

COLOUR DOWSING AND THE CLASSROOM

By Emily Rogers

Colour can make or break a classroom. This sounds like a very strong statement, but it is very true.

For the past three years I have used colour in my classroom to manage behaviour and heighten the learning environment. (My 4th grade classes average 28 students.) The process and results are as follows.

For a physical background of the classroom, there are 38 fluorescent lights, white walls, a hall door with a small glass, an outside door with a large glass, and NO windows.

Upon reading, *Health and Light*, by John N Ott. C1976, I realized that the classroom had a high concentration of yellow light rays. Mr Ott had stated that these rays affect behaviour and many other things. I knew that there was no way for me to persuade the public school board to pay for more expensive lights, 48 new bulbs, with which I could experiment. So, Sam, my husband, and I set out to find an inexpensive compromise. I had been involved in the study of colour since the 50's, so Sam dowsed and we decided colour was the compromise.

The next step was to go to my principal. I gave him a copy of the book, *Health and Light*, with special pages marked. I explained what I wanted to do and why. He is very progressive and very concerned with the students. He studied the proposal and agreed in October of 1985.

Sam dowsed to get the colour vibration needed to balance the lights. For his balance the bulletin boards had to have in layers: red paper, green paper and blue paper on top. The paper was not removed until the end of school in June. When new paper was needed blue paper was put over blue paper. Also these same colours, in the same order, were placed under the chalkboards, which is the length of two sides of the room.

The first three weeks of October showed worse behaviour, but I waited. The behaviour problems became fewer and fewer. The students were as well behaved on Friday as on Monday.

The overall results were:

1. Better behaviour – all year especially the last month
2. Students seemed to have balanced energy especially after lunch.
3. More attentive.
4. Improved grades.
5. Fewer arguments and complaints.
6. More smiles.
7. More helpful and co-operative.
8. Good attendance.
9. Added energy at the end of the day for me.

That was three years ago and I have done it ever since, except now I begin the first week of school with the colours up0.

Some may question my sticking to only blue, but Sam constantly checks by dowsing to see what the room needs.

When anyone says anything about my not changing, I ask them – Do you change your picture frames and pictures every week or month? Children need some consistence. Blue bulletin boards, with different work put up, is like a picture frame with changing pictures.

I contacted a teacher friend in Louisville, Ky, after I began in October, 1985 to see if she would try the experiment with me. She taught in a middle school where classes change every hour. Even though she does not dowse, she was excited about the idea. I sent her a copy of the book and she took it to her principal and the experiment began in late October. The physical setting of her room was different since she had a wall of windows. Sam dowsed and she only needed colour on the bulletin boards. She put layers of paper as Sam directed. Upon continual contact, her last three years have paralleled mine.

This past summer my classroom was painted an off white, but that made no change. Checks are always made at the first of school, when bulletin boards need changing and when behaviour shows signs of change for the worse. (I even dowse which papers to put on which bulletin board.)

Since I began this three years ago, I have gone into the different rooms and noticed how I felt and how the students were behaving. I also have listened to teachers complaining about being tired and problem behaviour. I have noted that those teachers use yellow for September, orange for October and November, red for December, white for January, red for February, green for March, yellow for April, May and June on at least 2 bulletin boards in their room. These bulletin boards are usually near the inside door and a lot of time near the teacher's desk. But these are the TRADITIONAL COLOURS so they stick with them. I feel, these colours with the lighting stimulates some students and tires other students.

As an example, even fast food chains know to use bright colours as red, orange, and yellow so the people will be in and out fast. More exclusive and usually more expensive restaurants use blues, greens and restful colours. They want people to relax and enjoy their meal and to return again and again for a quiet dinner.

Doctors' offices and other offices use colour to help people feel comfortable and less stressful.

Education can learn from business and use more greens, blues, and purples to help children relax and learn.

I need to qualify the greens, blues and purples by saying that these colours need to be like the colours of nature and not the brightest blue around, etc. There are so many shades of these colours that can be used successfully that everyone should be able to be pleased.

By the way, I also dress for my students' optimum learning. Since their eyes focus on me so much during the day, I wear cool colours – greens, blues and purples, and soft or muted colours – greys, browns, navies, light pink, light yellow, etc. Around the holidays I try to keep to blues and greens. Since I have done this my class has had a more self-controlled, calm excitement; not the over-exuberance

that I used to see students display in my room, and still see in other rooms. I have taught over 20 years and did none of these things until I met Sam in 1984 and learned the many and varied uses of dowsing.

Upon reading this I hope others will dowse and use colours to help their students and themselves. Remember it may take several colours, one on top of the other, to get the balance needed in the room. Always think of the room filled with students.

Helping one student is worth the effort. All students benefit, but, of course, some do more than others. You can dowse to see how much it helps and can also check behaviour with former teachers.

You may also find your attitude has become more positive, because you will have fewer behaviour problems to worry about and you can accomplish more each day. There still may be some problems from time to time, but I truly feel that colour is a great help. Now you know why I feel colour can make or break a classroom.(Editor's Note: Dr Ott has written several other books besides "Health and Light". They are: "Light, Radiation and You", and "My Ivory Cellar – The Story of Time-Lapse Photography", both published by The Devin-Adair Company Inc.,)

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