and misbehavior with acts “done on purpose” (Gartrell,1994). Mistaken behavior includes both accidents and intentional behaviors. A young child on a trike who runs over the toe of another child by accident has shown level-one mistaken behavior. The accident was unintentional but was level one because it was a mistake that arose from involvement.

A child may run over another’s foot for a second reason related to level one (Gartrell,1994). As a part of encountering social relations, the trike rider hits

the other’s foot “accidentally on purpose” to see what will happen. The lack of development of young children results in their difficulty understanding how another child would feel under such circumstances. The act was intentional but was done without full awareness of the consequences and so is level-one mistaken behavior. The importance of the term *mistaken behavior* is that it reminds the adult that the trike rider needs guidance about human feelings and the consequences of actions, not punishment for making a mistake.

Of course, hitting another child’s foot might also be a level-two or level-three mistaken behavior (Gartrell,1994). At level two, one child follows another on a trike. The second rider sees the first swing close to a bystander and follows suit but strikes the bystander’s foot. At level three, a trike rider who is harboring feelings of hostility acts out against an innocent child. When the teacher hypothesizes that level two or level three is involved, she reacts with increasing degrees of firmness, although she retains the element of friendliness, which is at the heart of guidance. If the trike rider’s motives indicate that strong-needs mistaken behavior is present, the teacher should follow up as suggested for level three.

The additional step is important because serious mistaken behaviors occur when children are the victims of life circumstances that are beyond their control. Even the mistaken behavior of aggression is a nonverbal request for assistance, not a situation requiring punishment.

It should be noted that whatever the level of mistaken behavior, the teacher reacts to the immediate situation by using guidance. She first gives attention to the victim, who deserves it. This action shows support for the wronged child (and also may help the teacher calm down). The teacher then speaks with the trike rider. She does some empathy building by pointing out that the trike hurt the other child and she cannot let anyone (including the trike rider) be hurt at school. She discusses with the trike rider how he could avoid having this problem next time. Although the teacher does not force an apology, she perhaps asks how the trike rider could help the child who was hurt feel better. The teacher then assists the trike rider back into positive activity, which often includes helping him to make amends. In guidance practice the teacher avoids the traditional discipline reaction. She does not lecture about how naughty the behavior was

or automatically put the child in a time-out. The goal is to help the child learn from the mistake, not punish him for making it.

Again, the value of the term *mistaken behavior* is that it has different implications than the conventional term, *misbehavior*. Misbehavior tends to connote a judgement of character that leads to punishment rather than guidance. Mistaken behavior precludes character assessment and asks that the child be accepted as a person of worth (by virtue of being alive). The person may need to face consequences, but at the base of those consequences is guidance, so the possibility of change is maximized (Gartrell,1994).

A premise in the use of guidance is that even willful acts that are done “on purpose” still constitute mistaken behavior. A child who deliberately bites or intentionally disobeys has made a mistake. The adult who is able to approach children as worthwhile individuals who make mistakes is in a philosophically strong position to assist them with healthy personal and social development.

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“Many adults assume that the alternative to a highly structured, teacher-directed classroom must be chaos. In fact, the opposite is more often true. The visitor to a developmentally appropriate primary classroom is often surprised to see children working together in small groups with minimal teacher supervision. In contrast, teachers in more traditional classrooms tend to spend considerable amounts of time trying to control disruptive behavior that results when all children are expected to behave in the same way at the same time, regardless of their developmental needs”
(SREB, 1994, p. 13).



early years are learning years

Time out for “time-out”

The purpose of discipline for young children is to teach coping skills and discourage inappropriate behavior. “Time-out” is not a first choice, but a last resort technique for a child who is harming another or in danger of harming herself. Used infrequently and for very brief periods (no longer than two or three minutes), time-out may give a child the opportunity to calm down and cool off after a frustrating situation. Used often or inappropriately, time-out may not only be ineffectual—it may be damaging to the child.

The early years are a time for children to develop confidence and self-control. When adults create environments that respect each individual child, they set forth a message that the world is a warm, friendly learning place. Positive discipline techniques that combine caring and direction are a part of this healthy environment. Adults should look for meaningful ways to show children why harmful and aggressive acts are unacceptable.

Before you give a child time-out, make sure of the following:

- ◆ **Adults avoid using time-out for infants and toddlers.** Very young children should not be isolated, nor should they be ignored or left without proper stimulation. Infants or young toddlers who do not understand why their behavior is unacceptable should gently be directed to more acceptable behaviors or activities.
- ◆ **Your expectations of a child’s behavior are realistic.** A general knowledge of child development will help you identify when children are merely experimenting with their boundaries and when they are behaving inappropriately. When adults give children realistic goals, children feel good about themselves and are more likely to cope successfully with stressful situations.
- ◆ **Consequences immediately follow the child’s behavior.** When children experience immediate repercussions for harming others, they understand more clearly why we are disciplining them. Whenever possible, adults should offer children positive alternatives to their actions (asking a child to help rebuild a block structure she has knocked down is more productive than removing her from the area entirely).
- ◆ **Time-out should not be humiliating, nor should it make children feel threatened or afraid.** There

should not be a special chair or area assigned for time-out—this reinforces the idea that time-out is a punishment and may cause undue anxiety. Adults should never make a child feel ridiculed or isolated during time-out periods.

- ◆ **The child should not be left alone, unless he wants to be.** Young children need adults’ support to work out their feelings. If adults show children that their feelings count, they will be more likely to respect the feelings of others. A caregiver should always visually observe a child during a time-out period.
- ◆ **Time out does not last longer than it takes for the child to calm down.** After the child calms down, explain clearly what is appropriate and inappropriate behavior. There should be no ambiguity about why we have disciplined the child, otherwise the child is more likely to repeat the undesirable behavior.
- ◆ **The child feels safe with the knowledge that people care for her.** Remember that children imitate adults’ behavior. Screaming, hitting, or ridiculing a child for bad behavior is not an effective way to teach self-control.
- ◆ **Tailor the method of discipline to the individual child.** Children develop their abilities to control themselves at different rates. Take into consideration the needs of the particular child involved. No single technique will work with every child every time.
- ◆ **Time-out is not used as a punishment.** Time-out is an opportunity for a child to clear her mind and rejoin the group or activity in a more productive state. Teach a child how to solve her own problems with love and support, and time-out may no longer be necessary.

Additional Resources:

- Greenberg, P. 1991. *Character development Encouraging self-esteem & self-discipline in infants, toddlers, & two-year-olds*. Washington, DC: NAEYC. #175/\$8.
- Honig, AS. 1989. *Love & learn: Discipline for young children*. Washington, DC: NAEYC. #528/50¢.
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Pool session

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In the pool session I will show some aspects of the Freestyle progression in practice and show some different ways of organising groups effectively.

There will also be time to answer questions about the various presentations that were made and show any demonstrations necessary.

Thank you!

Thank you for your attention and I hope some of the information I have covered has been helpful to you in some way.

All the best in your teaching and coaching.

David M. Dubois