STIR EDUCATION

At STIR Education, our belief is that the best way to improve the quality of education is to empower teachers and principals. As the people closest to the challenges of providing all children a high quality education, teachers and principals are uniquely placed to lead change in the education system.

STIR has two very simple ideas about how to do this:
1. By identifying the teachers and principals who have created successful, innovative practices – what we call ‘micro-innovations’ to improve education in their schools and recognising their efforts publicly.
2. By creating an ecosystem that enables those micro-innovations to be shared with other teachers and schools – through partner organisations and teacher networks – and that encourages and inspires the development of additional micro-innovations.

By identifying teachers’ innovations and building the STIR network of teachers – what will become India’s most creative community of teachers - our aim is to improve the quality of education for over 1 million children in the next three years.

This guide introduces just five of our micro-innovations: We hope that it inspires you to introduce a similar idea in your classroom, to share your own micro-innovations with STIR and to join the STIR network of innovative educators!

CASE STUDIES FOR TEACHER DEVELOPMENT

LEARNING: DISCIPLINE

CASE STUDIES FOR TEACHER DEVELOPMENT

KH NIIE–ALICE AND EBYON PUBLIC SCHOOL

Alice is the Principal of Ebyon Public School. As well as teaching and overseeing the day to day management of the school, Alice works hard to gain the support of parents and community members for the efforts teachers are making to provide a good quality education to their children.

Ebyon Public School educates about 200 children in standards Ist - Vth living in Khajuri Kas, East Delhi. The majority children at the school are first generation learners whose parents are drivers, daily wage earners, rickshaw pullers and maids in affluent households.

SOME OF MY STUDENTS ARE SO DISRUPTIVE

Overall, the behaviour of the students at Ebyon Public School is good. However, Alice and her colleagues were frustrated by the influence that a small number of disruptive children could have; just two or three students could have a negative impact on the learning of the whole class. Alice knew that if she could identify a way to manage the behaviour and provide support and guidance to these disruptive children, it would benefit not just their education but that of all the children in the class.
Alice developed a SOLUTION that helped her and her colleagues gradually IMPROVE THE BEHAVIOUR of their disruptive students and the added bonus of providing some EXCELLENT TEACHER DEVELOPMENT.

DO THESE CHALLENGES SOUND FAMILIAR?

To help her to develop effective ways of dealing with disruptive students, Alice began to make notes about her efforts to change the behaviour and attitude of a particularly difficult student called Madan. Each time she worked or interacted with him, she would reflect on her interaction with him and note down how effective her approach had been. She noticed, for instance, that spending a little bit of time with Madan every day and praising him for his achievements, no matter how small, had a very positive effect on his attitude.

Over time, Alice began to keep notes – ‘case studies’ - on several disruptive students and, encouraged by positive feedback from colleagues about improved student behaviour, decided to share and discuss the technique with other teachers. The idea has gone from strength to strength.

“I tried telling the children off, punishing them and speaking to parents about their children’s behaviour but nothing seemed to work. I learned that often the children were in trouble at home as well. But I knew that if we could somehow change the attitude of these children towards school, there would be a positive benefit for all students (and teachers!) at Ebyon.”
All the teachers now write case studies about their disruptive students and Alice now organises weekly teachers’ meetings for the teachers to share their case studies with each other, learn from each other’s behaviour management techniques and reflect further on how they can help their students develop a positive attitude to school. This teacher reflection not only helps teachers develop their practice, it also ensures that all teachers are aware of the children who are struggling and thus extends their network of support.

Alice now aims to keep case studies of about 10 children each year and is trialling the case study method as a means of supporting not just disruptive children but also some who are struggling academically and some (mainly girls) who are at risk of dropping out of school.

ALICE’S ADVICE

The reason why Alice’s case study method is successful is because it recognises that reflecting on practice is crucial as a teacher – both self-reflection and collaborative reflection – and because it encourages teachers not to simply give up on challenging students but to believe that it is within their power to help the students change.

If you decide to use a version of this innovation in your school, make sure that you:

1. **Build reflection into your routine:** Whether you keep notes or reflect on how to improve student behaviour in a different way, ensure that you build time for reflection (individual and group) into your routine so that it becomes a habit.

2. **Be willing to try different ways of supporting children:** It is very easy to simply give up on disruptive children. Be prepared to experiment with different ways of supporting them – as long as you reflect on your efforts and amend them as necessary, you will gradually learn effective ways of helping all your students.

3. **Share with your colleagues:** Schools work best when all teachers are working together to support their students – the more you can support each other as teachers, the better!

---

**Could you use the case studies in your school? How could you adapt it to suit your school?**

You can introduce the case studies in your school in exactly the same way that Alice did (see case studies ‘step by step’ below) to reflect on dealing with disruptive behaviour; you could adapt the case study idea to support children with different needs; or you could develop your own innovation to help deal with challenging behaviour and provide opportunities for group reflection for teachers.
To implement the Case Studies at your school:

1. **Identify the students** (start with 3 or 4) who have been disruptive in class or disinterested in learning for a sustained period of time and require additional support to achieve.

2. Organise to meet with them individually for 10 – 15 minutes every day and, if possible, **provide them with some remedial classes** as well – very often poor behaviour is a response to being behind in class.

3. Use the 10 – 15 minute discussion to get to know the individual children and to **understand their concerns about home or school**. Initially, it is useful to **ask them simple questions** such as what they like to do outside of school or how many brothers and sisters they have.

4. Over time, it is likely the students will open up more and share their worries or concerns with you. **Make sure the children know that you will not tell other students about these concerns.**

5. If you can, **organise to visit the children at home** to learn about their home lives.

6. Try to **appreciate and praise the students for small achievements** during every meeting and take a real interest in their lives – this will help them feel wanted and valued at school.

7. Keep a note after every meeting of your thoughts on how you could help the child feel valued at school and ideas for providing additional support. You will **gradually build up a profile** of the child. You may also wish to **record any poor behaviour and track changes/improvements over time.**

8. **Organise regular staff meetings**, to share your experiences with your colleagues. Ask for their advice and whether anyone has dealt with similar challenges before. **These discussions will help all staff develop and consider new approaches** to supporting children to improve their behaviour.

9. You may wish to take it in turns to ‘**present’ case studies to the other teachers and gain specific support** for how to deal with individual children.

10. **Share any new information** about particular children in order to ensure all staff can be as supportive as possible.
HOW TO IMPROVE YOUR VERSION OF THE STUDENT CASE STUDIES

Hopefully you will find that once you begin implementing your own version of the student case studies in your school it will help you and your colleagues to manage and support disruptive children more effectively.

However, it is important to understand the impact in a more rigorous manner. How will you know whether it is having the impact you want? Think about trying the following:

1. **Keep careful track of the number of ‘behavioural incidents’** each child is involved in and see if the number reduces over time.

2. **Track students’ academic achievement** and see if it improves as a result of additional support to improve behaviour.

3. Ask teachers and parents for **regular feedback** on the children’s behaviour.

WHAT DO OTHER TEACHERS SAY?

## POSITIVE BENEFITS

“It was difficult for me to control some of my students in class and I started taking Alice’s help with a few difficult students. The kids have started taking some interest in their studies but more than that this method is helping me improve my skillset as I am learning to listen to my students more and more.”

“Since Alice has started interacting with my child, he is a lot more disciplined at home.”

— Parent at Ebyon Public School

## CHALLENGES TO MANAGE

“All teachers need to commit to attending teacher meetings to share case studies regularly. If they are not well attended and the Principal does not fully support the case studies process, it can be hard to keep going.”

Alice has created processes to manage these challenges. How else could you manage them?