

## EDUCATORS' USAGE OF DIFFERENT DISCIPLINARY MEASURES AS ALTERNATIVES TO CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

by

David P. Ngidi

Faculty of Education  
University of Zululand  
dngidi@pan.uzulu.ac.za

### ABSTRACT

*This study investigated educators' usage of different disciplinary measures for learners' misconduct inside the classroom (level 1) as alternatives to corporal punishment. To this end, the Level 1 Disciplinary Action Scale (L1DAS) was used. The findings indicated that educators differ significantly in the extent to which they use verbal warning, community service, demerits, additional work, small menial tasks, and detention as alternatives to corporal punishment. The findings also indicated that educators' gender has a significant influence on their usage of community service. The findings further indicated that teaching experience has a significant influence on educators' usage of detention and that the teaching phase has a significant influence on their usage of demerits. The findings also showed that educators differ significantly in the extent to which they use corporal punishment in school.*

### INTRODUCTION

After 1994, when South Africa stepped out of isolation and adopted a new, democratic constitution guaranteeing the right to dignity, equality, freedom and security for all citizens, it followed the path of most other democracies by passing legislation to outlaw corporal punishment (Department of Education, 2000: 5). The banning of corporal punishment in all schools was done under section 10 of South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996 (Republic of South Africa, 1996), which says (1) "No person may administer corporal punishment at schools to a learner; (2) Any person who contravenes subsection 1 is guilty of an offence and liable on conviction to a sentence which could be imposed for assault". This was met with mixed reaction. Some educators and parents were very positive about it. Others were very concerned in that they felt that there were no viable alternatives to corporal punishment (Pienaar, 2003: 261-262).

Besides South African Schools Act, there are other laws that make corporal punishment illegal. Among these laws are: section 12 of the South African Constitution Act No. 108 of 1996 (Republic of South Africa, 1996: 8), which states that "Everyone has the right not to be treated or punished in a cruel, inhuman or degrading way"; the National Education Policy Act (Republic of South Africa, 1996), which says "No person shall administer corporal punishment or subject a

student to psychological or physical abuse at any educational institution" (Department of Education, 2000: 5).

South Africa is a signatory to the United Nation's Convention on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, which compels it to pass laws and take social, educational, and administrative measures to "protect the child from all forms of physical and mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse" (Department of Education, 2000: 5).

The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child commits its member countries to the same measures and adds that they must take steps to ensure that a child "who is subjected to school or parental discipline shall be treated with humanity and with respect for the inherent dignity of the child" (Department of Education, 2000: 5).

Although the South African Schools Act clearly prohibits corporal punishment in schools, there is research evidence which shows that educators are still using corporal punishment in schools. For example, the survey by the Education 2000 Plus project found that in most of the 27 schools across the country, where the survey had been conducted, educators still resort to corporal punishment (Tleane, 2002: 6). The findings of the project reveal that 81.5% of learners, 74.0% of educators and 74.0% of principals reported that corporal punishment is practiced in their schools (Prinsloo, 2005: 8). The shocking list of educators found guilty of misconduct between April 2004 and August 2005 includes 44 for administering corporal punishment (Sunday Times, 2005: 1). The newspaper extracts cited by Maree and Cherian (2004: 73-75) also reveal that corporal punishment has not been weeded out satisfactorily. The fact that corporal punishment is still used in some schools has also been acknowledged by: the National Association of School Governing Bodies in KwaZulu-Natal; the Congress for the South African Students (COSAS) and teacher unions (Isolezwe, 2006: 21; The Mercury, 2006: 5). Corporal punishment remains widespread, particularly in historically black schools and is experienced disproportionately by African learners (Morrel, 2001: 296). COSAS has also emphasised that the reason for continuing with corporal punishment in some schools is a result of conflicting policies passed by the Department of Education and those of school governing bodies (Isolezwe, 2006: 21). Teachers' frustrations as a result of learners' unruly behaviour has also been cited as one of the reasons why educators use corporal punishment (The Mercury, 2006: 5).

### DEALING WITH MISCONDUCT

After realising that many educators have found themselves in a position of not knowing what to do in the absence of corporal punishment, the Department of Education developed a document as a practical guide for educators on the alternatives to corporal punishment (Department of Education, 2000). Part three of the document provides guidelines for dealing with five different levels of misconduct. These levels are categorized in their order of severity as follows:

- level 1-misconduct inside the classroom;

- level 2-misconduct by breaking school rules;
- level 3-"serious" misconduct or serious violation of school codes;
- level 4-"very serious" misconduct or very serious violation of school codes;
  - level 5-criminal acts which not only violate school codes but which breach the law.

Level 1 includes misconducts such as failing to be in class on time, bunking classes, failing to finish homework, failing to respond to reasonable instructions, being dishonest with minor consequences. Examples of disciplinary actions for level 1 misconduct-carried out by class teacher are:

- Verbal warnings;
- Community service;
- "Demerits"- losing credits which have already been gained;
- Additional work which is constructive and which possibly relates to the misconduct;
- Small menial tasks like tidying up the classroom;
- Detention in which learners use their time constructively but within the confines of the classroom i.e. they cannot participate in extra-mural activities or go home.

Level 2 involves misconduct such as frequently repeating level 1 misconduct and not responding to disciplinary measures taken by the educator, smoking or carrying tobacco, leaving school without permission, using abusive language, interrupting education in the classroom, showing disrespect for another person, engaging in minor vandalism like graffiti, being dishonest with more serious consequences. Examples of disciplinary actions for level 2 misconduct-carried out by higher authority such as the head of department are:

- Any of the disciplinary actions listed above;
- Disciplinary talk with the learner;
- Talks with learner's parents or guardian;
- Written warnings;
- Signing "contract" with learner who agrees to improve;
- Daily report taken by learner and signed by all parents;
- Performing duties that improve the school environment such as cleaning, gardening or administrative tasks.

Level 3 includes misconduct such as frequently repeating level 2 misconduct and where action taken by school authorities is considered ineffective, inflicting minor injury on another person, gambling, being severely disruptive of classes, forging documents or signatures with minor consequences, using racist, sexist or other discriminatory behaviour, possessing or distributing pornographic, racist or sexist materials, possessing dangerous weapons, theft, vandalism, cheating during exams. Examples of disciplinary actions for level 3 misconduct-carried out by the principal or referred to an outside agency for counselling are:

- Any of the disciplinary actions listed above
- Written warning of the possibility of suspension from the school;

- Referral to a counsellor or social worker;
- Community service, once permission is granted by the provincial education department.

Level 4 misconduct involves misconduct like repetition of level 3 misconduct where disciplinary action has been ineffective, threatening another person with a dangerous weapon, causing intentional limited injury to another person, verbally threatening the safety of another person, engaging in sexual abuse such as grabbing, engaging in sexual activity, selling drugs, possession or using alcohol or drugs or being drunk or under the influence of narcotics, disrupting the entire school: for example, boycotting or staging a picket without consent, forging documents or signatures with serious consequences. Examples of punishments for level 4 misbehaviour-carried out by the principal or the school governing body together with the provincial education department are:

- Any of the disciplinary actions listed above;
- Referral of learner to an outside agency for counselling;
- Application to the provincial education department for limited suspension from all school activities.

Level 5 misconduct includes repetition of level 4 acts, intending to inflict major physical injury on another person (assault), intentionally using a dangerous weapon, sexual harassment, sexual abuse and rape, robbery, major theft, breaking and entering locked premises, murder. Examples of disciplinary actions for level 5 misconduct – carried out by the principal and the school governing body together with the provincial education department – are:

- Application to the provincial education for expulsion or transfer of the learner from the school;
- Allow for criminal or civil prosecution which may follow, given that the misconduct is of a criminal nature (Department of Education, 2000: 25-28).

It is clear from the foregone explanation that levels 3 to 5 are serious misconducts which are beyond educators' capacity to carry out disciplinary actions in the school – they need only the principal. However, class educators can carry out disciplinary actions for misconducts related to level 1 while the head of departments can carry out those related to level 2. For the purpose of this study, the focus is on level 1- misconduct inside the classroom.

## PROBLEM STATEMENT

Very few, if any studies, have attempted to investigate educators' usage of different disciplinary actions or measures for learners' misconduct inside the classroom (level 1) as alternatives to corporal punishment. The present study intends to do that. More specifically, this study attempts to find answers to the following research questions:

- To what extent do educators use different disciplinary actions namely, verbal warning, community service, demerits, additional work, small menial tasks, and detention for learners' misconduct inside the classroom (level 1) as alternatives to corporal punishment?
- Do educators' biographical variables (gender, teaching experience and teaching phase) have any influence on their usage of different disciplinary actions namely, verbal warning, community service, demerits, additional work, small menial tasks, and detention for learners' misconduct inside the classroom (level 1) as alternative to corporal punishment?
- To what extent do educators generally use corporal punishment in school?
- Do educators' biographical variables (gender, teaching experience and teaching phase) have any influence on their general usage of corporal punishment in school?

**Concept clarification**

In this study, the term educator refers to a teacher. South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996 (Republic of South Africa, 1996: 2) also refers to a teacher as an educator. Several authors have adopted this definition (Potgieter, Visser, Van der Bank, Mothata & Squelch, 1997: 24 ; Ngidi, 2004: 261). Disciplinary measures in this study shall mean actions taken by educators in order to discipline learners for their misconduct. A practical guide for educators on alternatives to corporal punishment (Republic of South Africa, 2001: 20) also defines it this way. The term corporal punishment refers to any deliberate act against a child that inflicts pain or physical discomfort to punish or contain him/her (Department of Education, 2000: 6).

**METHOD**

**Aim and objectives of research**

The present research aimed at achieving the following objectives:

- To ascertain the extent to which educators use different disciplinary actions namely, verbal warning, community service, demerits, additional work, small menial tasks, and detention for learners' misconduct inside the classroom (level 1) as alternatives to corporal punishment.
- To establish whether educators' biographical variables (gender, teaching experience and teaching phase) have any influence on their usage of disciplinary actions namely, verbal warning, community service, demerits, additional work, small menial tasks, and detention for learners' misconduct inside the classroom (level 1) as alternatives to corporal punishment.
- To ascertain the extent to which educators generally use corporal punishment in school.
- To establish whether educators' biographical variables (gender, teaching experience and teaching phase) have any influence on their general usage of corporal punishment in school.

**Hypotheses**

The following theoretical hypotheses were formulated:

- Educators do not differ in the extent to which they use different disciplinary actions namely, verbal warning, community service, demerits, additional work, small menial tasks, and detention for learners' misconduct inside the classroom (level 1) as alternatives to corporal punishment.
- Educators' biographical variables (gender, teaching experience and teaching phase) have no influence on their usage of different disciplinary actions namely, verbal warning, community service, demerits, additional work, small menial tasks, and detention for learners' misconduct inside the classroom (level 1) as alternatives to corporal punishment.
- Educators do not differ in the extent to which they generally use corporal punishment in school.
- Educators' biographical variables (gender, teaching experience and teaching phase) have no influence on their general usage of corporal punishment in school.

**Participants**

There were four educational regions in the KwaZulu-Natal province in the time of investigation. These regions in their alphabetical order are: eThekweni; uKhahlamba; uMgungundlovu; and Zululand. Simple random sampling was used to select the Zululand region, which has three districts, namely, Empangeni, Obonjeni and Vryheid. In order to ensure that the results are not biased, each district was sampled. A list of schools in each district was obtained. Simple random sampling was used to select equal number of schools from each district. Four schools from each district were selected. The number of schools was based on the estimated sample of about 300 educators, with an estimate of 20 educators per school. Therefore, the total number of randomly selected schools was 16. The selected schools were used to draw a sample of educators (Table 1).

TABLE 1 DISTRIBUTION OF PARTICIPANTS ACCORDING TO BIOGRAPHICAL VARIABLES (N=252)

GENDER	TEACHING EXPERIENCE			TEACHING PHASE		
	0-9	10-19	20+	F	I	S
Male	61	69	52	126	64	62
Female	191	151	151			

F= Foundation phase; I=Intermediate phase; S=Senior phase

Table 1 shows the distribution of participants in accordance with their biographical variables, namely, gender, teaching experience and teaching phase. The sample included 252 educators, exclusively from previous black schools. Out

of 300 questionnaires that were distributed, 252 were returned, which is an 84% return rate.

### Measures

The questionnaire was used as a research instrument for collecting data. The questionnaire was appropriate for eliciting and rating educators' responses as well as for quantitative analysis of data. It consisted of three sections covering the aims of study. The first section (Section A) consisted of educators' biographical information (gender, teaching experience and teaching phase). The second section (Section B) consisted of level 1 disciplinary actions scale (L1DAS). The third section (Section C) consisted of a single item scale on educators' general usage of corporal punishment in school.

### L1DAS

Informed by the examples of disciplinary actions for level 1- misconduct inside the classroom, as alternatives to corporal punishment (Department of Education, 2000: 25), the researcher developed the Level 1 Disciplinary Action Scale (L1DAS). This is a four- point scale. Respondents were asked to indicate how often they use each disciplinary action for different level 1 misconducts listed. The ratings were: never (0), seldom (1), regularly (2), always (3). The internal-consistency reliability for this study measured by Cronbach's alpha was, 0.71; 0.76; 0.74; 0.73; 0.75 and 0.79 for Verbal warning; Community service; Demerits; Additional work; Small menial tasks and Detention subscales, respectively. The internal-consistency reliability for the whole scale was 0.88. According to Nunnally and Bernstein (1994), a reliability estimate of 0.70 and above represents acceptable reliability. Therefore, this instrument is regarded as satisfactory.

Each disciplinary action subscale consists of 5 items. Therefore, the lowest possible score on each disciplinary action subscale is  $5 \times 0 = 0$  and the highest possible score is  $5 \times 3 = 15$ . This continuum of 0-15 was arbitrarily divided into three categories, namely: 0-5 indicating a low usage level (LUL); 6-10 a moderate usage level (MUL); and 11-15 showing a high usage level (HUL). Thus the respondent's summated score on each subscale was classified accordingly into one of these three categories. This procedure yielded data to fulfil the first aim. Data obtained through this procedure were also used together with those of educators' biographical data in order to meet the second aim of the present study.

With regard to the single item scale on educators' general usage of corporal punishment, respondents were asked to indicate how often they generally use corporal punishment as a disciplinary measure for learners' misconduct in the school. The same ratings used for L1DAS, namely, never (0), seldom (1), regularly (2), always (3) were retained and used as four categories. Thus the respondent's single score was classified accordingly into one of these four categories. This procedure yielded data to fulfil the third aim. Data obtained

through this procedure were also used together with those of the educators' biographical data in order to meet the fourth aim of the present study.

### Procedures

Questionnaires, with a letter explaining the nature and purpose of the research, were personally delivered to schools that were part of the sample and were personally collected when completed.

In order to achieve the aims of this study, various inferential statistical procedures were followed. The chi-square one sample test was used to ascertain the extent to which educators use different disciplinary actions for learners' misconduct inside the classroom as an alternative to corporal punishment (aim number one) as well as to ascertain the extent to which they generally use corporal punishment in school (aim number three). The chi-square test of independence was used to determine whether educators' biographical variables (gender, teaching experience and teaching phase) have any influence on their usage of different disciplinary actions for learners' misconduct inside the classroom (aim number two) as well as on their general usage of corporal punishment in school (aim number four). The chi-square test is appropriate for categorical data (Orlich, 1978; Borg & Gall, 1983; Behr, 1988). Inferential statistics were used to test the hypotheses of the study. Inferential statistics are used to determine whether differences between groups are due to chance or not (Orlich, 1978). They are also used for generalising from a sample to make inferences about a wider population (Borg & Gall, 1983).

In order to understand how the educators responded to each item of the L1DAS, descriptive statistics were used. To this end, data were summarised by averaging group scores (Table 12). When the mean or average for the responses to each item was converted to the nominal categories, it gave an indication of the group's response to a particular item (Orlich, 1978; Henerson, Morris & Fitz-Gibbon, 1987).

### Results

Inferential statistics for aim number one are presented in Tables 2 to 7.

The chi-square test ( $\chi^2 = 77.881$ ;  $df=2$ ;  $p<0.05$ ) indicates that significance difference was found among the low usage level (LUL), moderate usage level (MUL) and high usage level (HUL) groups of verbal warning (Table 2). This finding shows that educators differ in the extent to which they use verbal warning for learners' misconduct inside the classroom. The three groups of verbal warning usage levels differ among themselves. Put differently, the existence of these three groups is not due to chance factors.

The chi-square test ( $\chi^2 = 50.786$ ;  $df=2$ ;  $p<0.05$ ) reveals that significance difference was found among the low usage level (LUL), moderate usage level

(MUL) and high usage level (HUL) groups of community service (Table 3). This finding indicates that educators differ in the extent to which they use community service for learners' misconduct inside the classroom. The three groups of community service usage levels differ among themselves. Put differently, the existence of these three groups is not due to chance factors.

TABLE 2 RESPONDENTS GROUPED ACCORDING TO VERBAL WARNING USAGE LEVELS

	LUL	MUL	HUL
	(0-5)	(6-10)	(11-15)
Frequencies	18	115	119

$\chi^2 = 77.881$ ; df = 2; p < 0.05

TABLE 3 RESPONDENTS GROUPED ACCORDING TO COMMUNITY SERVICE USAGE LEVELS

	LUL	MUL	HUL
	(0-5)	(6-10)	(11-15)
Frequencies	96	123	33

$\chi^2 = 50.786$ ; df = 2; p < 0.05

TABLE 4 RESPONDENTS GROUPED ACCORDING TO DEMERITS USAGE LEVELS

	LUL	MUL	HUL
	(0-5)	(6-10)	(11-15)
Frequencies	90	126	36

$\chi^2 = 48.857$ ; df = 2; p < 0.05

TABLE 5 RESPONDENTS GROUPED ACCORDING TO ADDITIONAL WORK USAGE LEVELS

	LUL	MUL	HUL
	(0-5)	(6-10)	(11-15)
Frequencies	73	136	43

$\chi^2 = 53.643$ ; df = 2; p < 0.05

The chi-square test ( $\chi^2 = 48.857$ ; df=2; p<0.05) indicates that significance difference was found among the low usage level (LUL), moderate usage level (MUL) and high usage level (HUL) groups of demerits (Table 4). This finding shows that educators differ in the extent to which they use demerits for learners'

misconduct inside the classroom. The three groups of demerits usage levels differ among themselves. Put differently, the existence of these three groups is not due to chance factors.

The chi-square test ( $\chi^2 = 53.643$ ; df=2; p<0.05) reveals that significant difference was found among the low usage level (LUL), moderate usage level (MUL) and high usage level (HUL) groups of additional work (Table 5). This finding indicates that educators differ in the extent to which they use additional work for learners' misconduct inside the classroom. The three groups of additional work usage levels differ among themselves. Put differently, the existence of these three groups is not due to chance factors.

TABLE 6 RESPONDENTS GROUPED ACCORDING TO SMALL MENIAL TASKS USAGE LEVELS

	LUL	MUL	HUL
	(0-5)	(6-10)	(11-15)
Frequencies	73	132	47

$\chi^2 = 45.167$ ; df = 2; p < 0.05

The chi-square test ( $\chi^2 = 45.167$ ; df=2; p<0.05) indicates that significance difference was found among the low usage level (LUL), moderate usage level (MUL) and high usage level (HUL) groups of small menial tasks (Table 6). This finding shows that educators differ in the extent to which they use small menial tasks for learners' misconduct inside the classroom. The three groups of small menial tasks usage levels differ among themselves. Put differently, the existence of these three groups is not due to chance factors.

TABLE 7 RESPONDENTS GROUPED ACCORDING TO DETENTION USAGE LEVELS

	LUL	MUL	HUL
	(0-5)	(6-10)	(11-15)
Frequencies	89	123	40

$\chi^2 = 41.452$ ; df = 2; p < 0.05

The chi-square test ( $\chi^2 = 41.452$ ; df=2; p<0.05) reveals that significance difference was found among the low usage level (LUL), moderate usage level (MUL) and high usage level (HUL) groups of detention (Table 7). This finding indicates that educators differ in the extent to which they use detention for learners' misconduct inside the classroom. The three groups of detention usage levels differ among themselves. Put differently, the existence of these three groups is not due to chance factors.

The results for aim number two, with significant differences, are presented in Tables 8 to 10.

TABLE 8 GENDER AND COMMUNITY SERVICE USAGE LEVELS

GENDER	LUL (0-5)	MUL (6-10)	HUL (11-15)
Male	31	26	4
Female	65	97	29

$\chi^2 = 6.679$ ; df = 2; p < 0.05

The chi-square test ( $\chi^2 = 6.679$ ; df=2; p<0.05) indicates that significant difference was found between males and females with regard to reported usage levels of community service (Table 8). This finding shows that gender has an influence on educators' usage of community service for learners' misconduct inside the classroom. Gender differences difference pertaining to the three community service usage levels were not due to chance factors.

The chi-square test ( $\chi^2 = 9.460$ ; df=4; p<0.05) reveals that significant difference was found among 0-9, 10-19 and 20 and above years of teaching experience with regard to reported usage levels of detention (Table 9). This finding indicates that teaching experience has an influence on educators' usage of detention for learners' misconduct inside the classroom. Teaching experience differences pertaining to the three detention usage levels were not due to chance factors.

TABLE 9 TEACHING EXPERIENCE AND DETENTION USAGE LEVELS

TEACHING EXPERIENCE	LUL (0-5)	MUL (6-10)	HUL (11-15)
0-9	33	30	6
10-19	44	80	27
20+	12	13	7

$\chi^2 = 9.460$ ; df = 4; p < 0.05

TABLE 10 TEACHING PHASE AND DEMERITS USAGE LEVELS

TEACHING PHASE	LUL (0-5)	MUL (6-10)	HUL (11-15)
Foundation	47	67	12
Intermediate	16	33	15
Senior	27	26	9

$\chi^2 = 10.058$ ; df = 4; p < 0.05

The chi-square test ( $\chi^2 = 10.058$ ; df=4; p<0.05) shows that significant difference was found among Foundation phase, Intermediate phase and Senior phase with regard to reported usage levels of demerits (Table 10). This finding indicates that teaching phase has an influence on educators' usage of demerits for learners' misconduct inside the classroom. Teaching phase differences pertaining to the three demerits usage levels were not due to chance factors.

The results for aim number three are presented in Table 11.

TABLE 11 RESPONDENTS GROUPED ACCORDING TO CORPORAL PUNISHMENT USAGE LEVELS

Frequencies	NEVER 52	SELDOM 125	REGULARLY 61	ALWAYS 14
-------------	-------------	---------------	-----------------	--------------

$\chi^2 = 101.111$ ; df = 3; p < 0.05

The chi-square test ( $\chi^2 = 101.111$ ; df=3; p<0.05) indicates that significance difference was found among the never, seldom, regularly and always usage levels (Table 11). This shows that educators differ in the extent to which they generally use corporal punishment in school. The four groups of corporal punishment usage levels differ among themselves. Put differently, the existence of these four groups is not due to chance factors.

The analysis of data for aim number four indicates that educators' biographical variables (gender, teaching experience and teaching phase) have no influence on their general usage of corporal punishment in school.

The descriptive statistics of the L1DAS items are presented in Table 12.

TABLE 12 RANK ORDER OF GROUP RESPONSES TO ITEMS 1-30 (N=252)

Rank Order	Factor	Mean	SD
1	Verbal warning for learners who fail to be in class on time	2.32	.82
2	Verbal warning for learners who fail to finish homework	2.25	.90
3	Verbal warning for learners who fail to respond to reasonable instructions	2.04	.95
4	Verbal warning for learners who are being dishonest such as lying	2.00	.96
5	Verbal warning for learners who bunk classes	1.99	.98
6	Small menial tasks like tidying up the classroom for learners who fail to be in class on time	1.67	1.01
7	Small menial tasks like tidying up the classroom for learners who bunk classes	1.54	1.02
8	Additional work for learners who fail to be in class on time	1.52	1.03
9	Additional work for learners who bunk classes	1.50	1.02
10	Community service for learners who fail to be in class on time	1.47	.94
11	Demerits for learners who fail to finish homework	1.45	.98
12	Additional work for learners who fail to respond to reasonable instructions	1.44	.96

12	Additional work for learners who fail to finish homework	1.44	1.01
14	Small menial tasks like tidying up the classroom for learners who fail to respond to reasonable instructions	1.42	.97
15	Small menial tasks like tidying up the classroom for learners who fail to finish homework	1.41	.98
16	Detention for learners who bunk classes	1.39	1.00
16	Detention for learners who fail to finish homework	1.39	.99
18	Additional work for learners who are being dishonest such as lying	1.36	1.00
18	Small menial tasks like tidying up the classroom for learners who are being dishonest such as lying	1.36	.91
20	Demerits for learners who fail to respond to reasonable instructions	1.35	1.00
21	Demerits for learners who are being dishonest such as lying	1.34	1.01
21	Community service for learners who fail to finish homework	1.34	1.05
23	Community service for learners who are being dishonest such as lying	1.33	1.04
24	Community service for learners who fail to respond to reasonable instructions	1.32	1.02
24	Detention for learners who fail to be in class on time	1.32	1.02
26	Detention for learners who fail to respond to reasonable instructions	1.30	1.04
26	Demerits for learners who fail to be in class on time	1.30	1.11
28	Detention for learners who are being dishonest such as lying	1.29	1.02
28	Demerits for learners who bunk classes	1.29	.98
30	Community service for learners who who bunk classes	1.25	1.02

Table 12 shows that verbal warning was ranked high for all the learners' misconducts. This gives an indication that, of all the disciplinary actions included in the study, verbal warning is mostly used by educators for learners' misconducts in the classroom as an alternative to corporal punishment.

### Discussion

The findings revealed that educators differ in the extent to which they use verbal warning for learners' misconduct inside the classroom. A higher percentage of educators (47%) reported a high level of using verbal warning compared to those who reported a low level (7%) and those who reported a moderate level (46%) (Table 2). This means that the majority of educators highly use verbal warning for learners' misconduct inside the classroom. There may be several reasons for educators' high level of using verbal warning for learners' misconduct inside the classroom. One of these reasons may be that it is the easier and less demanding disciplinary action to use.

The findings also revealed that educators differ in the extent to which they use community service for learners' misconduct inside the classroom. A higher percentage of educators (49%) reported a moderate level of using community service compared to those who reported a low level (38%) and those who reported a high level (13%) (Table 3). This implies that the majority of educators moderately use community service for learners' misconduct inside the classroom. The findings further revealed that educators differ in the extent to which they use demerits for learners' misconduct inside the classroom. A higher percentage of educators (50%) reported a moderate level of using demerits compared to those

who reported a low level (36%) and those who reported a high level (14%) (Table 4). This shows that the majority of educators moderately use demerits for learners' misconduct inside the classroom.

The findings also indicated that educators differ in the extent to which they use additional work for learners' misconduct inside the classroom. A higher percentage of educators (54%) reported a moderate level of using additional work compared to those who reported a low level (29%) and those who reported a high level (17%) (Table 5). This indicates that the majority of educators moderately use additional work for learners' misconduct inside the classroom.

The findings further indicated that educators differ in the extent to which they use small menial tasks for learners' misconduct inside the classroom. A higher percentage of educators (52%) reported a moderate level of using small menial tasks compared to those who reported a low level (29%) and those who reported a high level (19%) (Table 6). This means that the majority of educators moderately use small menial tasks for learners' misconduct inside the classroom.

The findings also showed that educators differ in the extent to which they use detention for learners' misconduct in the classroom. A higher percentage of educators (49%) reported a moderate level of using detention compared to those who reported a low level (35%) and those who reported a high level (16%) (Table 7). This implies that the majority of educators moderately use detention for learners' misconduct inside the classroom.

There may be several reasons why a higher percentage of educators reported a moderate level of using community service, demerits, additional work, small menial tasks and detention for learners' misconduct inside the classroom compared to a very low percentage of those who reported a high usage level. One of the reasons may be that these disciplinary actions were less emphasised in historically black schools, therefore, some educators are not accustomed to them. Another reason may be that in spite of guidelines provided by the Department of Education, educators do not know how to implement them effectively.

With regard to the influence of educators' biographical variables on educators' usage of different disciplinary actions, the findings indicated that gender influences educators' usage of community service. A higher percentage of male educators (51%) reported a low level of using community service while a higher percentage of females (51%) reported a moderate usage level (Table 8). This means that the majority of female educators use community service more than their male counterparts. The reason for this state of affairs may be that females are more concerned about caring for the community.

The findings also indicated that teaching experience influences educators' usage of detention. A higher percentage of educators with lesser teaching experience (48%) reported a low level of using detention while a higher percentage of those with longer teaching experience (53%) reported a moderate usage level (Table

9). This implies that the more experienced the educators become the more they use detention.

The findings further indicated that teaching phase influences educators' usage of demerits. A higher percentage of educators at Foundation phase (53%) and Intermediate phase (52%) reported a moderate level of using demerits while a higher percentage of those at Senior phase (44%) reported a low usage level (Table 10). This implies that the lower the phase educators teach the more they use demerits and vice versa.

Another finding relates to educators' general usage of corporal punishment in school. It revealed that educators differ in the extent to which they use corporal punishment. A higher percentage of educators (50%) reported that they seldom use corporal punishment compared to those who reported that they regularly use it (24%), those who reported that they always use it (5%) and those who reported that they never use it (21%) (Table 11). In other words, 79% of educators in this study reported that they, at various degrees, use corporal punishment in school. These findings support the results of previous studies (Education 2000 Plus project, 2000; Morrell, 2001; Maree & Cherian, 2004) and newspapers reports (Isolezwe, 2006; The Mercury, 2006). Conflicting policies, those passed by the Department of Education and those of school governing bodies, as well as teachers' frustrations as a result of learners' unruly behaviour have been cited as some of the reasons why educators use corporal punishment ((Isolezwe, 2006; The Mercury, 2006). These reasons may also be true for educators in this study. Another reason may be that educators regard other disciplinary actions as not effective.

With regard to the order of disciplinary actions, in relation to learners' misconducts inside the classroom ranked by educators, verbal warning, with all learners' misconducts associated with it was ranked high (Table 12). This shows that verbal warning is the most popular disciplinary action among educators.

The disciplinary action that was ranked high after verbal warning was small menial tasks, especially with misconducts related to classroom attendance. Additional work was ranked high after small menial tasks, also especially with misconducts associated with classroom attendance. This implies that, if not using verbal warning, small menial tasks and then additional work are preferred by educators, especially for classroom attendance-related misconducts.

Other than used for learners who fail to be in class on time, community service is ranked the lowest with demerits and detention. This indicates that these three disciplinary actions are not popular among educators. However, although not among the top ten, demerits is preferred by educators for learners who fail to finish homework if verbal warning is not used.

## CONCLUSION

Educators differ in the extent to which they use verbal warning, community service, demerits, additional work, small menial tasks and detention as disciplinary actions for learners' misconduct in the classroom. Given that the majority of educators moderately use community service, demerits, additional work, small menial tasks and detention, there is a need for the Department of Education to intervene. It should assist educators in using these disciplinary measures effectively. This can be done through workshops. The services of other stakeholders such as teacher unions can also be used in this regard. Effective application of these disciplinary measures can play an important role in reducing the high incidents of using corporal punishment that are prevailing in schools.

## REFERENCES

- Behr AL 1988. *Empirical research methods for the human sciences*. Durban: Butterworth.
- Borg WR & Gall MD 1983. *Educational research*. New York: Longman
- Department of Education 2000. *Alternatives to corporal punishment: the learning experience*. Pretoria: Department of Education.
- Henerson ME, Morris LL & Fitz-Gibbon CT 1987. *How to measure attitudes*. London: Page Publications.
- Isolezwe 2006. Kukhalwa ngothisha abashaya izingane, 25 July.
- Maree JG & Cherian L 2004. Hitting the headlines-the evil on corporal punishment in South Africa. *Acta Criminology*, 17: 72-85.
- Morrell R 2001. Corporal punishment in South African schools: a neglected Explanation for its persistence. *South African Journal of Education*, 21: 292-299.
- Ngidi DP 2004. Educators' perceptions of the efficiency of School Governing Bodies. *South African Journal of Education*, 24: 260-263.
- Nunnally JC & Bernstein IH 1994. *Psychometric theory*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Orlich DC 1978. *Designing sensible surveys*. New York: Redgrave Publishing Company.
- Pienaar G 2003. A different approach to classroom discipline problems. *Educare*, 32: 261-274.
- Potgieter JM, Visser PJ, Van der Bank AJ, Mothata, MS & Squelch JM 1997. *Understanding the SA Schools Act*. Pretoria: Department of Education.
- Prinsloo IJ 2005. How safe are South African schools? *South African Journal of Education*, 25: 5-10.
- Republic of South Africa 1996. *The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act No. 108 of 1996*. Pretoria: Government Printer.
- Republic of South Africa 1996. *National Policy Act No.27 of 1996*. Pretoria: Government Printer.
- Republic of South Africa 1996. *South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996*. Pretoria: Government Printer.
- Sunday Times 2005. Dirty teachers axed, 28 August.



*The Mercury* 2006. Teachers still hitting pupils, 26 July.

Tleane C 2002. *Developing a new ethos in schools*. Braamfontein: Centre for Education Policy Development, Evaluation and Management (CEPD).