Creating Learning Environments
What Would You Do?

Teachers' Casebook

Two boys are taunting one of your students. The two are larger, stronger, and older than the boy in your class, who is small for his age and shy. Unfortunately, the bullies are fairly popular, in part because they are successful athletes, so there are incidents on the bus before and after school, in the gym, in the hallways, and at lunch— including intimidation, extortion of lunch money, tripping, shaving, and verbal taunts—"tag" is a favorite chant. You do not have the two bullies in any of your classes. Your student has started to miss school routinely, and when he is in class, the quality of his work is declining.

Critical Thinking

- How do you handle this situation?
- Who should be involved?
- What would you do if the bullies were in your classes?
- What would you do if the bullies and victim were girls?

Collaboration

With 2 or 3 other members of your class, role play a discussion with the boys, their teachers, their parents, or the principal—whoever you decide you should talk to. What is your plan to deal with this situation?

This chapter looks at the ways that teachers create social and physical environments for learning by examining classroom management—one of the main concerns of teachers, particularly beginning teachers. The very nature of classes, teaching, and students makes good management a critical ingredient of success; we will investigate why this is true. Successful managers create more time for learning, involve more students, and help students become self-managing.

A positive learning environment must be established and maintained throughout the year. One of the best ways to do this is to try to prevent problems from occurring at all. But when problems arise—as they always do—an appropriate response is important. What will you do when students challenge you openly in class, when one student asks your advice on a difficult personal problem, or when another withdraws from all participation? We will examine the ways that teachers can communicate effectively with their students in these and many other situations.

By the time you have completed this chapter, you should be able to answer these questions:

- What are the special managerial demands of classrooms and the needs of students of different ages?
- How will you establish a list of rules and procedures for a class?
- How will you arrange the physical environment of your classroom to fit your learning goals and teaching methods?
- How will you manage computers in your classroom to fit your learning goals and teaching methods?
- What are Koumin's suggestions for preventing management problems?
- How would you respond to a student who seldom completes work?
- What are two different approaches for dealing with a conflict between a teacher and a student?
Connect and Extend to Your Teaching/Portfolio

Some educators object to the metaphor of teacher as manager. These critics suggest that the image brings with it notions of manipulation and detachment. Is the metaphor of manager an appropriate choice? What other metaphors can you suggest for teachers acting to maintain order and discipline? My research in this area suggests that images of group leaders (coaches, guides, etc.), problem solvers (physicians, chess players), and nurturers (mother, father, gardener) are common for beginning teachers.

The Need for Organization

In study after study of the factors related to student achievement, classroom management stands out as the variable with the largest impact (Marzano & Marzano, 2005). Knowledge and expertise in classroom management are marks of expertise in teaching; stress and exhaustion from managerial difficulties are precursors of burnout in teaching (Emmer & Stough, 2001). What is it about classrooms that makes management so critical?

Classes are particular kinds of environments. They have distinctive features that influence their inhabitants no matter how the students or the desks are organized or what the teacher believes about education (Doyle, 1986; 2006). Classrooms are multidimensional. They are crowded with people, tasks, and time pressures. Many individuals, all with differing goals, preferences, and abilities, must share resources, accomplish various tasks, use and reuse materials without losing them, move in and out of the room, and so on. In addition, actions can have multiple effects. Calling on low-ability students may encourage their participation and thinking, but may slow the discussion and lead to management problems if the students cannot answer. And events occur simultaneously—everything happens at once and the pace is fast. Teachers have literally hundreds of exchanges with students during a single day.

In this rapid-fire existence, events are unpredictable. Even when plans are carefully made, the overhead projector is in place, and the demonstration is ready, the lesson can still be interrupted by a burned-out bulb in the projector or a loud, angry discussion right outside the classroom. Because classrooms are public, the way the teacher handles these unexpected intrusions is seen and judged by all. Students are always noticing if the teacher is being “fair.” Is there favoritism? What happens when a rule is broken? Finally, classrooms have histories. The meaning of a particular teacher’s or student’s actions depends in part on what has happened before. The fifth-grade student arrives late requires a different response from the teacher than the first-grade student. In addition, the history of the first few weeks of school affects life in the class all year.

The Basic Task: Gain Their Cooperation

No productive activity can take place in a group without the cooperation of all members. This obviously applies to classrooms. Even if some students don’t participate, they must allow others to do so. (We all have seen one or two students bring an entire class to a halt.) So the basic management task for teachers is to achieve order and harmony by gaining and maintaining student cooperation in class activities (Doyle, 2006). Given the multidimensional, simultaneous, fast-paced, unpredictable, public, and historical nature of classrooms, this is quite a challenge.

Gaining student cooperation means much more than dealing effectively with misbehavior. It means planning activities, having materials ready, making appropriate behavioral and academic demands on students, giving clear signals, accomplishing transitions smoothly, foreseeing problems and stopping them before they start, selecting and sequencing activities so that flow and interest are maintained—and much more. Also, different activities require different managerial skills. For example, a new or complicated activity may be a greater threat to classroom management than a familiar or simple activity. And appropriate student participation varies across different activities. For example, loud student comments during a hip-hop reading of Green Eggs and Ham in an urban classroom are indications of engagement and cooperation, not disorderly call-outs (Doyle, 2006).

Obviously, gaining the cooperation of kindergartners is not the same task as gaining the cooperation of high-school seniors. Jere Brophy and Carolyn Evertson (1978) identified four general stages of classroom management, defined by age-related needs. During kindergarten and the first few years of elementary school, direct teaching of classroom rules and procedures is important. For children in the middle-elementary years, many classroom routines have become relatively automatic, but new procedures for a particular activity may have to be taught directly, and the entire system still needs monitoring and maintenance.
Toward the end of elementary school, some students begin to test and defy authority. The management challenges at this stage are to deal productively with these disruptions and to motivate students who are becoming less concerned with teachers’ opinions and more interested in their social lives. By the end of high school, the challenges are to manage the curriculum, fit academic material to students’ interests and abilities, and help students become more self-managing. The first few classes each semester may be devoted to teaching particular procedures for using materials and equipment, or for keeping track of and submitting assignments. But most students know what is expected of them.

The Goals of Classroom Management

STOP, THINK, WRITE. You are interviewing for a job in a great district—it is known for innovation. The assistant principal looks at you for a moment and then asks, “What is classroom management?” How would you answer?

The aim of classroom management is to maintain a positive, productive learning environment. But order for its own sake is an empty goal. As we discussed in Chapter 6, it is unethical to use classroom management techniques just to keep students docile and quiet. What, then, is the point of working so hard to manage classrooms? There are at least three reasons.

More Time for Learning. I once used a stopwatch to time the commercials during a TV quiz show. I was amazed to find that half of the program was devoted to commercials. Actually, very little quizzing took place. If you used a similar approach in classrooms, timing all the different activities throughout the day, you might be surprised by how little actual teaching takes place. Many minutes each day are lost through interruptions, disruptions, late starts, and rough transitions (Karweit, 1989; Karweit & Slavin, 1981).

Obviously, students can only learn what they encounter. Almost every study examining time and learning has found a significant relationship between time spent on content and student learning (Berliner, 1988). In fact, the correlations between content studied and student learning are usually larger than the correlations between specific teacher behaviors and student learning (Rosenhine, 1979). Thus, one important goal of classroom management is to expand the sheer number of minutes available for learning. This is sometimes called allocated time.

While the stereotypical classroom consists of students seated quietly in rows, their hands folded neatly on their desks, the reality is that teachers are often called on to keep track of many different activities at one time.

Connect and Extend to Your Teaching/Portfolio

Think about your philosophy of teaching, a question you will be asked at most job interviews. What is your philosophy of classroom management? What rules will you set and how will you establish them? (Consult the Guidelines for ideas.)

Classroom management Techniques used to maintain a healthy learning environment, relatively free of behavior problems.

Allocated time Time set aside for learning.

The Need for Organization
Simply making more time for learning will not automatically lead to achievement. To be valuable, time must be used effectively. As you saw in the chapters on cognitive learning, the way students process information is a central factor in what they learn and remember. Basically, students will learn what they practice and think about (Doyle, 1983). Time spent actively involved in specific learning tasks often is called **engaged time**, or sometimes **time on task**.

Again, however, engaged time doesn’t guarantee learning. Students may be struggling with material that is too difficult or using the wrong learning strategies. When students are working with a high rate of success—really learning and understanding—we call the time spent **academic learning time**. Another goal of class management is to increase academic learning time by keeping students **actively engaged in worthwhile, appropriate learning activities**. Figure 12.1 shows how the 1,100 hours of time mandated for school in most states can become only about 333 hours of quality academic learning time for a typical student.

**Getting students engaged in learning early in their school careers can make a big difference.** Several studies have shown that teachers’ rating of students’ on-task, persistent engagement in 1st grade predicts achievement test score gains and grades through 4th grade, as well as the decision to drop out of high school (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004).

**Access to Learning.** Each classroom activity has its own rules for participation. Sometimes these rules are clearly stated by the teacher, but often they are implicit and unstated. Teacher and students may not even be aware that they are following different rules for different activities (Berliner, 1983). For example, in a reading group, students may

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**FIGURE 12.1**

Who Knows Where the Time Goes?

The data show that nearly 70% of instructional mandated time is spent on only 22% of what is considered hours of quality academic learning time.

![Graph showing time spent on various activities](image)

**Engaged time/Time on-task**: Time spent actively engaged in the learning task at hand.

**Academic learning time**: Time when students are actually succeeding at the learning task.

have to raise their hands to make a comment, but in a show-and-tell circle in the same class, they may simply have to catch the teacher’s eye.

As we saw in Chapter 5, the rules defining who can talk, what they can talk about, and when, to whom, and how long they can talk are often called participation structures. In order to participate successfully in a given activity, students must understand the participation structure. Some students, however, seem to come to school less able to participate than others. The participation structures they learn at home in interactions with siblings, parents, and other adults do not match the participation structures of school activities (Tharp, 1989). But teachers are not necessarily aware of this conflict. Instead, the teachers see that a child doesn’t quite fit in, always seems to say the wrong thing at the wrong time, or is very reluctant to participate, and they are not sure why.

What can we conclude? To reach the second goal of good classroom management—getting all students access to learning—you must make sure everyone knows how to participate in class activities. The key is awareness. What are your rules and expectations? Are they understandable, given your students’ cultural backgrounds and home experiences? What unspoken rules or values may be operating? Are you clearly signaling appropriate ways to participate? For some students, particularly those with behavioral and emotional challenges, direct teaching and practicing of the important behaviors may be required (Easter & Stough, 2001).

An example of being sensitive to participation structures was documented by Adrienne Alton-Lee and her colleagues in a classroom in New Zealand (2001). As a critical part of a unit on children in hospitals, the teacher, Ms. Nikora, planned to have one of her students, a Maori girl named Huhana, describe a recent visit to the hospital. Huhana agreed. But when the time came and the teacher asked her to come to the front of the class and share her experiences, Huhana looked down and shook her head. Rather than confront or scold Huhana, the teacher simply said, “All right. If we sit in a circle... Huhana might be able to tell us about what happened.” When students were in a circle, the teacher said, “All right, Huhana, after Ms. Nikora called your mum and the... Where did she take you?” As Huhana began to share her experience, the teacher scaffolded her participation by asking questions, providing reminders of details the teacher had learned in previous conversations with Huhana, and waiting patiently for the student’s responses. Rather than perceiving the child as lacking competence, the teacher saw the situation as hindering competent expression.

Management for Self-Management. The third goal of any management system is to help students become better able to manage themselves. If teachers focus on student compliance, they will spend much of the teaching/learning time monitoring and correcting. Students come to see the purpose of school as just following rules, not constructing deep understanding of academic knowledge. And complex learning structures such as cooperative or problem-based learning require student self-management. Compliance with rules is not enough to make these learning structures work (McCaslin & Good, 1998).

The movement from demanding obedience to teaching self-regulation and self-control is a fundamental shift in discussions of classroom management today (Weinstein, 1999). Tom Savage (1999) says simply, “the most fundamental purpose of discipline is the development of self-control. Academic knowledge and technological skill will be of little consequence if those who possess them lack self-control” (p. 11). Through self-control, students demonstrate responsibility—the ability to fulfill their own needs without interfering with the rights and needs of others (Glasser, 1990). Students learn self-control by making choices and dealing with the consequences, setting goals and priorities, managing time, collaborating to learn, mediating disputes and making peace, and developing trusting relations with trustworthy teachers and classmates (Bear, 2005; Rogers & Freberg, 1994).

Encouraging self-management requires extra time, but teaching students how to take responsibility is an investment well worth the effort. When elementary and secondary teachers have very effective class management systems but neglect to set student self-management as a goal, their students often find that they have trouble working independently after they graduate from these “well-managed” classes.

Connect and Extend to Your Teaching/Portfolio

Are there cultural differences in the verbal and nonverbal ways that students show respect, pay attention, and bid for a turn in conversations? How can cultural differences in interaction styles and expectations make classroom management more challenging?
Creating a Positive Learning Environment

Connect and Extend to Other Chapters
In Chapter 13 you will learn about the importance of careful planning and clear objectives. Good planning is an important aspect of classroom management.

Connect and Extend to the Research
For a description of a study that tested the Emmer/Evertson management principles along with other approaches, such as reinforcement strategies with adolescents in several schools, see: Gottfredson, D. C., Gottfredson, G. D., & Hybl, L. G. (1993). Managing adolescent behavior: A multiyear, multischool study. American Educational Research Journal, 30, 179-217. Generally, the application of these principles improved behavior.

In making plans for your class, much of what you have already learned in this book should prove helpful. You know, for example, that problems are prevented when individual variations, such as those discussed in Chapters 2, 3, 4, and 5, are taken into account in instructional planning. Sometimes students become disruptive because the work assigned is too difficult. And students who are bored by lessons well below their ability levels may be interested in finding more exciting activities to fill their time.

In one sense, teachers prevent discipline problems whenever they make an effort to motivate students. A student engaged in learning is usually not involved in a clash with the teacher or other students at the same time. All plans for motivating students are steps toward preventing problems.

Some Research Results
What else can teachers do? For several years, educational psychologists at the University of Texas at Austin studied classroom management quite thoroughly (Emmer & Stough, 2001; Emmer, Evertson, & Anderson, 1980; Emmer & Gersh, 2006). Their general approach was to study a large number of classrooms, making frequent observations the first weeks of school and less frequent visits later in the year. After several months, there were dramatic differences among the classes. Some had very few management problems, while others had many. The most and least effective teachers were identified on the basis of the quality of classroom management and student achievement later in the year.

Next, the researchers looked at their observation records of the first weeks of class to see how the effective teachers got started. Other comparisons were made between the teachers who ultimately had harmonious, high-achieving classes and those whose classes were fraught with problems. On the basis of these comparisons, the researchers developed management principles. They then taught these principles to a new group of teachers, and the results were quite positive. Teachers who applied the principles had fewer problems; their students spent more time learning and less time disrupting; and achievement was higher. The findings of these studies formed the basis for two books on classroom management (Emmer, Evertson, & Worsham, 2006; Evertson, Emmer, & Worsham, 2006). Many of the ideas in the following pages are from these books.

Rules and Procedures Required
- STOP | THINK | WRITE: What are the three or four most important rules you will have for your classroom?

At the elementary-school level, teachers must lead 20 to 30 students of varying abilities through many different activities each day. Without efficient rules and procedures, a great deal of time is wasted answering the same question over and over. “My pencil broke. How can I do my math?” “I’m finished with my story. What should I do now?” “Carlos tripped me!” “I left my homework in my locker.”

At the secondary-school level, teachers must deal daily with over 100 students who use dozens of materials and often change rooms. Secondary-school students are also more likely to challenge teachers’ authority. The effective managers studied by Emmer, Evertson, and their colleagues had planned procedures and rules for coping with these situations.

Procedures. How will materials and assignments be distributed and collected? Under what conditions can students leave the room? How will grades be determined? What are the special routines for handling equipment and supplies in science, art, or vocational classes? Procedures (often called routines) describe how activities are accomplished in classrooms, but they are seldom written down; they are simply the ways of getting things
done in class. Carol Weinstein and Andy Mignano (Weinstein, 2003; Weinstein and Mignano, 2003) suggest that teachers establish routines to cover the following areas:

1. **Administrative routines**, such as taking attendance.
2. **Student movement**, such as entering and leaving or going to the bathroom.
3. **Housekeeping**, such as watering plants or storing personal items.
4. **Routines for accomplishing lessons**, such as how to collect assignments or return homework.
5. **Interactions between teacher and student**, such as how to get the teacher's attention when help is needed.
6. **Talk among students**, such as giving help or socializing.

You might use these six areas as a framework for planning your class procedures and routines. The Guidelines should help you as you plan.

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**Guidelines: Establishing Class Procedures**

Determine procedures for student upkeep of desks, classroom equipment, and other facilities.

**EXAMPLES:**

1. Set aside a cleanup time each day or once a week in self-contained classes.
2. Demonstrate and have students practice how to push chairs under the desk, take and return materials stored on shelves, sharpen pencils, use the sink or water fountain, assemble lab equipment, and so on.
3. Put a rotating monitor in charge of equipment or materials.

Decide how students will be expected to enter and leave the room.

**EXAMPLES:**

1. Have a procedure for students to follow as soon as they enter the room. Some teachers have a standard assignment (“Have your homework out and be checking it over”).
2. Inform students under what conditions they can leave the room, and make sure they understand when they need to ask for permission to do so.
3. Tell students how they should gain admission to the room if they are late.
4. Set up a policy about class dismissal. Many teachers require students to be in their seats and quiet before they can leave at the end of class. The teacher, not the bell, dismisses class.

Establish a signal and teach it to your students.

**EXAMPLES:**

1. In the classroom, flick the lights on and off, sound a chord or a piano or recorder, sound a bell like the “ring bell for service” at a sales counter, move to the podium and stare silently at the class, use a phrase like “Eyes, please,” take out your grade book, or move to the front of the class.
2. In the halls, raise a hand, clap once, or use some other signal to indicate “Stop.”
3. On the playground, raise a hand or whistle to indicate “Line up.”

Set procedures for student participation in class.

**EXAMPLES:**

1. Decide whether you will have students raise their hands for permission to speak or simply require that they wait until the speaker has finished.
2. Determine a signal to indicate that you want everyone to respond at once. Some teachers raise a cupped hand to their ear. Others preface the question with “Everyone.”
3. Make sure you are clear about differences in procedures for different activities: reading group, learning center, discussion, teacher presentation, art work, film, peer learning group, library, and so forth.
4. Establish how many students at a time can be at the pencil sharpener, teacher’s desk, learning center, sink, bookshelves, reading corner, or bathroom.

Determine how you will communicate, collect, and return assignments.

**EXAMPLES:**

1. Establish a place for listing assignments. Some teachers reserve a particular corner of the board for listing assignments. Others write assignments in colored chalk. For younger students, it may be better to prepare assignment sheets or folders, color-coding them for math workbook, reading packet, and science kit.
2. Be clear about how and where assignments should be collected. Some teachers collect assignments in a box or bin; others have a student collect work while they introduce the next activity.

For ideas about involving students in developing rules and procedures, see [http://www.educationworld.com/aht/lesson/lesson/lesson274.shtml](http://www.educationworld.com/aht/lesson/lesson/lesson274.shtml)
Classroom rules that are clearly understood by all students can help maintain a classroom environment that is respectful and more conducive to effective learning.

Rules. Rules specify expected and forbidden actions in the class. They are the dos and don'ts of classroom life. Unlike procedures, rules are often written down and posted. In establishing rules, you should consider what kind of atmosphere you want to create. What student behaviors will help you teach effectively? What limits do the students need to guide their behavior? The rules you set should be consistent with school rules, and also in keeping with principles of learning. For example, we know from the research on small-group learning that students benefit when they explain work to peers. They learn as they teach. A rule that forbids students to help each other may be inconsistent with good learning principles. Or a rule that says, “No erasers when writing” may make students focus more on preventing mistakes than on communicating clearly in their writing (Burden, 1995; Emmer & Stough, 2001; Weinstein & Mignano, 2003).

Rules should be positive and observable (raise your hand to be recognized). Having a few general rules that cover many specifics is better than listing all the dos and don'ts. But, if specific actions are forbidden, such as leaving the campus or smoking in the bathrooms, then a rule should make this clear (Emmer & Gerwels, 2006).

Rules for Elementary School. Everson and her colleagues (2006) give four examples of general rules for elementary-school classes:

1. *Respect and be polite to all people.* Give clear explanations of what you mean by “polite,” including not hitting, fighting, or teasing. Examples of polite behavior include waiting your turn, saying “please” and “thank you,” and not calling names. This applies to behavior toward adults (including substitute teachers) and children.

2. *Be prompt and prepared.* This rule highlights the importance of the academic work in the class. Being prompt includes the beginning of the day and transitions between activities.

3. *Listen quietly while others are speaking.* This applies to the teacher and other students, in both large-class lessons or small-group discussions.

4. *Obey all school rules.* This reminds students that all school rules apply in your classroom. Then students cannot claim, for example, that they thought it was okay to chew gum or listen to a radio in your class, even though these are against school rules, “because you never made a rule against it for us.”

Whatever the rule, students need to be taught the behaviors that the rule includes and excludes. Examples, practice, and discussion will be needed before learning is complete.
As you’ve seen, different activities often require different rules. This can be confusing for elementary students until they have thoroughly learned all the rules. To prevent confusion, you might consider making signs that list the rules for each activity. Then, before the activity, you can post the appropriate sign as a reminder. This provides clear and consistent cues about participation structures so all students, not just the “well-behaved,” know what is expected. Of course, these rules must be explained and discussed before the signs can have their full effect.


1. **Bring all needed materials to class.** The teacher must specify the type of pen, pencil, paper, notebook, texts, and so on.
2. **Be in your seat and ready to work when the bell rings.** Many teachers combine this rule with a standard beginning procedure for the class, such as a warm-up exercise on the board or a requirement that students have paper with a proper heading ready when the bell rings.
3. **Respect and be polite to all people.** This covers fighting, verbal abuse, and general rule breaking. All people include the teacher.
4. **Respect other people’s property.** This means property belonging to the school, the teacher, or other students.
5. **Listen and stay seated while someone else is speaking.** This applies when the teacher or other students are talking.
6. **Obey all school rules.** As with the elementary class rules, this covers many behaviors and situations, so you do not have to repeat every school rule for your class. It also reminds the students that you will be monitoring them inside and outside your class. Make sure you know all the school rules. Some secondary students are very adept at convincing teachers that their misbehavior “really isn’t against the rules.”

**Consequences.** As soon as you decide on your rules and procedures, you must consider what you will do when a student breaks a rule or does not follow a procedure. It is too late to make this decision after the rule has been broken. For many infractions, the logical consequence going back to “do it right.” Students who run in the hall may have to return to where they started and walk properly. Incomplete papers can be redone. Materials left out should be put back (Charles, 2002b). You can use natural or logical consequences to support social/emotional development by doing the following (Elias & Schwab, 2006):

- Your response should separate the deed from the doer—the problem is the behavior, not the student.
- Emphasize to students that they have the power to choose their actions and thus avoid losing control.
- Encourage student reflection, self-evaluation, and problem-solving—avoid teacher lecturing.
- Help students identify and give a rationale for what they could do differently next time in a similar situation.

The main point here is that decisions about penalties (and rewards) must be made early on, so students know before they break a rule or use the wrong procedure what this will mean for them. I encourage my student teachers to get a copy of the school rules and their cooperating teacher’s rules and then plan their own. Sometimes, consequences are more complicated. In their case studies of four expert elementary-school teachers, Weinstein and Mignano (2003) found that the teachers’ negative consequences fell into seven categories, as shown in Table 12.1 on the next page.

**Who Sets the Rules and Consequences?** In the first chapter, I described Ken, an expert teacher who worked with his students to establish a students’ “Bill of Rights” instead of defining rules. These “rights” cover most situations that might require a “rule” and help...
TABLE 12.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Seven Categories of Penalties for Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Expressions of disappointment. If students like and respect their teacher, then a serious, sorrowful expression of disappointment may cause students to stop and think about their behavior.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Loss of privileges. Students can lose free time. If they have not completed homework, for example, they can be required to do it during a free period or recess.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Exclusion from the group. Students who distract their peers or fail to cooperate can be separated from the group until they are ready to cooperate. Some teachers give a student a pass for 10 to 15 minutes. The student must go to another class or study hall, where the other students and teachers ignore the offending student for that time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Written reflections on the problem. Students can write in journals, write essays about what they did and how it affected others, or write letters of apology—if this is appropriate. Another possibility is to ask students to describe objectively what they did; then the teacher and the student can sign and date this statement. These records are available if parents or administrators need evidence of the students’ behavior.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Detentions. Detentions can be very brief meetings after school, during a free period, or at lunch. The main purpose is to talk about what has happened. (In high school, detentions are often used as punishments; suspensions and expulsions are available as more extreme measures.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Visits to the principal's office. Experts tend to use this penalty rarely, but they do use it when the situation warrants. Some schools require students to be sent to the office for certain offenses, such as fighting. If you tell a student to go to the office and the student refuses, you might call the office saying the student has been sent. Then the student has the choice of either going to the office or facing the principal’s penalty for “disappearing” on the way.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Contact with parents. If problems become a repeated pattern, most teachers contact the student’s family. This is done to seek support for helping the student, not to blame the parents or punish the student.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


the students move toward the goal of becoming self-managing. The rights for one recent class are in Table 12.2. Developing rights and responsibilities rather than rules makes an important point to students. “Teaching children that something is wrong because there is a rule against it is not the same as teaching them that there is a rule against it because it is wrong, and helping them to understand why this is so” (Weinstein, 1999, p. 134). Students should understand that the rules are developed so that everyone can work and learn together. I might add that when Ken has had some very difficult classes, he and his students have had to establish some “laws” that protect students’ rights.

If you are going to involve students in setting rules or creating a constitution, you may need to wait until you have established a sense of community in your classroom. Before students can contribute meaningfully to the class rules, they need to trust the teacher and the situation (Elias & Schwab, 2006).

Another kind of planning that affects the learning environment is designing the physical arrangement of the class furniture, materials, and learning tools.

### Planning Spaces for Learning

**STOP | THINK | WRITE**: Think back over all the rooms in all the schools you have attended. Which ones stand out as inviting or exciting? Which ones were cold and empty? Did one teacher have a design that let different students do different things at once? ■

Spaces for learning should invite and support the activities you plan in your classroom, and they should respect the inhabitants of the space. This respect begins at the classroom door for young children by helping them identify their class. One school that has won awards for its architecture paints each classroom door a different bright color, so young
**TABLE 12.2**

**A Bill of Rights for Students and Teachers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students' Bill of Rights</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To whisper when the teacher isn’t talking or asking for silence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To celebrate authorship or other work at least once a month.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To exercise outside on days there is no physical education class.</td>
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<tr>
<td>To have 2-minute breaks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To make healthy snacks during snack time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To participate in choosing a table.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To have privacy. Get permission to touch anyone else’s possessions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To be comfortable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To chew gum without blowing bubbles or making a mess.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To make choices about the day’s schedule.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To have free work time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To work with partners.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To talk to the class without anyone else talking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To work without being disturbed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


children can find their “home” (Herbert, 1998). Once inside, spaces can be created that invite quiet reading, group collaboration, or independent research. If students are to use materials, they should be able to reach them. In an interview with Marge Scherer (1999), Herb Kohl describes how he creates a positive environment in his classes:

> What I do is put up the most beautiful things I know—posters, games, puzzles, challenges—and let the children know these are provocations. These are ways of provoking them into using their minds. You have to create an environment that makes kids walk in and say, “I really want to see what’s here. I would really like to look at this.” (p. 9)

In terms of classroom arrangement, there are two basic ways of organizing space: personal territories and interest areas.

**Personal Territories.** Can the physical setting influence teaching and learning in classrooms organized by territories? Front-seat location does seem to increase participation for students who are predisposed to speak in class, whereas a seat in the back will make it more difficult to participate and easier to sit back and daydream (Woolfolk & Brooks, 1983). But the action zone where participation is greatest may be in other areas such as on one side, or near a particular learning center (Good, 1983; Lambert, 1994). To “spread the action around,” Weinstein and Mignano (2003) suggest that teachers move around the room when possible, establish eye contact with direct questions to students seated far away, and vary the seating so the same students are not always consigned to the back.

Horizontal rows share many of the advantages of the traditional row and column arrangements. Both are useful for independent seatwork and teacher, student, or media presentations; they encourage students to focus on the presenter and simplify housekeeping. Horizontal rows also permit students to work more easily in pairs. However, this is a poor arrangement for large-group discussion.

Clusters of four or circle arrangements are best for student interaction. Circles are especially useful for discussions but still allow for independent seatwork. Clusters permit...
Guidelines: Designing Learning Spaces

Note the fixed features and plan accordingly.

Examples:
1. Remember that the audiovisual center and computers need an electrical outlet.
2. Keep art supplies near the sink, small-group work by a blackboard.

Create easy access to materials and a well-organized place to store them.

Examples:
1. Make sure materials are easy to reach and visible to students.
2. Have enough shelves so that materials need not be stacked.

Provide students with clean, convenient surfaces for studying.

Examples:
1. Put bookshelves next to the reading area, games by the game table.
2. Prevent fights by avoiding crowded work spaces.

Avoid dead spaces and "racetracks."

Examples:
1. Don't have all the interest areas around the outside of the room, leaving a large dead space in the middle.
2. Avoid placing a few items of furniture right in the middle of this large space, creating a "racetrack" around the furniture.

Arrange things so you can see your students and they can see all instructional presentations.

Examples:
1. Make sure you can see over partitions.
2. Design seating so that students can see instruction without moving their chairs or desks.

Make sure work areas are private and quiet.

Examples:
1. Make sure there are no tables or work areas in the middle of traffic lanes; a person should not have to pass through one area to get to another.
2. Keep noisy activities as far as possible from quiet ones. Increase the feeling of privacy by placing partitions, such as bookcases or pegboards, between areas or within large areas.

Provide choices and flexibility.

Examples:
1. Establish private cubicles for individual work, open tables for group work, and cushions on the floor for whole-class meetings.
2. Give students a place to keep their personal belongings. This is especially important if students don't have personal desks.

Try new arrangements, then evaluate and improve.

Examples:
1. Have a "two-week arrangement," then evaluate.
2. Enlist the aid of your students. They have to live in the room, too, and designing a classroom can be a very challenging educational experience.

For more ideas on classroom design, see http://www.edsfacilities.org/dl/classroom_design.cfm

Connect and Extend to the Research:
To read three case studies describing how teachers planned the physical environments in their rooms, see Ponton, P., & Kershner, R. (2000). Making decisions about organizing the primary classroom as a context for learning: The views of three experienced teachers and their pupils. Teaching and Teacher Education, 16, 111-127.

Students to talk, help one another, share materials, and work on group tasks. Both arrangements, however, are poor for whole-group presentations and may make class management more difficult.

The fishbowl or stack special formation, where students sit close together near the focus of attention (the back row may even be standing), should be used only for short periods of time, because it is not comfortable and can lead to discipline problems. On the other hand, the fishbowl can create a feeling of group cohesion and is helpful when the teacher wants students to watch a demonstration, brainstorm on a class problem, or see a small visual aid.

Interest Areas. The design of interest areas can influence the way the areas are used by students. For example, working with a classroom teacher, Carol Weinstein (1977) was able to make changes in interest areas that helped the teacher meet her objectives of hav-
ing more girls involved in the science center and having all students experiment more with a variety of manipulative materials. In a second study, changes in a library corner led to more involvement in literature activities throughout the class (Morrow & Weinstein, 1986). If you design interest areas for your class, keep the Guidelines in mind.

Personal territories and interest areas are not mutually exclusive; many teachers use a design that combines these types of organizations. Individual students' desks— their territories—are placed in the center, with interest areas in the back or around the periphery of the room. This allows the flexibility needed for both large- and small-group activities. Figure 12.2 shows an elementary classroom that combines interest area and personal territory arrangements.

**Planning for Computer Uses**

Many classrooms today have computers. Some classes have only one, others have several, and some classes are labs with a computer for every student. Using computers productively brings with it management challenges. Computers can be used to connect to powerful knowledge bases around the world; to act as tools for writing, drawing, calculating, and designing; to simulate scientific experiments or life in other times and places; to collaborate and communicate with people across the hall or across the ocean; to publish work or make presentations; and to keep track of appointments, assignments, or grades.
To get the greatest benefits from computers in your classroom, teachers must have good management systems. Table 12.3 summarizes strategies for managing computer labs.

Most classrooms will not have a computer for every student. In fact, many have only one computer or none at all. The Guidelines discuss using computers in regular classrooms.

### TABLE 12.3

**Tips for Managing a Computer Lab**

(All these ideas are from Cherry Bolick and James Cooper, 2006.)

- Always run through a technology lesson before presenting it to the class—and always have a back-up lesson prepared in case the technology fails.
- Type directions for frequently used computer operations—opening programs, inserting clip art, printing documents, and so on—on index cards, laminate them, and connect them with a ring. Keep a set next to each computer.
- Have students turn off their monitors when you’re giving directions.
- Appoint classroom technology managers. Consider an Attendance Manager, who takes attendance and serves as a substitute teacher helper when necessary; a Materials Manager, who passes out materials and runs errands; a Technical Manager, who helps resolve printer and computer issues; and an End-of-Class Manager, who makes sure work areas are neat—keyboards pushed in, mice straight, and programs closed—before students are dismissed.
- If you have classes filtering in and out of a computer lab each day and have little or no time to set up between classes, arrange for older students to help. Simply end your lesson five minutes early and walk the older students through the process of setting up for the next class.
- When working on lengthy technology projects, print out step-by-step instructions. Include some that say “Save your work; do not go any further until you help your neighbors reach this point.” This helps less-proficient students solve problems more quickly, keeps the class at roughly the same point in the project, and fosters collaborative learning.
- Make it a class rule that students can help one another but cannot ever touch another student’s computer. That way, you can be sure that learning occurs even when students help one another.
- Keep a red plastic cup at each computer. When students need help, have them place the highly visible cups on top of their monitors.
- Before students leave class, have them turn their mice upside down so the trackballs are showing. You’ll lose fewer trackballs that way.
- Place different colored sticker dots on the left and the right bottom corners of each monitor. Use these to indicate which side of the screen you are talking about—very helpful when using certain programs, such as the new Kid Pix—and to determine whose turn it is if students share a computer.
- Plug all speakers into a main power bar. Turn the bar off when you’re teaching and turn it on when students are working. If the room becomes too noisy, turn off the power bar to get students’ attention.
- Use a Video Out card to project a monitor display onto a television screen.
- Type PLEASE WAIT FOR INSTRUCTIONS on 8 by 11 papers, laminate them, and tape one sheet to the top of every monitor. Students flip the signs to the back of the monitor after you’ve given directions.
- Create a folder in the Start menu and place any programs you use with students in that folder. Students never have to click Programs—everything they use is in one folder.
- When working in a computer lab, assign each student a computer. Students can line up in “computer lab order” in their classrooms. Seating goes very quickly when they get to the lab.
- If you’re working on a network, ask your technology coordinator to set up a shared folder for Internet resources. Then, when you’re planning an Internet lesson, simply save a shortcut to the Web site in that folder. During lab time, students can go to the shared folder, double click the link, and go right to the site without typing the URL. This saves time and stress for both students and teachers.

Guidelines: Using Computers: Management Issues

**If you have only one computer in your classroom:**
Provide convenient access.

**EXAMPLES:**
1. Find a central location if the computer is used to display material for the class.
2. Find a spot on the side of the room that allows seating and view of the screen, but does not crowd or disturb other students if the computer is used as a workstation for individuals or small groups.

Be prepared.

**EXAMPLES:**
1. Check to be sure software needed for a lesson or assignment is installed and working.
2. Make sure instructions for using the software or doing the assignment are in an obvious place and clear.
3. Provide a checklist for completing assignments.

Create “trained experts” to help with computers.

**EXAMPLES:**
1. Train student experts, and rotate experts.
2. Use adult volunteers—parents, grandparents, or older siblings.

Develop systems for using the computer.

**EXAMPLES:**
1. Make up a schedule to insure that all students have access to the computer and no students monopolize the time.
2. Create standard ways of saving student work.

**If you have more than one computer in your classroom:**
Plan the arrangement of the computers to fit your instructional goals.

**EXAMPLES:**
1. For cooperative groups, arrange so students can cluster around their group’s computer.
2. For different projects at different computer stations, allow for easy rotation from station to station.

Experiment with other models for using computers.

**EXAMPLES:**
1. Navigator Model—4 students per computer: One student is the (mouse and keyboard) driver, another is the “navigator.” “Back-seat driver 1” manages the group’s progress and “back-seat driver 2” serves as the time-keeper. The navigator attends a 10-minute to 20-minute training session in which the facilitator provides an overview of the basics of particular software. Navigators cannot touch the mouse. Driver roles are rotated.
2. Facilitator Model: 6 students per computer: the facilitator has more experience, expertise, or training—serves as the guide or teacher.
3. Collaborative Group Model—7 students per computer: Each small group is responsible for creating some component of the whole group’s final product. For example, one part of the group writes a report, another creates a map, and a third uses the computer to gather and graph census data.

For more ideas, see http://www.internet-classrooms.com/one_computer.htm

Getting Started: The First Weeks of Class

Determining a room design, rules, and procedures are the first steps toward having a well-managed class, but how do effective teachers gain students’ cooperation in those early critical days and weeks? One study carefully analyzed the first weeks’ activities of effective and ineffective elementary teachers, and found striking differences (Kimmer, Evertson, & Anderson, 1980). By the second or third week of school, students in the ineffective teachers’ classrooms were more and more disruptive, less and less on task.

**Effective Managers for Elementary Students.** In the effective teachers’ classrooms, the very first day was well organized. Name tags were ready. There was something interesting for each child to do right away. Materials were set up. The teachers had planned carefully to avoid any last-minute tasks that might turn them away from their students. These teachers dealt with the children’s pressing concerns first. “Where do I put my things?” “How do I pronounce my teacher’s name?” “Can I whisper to my neighbor?” “Where is the bathroom?” The effective teachers were explicit about their expectations. They had a workable, easily understood set of rules and taught the students the most important rules.
right away. They taught the rules like any other subject—with lots of explanation, examples, and practice.

Throughout the first weeks, the effective managers continued to spend quite a bit of time teaching rules and procedures. Some used guided practice to teach procedures; others used rewards to shape behavior. Most taught students to respond to a bell or some other signal to gain their attention. These teachers worked with the class as a whole on enjoyable academic activities. They did not rush to get students into small groups or to get them started in readers. This whole-class work gave the teachers a better opportunity to continue monitoring all students’ learning of the rules and procedures. Misbehavior was stopped quickly and firmly, but not harshly.

In the poorly managed classrooms, the first weeks were quite different. Rules were not workable; they were either too vague or too complicated. For example, one teacher made a rule that students should “be in the right place at the right time.” Students were not told what this meant, so their behavior could not be guided by the rule. Neither positive nor negative behaviors had clear, consistent consequences. After students broke a rule, ineffective managers might give vague criticisms, such as “Some of my children are too noisy,” or issue a warning, but not follow through with the threatened consequence.

In the poorly managed classes, procedures for accomplishing routine tasks varied from day to day and were never taught or practiced. Instead of dealing with these obvious needs, ineffective managers spent time on procedures that could have waited. For example, one teacher had the class practice for a fire drill the first day, but left unexplained other procedures that would be needed every day. Students wandered around the classroom aimlessly and had to ask each other what they should be doing. Often the students talked to one another because they had nothing productive to do. Ineffective teachers frequently left the room. Many became absorbed in paperwork or in helping just one student. They had not made plans for how to deal with late-arriving students or interruptions. One ineffective teacher tried to teach students to respond to a bell as a signal for attention, but later let the students ignore it. All in all, the first weeks in these classrooms were disorganized and filled with surprises for teachers and students alike.

**Effective Managers for Secondary Students.** What about getting started in a secondary school class? It appears that many of the differences between effective and ineffective elementary school teachers hold at the secondary level as well. Again, effective managers focus on establishing rules, procedures, and expectations on the first day of class. These standards for academic work and class behavior are clearly communicated to students and consistently enforced during the first weeks of class. Student behavior is closely monitored, and infractions of the rules are dealt with quickly. In classes with lower-ability students, work cycles are shorter, students are not required to spend long, unbroken periods on one type of activity. Instead, during each period, they are moved smoothly through several different tasks. In general, effective teachers carefully follow each student’s progress, so students cannot avoid work without facing consequences (Emmer & Everton, 1982).

With all this close monitoring and consistent enforcement of the rules, you may wonder if effective secondary teachers have to be grim and humorless. Not necessarily. The effective managers in one study also smiled and joked more with their students (Moskowitz & Heyman, 1976). As any experienced teacher can tell you, there is much more to smile about when the class is cooperative.

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**Maintaining a Good Environment for Learning**

A good start is just that—a beginning. Effective teachers build on this beginning. They maintain their management system by preventing problems and keeping students engaged in productive learning activities. We have discussed several ways to keep students engaged. In the chapter on motivation, for example, we considered stimulating curiosity, relating lessons to student interests, establishing learning goals instead of performance goals, and having positive expectations. What else can teachers do?
Encouraging Engagement

STOP THINK WRITE. What activities keep you completely engaged—the time just seems to disappear? What is it about those activities that keeps you focused?

The format of a lesson affects student involvement. In general, as teacher supervision increases, students' engaged time also increases (Emmer & Everson, 1981). One study, for example, found that elementory students working directly with a teacher were on task 97% of the time, whereas students working on their own were on task only 57% of the time (Frick, 1990). This does not mean that teachers should eliminate independent work for students. It simply means that this type of activity usually requires careful planning and monitoring.

When the task provides continuous cues for the student about what to do next, involvement will be greater. Activities with clear steps are likely to be more absorbing, because one step leads naturally to the next. When students have all the materials they need to complete a task, they tend to stay involved. If their curiosity is piqued, students will be motivated to continue seeking an answer. And, as you now know, students will be more engaged if they are involved in authentic tasks—activities that have connections to real life. Also, activities are more engaging when the level of challenge is higher and when students' interests are incorporated into the tasks (Emmer & Gerwels, 2006).

Of course, teachers can't supervise every student all the time, or rely on curiosity. Sometimes must keep students working on their own. In their study of secondary and early students, Everson, Emmer, and their colleagues found that effective class managers at both levels had well-planned systems for encouraging students to manage their own work (Emmer, Everson, & Worsham, 2006; Everson, Emmer, & Worsham, 2006). The Guidelines are based on their findings.

Guidelines: Keeping Students Engaged

Make basic work requirements clear.

**Examples**
1. Specify and post the routine work requirements for headings, paper size, pen or pencil use, and neatness.
2. Establish and explain rules about late or incomplete work and absences. If a pattern of incomplete work begins to develop, deal with it early; speak with parents if necessary.
3. Make due dates reasonable, and stick to them unless the student has a very good excuse for lateness.

Communicate the specifics of assignments.

**Examples**
1. With younger students, have a routine procedure for giving assignments, such as writing them on the board in the same place each day. With older students, assignments may be dictated, posted, or given in a syllabus.
2. Remind students of upcoming assignments.
3. With complicated assignments, give students a sheet describing what to do, what resources are available, due dates, and so on. Older students should also be told your grading criteria.
4. Demonstrate how to do the assignment, do the first few questions together, or provide a sample worksheet.

Monitor work in progress.

**Examples**
1. When you make an assignment in class, make sure each student gets started correctly. If you check only students who raise their hands for help, you will miss those who think they know what to do but don't really understand, those who are too shy to ask for help, and those who don't plan to do the work at all.
2. Check progress periodically. In discussions, make sure everyone has a chance to respond.

Give frequent academic feedback.

**Examples**
1. Elementary students should get papers back the day after they are handed in.
2. Good work can be displayed in class and graded papers sent home to parents each week.
3. Students of all ages can keep records of grades, projects completed, and extra credits earned.
4. For older students, break up long-term assignments into several phases, giving feedback at each point.

For more ideas, see: http://www.cat.ilnl.edu/teaching_tips/handouts/engage.shtml or: http://jrc.virginia.edu/Publications/Teaching_Concerns/TC_Topic/Engaging_Students.htm. These citations are for college students, but have many good ideas.
Prevention Is the Best Medicine

The ideal way to manage problems, of course, is to prevent them in the first place. In a classic study, Jacob Kounin (1970) examined classroom management by comparing effective teachers, whose classes were relatively free of problems, with ineffective teachers, whose classes were continually plagued by chaos and disruption. Observing both groups in action, Kounin found that they were not very different in the way they handled discipline once problems arose. The difference was that the successful managers were much better at preventing problems. Kounin concluded that effective classroom managers were especially skilled in four areas: \textit{withitness}, \textit{overlapping activities}, \textit{group focusing}, and \textit{movement management} (Doyle, 1977). More recent research confirms the importance of these factors (Emmer & Stough, 2001; Evertson, 1988).

\textbf{Withitness.} Withitness means communicating to students that you are aware of everything that is happening in the classroom—that you aren’t missing anything. “Will-it” teachers seem to have eyes in the back of their heads. They avoid becoming absorbed or interacting with only a few students, because this encourages the rest of the class to wander. They are always scanning the room, making eye contact with individual students, so the students know they are being monitored (Charles, 2002a; Brooks, 1985).

These teachers prevent minor disruptions from becoming major. They also know who instigated the problem, and they make sure they deal with the right people. In other words, they do not make what Kounin called \textit{timing errors} (waiting too long before intervening) or \textit{target errors} (blaming the wrong student and letting the real perpetrators escape responsibility for their behavior).

If two problems occur at the same time, effective managers deal with the more serious one first. For example, a teacher who tells two students to stop whispering, but ignores even a brief showing match at the pencil sharpener communicates a lack of awareness. Students begin to believe they can get away with almost anything if they are clever (Charles, 2002b).

\textbf{Overlapping and Group Focus.} Overlapping means keeping track of and supervising several activities at the same time. For example, a teacher may have to check the work of an individual and at the same time keep a small group working by saying, “Right, go on,” and stop an incident in another group with a quick “look” or reminder (Burden, 1995; Charles, 2002b).

Maintaining a group focus means keeping as many students as possible involved in appropriate class activities and avoiding narrowing in on just one or two students. All students should have something to do during a lesson. For example, the teacher might ask everyone to write the answer to a question, then call on individuals to respond while the other students compare their answers. Choral responses might be required while the
teacher moves around the room to make sure everyone is participating (Charles, 2002b). For example, during a grammar lesson the teacher might say, “Everyone who thinks the answer is have run, hold up the red side of your card. If you think the answer is has run, hold up the green side” (Hunter, 1982). This is one way teachers can ensure that all students are involved and that everyone understands the material.

**Movement Management.** Movement management means keeping lessons and the group moving at an appropriate (and flexible) pace, with smooth transitions and variety. The effective teacher avoids abrupt transitions, such as announcing a new activity before gaining the students’ attention or starting a new activity in the middle of something else. In these situations, one-third of the class will be doing the new activity, many will be working on the old lesson, several will be asking other students what to do, some will be taking the opportunity to have a little fun, and most will be confused. Another transition problem Kouzmin noted is the slowdown, or taking too much time to start a new activity. Sometimes teachers give too many directions. Problems also arise when teachers have students work one at a time while the rest of the class waits and watches.

**Caring Relationships: Connections with School.** When students and teachers have positive, trusting relationships, many management problems never develop. Students respect teachers who maintain their authority without being rigid, harsh, or unfair and who use creative instructional practices to “make learning fun.” Students also value teachers who show academic and personal caring by acting like real people (not just as teachers), sharing responsibility, minimizing the use of external controls, including everyone, searching for students’ strengths, communicating effectively, and showing an interest in their students’ lives and pursuits (Elias & Schwab, 2006; Woolfolk Hoy & Weinstein, 2006). All efforts at building positive relationships and classroom community are steps toward preventing management problems. Students who feel connected with school are happier, more self-disciplined, and less likely to engage in dangerous behaviors such as substance abuse, violence, and early sexual activity (Freiberg, 2006; McNeely, Nonnemaker, & Blum, 2002).

**Student Social Skills as Prevention.** But what about the students? What can they do? When students lack social and emotional skills such as being able to share materials, read the intentions of others, or handle frustration, classroom management problems often follow. So all efforts to teach social and emotional self-regulation are steps for preventing management problems. Over the short term, educators can teach and model these skills, then give students feedback and practice using them in a variety of settings. Over the long term, teachers can help to change attitudes that value aggression over cooperation and compromise (Elias & Schwab, 2006). Chapters 3 and 11 gave ideas for teaching social and emotional skills and competencies.

**Dealing with Discipline Problems**

**WHAT WOULD YOU SAY?**
You are interviewing for a job to take over a class in the middle of the school year. The lead principal asks, “In your experience with students in any capacity, what was your most challenging discipline problem so far and how did you handle it?”

In 2003, Phi Delta Kappa published the 37th annual Gallup Poll of the public’s attitude toward public schools. From 1969 until 1999, “lack of discipline” was named as the number one problem facing the schools almost every year (Rose & Gallup, 1999). Beginning in 2000, lack of financial support took over the number one place, but lack of discipline remained a close second or third every year. Clearly, the public sees discipline as an important challenge for teachers.

Being an effective manager does not mean publicly correcting every minor infraction of the rules. This kind of public attention may actually reinforce the misbehavior, as we saw in Chapter 6. Teachers who frequently correct students do not necessarily have

**Connect and Extend to the Research:**
Every year, the September issue of Phi Delta Kappa contains the "Annual Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools." Questions usually ask respondents to "grade" the schools, identify the problems facing the schools, their strategies for improvement, and give opinions about current issues such as school choice, home schooling, vouchers, and value.

**Movement management:** Keeping lessons and the group moving at an appropriate (and flexible) pace, with smooth transitions and variety.
the best behaved classes (Irving & Martin, 1982). The key is being aware of what is happening and knowing what is important so you can prevent problems.

Most students comply quickly when the teacher gives a direct order (a “stop doing that”) or redirects behavior. But some students are the targets of more than their share of directives. One study found that these disruptive students seldom complied with the first teacher request to stop. Often, the disruptive students responded negatively, leading to an average of 4 to 5 cycles of teacher directives and student responses before the student complied (Nelson & Roberts, 2000). Emmert and colleagues (2006) and Levin and Nolan (2000) suggest seven simple ways to stop misbehavior quickly, moving from least to most intrusive:

- **Make eye contact with, or move closer to, the offender.** Other nonverbal signals, such as pointing to the work students are supposed to be doing, might be helpful. Make sure the student actually stops the inappropriate behavior and gets back to work. If you do not, students will learn to ignore your signals.

- **Try verbal hints such as “name-dropping” (simply insert the student’s name into the lecture), asking the student a question, or making a humorous (not sarcastic) comment such as, “I must be hallucinating. I swear I heard someone shout out an answer, but that can’t be because I haven’t called on anyone yet.”**

- **Ask students if they are aware of the negative effects of their actions or send an “I message,” described later in the chapter.**

- **If they are not performing a class procedure correctly, remind the students of the procedure and have them follow it correctly.** You may need to quietly collect a toy, comb, magazine, or note that is competing with the learning activities, while privately informing the students that their possessions will be returned after class.**

- **In a calm, unhistroil way, ask the student to state the correct rule or procedure and then follow it.** Glasser (1969) proposes three questions: “What are you doing? Is it against the rules? What should you be doing?”

- **Tell the student in a clear, assertive, and unhostile way to stop the misbehavior.** (Later in the chapter we will discuss assertive messages to students in more detail.) If students “talk back,” simply repeat your statement.

- **Offer a choice.** For example, when a student continued to call out answers no matter what the teacher tried, the teacher said, “John, you have a choice. Stop calling out answers immediately and begin raising your hand to answer or move your seat to the back of the room and you and I will have a private discussion later. You decide” (Levin & Nolan, 2000, p. 177).

Many teachers prefer the use of logical consequences, described earlier, as opposed to penalties. For example, if one student has harmed another, you can require the offending student to make an “Apology of Action,” which includes a verbal apology plus somehow repairing the damage done. This helps offenders develop empathy and social perspective taking as they think about what would be an appropriate “repair” (Elia & Schlab, 2006).

If you must impose penalties, the Guidelines, taken from Weinstein (2003) and Weinstein and Mignano (2003), give ideas about how to do it. The examples are taken from the actual words of the expert teachers described in their book.

There is a caution about penalties. Never use lower achievement status (moving to a lower reading group, giving a lower grade, giving excess homework) as a punishment for breaking class rules. These actions should be done only if the benefit of the action outweighs the possible risk of harm. As Carolyn Orange (2000) notes, “Effective, caring teachers would not use low achievement status, grades, or the like as a means of discipline. This strategy is unfair and ineffective. It only serves to alienate the student” (p. 76).

**Special Problems with Secondary Students**

**WHAT WOULD YOU SAY?**

You are interviewing for a job in a high school that has been in the news lately about its “zero-tolerance policy.” The principal asks, “So what do you think about zero tolerance? What is your position?”
**Guidelines: Imposing Penalties**

Delay the discussion of the situation until you and the students involved are calmer and more objective.

**EXAMPLES:**
1. Say calmly to a student, “Sit there and think about what happened. I’ll call you in a few minutes,” or, “I don’t like what I just saw. Talk to me during your free period today.”
2. Say, “I’m really angry about what just happened. Everybody take out journals; we are going to write about this.” After a few minutes of writing, the class can discuss the incident.

Impose penalties privately.

**EXAMPLES:**
1. Make arrangements with students privately. Stand firm in enforcing arrangements.
2. Resist the temptation to “remind” students in public that they are not keeping their side of the bargain.
3. Move close to a student who must be disciplined and speak so that only the student can hear.

After imposing a penalty, reestablish a positive relationship with the student immediately.

**EXAMPLES:**
1. Send the student on an errand or ask him or her for help.
2. Compliment the student’s work or give a real or symbolic “pat on the back” when the student’s behavior warrants. Look hard for such an opportunity.
3. Set up a graded list of penalties that will fit many occasions.

**EXAMPLE:**
1. For not turning in homework: (1) receive reminder; (2) receive warning; (3) hand homework in before close of school day; (4) stay after school to finish work; (5) participate in a teacher–student–parent conference to develop an action plan.

Always teach a problem-solving strategies along with penalties to help students learn what to do next time (Elias & Schwab, 2006).

**EXAMPLE:**
1. Use Problem Diaries, where students record what they were feeling, identify the problem and their goal, then think of other possible ways to solve the problem and achieve the goal.
2. Try Keep Calm 5-2-1: At the first physical signs of anger, students say to themselves: “Stop. Keep Calm,” then take several slow breaths, counting to 5 breathing in, 2 holding breath, and 3 breathing out.

For more ideas, see [http://www.stopbullyingnow.com](http://www.stopbullyingnow.com) or [http://www.echildren.org](http://www.echildren.org)

Many secondary students never complete their work. Besides encouraging student responsibility, what else can teachers do to deal with this frustrating problem? Because students at this age have many assignments and teachers have many students, both teacher and students may lose track of what has and has not been completed. It often helps to teach students how to use a daily planner—paper or electronic. In addition, the teacher must keep accurate records. The most important thing is to enforce the established consequences for incomplete work. Do not pass a student because you know he or she is “bright enough” to pass. Make it clear to these students that the choice is theirs: They can do the work and pass, or they can refuse to do the work and face the consequences. You might also ask, in a private moment, if there is anything interfering with the student’s ability to get to the work.

There is also the problem of students who continually break the same rules, always forgetting materials, for example, or getting into fights. What should you do? Seat these students away from others who might be influenced by them. Try to catch them before they break the rules, but if rules are broken, be consistent in applying established consequences. Do not accept promises to do better next time (Levin & Nolan, 2000). Teach the students how to monitor their own behavior; some of the self-management techniques described in Chapter 6 should be helpful. Finally, remain friendly with the students. Try to catch them in a good moment so you can talk to them about something other than their rule-breaking.
A defiant, hostile student can pose serious problems. If there is an outburst, try to get out of the situation as soon as possible; everyone loses in a public power struggle. One possibility is to give the student a chance to save face and cool down by saying, “It’s your choice to cooperate or not. You can take a minute to think about it.” If the student complies, the two of you can talk later about controlling the outburst. If the student refuses to cooperate, you can tell him or her to wait in the hall until you get the class started on work, then step outside for a private talk. If the student refuses to leave, send another class member for the assistant principal. Again, follow through. If the student complies before help arrives, do not let him or her off the hook. If outbursts occur frequently, you might have a conference with the counselor, parents, or other teachers. If the problem is an irreconcilable clash of personalities, the student should be transferred to another teacher. There is quite a bit of discussion today about zero tolerance for rule breaking in the schools. Is this a good idea? The Point/Counterpoint looks at both sides.

It sometimes is useful to keep records of the incidents by logging the student’s name, words and actions, date, time, place, and teacher’s response. These records may help identify patterns and can prove useful in meetings with administrators, parents, or special services personnel (Burden, 1995). Some teachers have students sign each entry to verify the incidents.

Violence or destruction of property is a difficult and potentially dangerous problem. The first step is to send for help and get the names of participants and witnesses. Then get rid of any crowd that may have gathered; an audience will only make things worse.

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**Stories of Learning**

SANDY KRUPINSKI, a chemistry teacher in New Jersey, tells how she handled a dangerous situation. Robert walked into the class, straight to Daniel’s desk:

As usual, I was standing at the doorway as the kids were coming into the classroom. I noticed Robert came in without his backpack or any books. That didn’t look right, and I watched him cross the room and go over to Daniel, who was sitting at his desk. Robert picked up the desk and the leg of Daniel’s chair and overturned them, cursing and screaming the whole time. I ran over. The first thing I said was “Daniel, don’t raise your hands.” He was on the floor on his back, and Robert was standing over him, screaming. I kept saying, “Robert, look at me, look at me, look at me.” Finally, he made eye contact. Then I said, “You need to come with me.” We began to walk toward the door, but he turned back and started cursing again. Very quietly and firmly I told him, “You need to come with me.” We began to walk toward the door, but he turned back and started cursing again. Very quietly and firmly I told him, “You need to come with me now.” He followed me to the door, and as I reached the door I picked up the phone and called the office and said there was a problem and to send someone up. Then we stepped outside into the hallway. Robert was angry and was going to leave, and I asked him to please stop and talk to me about what was going on, what was bothering him. I didn’t yell, I didn’t say, “How could you do something so stupid?” (even though that’s what I felt like saying). I said, “Obviously you’re upset about something. Tell me about it.” It turns out that these two were friends, but Robert found out that Daniel was sleeping with his [Robert’s] girlfriend. I heard a lot I didn’t really want to hear, but it kept him occupied until the vice-principal came up.

Once the vice-principal took Robert, I got Daniel out into the hallway and asked him if he was OK, and if he needed to go to the nurse, or needed to be out of the classroom. He said no, he was OK. I told him, “You were very smart for not raising your hands against Robert.” He returned to his seat, and the kids started saying, “Daniel, are you OK?” and crowding around him. I told them, “Robert’s in the office, Daniel’s OK. Let’s get started on chemistry.” At the end of the period, the office called for Daniel to go to the peer mediation room to have the dispute mediated.

Robert was suspended for three days, but before he left, he apologized to Sandy for his language. Sandy accepted the apology and they talked about other ways he could have handled the situation. When Robert returned after the suspension, Sandy made sure that the two boys’ seats were changed so they were separated and easy for her to monitor for a while.

Point/Counterpoint

Is Zero Tolerance a Good Idea?

With the very visible violence in schools today, some districts have instituted “zero-tolerance” policies for rule breaking. One result: Two 8-year-old boys in New Jersey were suspended for making “terrorist threats.” They had pointed paper guns at their classmates while playing. Do zero-tolerance policies make sense?

POINT Zero-tolerance means zero common sense.

An Internet search using keywords (“zero-tolerance” and “schools”) will locate a wealth of information about the policy—much of it against. For example, in the August 29, 2001 issue of Salon Magazine, Jolanta Wald wrote an article entitled “The failure of zero tolerance.” Here are two examples she cites:

A 15-year-old honors student in Arizona began his senior year with an even more ominous cloud over his head. His college scholarship is in danger because of a 45-day sentence to an alternative school. His offense: An arbitrary search of his car by school officials in the spring revealed no drugs, but a scraper and pocketknife that his father had inadvertently left there the night before when he was fixing the rearview mirror. Despite anguish of peers, extending the circumstances to the “disastrous” nature of the offense, his school system has so far adamantly insisted that automatic punishments for weapon possession in school are inviolate.

Upon her release on April, the National Merit scholar, jailed and barred from her graduation ceremony because school authorities found a knife in her car, commented, “They’re taking away my memories.” Indeed, for all of the noise talk about the need for “consequences” for students’ actions, officials justifying these excesses seem curiously oblivious to the long-term impact of taking away the memories, dreams, and futures of a generation of students.

A 2001 Associated Press story, “ABA Recommends Dropping Zero-Tolerance in Schools,” announced that the leadership of the American Bar Association voted to recommend ending zero-tolerance school policies. The article quotes a report that accompanied the resolution against zero-tolerance adopted by the ABA’s policy-making House of Delegates:

“Zero-tolerance has become a one-size-fits-all solution to all of the problems that schools confront,” (Associated Press, February 21, 2001, available online at http://www.cnn.com/2001/ fyi/teachers.ednews/02/21/zero.tolerance.ap/). On this website you can post your views about zero-tolerance. Finally, many of the popular zero-tolerance interventions such as increased security guards, hallway monitors, and the introduction of metal detectors have no apparent effect on the incidence of school bullying (Hyman et al., 2006; NCES, 2003).

COUNTERPOINT Zero tolerance is necessary for now.

The arguments for zero tolerance focus on school safety and the responsibilities of schools and teachers to protect the students and themselves. Of course, many of the incidents reported in the news seem like overreaction to childhood pranks or worse, overzealous application of zero-tolerance innocent mistakes or lapses of memory. But how do schools officials separate the innocent from the dangerous? For example, it has been widely reported that Andy Williams (the boy who killed two classmates in Santee, California) assured his friends before the shootings that he was only joking about “pulling a Columbine.”

In response to the girl who crossed her graduation ceremony because school authorities found a knife in her car, Mike Gallagher (2001), a journalist writing for NewsMax, said:

I certainly understand the reason behind the e-mails to protest I received from Americans who think this is a case that went too far. If sure was a shame that this high school student, by all accounts a great student and fine young lady, had to pass the兴奋 of her commencement ceremony. But I argued that rules are rules, and zero-tolerance weapons policies were created because of parent’s demands that schools be safe.

Mr. Gallagher went on to describe a tragic event in Japan where eight young children were killed in school by a madman wielding a knife just one inch longer than the one found in the student’s car.

On January 13, 2003, I read a story in USA Today by Gregg Toppo entitled “School Violence Hits Lower Grades: Experts Who See Violent Behavior in Younger Kids Blame Parents, Prenatal Medical Problems and an ‘Angry Society,’ Educators Search for Ways to Cope.” The story opened with these examples: a 2nd grader in Indiana takes off his shoe and attacks his teacher with it; a Philadelphia kindergartner bites a pregnant teacher in the stomach; and a 5-year-old in Maryland threatens the gasoline tree knew exactly where he would point it, to break down his suburban elementary school.” Toppo noted, “Elementary school principals and safety experts say they’re seeing more violence and aggression than ever among their youngest students, pointing to what they see as an alarming rise in assaults and threats to classmates and teachers” (p. A2). Toppo cited statistics indicating that, although the incidence of school violence has decreased overall, assaults on elementary school teachers have actually increased.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

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Do not try to break up a fight without help. Make sure the school office is aware of the incident; usually the school has a policy for dealing with these situations. The Stories of Learning: Tributes to Teaching feature shows how one teacher helped two students survive a very volatile situation by keeping focused on what the students needed.
Reaching Every Student: School-wide Positive Behavior Supports

We discussed functional behavioral analysis and positive behavior supports (PBS) in Chapter 6. Positive behavioral supports are required under IDEA for students with disabilities and those who are being considered for special education services. Positive behavioral supports also can be part of a school-wide program. At the school level, the teachers and administrators:

- agree on a common approach for supporting positive behaviors and correcting problems.
- develop a few positively stated, specific behavioral expectations and procedures for teaching these expectations to all students.
- identify a continuum of ways (from small and simple, to more complex and stronger) to acknowledge appropriate behaviors and correct behavioral errors.
- integrate the positive behavioral support procedures with the schools’ discipline policy.

At the classroom level, teachers are encouraged to use such preventive strategies as pre-correction, which involves identifying the context for a student’s misbehavior, clearly specifying the alternative expected behavior, modifying the situation to make the problem behavior less likely—for example, providing a cue or moving the student away from tempting distractions—then rehearsing the expected positive behaviors in the new context and providing powerful reinforcers when the behaviors occur. There is an emphasis on keeping students engaged, providing a positive focus, consistently enforcing school/class rules, correcting disruptive behavior proactively, and planning for smooth transitions (Freiberg, 2006; www.pbs.org/schoolwide.htm).

Research on school-wide positive behavioral supports is limited, but results have been good. A study comparing middle-school students in a behavioral support program with students outside the program showed that program students reported more positive reinforcement for appropriate behavior. Disciplinary referrals as well as verbal and physical aggression significantly decreased. In addition, students’ perceptions of school safety improved (Metzler, Biglan, Rusby & Sprague, 2001). Students in general education may benefit from positive behavioral supports as well. Studies of school-wide PBS efforts indicate decreases in disciplinary referrals (Lewis, Sugai, & Colvin, 1998; Taylor-Groen, et al., 1997). In addition, Lewis and Sugai (1996) found that successful use of PBS in a general education setting benefited a student with behavioral disorders (Soodak & McCarthy, 2006).

The Need for Communication

STOP & THINK & WRITE: A student says to you, “That book you assigned is really stupid—I’m not reading it!” What do you say?

Communication between teacher and students is essential when problems arise. Communication is more than “teacher talks—student listens.” It is more than the words exchanged between individuals. We communicate in many ways. Our actions, movements, voice tone, facial expressions, and many other nonverbal behaviors send messages to our students. Many times, the messages we intend to send are not the messages our students receive.

Message Sent—Message Received

Teacher: Carl, where is your homework?
Carl: I left it in my Dad’s car this morning.
Teacher: Again? You will have to bring me a note tomorrow from your father saying that you actually did the homework. No grade without the note.
Message Carl receives: I can’t trust you. I need proof you did the work.

Teacher: Sit at every other desk. Put all your things under your desk. Jane and Laurel, you are sitting too close together. One of you move!
Message Jane and Laurel receive: I expect you two to cheat on this test.

A new student comes to Ms. Lincoln’s kindergarten. The child is messy and un-washed. Ms. Lincoln puts her hand lightly on the girl’s shoulder and says, “I’m glad you are here.” Her muscles tense, and she leans away from the child.
Message student receives: I don’t like you. I think you are bad.

In all interactions, a message is sent and a message is received. Sometimes teachers believe they are sending one message, but their voices, body positions, choices of words, and gestures may communicate a different message.

Students may hear the hidden message and respond to it. For example, a student may respond with hostility if she or he feels insulted by the teacher (or by another student), but may not be able to say exactly where the feeling of being insulted came from. Perhaps it was in the teacher’s tone of voice, not the words actually spoken. But the teacher feels attacked for no reason. The first principle of communication is that people respond to what they *think* was said or meant, not necessarily to the speaker’s intended message or actual words.

Students in my classes have told me about one instructor who encourages accurate communication by using the paraphrase rule. Before any participant, including the teacher, is allowed to respond to any other participant in a class discussion, he or she must summarize what the previous speaker said. If the summary is wrong, indicating the speaker was misunderstood, the speaker must explain again. The respondent then tries again to paraphrase. The process continues until the speaker agrees that the listener has heard the intended message.

Paraphrasing is more than a classroom exercise. It can be the first step in communicating with students. Before teachers can deal appropriately with any student problem, they must know what the real problem is. A student who says, “This book is really dumb! Why did we have to read it?” may really be saying, “The book was too difficult for me. I couldn’t read it, and I feel dumb.”

**Diagnosis: Whose Problem Is It?**

As a teacher, you may find many student behaviors unacceptable, unpleasant, or troubling. It is often difficult to stand back from these problems, take an objective look, and decide on an appropriate response. According to Thomas Gordon (1981), the key to good teacher-student relationships is determining why you are troubled by a particular behavior and who “owns” the problem. The answer to these questions is critical. If it is really the student’s problem, the teacher must become a counselor and supporter, helping the student find his or her own solution. But if the teacher “owns” the problem, it is the teacher’s responsibility to find a solution through problem solving with the student.

Diagnosing who owns the problem is not always straightforward. Let’s look at three troubling situations to get some practice in this skill:

1. A student writes obscene words and draws sexually explicit illustrations in a school encyclopedia.
2. A student tells you that his parents had a bad fight and he hates his father.
3. A student quietly reads a newspaper in the back of the room.

**Why are these behaviors troubling?** If you cannot accept the student’s behavior because it has a serious effect on you as a teacher—if you are blocked from reaching your goals by the student’s action—then you own the problem. It is your responsibility to confront the student and seek a solution. A teacher-owned problem appears to be present in

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**Connect and Extend to PRAXIS II**

Teacher-Student Communication (II, 13)

In well-managed classrooms requires a bi-directional line of communication between the teacher and students. Describe the various communication styles that teachers employ when interacting with students, and explain how these styles affect student behavior.

Paraphrase rule. Policy whereby listeners must accurately summarize what a speaker has said before being asked to respond.

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The Need for Communication
the first situation described above—the young pornographer—because teaching materials are damaged.

If you feel annoyed by the behavior because it is getting in the student's own way or because you are embarrassed for the child, but the behavior does not directly interfere with your teaching, then it is probably the student's problem. The student who hates his father would not prevent you from teaching, even though you might wish the student felt differently. The problem is really the student's, and he must find his own solution.

The third situation is more difficult to diagnose. One argument is that the teacher is not interfered with in any way, so it is the student's problem. But teachers might find the student reading the paper distracting during a lecture, so it is their problem, and they must find a solution. In a gray area such as this, the answer probably depends on how the teacher actually experiences the student's behavior.

Having decided who owns the problem, it is time to act.

**Counseling: The Student's Problem**

Let's pick up the situation in which the student found the reading assignment "dumb."

How might a teacher handle this positively?

**Student:** This book is really dumb! Why did we have to read it?

**Teacher:** You're pretty upset. This seemed like a worthless assignment to you.

[Teacher paraphrases the student's statement, trying to hear the emotions as well as the words.]

**Student:** Yeah! Well, I guess it was worthless. I mean, I don't know if it was. I couldn't exactly read it.

**Teacher:** It was just too hard to read, and that bothers you.

**Student:** Sure, I felt really dumb. I know I can write a good report, but not with a book this tough.

**Teacher:** I think I can give you some hints that will make the book easier to understand. Can you see me after school today?

**Student:** Okay.

Here the teacher used **empathetic listening** to allow the student to find a solution. (As you can see, this approach relies heavily on paraphrasing.) By trying to hear the student and by avoiding the tendency to jump in too quickly with advice, solutions, criticisms, reprimands, or interrogations, the teacher keeps the communication lines open. Here are a few unhelpful responses the teacher might have made:

- I chose the book because it is the best example of the author's style in our library. You will need to have read it before your English II class next year. (The teacher justifies the choice; this prevents the student from admitting that this "important" assignment is too difficult.)
- Did you really read it? I bet you didn't do the work, and now you want out of the assignment. (The teacher accuses; the student hears, "The teacher doesn't trust me!") and must either defend herself or himself or accept the teacher's view.
- Your job is to read the book, not ask me why. I know what's best. (The teacher pulls rank, and the student hears, "You can't possibly decide what is good for you!" The student can rebel or passively accept the teacher's judgment.)

Empathetic, active listening is more than a parroting of the student's words; it should capture the emotions, intent, and meaning behind them. Sokolove, Garrett, Sadker, and Sadker (1986, p. 241) have summarized the components of active listening: (1) blocking out external stimuli; (2) attending carefully to both the verbal and nonverbal messages; (3) differentiating between the intellectual and the emotional content of the message; and (4) making inferences regarding the speaker's feelings.

When students realize they really have been heard and not evaluated negatively for what they have said or felt, they begin to trust the teacher and to talk more openly. Sometimes the true problem surfaces later in the conversation.
Confrontation and Assertive Discipline

Now let’s assume a student is doing something that actively interferes with teaching. The teacher decides the student must stop. The problem is the teacher’s. Confrontation, not counseling, is required.

“I” Messages. Gordon (1981) recommends sending an “I” message in order to intervene and change a student’s behavior. Basically, this means telling a student in a straightforward, assertive, and nonjudgmental way what she or he is doing, how it affects you as a teacher, and how you feel about it. The student is then free to change voluntarily, and often does so. Here are two “I” messages:

If you leave your book bags in the aisles, I might trip and hurt myself.

When you all call out, I can’t concentrate on each answer, and I’m frustrated.

Assertive Discipline. Lee and Marlene Canter (1992; Canter, 1996) suggest other approaches for dealing with a teacher-owned problem. They call their method assertive discipline. Many teachers are ineffective with students because they are either wishy-washy and passive or hostile and aggressive (Charles, 2002a).

Instead of telling the student directly what to do, passive teachers tell, or often ask, the student to try or to think about the appropriate action. The passive teacher might comment on the problem behavior without actually telling the child what to do differently: “Why are you doing that? Don’t you know the rules?” or “Sam, are you disturbing the class?” Or teachers may clearly state what should happen, but never follow through with the established consequences, giving the students “one more chance” every time. Finally, teachers may ignore behavior that should receive a response or they may wait too long before responding.

A hostile response style involves different mistakes. Teachers may make “you” statements that condemn the student without stating clearly what the student should be doing: “You should be ashamed of the way you’re behaving!” or “You never listen!” or “You are acting like a baby!” Teachers may also threaten students angrily, but follow through too seldom, perhaps because the threats are too vague—“You’ll be very sorry when I get through with you!”—or too severe. For example, a teacher tells a student in a physical education class that he will have to “sit on the bench for three weeks.” A few days later, the team is short one member and the teacher lets the student play, never returning him to the bench to complete the three-week sentence. Often a teacher who has been passive becomes hostile and explodes when students persist in misbehaving.

In contrast with both the passive and hostile styles, an assertive response communicates to the students that you care much about them and the process of learning to allow inappropriate behavior to persist. Assertive teachers clearly state what they expect. To be most effective, the teachers often look into a student’s eyes when speaking and address the student by name. Assertive teachers’ voices are calm, firm, and confident. They are not sidetracked by accusations such as “You just don’t understand!” or “You don’t like me!” Assertive teachers do not get into a debate about the fairness of the rules. They expect changes, not promises or apologies.

Not all educators believe that assertive discipline is useful. Earlier critics questioned the penalty-focused approach and emphasized that assertive discipline undermined student self-management (Render, Padilla, & Krunk, 1989). John Covaleski (1992) observed “What helps children become moral is not knowledge of the rules, or even obedience to the rules, but discussions about the reasons for acting in certain ways” (p. 56). These critics have had an impact. More recent versions of assertive discipline focus on teaching students “in an atmosphere of respect, trust, and support, how to behave responsibly” (Charles, 2002a, p. 47).

Confrontations and Negotiations. If “I” messages or assertive responses fail and a student persists in misbehaving, teacher and student are in a conflict. Several pitfalls now loom. The two individuals become less able to perceive each other’s behavior accurately.

Connect and Extend to the Research


“I” message. Clear, nonaccusatory statement of how something is affecting you.

Assertive discipline Clear, firm, unhostile response style.
Research has shown that the more angry you get with another person, the more you see the other as the villain and yourself as an innocent victim. Because you feel the other person is in the wrong, and he or she feels just as strongly that the conflict is all your fault, very little mutual trust is possible. A cooperative solution to the problem is almost impossible. In fact, by the time the discussion has gone on for a few minutes, the original problem is lost in a sea of charges, countercharges, and self-defense (Baron & Byrne, 2003).

There are three methods of resolving a conflict between teacher and student. One is for the teacher to impose a solution. This may be necessary during an emergency, as when a defiant student refuses to go to the hall to discuss a public outbreak, but it is not a good solution for most conflicts. The second method is for the teacher to give in to the student's demands. You might be convinced by a particularly compelling student argument, but again, this should be used sparingly. It is generally a bad idea to be talked out of a position, unless the position was wrong in the first place. Problems arise when either the teacher or the student gives in completely.

Gordon recommends a third approach, which he calls the "no-lose method." Here, the needs of both teacher and student are taken into account in the solution. No one person is expected to give in completely; all participants retain respect for themselves and each other. The no-lose method is a six-step, problem-solving strategy:

1. **Define the problem.** What exactly are the behaviors involved? What does each person want? (Use active listening to help students pinpoint the real problem.)
2. **Generate many possible solutions.** Brainstorm, but remember, don't allow any evaluations of ideas yet.
3. **Evaluate each solution.** Any participant may veto any idea. If no solutions are found to be acceptable, brainstorm again.
4. **Make a decision.** Choose one solution through consensus—no voting. In the end, everyone must be satisfied with the solution.
5. **Determine how to implement the solution.** What will be needed? Who will be responsible for each task? What is the timetable?
6. **Evaluate the success of the solution.** After trying the solution for a while, ask, "Are we satisfied with our decision? How well is it working? Should we make some changes?"

Many of the conflicts in classrooms can be important learning experiences for all concerned.

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**Diversity and Convergences in Learning Environments**

We have looked at quite a few perspectives on classroom management. Clearly, there is not a one-size-fits-all strategy for creating social and physical spaces for learning. Let's first consider the role of culture in productive classroom management.

**Diversity: Culturally Responsive Management**

Research on discipline shows that African Americans and Latino/a Americans, especially males, are punished more often and more harshly than other students. These students lose time from learning as they spend more hours in detention or suspension (Gay, 2006; Monroe & Obidah, 2002; Skiba, Michael, Nardo, & Peterson, 2000). Why?

The notion that African Americans and Latino/a students are punished more because they commit more serious offenses is NOT supported by the data. Instead, these students are punished more severely for minor offenses such as rudeness or defiance—words and actions that are interpreted by teachers as meriting severe punishment. One explanation is a lack of cultural synchronization between teachers and students. "The language, style of walking, glances, and dress of black children, particularly males, have engendered fear, apprehension, and overreaction among many teachers and school administrators" (Irvine, 1990, p. 27). African American students may be disciplined for
behaviors that were never intended to be disruptive or disrespectful. Teachers do their students and themselves a service if they work at becoming bicultural—helping their students to learn how to function in both mainstream and home cultures, but also learning the meaning of their students' words and actions—so they do not misinterpret and then punish their students' unintended insults (Gay, 2006).

Culturally responsive management is simply a part of the larger concept of culturally relevant teaching. Geneva Gay (2006) sums it up:

If the classroom is a comfortable, caring, embracing, affirming, engaging, and facilitative place for students then discipline is not likely to be much of an issue. It follows then that both classroom management and school achievement can be improved for students from different ethnic, racial, social, and linguistic backgrounds by ensuring that curriculum and instruction are culturally relevant and personally meaningful for them.

The teachers who seem to be most effective with these students practice culturally responsive management and have been called “warm demanders” (Irvine & Armento, 2001; Irvine and Fraser, 1998). Sometimes these warm demanders appear harsh to outside observers (Burke-Spero, 1999; Burke-Spero & Woolfolk Hoy, 2002). For example, results of one study indicated:

To a person unfamiliar with African American culture of inner-city life, it could be misconstrued as intimidation or heavy handed but in the minds of these informants, discipline was directly connected to eating. In fact, all viewed lack of discipline as a sign of uncaring and an apathetic teaching force. (Gordon, 1998, p. 427)

Carla Monroe and Jennifer Obidah (2002) studied Ms. Simpson, an African American teacher working with her 8th-grade science class. She describes herself as having high expectations for academics and behavior in her classes—so much so that she believed her students perceived her as “mean.” Yet she often used humor and dialect to communicate her expectations, as in the following exchange:

Ms. Simpson [addressing the class]: If you know you’re going to act the fool just come to me and say, “I’m going to act the fool at the pep rally.” So I can go ahead and send you to wherever you need to go. [Class laughs.]

Ms. Simpson: I’m real serious. If you know you’re having a bad day, you don’t want anybody touching you, you don’t want nobody saying nothing to you, somebody bump into you you’re going to snap—you need to come up to me and say, “I’m going to snap and I can’t go to the pep rally.” [The students start to call out various comments.]

Ms. Simpson: Now, I just want to say I expect you to have the best behavior because you’re the most mature students in the building—don’t make me stop the pep rally and ask the 8th graders to leave.

Edward: We’ll have silent lunch won’t we? [Class laughs.]

Ms. Simpson: You don’t want to dream about what you’re going to have. [Class laughs.]

Ok, 15 minutes for warm ups. [The students begin their warm-up assignment.]

Many African American students may be more accustomed to a directive kind of management and discipline outside of school. Their families might say, “Put down that candy” or “Go to bed,” whereas White parents might ask, “Can we eat candy before dinner?” or “Isn’t it time for bed?” As H. Richard Milner (2006) says, “The question should not be which approach is right or wrong but which approach works with and connects with the students’ prior knowledge and ways of knowing.”

Convergences: Research on Management Approaches

We have examined a number of approaches to classroom student discipline. Are some better than others? Research provides some guidance. Emmer and Austin (1990) conducted a meta-analysis of three general perspectives on management: influencing students through listening and problem solving, as described by Gordon (1981); group management through class meetings and student discussion, as advocated byGlasser (1969, 1990); and control through rewards and punishments, as exemplified by Canter and Canter (1992). No clear conclusions could be drawn about the impact of these approaches on student behaviors.
However, some evaluations have found positive effects for Freiberg's (1999) Consistency Management program and for programs that use rewards and punishments (Lewis, 2001).

**Integrating Ideas.** In a study conducted in Australia, Ramon Lewis (2001) found that recognizing and rewarding appropriate student behaviors, talking with students about how their behavior affects others, involving students in class discipline decisions, and providing nondirective hints and descriptions about unacceptable behaviors were associated with students taking greater responsibility for their own learning. It is interesting that these interventions represent all three of the general approaches reviewed by Emmer and Associates: influence, group management, and control. Lewis also concluded that teachers sometimes find using these interventions difficult when students are aggressive—and most in need of the approaches. When teachers feel threatened, it can be difficult to do what students need, but that may be the most important time to act positively.

**Communicating with Families about Classroom Management.** As we have seen throughout this book, families are important partners in education. This statement applies to classroom management as well. When parents and teachers share the same expectations and support each other, they can create a more positive classroom environment and more time for learning. The *Family and Community Partnerships Guidelines* provide ideas for working with families and the community.

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**Family and Community Partnerships**

**Guidelines: Classroom Management**

Make sure families know the expectations and rules of your class and school.

**Examples:**

1. At a Family Fun Night, have your students do skits showing the rules—how to follow them and what breaking them “looks like” and “sounds like.”
2. Make a poster for the refrigerator at home that describes, in a light way, the most important rules and expectations.
3. For older students, give families a list of due dates for the major assignments, along with tips on how to encourage quality work by pacing the effort—avoiding last minute panic.
4. Communicate in appropriate ways—use the family’s first language when possible. Tailor messages to the reading level of the home.

Make families partners in recognizing good citizenship.

**Examples:**

1. Send positive notes home when students, especially students who have had trouble with classroom management, work well in the classroom.
2. Give ideas for ways any family, even those with few economic resources, can celebrate accomplishment—a favorite food; the chance to choose a video to rent; a comment to a special person such as an aunt, grandparent, or minister; the chance to read to a younger sibling.

Identify talents in the community to help build a learning environment in your class.

**Examples:**

1. Have students write letters to carpet and furniture stores asking for donations of remnants to carpet a reading corner.
2. Find family members who can build shelves or room dividers, paint, sew, laminate manipulatives, write stories, repot plants, or network computers.
3. Contact businesses for donations of computers, printers, or other equipment.

Seek cooperation from families when behavior problems arise.

**Examples:**

1. Talk to families over the phone or in their home. Keep good records about the problem behavior.
2. Listen to family members and solve problems with them.

### The Need for Organization (pp. 444–447)

What are the challenges of classroom management? Classrooms are by nature multidimensional, full of simultaneous activities, fast-paced and immediate, unpredictable, public, and affected by the history of students' and teachers' actions. A teacher must juggle all these elements every day. Productive classroom activity requires students' cooperation. Maintaining cooperation is different for each age group. Young students are learning how to "go to school" and need to learn the general procedures of school. Older students need to learn the specifics required for working in different subjects. Working with adolescents requires teachers to understand the power of the adolescent peer group.

What are the goals of good classroom management? The goals of effective classroom management are to make ample time for learning; improve the quality of time use by keeping students actively engaged; make sure participation structures are clear, straightforward, and consistently signaled; and encourage student self-management, self-control, and responsibility.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classroom management</th>
<th>Techniques used to maintain a healthy learning environment, relatively free of behavior problems.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Allocated time</td>
<td>Time set aside for learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engaged time/Time on task</td>
<td>Time spent actively learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic learning time</td>
<td>Time when students are actually succeeding at the learning task.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation structures</td>
<td>Rules defining how to participate in different activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-management</td>
<td>Management of your own behavior and acceptance of responsibility for your own actions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Creating a Positive Learning Environment (pp. 448–458)

Distinguish between rules and procedures. Rules are the specific dos and don'ts of classroom life. They usually are written down or posted. Procedures cover administrative tasks, student movement, housekeeping, routines for accomplishing lessons, interactions between students and teachers, and interactions among students. Rules can be written in terms of rights and students may benefit from participating in establishing these rules. Consequences should be established for following and breaking the rules and procedures so that the teacher and the students know what will happen.

Distinguish between personal territories and interest-areas spatial arrangements. There are two basic kinds of spatial organization, territorial (the traditional classroom arrangement) and functional (dividing space into interest or work areas). Flexibility is often the key. Access to materials, convenience, privacy when needed, ease of supervision, and a willingness to reevaluate plans are important considerations in the teacher's choice of physical arrangements.

### What management issues do computers raise in the classroom? Clear procedures are especially important when there are computers in the classroom. Whether teachers have one, several, or a room full of computers, they need to think through what students will need to know, teach procedures, and provide easy-to-find and follow written instructions for common tasks. Students or parent volunteers can be trained as expert support. Different role structures make management of computer tasks easier.

### Contrast the first school week of effective and ineffective classroom managers. Effective classroom managers spent the first days of class teaching a workable, easily understood set of rules and procedures by using lots of explanation, examples, and practice. Students were occupied with organized, enjoyable activities and learned to function cooperatively in the group. Quick, firm, clear, and consistent responses to infractions of the rules characterized effective teachers. The teachers had planned carefully to avoid any last-minute tasks that might have taken them away from their students. These teachers dealt with the children's pressing concerns first.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Procedures</th>
<th>Prescribed steps for an activity.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rules</td>
<td>Statements specifying expected and forbidden behaviors: dos and don'ts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural/logical consequences</td>
<td>Instead of punishing, have students redo, repair, or in some way face the consequences that naturally flow from their actions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action zone</td>
<td>Area of a classroom where the greatest amount of interaction takes place.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Maintaining a Good Environment for Learning (pp. 458–466)

How can teachers encourage engagement? In general, as teacher supervision increases, students' engaged time also increases. When the task provides continuous cues for the student about what to do next, involvement will be greater. Activities with clear steps are likely to be more absorbing, because one step leads naturally to the next. Making work requirements clear and specific, providing needed materials, and monitoring activities all add to engagement.

Explain the factors identified by Kounin that prevent management problems in the classroom. To create a positive environment and prevent problems, teachers must take individual differences into account, maintain student motivation, and reinforce positive behavior. Successful problem preventers are skilled in four areas described by Kounin: "withinness," overlapping, group focusing, and movement management. When penalties have to be imposed, teachers should impose them calmly and privately. In addition to applying Kounin's ideas, teachers can prevent problems by establishing a caring classroom community and teaching students to use social skills and emotional self-regulation skills.
Describe seven levels of intervention in misbehavior.

Teachers can first make eye contact with the student or use other nonverbal signals, then try verbal hints such as simply inserting the student’s name into the lecture. Next the teacher asks if the offender is aware of the negative effects of the actions, then reminds the student of the procedure and has her or him follow it correctly. If this does not work, the teacher can ask the student to state the correct rule or procedure and then to follow it, and then move to telling the student in a clear, assertive, and unhostile way to stop the misbehavior. If this fails too, the teacher can offer a choice—stop the behavior or meet privately to work out the consequences.

What are some challenges in secondary classrooms?

Teachers working in secondary schools should be prepared to handle students who don’t complete school work, repeatedly break the same rule, or openly defy teachers.

- Withitness According to Kounin, awareness of everything happening in a classroom.
- Overlapping Supervising several activities at once.
- Group focus The ability to keep as many students as possible involved in activities.
- Movement management Keeping lessons and the group moving at an appropriate (and flexible) pace, with smooth transitions and variety.
- Precorrection A way of preventing serious behavior problems of students who have been labeled at risk by directing the students toward more appropriate actions.

The Need for Communication

(pp. 466-470)

What is meant by “empathetic listening”? Communication between teacher and student is essential when problems arise. All interactions between people, even silence or neglect, communicate some meaning. Empathetic, active listening can be a helpful response when students bring problems to teachers. Teachers must reflect back to the students what they hear them saying. This reflection is more than a parroting of words; it should capture the emotions, intent, and meaning behind them.

Distinguish among passive, hostile, and assertive response styles. The passive style can take several forms. Instead of telling the student directly what to do, the teacher simply comments on the behavior, asks the student to think about the appropriate action, or threatens but never follows through. In a hostile response style, teachers may make “you” statements that condemn the student without stating clearly what the student should be doing. An assertive response communicates to the students that the teacher cares too much about them and the process of learning to allow inappropriate behavior to persist. Assertive teachers clearly state what they expect.

Paraphrase rule Policy whereby listeners must accurately summarize what a speaker has said before being allowed to respond.

Empathetic listening Hearing the intent and emotions behind what another says and reflecting them back by paraphrasing.

“I” message Clear, nonaccusatory statement of how something is affecting you.

Assertive discipline Clear, firm, unhostile response style.

Culturally responsive management Taking cultural meanings and styles into account when developing management plans and responding to students.

Warm demanders Effective teachers with African American students who show both high expectations and great caring for their students.
Teachers' Casebook: Connections to PRAXIS II™

Teachers work to create school and classroom environments in which students feel safe, accepted, and respected. In the case at the beginning of this chapter, that environment is threatened—at least for one student. As a classroom manager, you have to ask yourself not only what to do to eliminate this problem for your student, but also what strategies and techniques can prevent similar problems in the future.

What Would They Do?

Here are some things you could do with bullying at school.

Jolita Harper, Third Grade Teacher,
Preventing Academic Leader Academy
Maple Heights, Ohio

I believe that the entire learning community has a critical role in preventing acts of intimidation between students, and that this is best accomplished with open communication between all parties. Care should be taken to assure that there are no barriers between colleagues as to the nature of the conflict. The classroom teacher who is aware of the situation is bullying and is able to provide guidance and support is sometimes the key. It is important to let the child know that he or she is not alone and that there is someone who cares about him or her. Sometimes, the best way to do this is to have a trusted friend who can help the student through the ordeal.

Keith J. Boyle, English Teacher, grades 9-12,
Oak Hill High School, Jackson, New Jersey

Bullying can happen anywhere, but it is particularly prevalent in schools with large populations. It is important for educators to be aware of the potential for bullying and to take proactive steps to prevent it. One way to do this is to establish a reporting system that encourages students to report incidents of bullying. This system should be easy to use and should provide clear instructions on how to report an incident. Once an incident is reported, it should be investigated promptly and fairly. The school administration should keep the student informed about the progress of the investigation and should take action to prevent the behavior from recurring.

Dan Doyle, History Teacher, Grade 11,
St. Joseph's Academy, Hoffman, Illinois

Bullying can be a serious problem, especially when it comes to the safety and well-being of students. It is important for schools to take proactive steps to prevent bullying and to provide support for students who have been bullied. One way to do this is to establish a reporting system that encourages students to report incidents of bullying. This system should be easy to use and should provide clear instructions on how to report an incident. Once an incident is reported, it should be investigated promptly and fairly. The school administration should keep the student informed about the progress of the investigation and should take action to prevent the behavior from recurring.

Kelley Crockett, Preadolescent Elementary School, Fort Worth, Texas

Bullying can take many forms, and it is important for schools to be aware of the potential for bullying and to take proactive steps to prevent it. One way to do this is to establish a reporting system that encourages students to report incidents of bullying. This system should be easy to use and should provide clear instructions on how to report an incident. Once an incident is reported, it should be investigated promptly and fairly. The school administration should keep the student informed about the progress of the investigation and should take action to prevent the behavior from recurring.