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Honours Project Report

New teachers' stress in working with student misbehaviour

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# New teachers' stress in working with student misbehaviour

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Research Background

Research in a number of countries has revealed that teaching is a highly stressful profession (Smith et al. 2000). Hong Kong is no exception. According to the study conducted by the Hong Kong Federation of Education Workers and the local Democratic Alliance for Betterment of Hong Kong (DAB, 2014), nearly 90% of 800 teachers reported that they were moderately stressed or very stressed and 70% of them found it hard to handle extra work and student discipline problems. 56% of them reported that they had to work more than 61 hours a week and a quarter said that they worked around 71 hours per week.

Stress is defined as long-term pressures that fail to be managed and handled effectively by one's current resources and coping strategies (Kokkinos, 2007). Suffering from high and continual levels of occupational stress can result in a state of burnout as well as desistance from the profession. For instance, continual encounter of student misbehavior can seriously lower teachers' emotional and confidence, resulting in depression, self-doubt, loss of satisfaction and poor quality of teaching (Pang, 2012).

Jarvis (2008) discovered that issues of classroom management and discipline problems is one of the main causal factors in teacher stress, especially for new teachers who do not have very experienced classroom management skills. According to another survey, student misbehavior was ranked the third most important stressor by Hong Kong primary school teachers among six main stressors (Chan, 2005). Teachers reported high levels of stress because of student behavioral problems, which is one of the reasons in accordance with teachers' desire to leave the teaching profession. American studies have shown that more than 50% of newly graduated teachers considered leaving teaching career within the first five years due to the overwhelming stress (Rosenholtz, 1989 & Ingersoll, 2003). This could result in both student achievement and financial losses.

## 1.2 Research Purpose

The study focuses on new teachers' stress in working with student misbehaviour in local primary schools instead of all teachers. It mainly examines various forms of student misbehaviour and investigates the impact of student misbehaviour on new teachers.

The study is important to education for several reasons. First, the study of teachers' stress is too broad in Hong Kong. Many of them focus on various kinds of teachers' stress such as heavy workload, role overload or relationships between colleagues and parents. Only a few research focus on examining the impact of student misbehavior on teachers. Second, there are some researches about teachers' stress in working with challenging students. However, few researches have explored this kind of stress of new teachers. In this study, the participants are limited to new teachers and this can specifically explore the impact of student misbehaviour on new teachers as they may have different perception on student misbehaviour when compared with other teachers. Third, based on the result of the study, remedies are proposed to relieve the stress among Hong Kong's new teachers.

## 1.3 Research Questions

Accordingly, two research questions are addressed:

1. What type(s) of student misbehaviour new teachers encounter most frequently?
2. How do new teachers perceive the impact of student misbehaviour on their stress?

## 2. Literature Review

Hong Kong's current education and teaching context

Research has revealed that occupational stress is significant among Hong Kong teachers. The characteristics of primary schools in Hong Kong vary in different aspects including the school culture and the background of students (Pang, 2012).

Generally, teachers are expected to teach between 30-37 students per class. The

responsibility of teachers is not restricted to teach and education students, they have to first be able to manage students' discipline.

#### Teachers' stress related to students' behavioural problems

Student behavioural problem is one of the main sources of stress and burnout for new teachers. According to the study (Sun & Shek, 2012), inattention, calling out, disturbing others, rudeness to teachers, hostility and non-compliance are considered as the most commonly classroom behaviour problems. There are various terms used to describe different kinds of students' behavioural problems. When there are explicit rules and regulations set in classroom, violation of these is considered as a "misbehavior or misconduct or discipline problem" such as fighting, stealing and vandalism at school (Stewart et al. 1998). Apart from rule breaking, inappropriate or disturbing behavior in the classroom is also considered as student misbehavior. For instance, daydreaming in class, not completing homework, chatting in class, lesson disruption, bullying, and rudeness to the teacher are all named as "problem behaviors", "behavior problems," or "disruptive behaviors" (Ho, 2004). All of these behaviors are defined as "a behavior that causes distress for teachers and affects the learning environment which lead teachers to "make continual comments to the student", or "the myriad activities which disrupt and impede the teaching-learning process" (Thompson, 2009).

In light of the student behavioral problems, it is found that teachers become apprehensive, reluctant and least tolerant of students in classroom. New teachers reported that they were incapable of dealing with student behavioral problems because of the lack of training, experience and preparation (Martin et al., 1999). They perceived themselves to be poorly equipped to handling classroom management issues as they did not receive formal training on handling student behaviors. New teachers need to spend a great deal of time and energy dealing with student misbehavior in class, which may interrupt the lesson time of giving instructions and

academic activities. Failure to handle students' behavioural problems can impede the learning environment as well as retard the smoothness and effectiveness of teaching (Sun & Shek, 2012). Teachers do not have adequate time to cover curriculum content and teacher authority can be undermined, and most importantly, resulting teacher stress in the long run.

It was also found that teachers' concerns related to student misbehavior can mainly contribute to teachers' job dissatisfaction (Landers, Alter, & Servilio, 2008; Liu & Meyer, 2005) and job commitment (Day, Sammons, Stobart, Kingston, & Gu, 2007), regardless of age or experience levels. A series of unsuccessful and negative experiences will lower self-efficacy and confidence of teachers, which may result in negative beliefs about their abilities to teach and classroom management skills (Giallo & Little, 2003). New teachers have higher possibilities to become angry when dealing with student disruptive behaviors. They may use inappropriate classroom management approaches. For instance, teachers may refer misbehaved students to other school personnel too often such as social workers. In this case, they cannot effectively tackle student misbehavior problems or even worsen the classroom management.

### 3. Research Design & Implementation

#### 3.1 Research methods

##### 3.1.1 Participants

A local primary school, which is the placement school of the author, was invited to join this study. The participants of this study were four full time primary school teachers with less than five years teaching experiences. New teachers were chosen to participate in the research as they might feel ineffective in their ability or do not have much experience of tackling student misbehaviour when compared with experienced teachers. Two male and two female teachers of different subjects were selected,

including both religious and non-religious to guarantee research representative. All participants were asked to respond in accordance with their past teaching experiences in an interview. Their participation were voluntary and the issues of anonymity and confidentiality in dealing with the data in the interview were also clearly explained at the beginning of each interview.

**Table 1** Participants' personal information

	Teacher A	Teacher B	Teacher C	Teacher D
Gender	Male	Female	Female	Male
Teaching experience	4 years	1 year	2 years	5 years
Subject (s)	G.S & I.T	English & Music	Chinese & R.S	P.E & E.C.A
Religion	✓	✓	✓	✗

### 3.1.2 A description of the school

It is a prestigious and religious primary school which fosters and nurtures the beliefs of Christianity through the development of multi-intelligence. Teachers apply different teaching modes in a large class teaching environment, with approximately 33 students class size. The school also fosters students' lifelong learning attitude and a sound personality through student guidance, discipline services and religious studies.

### 3.1.3 Instrument

A semi-constructed format interview was designed and used for each individual interview. In the interview, participants were required to answer the questions in order to explore their perceptions of student misbehavior, the impact of student

misbehaviour on their stress as well as their management strategies used in the classroom and school contexts. They were first asked about the correlation between their career stress and student misbehaviour. Then, various forms of student misbehavior in their classrooms were asked and participants were invited to use real-life examples or past experiences to further illustrate. They were also asked about the impact of student misbehaviour on their stress related to teaching career. At the end of the interview, they were asked to comment on the sufficiency of their classroom management training and whether they would like to have additional training in the future.

The average time for an interview was 30 minutes. The interviews were conducted in Cantonese, which was the mother tongue of both the participants and research conductor. The interviews were audio-taped with the participants' prior consent and transcribed after the interview in order to important detail and an accurate verbatim record. Transcripts of the interviews were analyzed to identify new teachers' stress in working with student misbehaviour.

There were various questions included in the interview and the following questions were analyzed in this study.

1. What is your stress level? Rank from 0 to 10.
2. To what extent do you think student misbehaviour cause the stress?
3. In your classroom, what student problem behaviours did you encounter?  
Please list out and describe them.
4. Among these misbehaviours, which are the most commonly found in your classroom? Please illustrate.
5. How do you perceive the impact of student misbehaviour on your stress?  
Please explain.
6. Do you think your lesson can be easily interrupted by student misbehaviour?  
Please explain.
7. What techniques do you incorporate to ensure effective student behaviour management?

8. Have you joined any classroom management training before? Please explain.
9. Are you satisfied with the amount and quality of classroom management training you have received before? Please explain.
10. Anything you want to share about new teachers' stress and its impact which are not covered by the questions above?

### 3.2 Data analysis

After the interviews, all the data was analysed by using qualitative analyses method in this study. First level of coding was conducted by the author, in which the semantically similar words, phrases or sentences from the responses of each interview were grouped whereas semantically different data was divided. Further checking and second level coding was carried out by the author, in which the codes were grouped to reflect higher-order categories of theme through examining, comparing, conceptualizing and categorizing the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

### 3.3 Research timeline

The tasks of the research were carried out at different stages. On May 2018, the draft proposal was submitted. On November 2018, the research proposal was submitted to the supervisor, together with a full set of materials for ethical review. From November to December 2018, the author conducted interviews and collected data at the placement school. From January to April 2019, the data was analysed for writing the final report. On May 2019, the final report of the research was submitted.

### 3.4 Ethical matters

There were several ethical matters to be considered in the research. First, the issue of honesty and integrity was ensured in order to let the public trust the result of the research. For instance, the methods, data, results applied to the research were all true and accurate. Second, concerning the objectivity, bias was avoided in the research, including design, data analysis and interpretation. These were tackled as the research



process, data collection and data analysis were under monitoring by the research conductor's supervisor. Third, human subjects' protection was one of the most important issues in any research (Resnick, 2015). It was necessary to reduce any possible harm and maximise the benefits to the participants. For instance, strictly exposing people to fulfil the research aims violates human rights of privacy and autonomy. Finally, the information of participants should be protected carefully in order to ensure the confidentiality of the research. These were tackled as the personal details of all teachers and school's name were not revealed.

#### 4. Results

##### 4.1 Correlations between their career stress and student misbehaviour

Results indicated that the range of the participants' stress level was 7 to 9, showing that all of them were stressful no matter how many years they have worked as a teacher. Two female teachers reported that student misbehaviour caused most of their stress while two male teachers revealed that other factors (administrative work, curriculum or parents) contributed to most of their stress. These results suggested that new teachers' stress is not necessarily caused by student misbehaviour, but student misbehaviour is one of the causal factors in new teachers' stress.

**Table 2** Stress level of the participants and correlations between participants' stress and student misbehaviour

	Stress level	Correlations between stress and student misbehaviour
Teacher A	7	To a small extent, student misbehaviour causes his stress.
Teacher B	7	To a large extent, student misbehaviour causes her stress.
Teacher C	7-9	To a large extent, student misbehaviour causes her stress.
Teacher D	7-8	To a small extent, student misbehaviour causes his stress.

##### 4.2 Forms of student misbehavior in the classroom

It was found that all participants encountered various forms of student misbehaviour in their classroom. New teachers reported that the most frequent student misbehaviour was ‘being inattentive’, followed by ‘shouting out’. ‘Arguing’, ‘talking’, ‘daydreaming’ and ‘wandering out of seat’ were also commonly found in new teachers’ classroom. These results suggested that new teachers have to tackle a number of student misbehaviour all the time.

There were no significant differences in the forms of student misbehaviour between male and female teachers. However, two teachers reported that students tend to misbehave in language lessons (Chinese and English language) when compared with other subjects (G.S. and P.E.). Students were cooperative and attentive when there were subjects or topics in which they were interested. Also, two teachers reported that students’ personal characteristics (active and competitive) could result misbehaviour in class. Students’ physical and mental state and classroom management were other factors that caused student misbehaviour.

**Table 3** Forms of student misbehavior in the classroom

	Forms of student misbehaviour
Teacher A	Arguing and committing violent acts with peers, being inattentive, daydreaming, sleeping, talking
Teacher B	Arguing with peers, shouting out, wandering out of seat, talking, complaining constantly
Teacher C	Being inattentive, talking back, getting angry, arguing with peers, sleeping
Teacher D	Being inattentive, arguing and committing violent acts with peers

**Table 4** The most frequent misbehaviour and reasons behind

	The most frequent misbehaviour	Reason(s)

Teacher A	Being inattentive	Subjects and topics, students' physical and mental state
Teacher B	Shouting out	Classroom management, students' personal characteristics
Teacher C	Being inattentive	Students' physical and mental state
Teacher D	Being inattentive	Subjects, students' personal characteristics

#### 4.3 Participants' perceptions towards student misbehaviour on their stress

It was found that 'disruption of teaching' was the main impact on the two teachers with the least teaching experiences, showing that new teachers tend to put emphasis on their teaching flow. 'Self doubt', 'loss of job satisfaction' and 'health worries' were other negative concerns reported by the new teachers. It was interesting to notice that a teacher reported the positive impact of 'motivates teachers to develop good relationships with students', showing that the teacher became more aware of teacher-student relationships because of student misbehaviour. He was eager to tackle student misbehaviour with the most useful strategy, so that he could maintain good teacher-student relationships at the same time. Results suggested that student misbehaviour might have positive and negative impacts on new teachers.

**Table 5** Participants' perceptions towards student misbehaviour on their stress

	Concerns or impacts
Teacher A	Motivates teachers to develop good relationships with students
Teacher B	Disruption of teaching, self doubt, loss of job satisfaction
Teacher C	Disruption of teaching
Teacher D	Health worries

#### 4.4 Classroom management

Two female teachers reported that their lessons were easily interrupted by student misbehaviour while two male teachers reported that they could handle their lessons

and students relatively well. The results suggested that female teachers tend to have difficulties in managing classroom order when compared with male teachers. It may associate with the factor of personality traits among new teachers.

For classroom management strategies, ‘slogans’ was found to be the most popular way to manage students among new teachers, followed by ‘punishment’ and ‘scoring’. Three teachers reported that they made use of slogans frequently because of the school contexts. Students at this school got used to the same set of slogans since they were in primary one, so it was useful to deal with student misbehaviour most of the time. According to the teachers, ‘punishment’ such as writing extra compositions, cancellation of recess time or free time could act as a deterrent to avoid student misbehaviour. For ‘scoring’, one teacher reported that most students were concerned about their scores so they would remind each other to behave well in class.

Apart from the above classroom management strategies, it was interesting to note that ‘cooperative learning’ and ‘teaching materials’ could also be used to manage students’ behaviour. Teacher A reported that the use of cooperative learning could make students busy as everyone got his/ her role in the lesson, so it could avoid student misbehaviour. Teacher C reported that teaching resources should be designed and allocated appropriately to cater for student diversity. It could prevent student misbehaviour caused by refusing to participate in class. The use of classroom management strategies among new teachers depends on the school contexts and types of student misbehaviour.

**Table 6** Participants’ opinions on classroom management and how to handle classroom management

	Lessons can be easily interrupted	Classroom management strategies
Teacher A	<b>X</b>	Cooperative learning, scoring, slogans,

		nonverbal cues
Teacher B	✓	Punishment, warning
Teacher C	✓	Slogans, scoring, teaching resources
Teacher D	✗	Punishment, volume, slogans

#### 4.5 Amount and quality of classroom management training

Results showed that all participants joined classroom management courses when they were studying in their university. There were some reasons like ‘the course was compulsory’, ‘to learn more about classroom management strategies’ and ‘to understand the causes of student misbehaviour’. However, none of them have joined any training after becoming a teacher. Teacher B reported that she would prefer attending training of major subject. Teacher D explained that he could handle student misbehaviour on his own and prefer to spend time on the heavy workload or lesson design.

Concerning the amount of classroom management training, findings suggested that one teacher did not notice about that while three teachers revealed a few classroom management training or courses were sufficient. Running out of time and focus on major teaching were the reasons reported by the new teachers. The new teachers were generally satisfied with the amount of classroom management training.

For the quality of classroom management training, two male teachers reported that the theories learnt were quite useful and could be applied in the workplace while two female teachers revealed that the theories learnt in the training courses were not authentic. The results suggested that new teachers might hold positive attitudes as well as negative attitudes towards the quality of classroom management training depending on the real situation associated with student misbehaviour in their classroom.

All participants mentioned that they could enhance and improve classroom management skills through authentic experiences (Field Experience or voluntary teaching). Teacher A reported that he had gained a lot from his supporting teacher in placement school in the aspect of classroom management. Teacher B said that she developed her classroom management skills through trying a variety of strategies in her classroom. Teacher C preferred to invite experienced teachers for lesson observation and ask for comments. Teacher D revealed that classroom management skills could be cultivated through accumulation of authentic experiences.

There were no significant differences in the opinions of new teachers on the amount and quality of classroom management training.

**Table 7** Participants' experience of classroom management training

	University	School context
Teacher A	✓	✗
Teacher B	✓	✗
Teacher C	✓	✗
Teacher D	✓	✗

**Table 8** Participants' opinion on the amount and quality of classroom management training

	Amount	Quality
Teacher A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not too many training or courses provided</li> <li>• A few was enough</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The theories learnt were quite useful and could be applied in the workplace</li> </ul>
Teacher B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not too many training or courses provided</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The situation and theories were not too authentic</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Classroom management skills could be enhanced through authentic experiences (e.g. FE)</li> </ul>
Teacher C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Didn't notice</li> <li>A few was sufficient</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There were differences between the theories learnt and the reality.</li> <li>Prefer to ask experienced teachers for help or invite them to observe the lesson</li> </ul>
Teacher D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A few was enough</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The theories learnt were quite useful and could be applied in the workplace</li> </ul>

## 5. Discussion

### 5.1 The occurrence and factors related to student misbehaviour

Student misbehaviour can be divided into three types – behaviour directed at class activities, behaviour directed at teachers, behaviour directed at peers (Oliveira, Teresa, & Graca, 2013).

This study showed that female teachers found more stress and challenging towards student misbehaviour, which was similar to earlier reports that female teachers perceived higher stress in dealing with students' behavioural problem (Everaert and van der Wolf, 2005; Forlin, 2001). On the other side, 'being inattentive' was found to be the most frequent student misbehaviour among Hong Kong primary students, which was different to the report that 'full of activity / easily distractible' was the most commonly found student misbehaviour by teachers in Hong Kong classroom (Pang, 2011).

The finding suggested that there were a variety of factors associated with

student misbehaviour (see Table 4). For physiological factors, students who are overly tired, hungry or sick can result in classroom misbehaviour such as getting angry, shouting out, daydreaming or being inattentive (Walker, Ramsey, and Gresham, 2004). According to the teachers in this study, students' physical and mental states could be affected by after-school activities (Appendix 1) and the school timetable (Appendix 3). Subjects can also be a factor of student misbehaviour. Some students might become demotivated because they were not interested in the specific subject or topic. They might get bored and refuse to engage in the lesson, resulting in classroom misbehaviour (Frederick, Blumfield, & Paris, 2004). In this study, when comparing to language teachers, non language teachers (G.S. & P.E.) reported that they encountered few student misbehaviour in their classroom (Appendix 1 & 4). Students' personal characteristics could also be one of the causes of student misbehaviour. There are some types of students who have high tendency to display misbehaviour. Students who lack confidence might become uncomfortable with taking part in class and refuse to engage class activities such as discussions or group activities (Long, 2000). Students who like to seek attention from making the class laugh might make jokes through shouting out or talking with the peers in class (Fontana, 1993). Students who tend to dominate the class activities might get upset when they are not allowed to show how good they are. They like to answer every question in class, especially for junior students (Appendix 3). As a result, they might shout the answer out or get angry when the opportunity is given to other classmates.

The causes of student misbehaviour can also be associated with teachers. The findings reported that a teacher's classroom management skills could provoke student misbehaviour (Appendix 2). If a teacher fails to establish or maintain authority over students' management and organization, he / she might not control students' discipline effectively as his / her authority is not accepted by the students (Yuan, & Che, 2012). In addition to the teachers' authority, Yuan and Che (2012) also suggests



that teachers' personal characteristics can also influence student misbehaviour in the classroom. Teachers who are able to judge students fairly and make appropriate decisions can develop positive relationships with students whereas teachers who treat students unfairly are more likely to provoke student misbehaviour.

## 5.2 The impacts of student misbehaviour

It was discovered that teachers could have different concerns or impacts even they encountered the same kind of student misbehaviour (see Table 4 & 5). Due to different personality traits and personal perceptions, teachers might improve or exacerbate their feelings or concerns under stressful situations such as student misbehaviour (Tsouloupas, Carson, & Matthews, 2013). For instance, the teacher would strive to develop a good rapport with his students and colleagues to make sure that student misbehaviour could be tackled promptly and effectively without destroying teacher-student relationships (Appendix 1). On the other hand, the other teachers showed greater worries and concerns related to student misbehaviour in the aspects of confidence in teaching, self doubt, job satisfaction, job commitment and health conditions. Perhaps extraverted teachers are more likely to consider student misbehaviour as a challenge while conscientious teachers feel a greater worry and need to maintain lesson smoothness, physical and mental health, teaching satisfaction and commitment.

## 5.3 Role of school context in dealing with student misbehaviour

Among different kinds of behaviour management strategies, new teachers felt more confident about using slogans in class. The school promotes the use of slogans and encourages teachers to manage student behaviour with the use of slogans. Therefore, students in this school get used to the same set of slogans and show immediate response to them. Apart from the use of slogans, punishment and scoring were the other strategies that new teachers commonly use in classroom. The school

holds relatively stern attitudes towards student misbehaviour. Teachers believed that appropriate punishment can act as negative reinforcement of student misbehaviour and it could warn the student that his / her behaviour is not allowed. By highlighting the mistake or wrongdoing can make them feel shamed or humiliated in order not to commit the action in the future. Scoring is a method that combines positive reinforcement and negative reinforcement. Students who behave well could be awarded points for encouragement, whereas students who perform undesirable behaviour could be deducted points. At this school, there is a table for point calculation for nearly every subject. Therefore, it was also found that scoring was used frequently as a behaviour management strategy among new teachers at this school.

Due to the school contexts and cultures, the classroom management strategies that most frequently used by new teachers were slogans, punishment and scoring, contrary to the early report that praise, encouragement, and rewards were the most commonly strategies used by first year primary teachers (Oneill, & Stephenson, 2013). The report also reported that first year primary teachers tend to promote desirable student behaviours through using positive approaches, rather than drawing attention to the inappropriate behaviours by using correction strategies, which was differ from this study's findings. Therefore, the results suggested that the use of student behaviour management strategies among new teachers highly depends on the school contexts.

#### 5.4 Effectiveness of classroom management training

Classroom management training for new teachers aims to provide skills and knowledge about how to manage an effective classroom with full student participation and learning, coupled with offering strategies of how to tackle student misbehaviour. New teachers can learn and gain experiences through reflection, observation, case scenarios, collaboration, and discussion in the training (Michele, 2008). Student

achievement can be enhanced by increasing teacher retention through classroom management training.

Lack of classroom management preparation is a major factor that results in student discipline problems, which is a top reason for new teachers leaving the profession (Bolich, 2001). However, the results of this study showed that some teachers questioned the effectiveness of classroom management training and they were not eager to attend a variety of the training (see Table 7 & 8) even they have time. They revealed that they were not given an opportunity to put the theories into practice in the training and information based training could not effectively enhance their classroom management skills. The findings reported that the training courses in the university might not be suitable for every pre-service teacher in boosting their classroom management skills.

#### 5.5 Other ways of tackling student misbehaviour

Nonverbal cues such as gestures, body language and eye contact are reported by the teacher (Appendix 1) as useful strategies to deal with minor, infrequent or less disruptive misbehaviour. For example, if a pair of students keeps chatting for a relatively long time without working on the activity or listening to the teacher, sometimes a glance in their direction, or just moving closer to the students or a light pat on their shoulders is sufficient to remind or get them back on task. Also, without interrupting the teaching in class, these nonverbal might prevent the misbehavior from spreading to other students. However, it does not work if the students fail to notice the cues or do not understand their meaning, especially young students (Guerrero & Floyd, 2005; Heimann, et al., 2006).

There were teachers mentioned that cooperative learning and appropriate teaching resources could be the ways of tackling student misbehaviour (see Table 6).

According to the Johnson's model (2006), cooperative learning is an effective way for students working in groups to accomplish a common goal - learn and process information quickly. Each student is assigned a specific role within the group, which makes every student stay on the task, listen to the instructions and work collaboratively for a relatively long time. For example, teachers can assign the roles of group leader, checker, recorder or editor to students and rotate the roles periodically. Make sure each student is clear about the responsibility of the role, which can further develop communication and teamwork skills (e.g. project management, conflict resolution skills and leadership) (Felder & Brent, 2007). Cooperative learning can be applied to both language lessons and non-language lessons to reduce the occurrence of student misbehaviour.

Teachers make use of a diverse range of teaching resources to support their teaching and students' learning. From textbooks, videos, worksheets, storybooks, pictures or the Internet, designing appropriate teaching materials can meet individual needs and prevent student misbehaviour. Research (Matthew, 2016) suggested that students might mentally withdraw or display disruptive behaviour out of boredom if they find the knowledge taught is not challenging or appropriate enough. Conversely, students who are not able to catch up with the material being taught or they are completely unfamiliar with, they are more likely to misbehave to avoid the completion of tasks. Teaching materials that are interesting, appropriate and challenging enough can satisfy a class of diverse learners and prevent student misbehaviour in class.

## 6. Limitations

One limitation of this study was the participants. Only four new teachers from the same school were involved and the data might not be too comprehensive. However, the four teachers were selected with different major subjects, teaching experiences,

religious background and gender, which would enhance the generalizability of the study's findings. Additionally, only teachers were interviewed in this study, the results may report the assumptions or biases of teachers because of their social role. It would be more comprehensive to include students' views. Another limitation was related to the school context of the study. It is a prestigious and religious school, which cultivates the beliefs of Christianity including development of students' decent learning attitudes. Therefore, students are generally well behaved due to the school context.. The findings might not represent all the situation of Hong Kong primary schools, but it obtains reference value for other schools with similar contexts or cultures.

## 7. Concluding remarks and implications

Effective classroom discipline is necessary for teachers to reduce the time and energy spent with student misbehaviour, coupled with optimizing the available instructional time to instil students various skills and knowledge. Preventing student misbehaviour in class is always more significant than looking for ways to react to it. The strategies teacher use to discipline students are affected by the school context, personality traits, staff development programme and training courses, hoping to become more confident about their actions and teaching, as well as to control and prevent student misbehaviour effectively. Additionally, the appropriate ways of tackling student misbehaviour in the classroom can be divided into two steps: find out the causes completely and deal with the misbehaviour intelligently. The quality of the teaching and learning progress can be ensured if the support and measures towards new teachers are introduce appropriately at various levels.

### 7.1 Implications: Personal

For new teachers, it is essential to develop their own resilience and sense of self-efficacy towards student misbehaviour through the enhancement of coping

strategies and personal resources (Lackey 2007). Teachers' negative impacts of student misbehaviour such as loss of job satisfaction or confidence in teaching, self-critical attitudes or loss of job commitment might be improved by counseling and training. New teachers should be willing to seek help or opinions from others, including colleagues. Besides, it is suggested that teachers have the responsibility to figure out the reasons of student misbehaviour, rather than ignoring it frequently. After perceiving the seriousness of the improper behaviour, teachers can make appropriate response to it. Apart from the above strategies, teachers can make use of cooperative learning or appropriate teaching materials to create an effective learning environment. In order to further develop personal resources of new teachers, it is found that social support from family and friends are also important (Argyle 2001).

#### 7.2 Implications: Classroom management training

It is not necessary to have a variety of classroom management training for new or pre-service teachers, the quality of the training is more important. As Michele (2001) suggested that new teachers are able to learn more about classroom management theories and strategies in quality classroom management training, together with the chances to put these skills and knowledge into practice, they may be able to deal with student misbehaviour and enjoy a long career in education. Through effective training, new teachers can find out their own personal classroom management strategies and style in order to manage student behaviour and develop a safe and comfortable learning environment. It is necessary for new and pre-service teachers to learn to apply different strategies in different situations. Besides, follow up in-service activities for new teachers would be useful to refine the training programmes, challenge the teachers' skills, and add what they have learned.

#### 7.2 Implications: School contexts

Positive school cultures and supportive relationships between teachers with

their colleagues and supervisors should be facilitated through activities and discussions. The school can build a supportive mentoring system and encourage teachers to seek comments from the experienced teachers and hold meetings regularly to ensure that new teachers gain sufficient support and help. It is found that strong support from the administrators and colleagues can have a positive impact on new teachers, such as maintaining new knowledge and skills over time (Lo, 2014). Also, for local staff development programmes, apart from classroom management skills, it is essential to enhance the positive personal development and growth of their staff by providing training on positive thinking skills and stress coping strategies.

To conclude this study, the stress of new teachers can be resulted from student misbehaviour. Due to a variety of causes originated from the family, classroom, school or society, dealing with student misbehaviour is not an easy task for new teachers. However, it is the obligation of the teachers to maintain a positive classroom management and provide quality teaching for students. Therefore, teachers must have the confidence to tackle student misbehaviour in their classroom. New teachers are no exception. To effectively deal with student misbehaviour, it requires the cooperation at various levels such as personal, school contexts as well as the classroom management training launched from universities, workplace, the government or society. It can reduce both student achievement and financial losses as fewer new teachers may leave the teaching profession due to the overwhelming stress associated with student misbehaviour.

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## Appendix 1 Transcript of Participant A

受訪者 A 的背景資料

性別：男

教學經驗：四年

任教科目：常識及資訊科技

宗教信仰：有

訪問者： X 老師，請問你會如何評價你的整體工作壓力指數？零是代表沒有壓力，壓力指數最高是十。

受訪者： 我的工作壓力都幾高，尤其是學期初，都有七分。

訪問者： 你覺得有幾大程度上你的工作壓力是來自於學生的行為問題？

受訪者： 對於我來說，很小程度我的工作壓力是來自於學生的行為問題，大概只有佔兩分，這並不是我壓力的主要來源。除了是因為現時我任教學校的學生行為問題並不是太差或太難應付，我今年亦是教學的第五年，對於自己課室管理的技巧已經逐漸純熟，所以這幾年的工作經驗足夠讓我應付學生課堂的行為問題。

訪問者： 對於學生的行為問題，這幾年來你在你的課堂曾經遇過那種問題？

受訪者： 我有遇過學生在分組的時候發生爭執，期間動口亦動手，但這種情況並不是時常發生，甚至可以說是極少發生。另外，我亦有遇過一些小問題，例如上課不專心、睡覺、偷做功課、閒聊等，但這些問題都是可以體諒的，因為人的專注力是有限，更何況是小朋友。

訪問者： 在以上所提及的問題之中，最常發生的是那一種？問題的成因是甚麼？

受訪者： 最常發生的當然是上課不專心。上課不專心有分為不同種類，例如以我現時任教學校的學生為例，他們普遍放學後都很忙，要上各種課外活動班，休息時間不夠導致上課未能專心。另一種是學生覺得上課缺乏趣味性，於是把玩文具或與其他人閒聊，以常識科為例，當我教不同主題的時候，學生上課表現是有明顯的差異，例如當我教有關香港政治及經濟發展，看得出大部分學生不感興趣、甚至在發夢，相反，學生對實驗或動物課題的課堂就很投入。

訪問者： 你有提及到學生的行為問題有佔你工作壓力的兩分，那麼這個問題會如何影響你的壓力？

受訪者： 我比較在意的是師生關係，認為如果處理學生行為問題不當會直接影響師生關係。有些學生的性格是比較難接受及反叛，尤其是當他們不聽從家人說話的時候，亦未

必會接受老師的訓導，但無論如何老師的責任都是要教好學生，不論是學科或做人處事方面。因此，我在處理學生行為問題時要考慮多一點，從而採取最合適和有效的方法，盡量減低影響師生關係的程度。

訪問者： 有沒有相關的例子可以分享一下？

受訪者： 我記得在我教學的第一年，當時我亦是班主任，我班有一位女學生是比較反叛，有一日她帶了撲克牌回學校，影響了課堂進度及其他同學，很明顯這是違規行為，於是我將它沒收了。事後她對我的態度十分不忿，當時我處理這些問題的經驗不夠，於是我將事件交由級主任跟進，後來那位學生的態度亦有改善。有了這幾年的經驗和學習，我明白到老師要改善學生行為問題的同時，亦要維持良好的師生關係。

訪問者： 你認為自己的課堂會不會容易受學生行為問題影響？

受訪者： 不會，我教的是常識科，和語文科比較，其實很多小朋友都比較喜歡常識科，基本上他們上課的時候都是專心的，除了某部分主題他們是不感興趣，所以我的課堂並不容易受學生行為問題影響。

訪問者： 你授課的時候有沒有甚麼課室管理的策略？

受訪者： 我的課堂主要是應用合作學習這個教學方法，雖然表面上這不算是一種課室管理的策略，但這個方法能有效令學生專心上課。一般的小朋友都很怕悶，我相信合作學習這個教學方法能夠令每個學生都有自己負責的課堂活動，他們一忙碌地做小組活動就不會有時間閒聊或搗亂。另外，我亦會採用加減分策略，表現好就加分、表現差就減分，普遍學生都會緊張自己的分數，他們就會互相提醒。有時也會用口號控制秩序。

訪問者： 你有沒有參加過任何課室管理訓練班？之前大學時期或現在職場上提供的都算。

受訪者： 我出來工作後就沒有參加過這些訓練班。在我修讀教育文憑那四年，我都有修讀過一些課室管理的課堂，當時學到的技巧現在都是可以應用到的，例如面對學生偏差行為可以有不同程度的提醒，包括眼神接觸、行近、敲桌、叫名、沒收文具或小息見學生。另外，我在課堂亦有學習到不同的教學方法，如合作學習，其實只要維持到學生的學習動機，這亦是一種有效的課室管理策略。這些課堂不但啟發了我，更影響了我教學的風格。

訪問者： 對於這些課室管理訓練班的數量和質素方面，你有甚麼評價？

受訪者： 在質素方面，我覺得學到的理論是可以在我的教學應用到出來的，例如我所提及的合作學習及不同程度的提醒。在數量方面，以我所知，我大學時期和職場上提供的課室管理訓練班並不多，一來以前是比較著重本科知識，二來時下老師未必抽到時間參加這些訓練班。反而我覺得以前大學的視導對我學習課室管理的技巧更有效，我記得那個時候學校有部門的導師會專門針對你的課室管理作出評價，另外視導的

時間夠長，可以讓實習老師去試不同策略的成效，同時吸取啟導老師的意見。

訪問者： 對於新老師的壓力或學生的行為問題，請問還有沒有其他補充？

受訪者： 先不說課室管理，我認為新老師的主要壓力是當班主任，當時我第一年出來教書，我就需要當五年級的班主任，並要處理升中、呈分試，當時也有很大壓力，班主任是一個很複雜的角色，很多繁複的雜務要處理。去到今年第五年的教學，我主要的壓力是來自於學校的行政事務，今年我同時是學校的行政人員和科主任，所以，相反地，學生的行為問題對我的影響並不是太大。

## Appendix 2 Transcript of Participant B

受訪者 B 的背景資料

性別：女

教學經驗：一年

任教科目：英文及音樂

宗教信仰：有

訪問者： X 老師，請問你會如何評價你的整體工作壓力指數？零是代表沒有壓力，壓力指數最高是十。

受訪者： 整體來說都有七分。

訪問者： 你覺得有幾大程度上你的工作壓力是來自於學生的行為問題？

受訪者： 十成來說都有八成是來自於學生的行為問題。始終自己還是新入職的老師，在處理學生行為問題的經驗尚淺，很多時候都無法有效地管理學生上課秩序，所以我會不時向資深的老師請教。

訪問者： 對於學生的行為問題，你在你的課堂曾經遇過那種問題？

受訪者： 我有遇過學生在課堂上嘈吵、沒有舉手的情況下發言、離開座位、與同學閒聊或嬉戲、甚至會發生爭執。

訪問者： 在以上所提及的問題之中，最常發生的是那一種？問題的成因是甚麼？

受訪者： 最常發生的是學生會在沒有舉手的情況下大聲發言，幾乎每日都會發生。尤其是低年級的學生，他們比較活潑好動，喜歡回答老師的問題，我認為這絕對是好的學習態度，但有時候他們太踴躍，未等老師叫名就大聲說出答案，這會擾亂上課秩序，甚至會製造噪音，所以我經常要提醒他們先舉手後發言，盡量不讓這種情況成為他們上課的習慣。

訪問者： 你有提及到你的工作壓力很大程度是來自於學生的行為問題，那麼這個問題會如何影響你的壓力？

受訪者： 首先，我認為花時間處理學生行為問題會直接影響我的教學進度，以一堂三十五分鐘來計，如果花了五至十分鐘來處理學生行為問題，那一堂就只剩二十多分鐘，很多時候我準備了的活動或進度都未能在課堂上完成，這都會令我感到沮喪和焦慮。另外，無法有效地管理學生上課秩序會令我懷疑自己的教學方法，為何無法讓學生投入課堂，影響自信心。

訪問者： 有沒有相關的例子可以分享一下？

受訪者：我記得有一次英文圖書課，我自製了一些道具讓學生扮演不同動物，增加課堂趣味性。但是，當我說故事的時候，很多學生都在把玩這些道具，只有少數學生有專心聽故事，我花了不少時間管理學生上課秩序，所以最後未能在課堂完成整個故事。事後我明白小朋友是對新事物比較好奇，而且我在課堂未有明確地訂立規矩，但難免會有些挫敗感。

訪問者：你認為自己的課堂會不會容易受學生行為問題影響？

受訪者：絕對是容易，如果十分是滿分，我會給九分。每當有學生大聲發言，我都不得不停下來平息或阻止他們，因為我擔心他們的發言會影響其他學生的專心和投入度，過多的停頓絕對會影響我課堂的流暢性和完整性，有時候會因為要處理他們的問題令我無法完成我想完成的進度。

訪問者：你授課的時候有沒有甚麼課室管理的策略？

受訪者：主要是我會用比較嚴肅的態度對待學生，甚至會警告他們，直接讓他們明白這是老師不想在課堂上看見的行為。我認為訂立合理的懲罰都是有效的，例如我知道他們普遍抗拒作文，我就會提出當有學生收到三次警告就需要作一篇長文。訂立目標後，我會公平處理學會的行為問題，不可以有任何偏袒，否則學生就認為這個懲罰沒有公信力。我認為這個方法都有成效，因為至今並未有學生需要接受這個懲罰，所以這有一定的阻嚇性。

訪問者：你有沒有參加過任何課室管理訓練班？之前大學時期或現在職場上提供的都算。

受訪者：我在大學的時期都有修讀過一些課室管理的課堂，學了不少課室管理的理論和分析各種問題。不過入職後就沒有參加過這些訓練班了，一來我還可以應付學生的行為問題，二來我未有時間參加，有需要的時候反而會直接向其他老師請教或者自己試其他方法，所以並沒有參加很多課室管理的訓練班。

訪問者：對於這些課室管理訓練班的數量和質素方面，你有甚麼評價？

受訪者：在質素方面，我覺得學到的大多都是理論，或者是想像出來的情況，並不是太真實，我認為親身經歷反而更可以培養自己課室管理的技能，從錯誤中學習，很多方法都是透過在真實情況下試過才會知道成效，例如實習。在數量方面，以我所知，課室管理訓練班是有的，但數量不多，比起課室管理，老師比較著重本科的教學法，學校亦要求老師定期參加有關本科的講座或訓練班。

訪問者：對於新老師的壓力或學生的行為問題，請問還有沒有其他補充？

受訪者：還有一點想補充，新老師給學生的第一印象是好重要的，我認為「先嚴後寬」這策略由古至今都有效，小朋友是會挑戰老師的底線，所以一開始不應該給學生一種太友善的感覺，否則將來就很難再維持老師的形象。



## Appendix 3 Transcript of Participant C

受訪者 C 的背景資料

性別：女

教學經驗：兩年

任教科目：中文及聖經

宗教信仰：有

訪問者： X 老師，請問你會如何評價你的整體工作壓力指數？零是代表沒有壓力，壓力指數最高是十。

受訪者： 我會說是七至九，一般不是太多工作的時候是七，學期初、考試前、家長日的時候會是九。

訪問者： 你覺得有幾大程度上你的工作壓力是來自於學生的行為問題？

受訪者： 作為一個新老師，在開學初的時候學生的行為問題都很大程度會造成我的工作壓力，尤其是高年級學生，他們會挑戰老師，所以一開始亦是老師與學生的磨合期。但去到中期情況會較好，影響的程度亦會降低。

訪問者： 對於學生的行為問題，這幾年來你在你的課堂曾經遇過那種問題？

受訪者： 上課不專心、駁嘴、發脾氣、與同學發生口角、亦有遇過學生上課睡覺，但就比較少發生。

訪問者： 在以上所提及的問題之中，最常發生的是那一種？問題的成因是甚麼？

受訪者： 最常發生的算是上課不專心，畢竟我教過兩間的都是主流學校，學生普遍是比較聽話和受教，所以極端的行為問題例如打架、發脾氣的情況都不會時常發生。學生未能投入課堂有很多原因，以我中文堂為例，有一班每逢星期三的課堂就會特別難控制，因為前一節課是體育課，學生的情緒和心情都會受影響，這是正常的，並不是學生的問題。另外，對科目不感興趣、受同學影響都會造成學生上課不專心。

訪問者： 你有提及到學生的行為問題會造成你的工作壓力，那麼這個問題會如何影響你的壓力？

受訪者： 學生的行為問題會影響我的教學進度，作為老師，當然希望自己的教學是順暢和依照進度，如果課室好像動物園一樣難以控制，我根本無法有效地教書。所以，如果學生的行為問題愈多，我的工作壓力就愈大。

訪問者： 有沒有相關的例子可以分享一下？

受訪者： 我試過因為交功課的問題與學生爭辯，他堅持自己有交功課，但我就沒有收到，我

有跟他說落堂後再處理，但他依舊在座位繼續大聲解釋，最後解決了事情再能繼續我的課堂，有時候我不得不停下我的教學去處理學生的行為問題或情緒問題。

訪問者： 你認為自己的課堂會不會容易受學生行為問題影響？

受訪者： 會，尤其是第一年教學，自己始終是新老師，一開始未太熟悉學生的特質，未確定應該採取那一種教學方法令學生更有效地學習，抱著嘗試的態度實施，亦都有遇過「撞板」，但我個人認為這個問題是逐漸改善中。

訪問者： 你授課的時候有沒有甚麼課室管理的策略？

受訪者： 會視乎教大班抑或是小班。大班的話用口號是最快捷和有效的方法，以這間學校為例，學生由幼稚園時開始已經是用同一系列的口號，所以他們對這些口號已經十分熟悉。對於高年班的學生，我會加入其他方法，除了叫口號，亦會有加減分，這樣會更有效管理學生的行為問題。我亦有教小班的經驗，雖然學生人數減少，但幾乎每個學生都是比較活潑或需要老師更多的照顧，所以教學資源要分配得好，有時會分配學生先完成不同的堂課，再抽時間對有需要的學生進行一對一或一對二的教學。

訪問者： 你有沒有參加過任何課室管理訓練班？之前大學時期或現在職場上提供的都算。

受訪者： 我大學時期有修讀過一些課室管理的課堂，但工作後就沒有。

訪問者： 對於這些課室管理訓練班的數量和質素方面，你有甚麼評價？

受訪者： 我覺得學的大多是理論，與現實發生的會有距離。反而我會向其他老師請教，或者邀請他們入課室觀察我的課堂，他們的意見會更有效幫助我解決問題，提高我的教學質素。

訪問者： 課室管理訓練班的數量方面，你有沒有甚麼意見？

受訪者： 我沒有留意到現時課室管理訓練班的數量，我覺得不需要太多，反而大學可以增加讓準老師有實踐的機會。

訪問者： 對於新老師的壓力或學生的行為問題，請問還有沒有其他補充？

受訪者： 沒有。

## Appendix 4 Transcript of Participant D

受訪者 D 的背景資料

性別：男

教學經驗：五年

任教科目：體育及課外活動

宗教信仰：沒有

訪問者： X 老師，請問你會如何評價你的整體工作壓力指數？零是代表沒有壓力，壓力指數最高是十。

受訪者： 七至八分。

訪問者： 你覺得有幾大程度上你的工作壓力是來自於學生的行為問題？

受訪者： 我的工作壓力很少程度是來自於學生的行為問題。我主要教的科目是體育課和有關課外活動的課堂，相對都是學生喜歡和覺得輕鬆的課堂，而且學生有機會周圍活動，我並不會要求他們坐定專心聽書，所以學生都很投入課堂，甚少出現不專心或搗亂的行為問題。除了體育科老師，我亦是訓導老師，我會重視學生的操行和品德，平時的形象比較嚴肅，這都會影響學生上我課堂的態度。

訪問者： 對於學生的行為問題，這幾年來你在你的課堂曾經遇過那種問題？

受訪者： 學生有時上課時會太過興奮，當我在講解比賽規則或注意事項時，他們會與同學們熱烈討論，但這並不是太大問題，因為他們會容易察覺老師的情緒變化，尤其是高年班學生。相反，我需要提醒低年班學生要專心。另外，我都有遇過學生在比賽是發生爭執和碰撞，小朋友喜歡比賽、好勝心較強，他們十分重視比賽成績，雙方都不想輸，所以比賽途中會容易發生衝突。

訪問者： 在以上所提及的問題之中，最常發生的是那一種？問題的成因是甚麼？

受訪者： 最常發生…… 是我說話的時候學生又會開始說話。他們有時並不是閒聊，而是討論有關課堂的內容，例如當我介紹這一堂是教羽毛球時，他們會立刻問同學有沒有學過，是不是擅長等等，會引起熱烈討論。我覺得這是出自小朋友的好奇心和喜歡分享的性格，很難想像他們會一直專心地聽我說話，尤其是體育課，難得能離開課室，他們會比較雀躍，這是很正常的，只要老師能控制到，這並不是一個嚴重的問題。

訪問者： 你認為自己的課堂會不會容易受學生行為問題影響？

受訪者： 不會，其實體育課和課外活動堂的性質很相似，當老師介紹完一些技巧或理論時，

就會有自由時間。其實學生很聰明，他們知道課堂的流程，為了有更多的自由時間，他們的合作性很高，很多時會專心聽完我的講解，只是有時會按耐不住與同學聊天。另外，體育與其他科目的課堂不同，不會出現學生擅自離開座位，或者學生感到沈悶而不專心，大部分學生都很享受上體育課，甚少會出現學生的行為問題，所以我的課堂容易受這些行為問題影響。

訪問者： 你授課的時候有沒有甚麼課室管理的策略？

受訪者： 最直接和最有效的方法是減少學生課堂的自由時間。如果有學生在多次警告後仍然騷擾其他同學上課，我會跟全班說因為有同學影響上課進度，所以要縮短自由時間，他們很重視自由時間，所以要自律或者互相提醒。除了這種懲罰的策略，我都會採取其他方法，例如當我說話的時候有學生聊天，我會停下來，他們就會察覺到自己在不適當的時間說話。而低年班的學生就會用另一個方法，例如提高聲量提醒他們不要再說話，或者未到他們討論的時間。我亦會用口號和拍手的方法管理學生的秩序。

訪問者： 你有沒有參加過任何課室管理訓練班？之前大學時期或現在職場上提供的都算。

受訪者： 之前大學有讀過一些有關課室管理必修課堂，主要都是講述當老師遇到不同的學生行為問題應採取的策略。但真正踏入教學生涯後就沒有參加過任何課室管理訓練班。除了是因為工作太忙，我認為我在課室管理方面並沒有太大問題，所以我想投放更多時間去設計課堂或處理行政工作。

訪問者： 對於這些課室管理訓練班的數量和質素方面，你有甚麼評價？

受訪者： 我認為這些訓練班或課堂是有效的，我記得有教授說過課室管理不是在於規範學生的自由，而是提供一個安靜、舒適及適合學習的環境讓學生學習。當中有一個策略是要老師在學期初與學生共同訂立班規，與他們討論每一項規則，確保他們明白每一項規則的內容，之後要訂立違反規則的懲罰，如取消他的小息時間、放學後留校。與學生共同訂立課堂規則是由我第一年教學沿用到現時，所以在以前課堂所學的專業知識都是有用的。在數量方面，我覺得不需要太多，反而需要有更多的實踐經驗，例如實習或義教，課室管理可以通過教學經驗累積得來。

訪問者： 對於新老師的壓力或學生的行為問題，請問還有沒有其他補充？

受訪者： 沒有。