

Too Much Talking: One or Two Students Distracting Others by Being Noisy Making Annoying Noises

19

(*The Solution Book*, Solution Sheets, Section 19)

See also

Too Much Talking: A General Class Problem 20

Description of the Problem	Cause
<p>Norman is a fourth-grade student. He's average in ability and usually completes most of his independent work. However, Norman is constantly making noise. If he isn't talking, he might be singing. If he isn't pounding on his desk, he might be whistling. Other students have complained that they can't do their work because Norman distracts them. Typically, the teacher deals with Norman's noise by telling him to be quiet. Norman obeys for a short period of time, and then he begins to make noise again. The teacher again reminds Norman to be quiet, and the pattern continues throughout the day.</p>	<p>Norman's teacher has been caught in what's called the criticism trap. The teacher thinks she's correcting Norman by nagging him but actually the teacher is reinforcing Norman's behavior. Norman has learned to get the teacher's attention by making so much noise that the teacher has to tell him to be quiet. The attention this gives him reinforces the misbehavior.</p> <p>If one student in the class is a problem and other students are complaining, the problem student may also be motivated by the attention that he or she receives from other students. The criticism trap sometimes involves other students as well as the teacher.</p> <p>Another reason that a student like Norman may make too much noise is that there may be no real consequence for being too loud. If all that happens is that the teacher yells a little, why not make noise?</p> <p>NOTE: If the problem student also is not completing his or her independent seatwork, implement the plan found in solution sheet 4, "Not Completing Assignments: A Minor Problem," in addition to implementing the following plan.</p>

The Goal

The student will learn to keep his or her noise to an acceptable level and not distract other members of the class.

The Plan

- Step 1 **Decide how much noise will be acceptable for the student to make.** Think about the various ways the student makes noise to help determine what behavior will be acceptable and what behavior will be unacceptable. If the borderline between acceptable and unacceptable behavior is not thought out beforehand, you are likely to be inconsistent in correcting the student. This inconsistency may lead the student to make more noise just to test where the limits are. Be as consistent as possible in letting the student know when a given level of noise is acceptable or unacceptable.
- Step 2 **Establish a time-out area as a corrective consequence for any student who makes too much noise.** The excessively noisy student demonstrates through noise-making that he or she is not mature enough to be part of the group. Therefore, the student should be removed from the group anytime he or she makes an unacceptable amount of noise. The time-out consequence demonstrates that it is a privilege to be part of the social structure in the classroom. If the privilege is abused, the privilege is lost.

Turn the page.

The Plan (continued)

Place an extra desk in a corner of the room, as far away from the other students as possible. Anytime a student makes an unacceptable amount of noise, instruct the student to take his or her materials to the corner and work there for the remainder of the day, where his or her noises won't bother other students. If the student continues to make noise in the isolation area, ignore him or her and praise other students who are ignoring the student. See booklet D, "Ignoring Misbehavior and Setting Goals for Student Behavior," for details on effectively changing a student's behavior through use of the ignoring strategy.

The problem student should start off each day working with the other students. The student may remain with the other students as long as his or her noise stays within the accepted limits. As soon as the student's noise moves outside the bounds of acceptability, the student should be sent to the isolation area and asked to work there for the remainder of the day. The student should be allowed to take part in group activities like P.E., music, or library. However, during something like an art project, the student should be required to work in the isolation area.

Step 3 **Discuss the problem and the plan with the student.** Let the student know what the borderline between acceptable noise and unacceptable noise will be. Be as specific as possible. Tell the student that anytime his or her noise moves into the unacceptable range, he or she will have to work in the isolation area. Show the isolation area to the student, and make sure he or she understands that being sent to this area means working there for the remainder of the day.

Keep the tone of the discussion positive. Focus on why it is important not to distract others. Let the student know that you think he or she is mature enough to function in school without making lots of noise. End the discussion by telling the student that you're looking forward to seeing how well he or she can do the next day.

Step 4 **When the student is being quiet, praise him or her.** Let the student know that his or her efforts are not unnoticed. The student must realize that he or she will gain attention from the teacher and be accepted as a part of the class as long as his or her noise stays within the limits of acceptability.

If the plan does not have the desired effect on the student's behavior within a week's time, begin to praise the student more frequently when the student is quiet.

Step 5 **Periodically, give the student a special privilege in return for making it through an entire day without making too much noise.** Let the student take a note to the office, go see the principal, or take a note home to his or her parents. Other privileges might include the following:

- Being line leader
- Having five minutes of free time
- Reading a short story to the class
- Planning a bulletin board