ABC State Quick Guide

self-discipline through social-responsibility
social-responsibility through self-discipline

Rules (for students)

ABC State is described to the students as follows:
- A-state is where everyone has their self-discipline.
- B-state is where someone loses their self-discipline (not paying attention, not working, dropping litter) but when someone points it out they correct it (pay attention, do work, pick up litter).
- C-state is when someone loses their self discipline, it is pointed out, and they continue. Then the teacher is empower (by government) to enforce sanctions.

ABC refers to the whole class dynamic, not the individual. Teachers record the state of the class after every lesson and **prepare for that state of class in the following lesson**. C-state is a normal class where teacher implements Consequence discipline system.

Observable Consequences

- A-state is where *everyone* can conduct rote/drill and more complex social engagements (group work etc), and perform a greater variety of activities due to quick turnarounds.
- State of the class determines teaching role: disciplinarian (C) or learning facilitator (A).
- C-state have the 'locus of control' centered on the teacher; A-state has a distributed 'locus of control' centered in the collective of students.
- Classes tend to fluctuate between AB or BC.
- A-state classes are positively self-organised, B-state may be influence by strong personalities; adult guidance helps a class shift from C to B to A state by reflecting on collective social skills.
- Teacher are *not* responsible for state of class; they are only responsible for behaviour if C-state, otherwise for AB-classes the **responsibility is on students**. Although the teacher is discouraged from employing Consequence system for AB classes, obviously at all times the teacher is ultimately accountable for safety in class.
- C+ is a well-disciplined class, not to be confused with A-state; C+ is an equally valid 'ideal' state where the 'threat' of Consequence system is present but not executed.

Explanations (Why ABC State Works)

- AB-classes rely on interdependence (Deutsche 1945) and cooperative learning (Johnson 2003)
- Provides language and conceptual framework for social self-organisation (Lepskiy 2015)
- ABC is not a 'reward', but a simultaneous emergent state of autopoiesis (Maturana 1980)
- Participants enjoy a 'before-the-fact' sensitivity, a conjoint journey of discovery (Shotter 2016)
- Social complexity is immersive and beyond computational (Anderson 2014)
- The collective state determines teacher role, enabling transformative praxis (Bhaskar 2000)
- Every class is action learning/research where teacher is researcher (Reil 2019)

Hints (for Teachers)

- Prepare standard classes for C-state, and set more challenging tasks (requiring greater social cohesion or self-discipline) for A-state classes; the intrinsic reward is in the enjoyment of the capacity of the class to do more socially demanding tasks.
- Share how you feel genuinely in AB-state; relate more as equals rather than roles.
- Don't get annoyed if students fail to live up to their promises; do show disappointment if you genuinely would like to operate in AB-state classes.
- If a class drops state (eg B to C), don't name individuals; just refer to some people ('they know who they are') who are not pulling their weight; it a collective learning opportunity.
- Do not use C-state as 'punishment'; consider C+ state of 'normal' well-run classes.
- Do not consider B or A state as 'reward' or a 'grade'; if a class sustains high self-discipline, the emergent state of the class is A or B.
- Reinforce the collective trust engendered by students who co-operate to sustain AB classes.
- Determining the state ABC is part of the intervention; you have final say, but base it on your evaluation of your own behaviour (whether you had to use discipline, or you were stressed, or you had to 'compensate' for individual or the collective behaviour) and how well the class actually organised themselves.
- Performance is more important than result; improving performance in every class will lead to better performance during exams, and thus results.
- Stabilise periods of 20 mins 'solid' work (drills, exercise, silent individual work) ensuring everyone starts and stops together; reward with more enjoyable social activities. Combine with accelerated learning so that particularly challenging skills and tasks are achieved; this reinforces the benefit of deliberate, conscientious effort in short bursts.
- Witness interpersonally intelligent students (naturally social), perhaps help class acknowledge them; more so with intra-personally intelligent students.
- General rule of thumb: for loud students to learn to be quieter and -- just as important -- for quiet students to be louder; hearing new voices in the class is naturally stimulating.

Social Cohesion (Potential Wider-scale Activities)

- Teams by friendship, by ability, by optimum teamwork.
- Scores for teams, rows, columns; deriving individual 'team-working' score.
- Data on different class states which an individual participates in, enabling student reflection.
- Swap teachers to test independence and cohesion of class state.
- Student-led projects.
- Group tests, rather than individual ones.
- Bespoke class arrangements: by ability/topic (eg for exam preparation), as individuals/teams.
- Whole year state, whole school state; which school might achieve consistent A state?
- Year 7 same class across multiple subjects; year 8 randomly mixed; potentially year 9 self-selecting or teacher-selected.
- Specialisation of role, 'Classroom Coordinator', whose sole role in form, PSHE or during classes is to facilitate social learning by sharing metacognitive, collaborative and mediation skills.