ESTABLISHING DISCIPLINE IN THE CONTEMPORARY CLASSROOM

by

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Abstract
The meaning that individual educators attach to the word "discipline" has a bearing on the discipline strategy that they would tend to employ in order to establish discipline in their classrooms. This article explores the different meaning(s) that are attached to the word "discipline" by educators in schools. It also explores the challenges that educators have to deal with in their classrooms as well as the discipline strategies that are been used by educators in their classrooms. The study concludes with recommendations suggesting proactive strategies that are easy to implement and would be useful to educators.

1. INTRODUCTION

Discipline continues to be one of the most puzzling and frustrating problems confronting educators today, more so than ever before. This assertion is confirmed by Charles (2002) who says that a surprising number of educators suffer stress and leave the profession because of learner misbehaviour and many of those who remain are asking for help. This is also confirmed by a research that was commissioned for educator support in Scotland (Finlayson, 2002), which found that the main cause of educator stress was learner misbehaviour. The reality of the matter is that while most educators are struggling to deal with learner misbehaviour, there are some educators who are able to establish discipline in their classrooms. The Minister of Education also acknowledges that whilst many educators are struggling in terms of establishing discipline, there are some educators who are coping. "We should also acknowledge that not all schools are problem schools. Our tribute must go to the thousands of teachers who have created empowering and caring schools in thousands of communities throughout the country" (Daily Dispatch, 28 Nov 2006).

Learner misconduct in South African schools should not be underestimated. Expressing her concern with regard to the seriousness of learner misconduct, the Minister of Education , Naledi Pandor , says that if we allow violence, abuse and drugs to become a familiar and accepted part of schooling, our future is lost. If we dither and hide behind our rights-based laws, then we merely confirm that rights protect abusers and not the dignity of all (South African Government Information, 21 November 2006).

2. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The South African Schools Act No.84 of 1996 (hereafter Schools Act), makes it clear that corporal punishment may no longer be used in public and independent (private) schools as a means of punishment. In addition, Section 12 of the Constitution states that everyone has the right not to be treated or punished in a cruel, inhuman or degrading way. However, vestiges of a more punitive and primitive nature still linger in some schools because educators lack knowledge and skills to employ classroom discipline strategies that will instill self-discipline, self-direction and positive attitudes in learners.

There are a number of discipline strategies or methods that have been recommended by the Department of Education (2001) which could be employed by educators, however, some of these methods are perceived to be ineffective by the majority of educators. As a result of the discipline struggle that they are faced with, educators use classroom discipline strategies they believe to be pedagogically sound and each discipline strategy has a distinct impact on learners. Some discipline strategies are effective, while some are not.

The real challenge lies in the implementation and maintenance of disciplinary measures and procedures that uphold order in classrooms with understanding and compassion and more importantly, develop self-discipline in learners. The main questions are: What meaning do educators attached to the word "discipline"? What discipline challenges are educators currently faced with? Which discipline strategies are currently employed by educators to establish discipline in their classrooms? If punishment tends to be ineffective and produce unexpected negative results, what can be done to replace it? Which knowledge, skills, attitudes and values are required of educators to establish discipline in the classroom? Are educators well trained and developed in the field of classroom discipline?

3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Cohen, Manion & Morrison, (2007) hold that research design is governed by the notion of fitness of purpose. This means that the research design and methodology is determined by the purpose of the research. The methodology of this study was qualitative, since this study focused on interpretation. According to Merriam (2002), the design of a qualitative study focused on interpretation includes shaping a problem for the type of study, selecting a sample, collecting and analyzing data and writing up the findings.

3.1 Sampling

Sampling is defined by Zikmund (2000) as a process of using a small number of items or parts of a larger population to make conclusions about the whole population. This study had to ensure that there was adequate representation of schools from different cultural and socio-economic backgrounds. This was done to ensure that the effects of cultural and socio-economic backgrounds on classroom discipline are reflected in this study. Thus, purposeful sampling was used. This means that the researcher selected sites for study which can purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study (Creswell 2007). A sample of three high schools in Pretoria East was used as a case study in this research. Case study research is a qualitative approach in which the researchers explores a bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information

such as interviews, observations and reports, a case description and case-based themes (Creswell, 2007). Merriam (2002, p.8) defines a case study as an intensive description and analysis of a phenomenon or social unit such as an individual, group, institution or community. Thus the selection of the three high schools: one school being a fully integrated English medium high school in an affluent area (School A), the second school being an Afrikaans medium high school in a more affluent area (School B), and the third school being an English medium high school in a low socio-economic area (School C).

3.2 Data collection

According to Creswell (2007), the major characteristic of qualitative research is that information is gathered by actually talking directly to people and seeing them behave and act within their context. Interview and observation were the two data collection techniques used in this study. In-depth interviews were the primary source of data and observations were the secondary source of data. The two data collection techniques were used to enhance validity of the findings and thus for the purpose of triangulation. The literature review was also considered as another source of data.

In-depth interviews, which according to (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001) are open response questions to obtain data of participant meanings with regard to how individuals conceive of their world by explaining and making sense of the important events in their lives were used in this case study. A total number of eighteen educators were interviewed in all three schools.

Other data was obtained through observation of interactions between educators and learners in classrooms. The distinctive characteristic of observation as a research process is that it offers a researcher the opportunity to gather "live" data from the naturally occurring social situation (Cohen, et al. 2007). The use of observations in this study enabled us to look directly at what is taking place in classrooms, rather than relying on second-hand accounts. Every observation was scheduled to take 40 minutes, which was the normal lesson period in the schools visited.

4. RESEARCH FINDINGS

The findings from interviews and observations conducted confirmed that some educators are able to establish discipline in their classrooms while other educators are struggling to achieve the same. The factors contributing to this discrepancy have been identified as the difference in the meaning ascribed to the word discipline in schools by different educators, the challenges that educators are faced with in their classrooms and the different discipline strategies which are been used by different educators as well as their effects on classroom discipline. These findings will be discussed in relation to the literature review conducted.

4.1 The meaning of the word "discipline"

Discipline in the classroom context is perceived differently by individual educators in schools. Some perceive it as the formation of moral character, some perceive it as control over learners, some perceive it as a preventive and corrective measure, some as self-discipline, whereas some understand it more narrowly as punishment.

Rossouw (2003) sees discipline as the formation of moral character. He thus holds that discipline should equip the learner and help him to be prepared to act as a responsible and effective member of a society. His assertion is supported by Oosthuizen, Roux & Van der Walt (2003), who says that discipline should be prospective in the sense that it should enable a learner to become an effective and well-behaved future functionary in society. Oosthuizen, et al. (2003) defines discipline as the action by which an educator calls a learner to order and to self-disciplined thinking with the purpose of instilling in the latter a sober and balanced state of mind and self-control, enabling the latter to become fully equipped for his calling in life and for meaningful existence within the constraints of acceptable behavioural codes in his or her particular environment. Charles (2002) combines prevention, control and correction in his definition of discipline. Thus, he says that discipline is intended to prevent, suppress and redirect misbehaviour. Foucault (1977) sees discipline as control and suppression and thus describes discipline as the specific technique of power that regards individuals both as objects and as instruments of its exercise. Foucault's argument is that discipline creates "docile bodies" (Foucault, 1977). He therefore maintains that to construct docile bodies, the disciplinary institutions must be able to constantly observe and record the bodies they control and ensure the internalization of the disciplinary individuality within the bodies being controlled.

Charles (2002) sees discipline as inner control. He maintains that the goal of discipline is to reduce the need for educator intervention over time by helping learners become self-disciplined, and are thus able to control their behaviour appropriately. He says that when educators employ various discipline techniques, they hope not only that misbehaviour will cease but that learners will further internalize self-discipline and display it in the classroom and elsewhere. Charles (2002) supports Dreikurs, Grunwald & Pepper (1982) and state that discipline is an inner process; an integrated part of one's values. It is imperative, however, to note that in the context of South African schooling discipline is often understood more narrowly as punishment and as a result many mistakenly equate discipline with punishment. Dreikurs et al. (1982) points out that most people, educators and parents alike, use the word "discipline" to mean control through punitive measures. "To many people it signifies physical punishment; to others, rigid control of rules and regulations and autocratic authority" asserts Dreikurs et al. (p. 80).

The findings in this study confirmed that educators attach different meanings to the word "discipline". It became evident that to some educators discipline is synonymous to control through punitive measures, to others, it is synonymous with the development of moral character and it is thus perceived as the ability to behave responsibly. To some educators, discipline remains synonymous with corporal punishment, whereas to some educators it implies self-discipline.

Most educators in schools perceive discipline as control through punitive measures because these educators themselves grew up and were educated in a school system where "child rights" violations were prevalent. This implies that some educators have not yet changed their mindset to come to understand the essence of discipline in the context of a democratic society. These educators see discipline more as a means of control and therefore suppress learners' ability to develop inner control. What is evident is that some educators fail to see the ultimate purpose of discipline as the empowerment of learners to make decisions on their own. They believe that learners are not able to decide between what is right and what is wrong, and thus need constant supervision. They fail to understand the essence of the

development of self-discipline. Self-discipline can be attained when learners are provided with an opportunity to discover the relationship between the decisions that they make and their consequences. In other words, they fail to understand that discipline is the learner's responsibility.

This study also revealed that there are some educators who see discipline as inner-control and thus ascribe discipline to the ability to act responsibly. Lack of training and development was therefore revealed as the source of inconsistent interpretations of the word "discipline".

4.2 Discipline challenges

Most educators are struggling to find alternatives that will enable them to feel in control of the learners they teach, as a result they are suffering from stress and some consider leaving teaching because of difficulties in dealing with learner misbehaviour. Finlayson (2002) confirms that that the main cause of educators' stress is learner misbehaviour. One cannot help but marry this struggle with the educators' lack of knowledge and skills to establish discipline in their classrooms. This study revealed that most educators have not received formal training with regard to the discipline strategies and their application as recommended by the Department of Education.

Some learners are not cooperative towards their educators and turn to violent and aggressive behaviour, smoke dagga and carry dangerous weapons. This confirms what is expressed by Flannery (2005) where he mentions that learners constantly disrespect, disrupt and demean. "Learners verbally assault educators regularly. They steal, cheat, lie, and vandalize, use cell phones in class and keep iPod earphones dangling from their ears", argues Flannery (2005, p.22). Furthering his argument, he says that many learners come to school with little regard for rules. "They're used to getting their own way," Flannery maintains. In this way educators do not have a cultural foundation to build upon. This also confirms Bateman's (Pretoria News, 28 May 2007) report that learners carry knives and fire arms, verbally abuse and threaten their educators.

This study also revealed that some educators still see corporal punishment as a necessary classroom tool. During the interviews an educator from one school said that he still uses light corporal punishment. Passing one classroom and observing that one educator was actually giving a learner a hiding and an educator from the other school saying she keeps a stick but does not use it, confirms that corporal punishment is still used by some educators. The Minister of Education, Naledi Pandor (Department of Education: 2007) also acknowledged that corporal punishment is regrettably still practiced in many schools and stressed that the use of corporal punishment is in direct contravention of the law. It is also crucial to note that educators who never relied on corporal punishment as a means to establish discipline are not facing as many challenges as those who relied solely on corporal punishment.

Another challenge that was revealed by this study is that most parents of learners who are truant are not supportive. Schools are not getting 100% support from parents with regard to learner behaviour management. This confirms Holford's (2006) argument that not all parents respond positively on receiving reports that their children have been corrected for misbehaviour.

Generally educators are finding it difficult to establish discipline in their classrooms. The struggle is more with some educators than with others. Those who have never relied on corporal punishment seem to be coping whereas those who have relied on it feel frustrated by the new system of education. The new curriculum in schools, as well as the outcome-based-education approach are also cited as contributing to the discipline challenges. However, some educators are being creative and one school has made a great effort to put in place a point system that enables educators to establish some kind of discipline.

4.3 Discipline strategies employed by educators in their classrooms

It is important to note that strategies that are employed by educators to establish discipline in the classroom will be based on the knowledge, skills, attitude and values that they acquired in one way or another. Before unpacking the strategies that are being employed by educators to establish discipline as articulated by different researchers, it is essential to outline the major models of classroom management to which these different discipline strategies that are employed by educators emanate from.

A foundation from which educators make classroom management decisions and respond to issues of learner misbehaviour is essential to creating well disciplined schools. In order to achieve that, Malmgren, Bervely & Peter (2005) urge educators to develop a cohesive and thoughtfully constructed personal philosophy of classroom management, which will provide them with the foundation from which their classroom management decisions and their responses to learner misbehaviour are based. Thus the following models of classroom management are discussed: assertive discipline, logical consequences and teacher effectiveness training. These three models are elaborated on in the following paragraphs.

4.3.1   Assertive discipline

According to Charles (2002, p.35) assertive discipline focuses primarily on rewards and punishments. The assertive discipline model as described by both Charles (2002) and Malmgren, et al. (2005), involves a high level of educator control in the classroom, as the educators control their classroom in a firm manner. Essentially, the core of this approach is developing a clear classroom discipline plan that consists of rules which learners must follow at all times, positive recognition that learners will receive for following the rules and consequences that result when learners choose not to follow the rules. Edward (2000) also confirms that basically assertive discipline involves establishing rules, punishing learners who violate rules and rewarding learners for good behaviour.

This study highlighted that classroom discipline strategies that are used by educators in their classrooms are based on the assertive model of classroom management and as such, discipline strategies are control-oriented. Although classroom rules are determined and agreed upon with learners, the consequence of breaking the rules is punishment of some sort. This will vary from educator to educator. It could be time-out, detention, cleaning up after school, ordering the learner to stand at a corner in the classroom and so on. Basically educators use punishment to establish discipline in their classroom and use rewards to encourage good behaviour.

4.3.2 Logical consequences

This model of classroom management is based on the notion that learners' misbehaviour is an outgrowth of their unmet needs. Thus, one of the underlying assumptions of this model is that all learners desire and need social recognition (Malmgren et al., 2005). According to Dreikurs, et al. (1982), when the learners' need for social recognition is not fulfilled, learners tend to adopt the following four mistaken goals without being aware of them, namely: to gain undue attention, to seek power, to seek revenge or to get even and to display inadequacy.

Dreikurs et al. (1982, as cited in Charles, 2002) encourages educators to learn to identify mistaken goals and to deal with them. He suggests that when educators see evidence that learners are pursuing mistaken goals, they should in a friendly and non-threatening manner point out the fact by identifying the mistaken goal and discussing the faulty logic involved with the learners. He strongly discourages the use of punishment because he says it has many bad side effects and suggests that it should be replaced with application of logical consequences agreed to with the class (Charles, 2002, p.29).

This study highlighted that there is no logical connection between the learner's misbehaviour and the consequence. Consequences are not logical. For example, with the application of the demerit system learners get points which ultimately lead to detention. In this way detention becomes the ultimate consequence, irrespective of the kind of misbehaviour. This is a big concern because the learners will not be able to connect the consequence with the misbehaviour since the learner sits for detention long after the misbehaviour was demonstrated. Hence the educators' concern is that a discipline measure such as detention does not seem to help the situation. Learners sit one detention after the other, but most learner behaviour does not change.

This study also revealed that schools utilizing one discipline system as the main discipline strategy in the classrooms, have some form of consistency in the application of such a system rather than a school wherein there is no agreed upon discipline strategy and as a result educators are using different strategies depending on their experience and discretion. A disturbing finding was that some educators use certain discipline strategies even when they are not convinced that they will be effective. Also, to discover that some educators refrain from using other forms of punishment but use harsh abusive verbal expressions that are emotionally destructive to the learners.

4.3.3 Teacher effectiveness training

Gordon (1989) emphasizes the importance of teaching learners to regulate and manage their own behaviour rather than employing power-based or control-oriented strategies. He maintains that these control-type strategies do not actually influence learners but only coerce or compel them. He believes that such strategies more often than not create new problems that range from rebellion to withdrawal, and that praise and reward do little to change learner behaviour for the better (Charles 2002) He therefore urges educators to strive for cooperation with learners, while avoiding power punishment, praise and reward.

In his teachings, Gordon (1989, as cited in Charles 2002, p.87) maintains that non-controlling strategies of behaviour change are available for educators in order to influence

learners to behave properly. He asserts that it is counterproductive for educators to use authoritative power or rewards and punishments to control learners.

Gordon (1989) articulates his views on discipline and emphasizes that the only effective discipline is self-control that occurs internally and he therefore urges educators to renounce external control by rewards and punishment. Gordon (1989, as cited in Charles (2002), asserts that educators need to assist learners and to teach them how to attain self-control. He further asserts that in order to teach learners to control their own behaviour and to become self-reliant in making positive decisions, educators must first give up their "controlling" power over learners. Thus Gordon believes that this occurs best in classrooms when learners are able to use their inner sense of self-control.

Gordon (1989) states that rewards and punishments are used by educators to control learners. As a result of the use of control-oriented strategies, educators are not always successful in establishing discipline. Although some educators manage to keep learner misbehaviour within tolerable limits, others educators are not managing at all. Gordon (1989, p.81) asserts that when control-oriented strategies are used to establish classroom discipline, learners engage in various coping mechanisms in a quest to achieve some degree of autonomy or at least to make life more miserable for those trying to coerce them. In other words learners who have been coerced usually show very little self-control when they are outside the influence of the controller.

This study also revealed that most discipline strategies used by educators are control-oriented. Thus they are more reactive rather than proactive. Most educators focus on eliminating negative behaviours rather than teaching appropriate behaviours. What happens is that most educators just hand in slips or incident reports for learner misbehaviour and there is even less time for one-to-one talk with the learner. The development of a good educator-learner relationship is neglected by most educators. These educators are mostly autocratic and create a hostile atmosphere in the classroom with the hope that they will achieve less discipline problems if they could make learners to fear them.

Insufficient educator training and development, and in some cases, lack of educator training and development were also revealed in this study as factors contributing to learner misconduct in the classroom. Short, Short & Blanton (1994) maintains that educators often receive little formal training in classroom discipline and that without such training it may be easier for them to resort to force and corporal punishment as behaviour control strategies. In two schools, new educators are inducted and receive coaching in terms of using the discipline strategy that is commonly used in the schools. However this is insufficient because these educators only acquire knowledge and skills in applying a particular discipline strategy but do not acquire knowledge and skills for maintaining discipline in general. This then limits their choice of discipline strategies because they do not have knowledge and skills to apply them. In the other school, educator training and development in terms of classroom discipline does not take place at all.

This study also revealed that schools are not using the same discipline strategies. Each school uses the strategy that they believe works. This is proved by School A which relies solely on the point system. School B relies mainly on the point system but does use other disciplinary strategies such as daily reports and time-out. A discipline strategy that is being used in the other two schools such as the demerit system is not used at all in school C. School C does not

seem to understand the application of detention as a discipline strategy. Bench marking then becomes a necessity for educators to determine best practices from schools in the neighbourhood.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations to address the challenges that educators are faced with regard to discipline in their classrooms are presented below:

5.1 Benchmarking against best practices

There is a need for schools to benchmark their practices against the practices of other schools in order to establish best practices. For example, schools within the same district should establish a forum in which the school administrators and their staff could collectively share their challenges and come up with possible solutions to challenges that are faced by educators with regard to discipline in their respective schools. This recommendation is based on the finding that some schools use discipline systems that enable them to establish discipline whereas other schools are struggling severely with discipline. This endeavour can be achieved through district workshops. Thus the districts of the Department of Education need to coordinate workshops on a regular basis so that individual schools do not operate in isolation but come together to discuss and share best practices with regard to systems that could be effective in establishing discipline in the contemporary classroom.

5.2 Internal workshops

Individual schools also need to hold internal workshops where educators could come together to find and share better discipline strategies in their classrooms. This recommendation is informed firstly, by the finding that some educators are struggling severely with discipline while others are fairly able to establish discipline in their classrooms and secondly, on the finding that there is no consistency in the application of disciplinary alternatives. Some educators are using alternatives that have been proven to be ineffective by other educators within the same school. Fellow educators can provide support in several ways. Another way is to schedule regular meetings where Grade Heads share behaviour management solutions with educators of the same grade.

Beginner educators need to be taken through an existing programme to equip them with the disciplinary system that is employed by the school.

5.3 Skills development programmes

Skills development programmes need to be developed and be rolled out in every district to build the capacity of educators in the effective use of proactive discipline strategies rather than control-oriented strategies. This will assist educators to see prevention as the most effective form of behaviour management and to focus on prevention of learner misbehaviour rather than reacting on learner misbehaviour. In this way educators will be equipped with appropriate skills to prevent the occurrence or escalation of learner misbehaviour from the beginning and will thus focus on teaching appropriate behaviours rather than eliminating negative behaviours.

Skills development programmes should cover the following important issues:

5.3.1 Classroom management models

Educators need to understand the three major models of classroom management and the principles that they are founded on. Knowledge of these models which where discussed above, namely, assertive discipline, logical consequences, and teacher effectiveness training is seen as critical to equip educators with the understanding of the continuum represented by these models in terms of the amount of educator versus learner control. The assertive discipline model emphasizes a high level of educator control in the classroom and thus focuses primarily on rewards and punishments. The logical consequences model emphasizes the need to meet learners' innate needs, as well as employing logical consequences to shape learner behaviour while the teacher effectiveness training model emphasizes the importance of giving the control of classroom behaviour over to the learners themselves, so that they come to have inner control. Understanding of these models will enable individual educators to develop personal theories of discipline which will act as a guide and help eliminate problems that stem from having to take decisions without the benefit of a firm set of principles.   This is regarded as important because the best system of discipline must be established by educators themselves, and thus be tailored to meet their particular personality, the realities of their learners, school and community they serve.

5.3.2 Proactive discipline strategies

The following proactive discipline strategies need to be internalized by educators in order to establish discipline in the contemporary classroom:

Educator-learner relationship

Creation of a good educator-learner relationship is essential because successful discipline also depends on the educators' ability to establish positive relationships with their learners. Educators should employ a humanistic approach by speaking to individual learners, knowing their learners and developing mutual respect. Educators should know that respect given leads to respect gained.

Empowerment of learners and responsibility training

Empowering learners to make intelligent decisions, to accept consequences for their decisions and be equipped to make better decisions in the future. This can be achieved by providing learners with opportunities to think, act and take responsibility. Educators need to understand that choice empowers. Educators should empower learners to be in charge of their own behaviour and learning and to feel confident that their needs are met. In this way, they will be fostering self-discipline. When educators teach learners to make valid decisions in the context of free choice and to be held accountable for the decisions they make, responsibility is fostered.

Character development and inculcation of values

Discipline is not possible without the inculcation of values and the development of learners' character. Inculcation of values develops character and thus enables learners to be able to

distinguish between right and wrong. It is thus the role of the educator to inculcate values and to be a good role-model around learners.

Involvement of family and other structures in behaviour management effort

Educators require a disciplined approach that permits them to work cooperatively with learners, their parents, and other support structures in behaviour management. Therefore partnership with parents and other support structures in behaviour management need to be strengthened. In this way, learners' behavioural problems can be attended to at an earlier stage. Educators also need to make use of the available psychologists and social workers to help learners to become responsible adults as envisaged by the South African society.

Democratic teaching style

Educators should adopt a democratic style of teaching, thus abandoning autocratic and permissive styles of teaching. This means that educators should provide firm guidance but should not promote rebellion. Learners should be allowed to make decisions. Educators should help learners to understand that making decisions is tied to responsibility. This means that learners should be helped to internalize that they are expected to assume responsibility for what they do and for the consequences of their actions. In this way learners will assume self-discipline.

Development of self-discipline

Educators should abandon the use of control-oriented strategies such as rewards and punishment, since these are control tactics. Instead they should encourage learners to behave acceptably because they see that doing so is advantageous to themselves and their classmates. Educators should work with learners helpfully and respectfully, ensuring learning while preserving learner dignity and good educator-learner relationships. This is imperative because discipline in the classroom, means teaching the learners inner control that will provide them with acceptable patterns of behaviour to society. These will contribute to their own welfare and progress.

Educator-researcher

Finally, educators should think of themselves as educator-researchers as they go about in their practice. They need to think about the constant and changing needs of their learners. They also need to learn from both their positive and negative experiences in their schools and to determine what to do and what not to do. Essentially, they need to work closely with colleagues in their school and in the education community to find strategies and techniques that work.

6. CONCLUSION

This study examined how discipline can be established in the contemporary classroom. Qualitative research design was used to gain understanding of this phenomenon. The study explored the different meanings that are attached to the word discipline, the challenges that educators are faced with in the contemporary classroom as well as discipline strategies that are currently being employed by educators in order to establish discipline.

The research questions were answered through the research findings. These confirm the articulations made by different authors in the literature review that was conducted for this study. The question that sought to understand the meaning that is attached to the word "discipline" in schools, was answered and the conclusion drawn is that the word "discipline" is perceived differently by individual educators. The question that sought to understand the challenges that educators are faced with in the contemporary classroom was also answered and the conclusion drawn from this study is that, in their quest to establish a disciplined classroom, educators face daily struggles. The question which sought to understand discipline strategies that are currently employed by educators in their classrooms was also answered and the conclusion drawn from the findings of this study is that most educators use control-oriented strategies to establish discipline and in their employing control-oriented strategies, they promote learner misbehaviour and rebellion. Many shortcomings with regard to the use of control-oriented strategies were identified and a number of proactive strategies were recommended as a means to establish effective discipline in the contemporary classroom.

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