

LEARNER DISCIPLINE AFTER CORPORAL PUNISHMENT IN THE TOWNSHIP PRIMARY SCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT

Learner discipline is an important aspect of schooling. Historically, teachers applied a number of measures to maintain discipline, including corporal punishment. In 1996 the use of corporal punishment in South African schools was banned. However, some parents and teachers believed that the banning of corporal punishment was directly responsible for poor discipline among learners in the township schools. The purpose of this article was to investigate this perception, as well as to investigate what teachers were doing to address disciplinary problems among learners. A questionnaire was developed, and distributed among 20 teachers from primary schools in the Matjhabeng Municipality (16 teachers responded). The data collected was quantitatively analysed. It was found that although cases of learner mischief were still experienced in the primary schools, the level of discipline has not increased disproportionately after the banning of corporal punishment; the majority of learners behaved fairly well. However, some teachers were found to use harsh measures of disciplining learners, including corporal punishment. The involvement of parents in learner discipline was not preferred by many teachers. To help teachers to effectively handle discipline, the Ministry of Education has to find ways of training teachers in democracy, stress management and conflict management.

Keywords: Learner discipline, corporal punishment, township schools.

1. INTRODUCTION

The South African schooling system has undergone major changes since 1994: a new teaching and learning approach was introduced; corporal punishment was banned in schools; the Constitution, which clearly protected the rights of children, was passed; and the Schools Act, which emphasised the role of parents in education, was promulgated. All these aspects had an influence on the school administration, teaching and learning, teacher conduct and learner discipline. Learner discipline, in particular, greatly influences the quality of teaching and learning in the school, since no effective learning takes place in a chaotic environment (Babertta, Norona & Bicard, 2005). Therefore, for effective teaching and learning high levels of discipline are required. In the past, corporal punishment was commonly used to maintain discipline in schools. However, in 1996 corporal punishment was banned in South African schools. The assumption among many teachers and parents is that the banning of corporal punishment has increased disciplinary problems among learners in schools.

The purpose of this study is, therefore, to determine the level of discipline among primary school learners in the Matjhabeng Municipality after the banning of corporal punishment. The study will also determine disciplinary measures teachers apply to manage learner discipline in these schools. The primary schools in South Africa mostly offer education from Grade zero (pre-school education) to Grade 7.

2. BACKGROUND

In the South African context, the term 'township' refers to a residential area mainly occupied by Africans, and the term 'suburb' refers to a residential area mainly occupied by whites. Traditionally, a town would have both a township and a suburb. Townships were established in accordance with the Native (Urban Areas) Act of 1923, in terms of which municipalities had to set aside segregated areas for occupation by Africans only (Thompson 1990; Worden 1994). Then it was illegal for Africans to live in the suburbs. Although laws which discriminated on the basis of colour have been repealed, the settlement patterns in South Africa have not changed that much: townships are still occupied by mainly Africans and suburbs by mainly whites (Vally, 2005). The study was, therefore, conducted in the townships of the Matjhabeng Municipality.

The Matjhabeng Municipality includes the following townships (with names of towns in brackets): Thabong (Welkom), Kutloanong (Odendaalsrus), Meloding (Virginia), Phomolong (Hennenman), Mamahabane (Ventersburg) and Nyakallong (Allanridge). The main economic activity in the Matjhabeng area remains mining, despite that a number of mines and shafts have closed down. The reasons cited for the closure of mines and shafts include declining gold grades, increased depth of mining and a drop in the gold price (MBendi, 2010; Ngonini, 2007). With the closure of many mines and shafts, the rate of unemployment, the level of poverty and the incidents of crime in the area have increased tremendously (Campbell & Meads, 2007; Ngonini, 2007). The higher levels of unemployment, crime and poverty are more noticeable in the townships as compared to the suburbs. The reason for this trend could be that most of the township residents are from the working (low) class, and depend significantly on the mines or the mining activity for employment, whereas in the suburbs most of the residents are middle class and have more stable, professional jobs.

3. LEARNER DISCIPLINE: LITERATURE STUDY

Discipline is the system of child rearing, which includes teaching and nurturing good behaviour, as well as correcting unwanted behaviour (Rogers 1998). The aim of discipline is to promote obedience and positive behaviour, as well as to induce a sense of self-control and self-discipline (DoE, 2000; Potgieter, Visser, Van der Bank, Mothata & Squelch, 1997; Wolfgang & Wolfgang, 1995).

Therefore, learners are expected to obey rules, to observe the school's code of conduct, to carry out instructions from the teacher, and to respect the teachers and fellow learners for the success of the teaching and learning activities. It is for this reason that schools have to find ways of enforcing discipline among learners. Hence, Cameron (2006) views school discipline as reliant on deterrence, control and punishment since discipline may not exist without some force and manipulation. Consequently, punishment forms an important part of school discipline.

Squelch (2000) describes punishment as a facet of discipline that involves action taken in response to inappropriate behaviour in order to correct it, or to modify it. Therefore, punishment is corrective discipline which is administered or inflicted on a person who has transgressed. Punishment for learners may take many forms, such as detention, withdrawal of privileges, time-out, assigning extra assignments and manual work; and in extreme cases, suspension and expulsion (Slee 1995).

Corporal punishment is also a form of punishment used as a measure of maintaining discipline in schools. Corporal punishment is described as any deliberate act of inflicting physical pain or discomfort on a learner, which may include spanking, slapping, pinching, shaking, throttling and hitting the learner with an object such as a belt, cane, shoe or ruler (International Human Rights Instruments, 2007; Soneson, 2005). Corporal punishment may also include denying or restricting the learner's use of the toilet, refusing the learner to drink or to eat, and forcing the learner to sit or stand in an uncomfortable position (Soneson, 2005). For the purpose of this article, corporal punishment refers to hitting the learner with a stick, belt or cane.

In South Africa the use of corporal punishment in schools was completely banned in 1996. The reason for the banning of corporal punishment was that it was barbaric and inhumane; and it promoted violence among learners (Squelch, 2000). Research has also revealed that severe forms of punishment, including harsh verbal and physical discipline, may be associated with behavioural problems among learners (Cameron, 2006; McKee, Roland, Coffelt, Olson, Forehand, Massari, Jones, Gaffney & Zens, 2007; Lansford & Dodge, 2008). Hoffman (2008) found that "those who behave most violently usually have a history of the most violent forms of punishment". McKee, *et al* (2007) found that because boys received harsher punishment than girls, boys showed more behavioural problems than girls.

In the South African schooling system corporal punishment was the most commonly used measure of punishment until it was banned in 1996 (DoE, 2000). The implication is that many township school teachers were themselves victims of severe corporal punishment throughout their schooling. These teachers also started their careers with the perception that corporal punishment was the best form of punishment (Du Bois, 2002; Morrel, 2001).

Hence the banning of corporal punishment angered many teachers who saw it as the only means of keeping order in the classroom.

4. METHODOLOGY

The method of this study was mainly quantitative. It was important to quantify incidents in order to obtain objective information. A questionnaire was developed. The questionnaire had three parts: the first part contained items which were made up of bad behaviours commonly committed by learners, the second part contained common teacher reactions to bad behaviour, and the last part allowed teachers to freely express their views with regard to what they viewed as causes of disciplinary problems among learners, and what they believed could be done to address these disciplinary problems in their schools. The last part was not dealt with in this article.

The questionnaires were distributed among 20 randomly selected teachers who were teaching at primary schools in the Matjhabeng Municipality. After a week, 16 completed questionnaires were collected a response rate of 80%. The Institutional Research Unit of the Central University of Technology, Free State, was used to analyse data collected through the questionnaires.

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Prevalence of bad behaviour among learners

In each case, respondents were asked to rate the occurrence of the proper behaviour on a three-point scale. The results are represented in the following table:

Table 1: Teachers' ratings of frequency of learner's proper behaviour

	Always		Often		Never	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Learners arriving for school in time	5	31.25%	11	68.75%	0	.00%
Learners doing homework properly	2	12.50%	12	75.00%	2	12.50%
Learners keeping quiet in class	3	18.75%	10	62.50%	3	18.75%
Learners carrying out instructions from the teacher	9	56.25%	6	37.50%	1	6.25%
Learners participating in class activities	9	64.29%	3	21.43%	2	14.29%

All the 16 (100%) respondents who answered this question reported that their learners frequently (always and often) arrived for school in time; 14 (87,50%) respondents reported that their learners frequently did their homework properly; 13 (81,25%) respondents reported that their learners frequently kept quiet in class; 15 (93,75%) respondents reported that their learners frequently carried out instructions from the teacher, and 12 (85,68%) of the 15 respondents indicated that their learners frequently participated in class activities. Although the majority of the learners frequently behaved as expected with regard to the good behaviours mentioned above, there were, however, learners who never behaved as expected with regard to the good behaviours mentioned above. Therefore, some disciplinary measures or interventions were required to correct the situation.

In Table 2 some bad behaviours by learners were indicated, and teachers had to rate the occurrence of the bad behaviours. Their responses are indicated below:

Table 2: Teachers' ratings of frequency of learners' disruptive behaviour 1

	Always		Often		Never	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Learners moving around in class during lessons	2	13.33%	9	60.00%	4	26.67%
Learners talking to each other while the teacher is speaking	3	18.75%	11	68.75%	2	12.50%
Learners fighting or teasing each other during the lesson	1	6.67%	8	53.33%	6	40.00%
Learners insulting/swearing at each other	2	12.50%	10	62.50%	4	25.00%
Learners stealing from each other	2	12.50%	12	75.00%	2	12.50%
Learners generally disrupting teaching and learning	2	13.33%	8	53.33%	5	33.33%

The statistics above indicate that majority of teachers reported that their learners were frequently (often and always) involved in incidents that disrupted the smooth running of the teaching and learning activities, with 11 (73,33%) reporting that learners were frequently involved with moving around in class during lessons; 14 (87,50%) reporting that their learners were frequently involved with talking to each other while the teacher was speaking; 9 (60%) reporting that their learners were frequently involved with fighting or teasing each

other during the lesson; 12 (75%) reported that their learners were frequently swearing at each other; 14 (87,50%) reporting that their learners frequently stole from each other; and 10 (66,66%) reporting that learners were frequently disrupting teaching and learning.

The conclusion is that at any given time, there were learners who were busy disrupting teaching and learning activities in class. There was, therefore, a need for some disciplinary measures to address this situation.

In Table 3, certain bad behaviours were identified and teachers were to confirm if such behaviours existed in their classes. Their responses are indicated below.

Table 3: Teachers' confirmation of the prevalence of certain bad behaviours

	Yes		No	
	Count	%	Count	%
Learners are involved in physical violence	5	33.3%	10	66.6%
Learners use improper language in school	4	26.7%	11	73.3%

The figures indicate that the involvement of learners in physical violence was experienced by only 5 (33,3%) of the 15 respondents; while the learners' use of improper language was experience by 4 (26,7%) of the 15 respondents.

It is a small number of teachers who experienced the bad behaviours mentioned above. However, the bad behaviours may make effective teaching and learning difficult in those classes where they are experienced. Therefore, some measures of discipline are required.

In Table 4 the teachers rated the level of the learners' negative attitude towards their teachers. The results are indicated below:

Table 4: Ratings of occurrence of negative attitude towards the teacher

	Always		Often		Never	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Learners being cheeky or stubborn towards the teacher	2	13.33%	7	46.67%	6	40.00%
Learners insulting/swearing at the teacher	0	.00%	7	46.67%	8	53.33%

The majority of the respondents (9 teachers or 60% of the 15 teachers) indicated that learners were frequently cheeky or stubborn towards them, while 7 (46,67%) reported that learners often swore at them. Only 6 (40%) of the 15 teachers did not experience cheekiness or stubbornness from learners, while 8 (53,33%) did not experience any swearing from the learners.

It could be concluded that the negative behaviour by learners was not only directed at fellow learners, but was also directed towards teachers. Teachers may feel threatened or intimidated, which may make them reluctant or simply scared to maintain discipline in their classes.

In Table 5 teachers were requested to confirm if learners displayed any negative attitudes, disobedience and disrespect towards them, as well as dishonesty towards their (learners') own work. The results are indicated below:

Table 5: Confirmation of learners' negative attitude towards school, teachers and school work

	Yes		No	
	Count	%	Count	%
Learners display negative attitude towards school	5	33.3%	10	66.6%
Learners display disobedience towards teachers	6	40.0%	9	60.0%
Learners display disrespect towards teachers	5	33.3%	10	66.6%
Learners are dishonest in their work	4	26.7%	11	73.3%

Of the 15 teachers who responded to this question, 5 (33,3%) confirmed that learners displayed negative attitudes towards school, 6 (40%) confirmed that learners showed disobedience towards teachers, 5 (33,3%) confirmed that learners showed disrespect towards teachers, and 4 (26,7%) confirmed that learners were dishonest in their own work. Although the majority of teachers indicated that they were not experiencing the attitudinal problems mentioned above, it remains a concern that learners displayed these unacceptable attitudes towards their teachers.

Teachers' opinions and practices in the maintenance of discipline.

The statements in Table 6 indicate teacher actions that are not approved by DoE for dealing with bad behaviour among learners. Teachers had to rate the extent to which they applied these non-approved measures. Their responses are indicated below.

Table 6: Teachers' ratings of non-approved practices

	Always		Often		Never	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
I administer corporal punishment	1	6.25%	4	25.00%	11	68.75%
I pinch (ho tsipa) misbehaving learners	0	.00%	3	18.75%	13	81.25%
I hit misbehaving learners with a ruler or duster	0	.00%	0	.00%	15	100.00%
I chase misbehaving learners out of my classroom	0	.00%	5	31.25%	11	68.75%
I swear at the misbehaving learners	0	.00%	2	12.50%	14	87.50%

The figures in Table 6 indicate that at least 5 (31,25%) of the 15 respondents frequently administered corporal punishment; another 5 (31,25) often chased misbehaving learners out of their classes; while 3 (18,75%) often pinched misbehaving learners, and 2 (12,50%) often swore at misbehaving learners. No teacher hit learners with a ruler or a duster.

The conclusion that can be drawn from the above discussion is that although corporal punishment is illegal in schools, some teachers still administered it on learners. The use of other non-approved measures of disciplining learners, such as pinching learners, chasing them out of the classroom and swearing at them may be an indication of the teachers' inability to effectively deal with indiscipline among learners.

Table 7 indicates actions that are approved by DoE, and how teachers applied these actions in dealing with bad behaviour among learners.

Table 7: Teachers' ratings of approved practices

	Always		Often		Never	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
I talk politely to misbehaving learners	10	62.50%	5	31.25%	1	6.25%
I call parents of misbehaving learners	6	40.00%	8	53.33%	1	6.67%
I report misbehaving learners to the school manager	8	50.00%	7	43.75%	1	6.25%
I just keep quiet when learners misbehave	1	6.25%	4	25.00%	11	68.75%
I stop the lesson when learners misbehave	1	6.25%	9	56.25%	6	37.50%
I give misbehaving learners manual/physical work	3	18.75%	10	62.50%	3	18.75%

In Table 7, the majority of the respondents (15 or 93,75%) frequently (always and often) talked politely to misbehaving learners. The reporting of misbehaving learners to the school manager was also popular since it was also done frequently by 15 of the 16 respondents; the parents of misbehaving learners were frequently called by 14 (93,33%) of the 16 respondents; 10 (62,50%) of the respondents frequently stopped the lesson when learners misbehaved, and 5 (31,25%) of the respondents frequently kept quiet when learners misbehaved.

The figures in table 7 indicate that the majority of teachers operated within the rules by applying DoE approved practices of dealing with learner indiscipline. However, some of them applied the non-approved measures. The conclusion that can be drawn from the situation is that the DoE approved measures may have been ineffective in dealing with learner indiscipline; hence some teachers resorted to non-approved measures. The reason for the ineffectiveness of the DoE approved measures could be that these measures are not in line with the practices at most African homes. For instance, it is not popular among adult Africans to talk politely to misbehaving children, or to keep quiet when children misbehave, but to be harsh and to even hit them (or administer corporal punishment on them) (Vaaler, Ellison, Horton & Marcum, 2008). Curwin and Mendler (1999) believe that the largest single influence on children is their home life and society; and the violence children see at home and in the society translates into violence and indiscipline. Therefore, the polite measures applied at school may not be effective in dealing ill-discipline among learners from the townships, due to the learners' exposure to unruly behaviour.

6. TEACHERS' OPINIONS ON CORPORAL PUNISHMENT AND THE ROLE OF PARENTS IN LEARNER DISCIPLINE

In Table 8 sentiments which were commonly expressed by parents and teachers were presented to teachers, and teachers had to indicate whether they agreed with the statements. Their responses are indicated below:

Table 8: Sentiments on corporal punishment (teachers' opinions)

	Yes		No	
	Count	%	Count	%
Department of Education should re-introduce corporal punishment as a way to improve discipline	5	33.3%	10	66.6%
Banning of corporal punishment increased the level disciplinary problems	6	40.0%	9	60.0%
Banning of corporal punishment negatively affected learner performance.	4	26.7%	11	73.3%

It was found that 5 (33,33%) of the 15 respondents felt that the re-introduction of corporal punishment could improve discipline among learners, while 10 did not agree; 6 (40%) believed that the banning of corporal punishment contributed significantly to the increase of disciplinary problems among learners, while 9 did not agree; and only 4 (26,7%) believed that the banning of corporal punishment would affect the performance of learners negatively, and 11 disagreed.

The conclusion from the figures of Table 8 is that the majority of educators do not believe that corporal punishment has a positive contribution in the performance and discipline of learners.

In Table 9 statements which expressed the role of parents in learner discipline were provided, and teachers had to confirm whether they agreed or disagreed with such statements. Their responses are indicated below:

Table 9: Teachers' opinions on the role of parents in improving learner discipline at schools

	Yes		No	
	Count	%	Count	%
Parents can discipline children at home to improve discipline at school	3	20.0%	12	80.0%
Parents can remove children's rights or power to improve discipline at school	1	6.7%	14	93.3%
Parents can visit the school regularly to improve discipline at school	2	13.4%	13	86.6%
Parents co-operate with the school or teachers to improve discipline at school	5	33.3%	10	66.65

The figures reveal that only 3 (20%) of the 15 teachers believed that disciplining children at home could improve discipline at school, while only 5 (33,33%) believed that learner discipline could improve when parents cooperated with teachers. Parents' removal of children's rights or power, and parents' visiting the school regularly were viewed by respectively one (6,7%) and 2 (13,4%) teachers as important for improving discipline at schools.

The conclusion drawn from the figures of Table 9 is that the majority of teachers do not view parents as having an important role to play in learner discipline.

7. CHI-SQUARE TEST

The chi-square test was applied in order to compare teachers' disciplinary actions with learner behaviour. The results are represented in the tables below.

Table 10: Contingency table of 'Learners being cheeky or stubborn towards the educator' versus 'I administer corporal punishment' occurrence ratings.

Learners being "cheeky or stubborn towards the educator	I administer corporal punishment			Total
	Always	Often	Never	
Always	0	1	1	2
Often	0	2	5	7
Never	1	1	4	6
Total	1	4	10	15

Table10a

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	2.250 ^a	4	.690
Likelihood Ratio	2.540	4	.637
Linear-by-Linear Association	.058	1	.810
N of Valid Cases	15		

a. 9 cells (100.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .13.

One can notice the independence of the frequency of administering corporal punishment with the level of learners' cheekiness or stubbornness. The prevalence of administering corporal punishment has nothing to do with the learners' bad behaviour.

Table 11: Contingency table of 'Learners being cheeky or stubborn towards the educator' versus 'I pinch (ho tsipa) misbehaving learners' occurrence ratings.

Learners being "cheeky or stubborn towards the educator	I pinch (ho tsipa) misbehaving learners		Total
	Often	Never	
Always	0	2	2
Often	1	6	7
Never	2	4	6
Total	3	12	15

Table 11a

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1.310 ^a	2	.520
Likelihood Ratio	1.632	2	.442
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.212	1	.271
N of Valid Cases	15		

a. 5 cells (83.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .40.

One can notice the independence of frequency of pinching learners by teachers as compared to the level of learners' cheekiness or stubbornness. The prevalence of teachers' practice has nothing to do with the learners' behaviour.

Table 12: Contingency table of 'Learners being cheeky or stubborn towards the educator' versus 'I swear at the misbehaving learners' occurrence ratings.

Learners being "cheeky or stubborn towards the educator		I swear at the misbehaving learners		Total
		Often	Never	
Always		0	2	2
Often		1	6	7
Never		1	5	6
Total		2	13	15

Table 12a

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.371 ^a	2	.831
Likelihood Ratio	.632	2	.729
Linear-by-Linear Association	.254	1	.614
N of Valid Cases	15		

a. 4 cells (66.7%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .27.

One can notice the independence of frequency of swearing at learners with the level of learners' cheekiness or stubbornness. There is no relationship between the teachers' practice of swearing at learners and the behaviour of learners.

7. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study has revealed that learner discipline is fairly manageable at many township primary schools in the Matjhabeng Municipality. The majority of teachers apply approved measures to maintain discipline in their classes. However, problems of ill-discipline also exist.

The problems such as stealing, swearing, physical fights, stubbornness, disobedience, dishonesty and disruptive behaviour exist among township learners. While most of the bad behaviour was directed at fellow learners, teachers were, however, not spared as they also experienced swearing, cheekiness and disobedience (from learners). These problems, although perpetuated by a small number of learners, have the potential to disrupt the smooth progress of teaching and learning activities in the classroom. The teachers are, therefore, expected to address bad behaviour and maintain discipline.

The study also revealed that while the majority of teachers relied on DoE approved measures of disciplining learners, some teachers still used non-approved measures such as pinching learners, chasing learners out of the classrooms, swearing at learners and corporal punishment. The application of corporal punishment for disciplining learners is illegal in South African schools. Consequently, the media continually reports on a number of teachers who are charged in the courts for the administration of corporal punishment on learners. Keeping quiet or stopping the lesson when learners misbehave may also disadvantage other learners who may not be involved in the bad behaviour. This practice could be a further indication of the township teachers' inability to deal with learner indiscipline.

The majority of teachers did not believe that democracy and learner rights led to increased disciplinary problems. The parents of township school learners were believed to be unable or least able to help teachers in maintaining discipline at schools. Hence, the majority of teachers did not depend on parents for maintaining learner discipline. This trend seems unusual since in many communities parents are expected to play a major role in the maintenance of discipline in schools. The parents' level of education could have a role to play in this case. Vally (2005) established that the majority of learners who are in the township schools have parents who are generally poor and uneducated. Mpeta (2000) has found that uneducated parents are less concerned with school issues, but are mainly obsessed with basics such as food, shelter and clothing. Therefore, uneducated parents are unable to contribute ideas on how to deal with indiscipline among learners. This could be the reason why teachers do not rely on them when it comes to dealing with discipline among learners.

The frequency tables revealed that the majority of learners behaved fairly well. Good behaviours such as arriving for school in time, carrying out instructions from the teacher, and participating in class activities were observed by the majority of learners. It was expected that the good behaviours by the majority of learners would compensate for the bad behaviour by the few learners, and consequently, lead to less need for harsher corrective measures such as administering corporal punishment, pinching learners and swearing at learners.

However, when the chi-square test was used to compare teacher disciplinary actions with learner behaviour, it was found that no relationship existed between the behaviour of learners and the disciplinary measures administered by teachers: teachers still administered corporal punishment, pinched learners and swore at learners who misbehaved, despite that the majority of learners displayed good behaviour. Therefore, the teachers' decision to administer corporal punishment, to pinch learners and to swear at learners was not dependent on the learners' good behaviour. The reason could be that teachers are expected to act against individual learners who transgress, and do not view the transgression of an individual learner as isolated and deserving to be ignored. The other reasons for the teachers' behaviour could be that teachers have a responsibility to mould learners as individuals and not as a collective, and that if transgressions by individual learners are not immediately punished, other learners could be impressed and end up pursuing the same unacceptable behaviours.

The conclusion one draws from the study is that the behaviour of learners in the selected primary schools did not show a marked increase after the banning of corporal punishment. However, some teachers continued to apply harsher or too strict measures of discipline to learners in the primary school.

The following are recommended in order to help teachers to address disciplinary problems in the school:

- Training teachers in democracy, stress management and conflict management. The insight gained in such training could help teachers to be more objective and more tolerant when dealing with learners steps which could go a long way in preventing some disciplinary problems among learners.
- The involvement of parents in learner discipline. This could be done by forming small parent groups such as Class/Phase Committees to help teachers to handle disciplinary problems, and

- The holding of weekly/monthly disciplinary meetings where teachers share disciplinary problems experienced over that period, and how these were handled. These meetings could also help schools to identify learners with disciplinary problems, and to have a consistent approach to disciplinary problems within the school.

It is important that teachers are helped to handle learner indiscipline effectively, and without the application of the harsh measures.

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