Classroom Management


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Acknowledgments

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Special thanks is offered to my graduate students, all of them teachers who, through their questions, comments, challenges, and volunteered examples, have helped me to clarify my thoughts regarding classroom management. Their input has been especially valuable in helping me to write and justify the inclusion of three new chapters—Democracy and Discipline, Acting and Discipline, and Bullying.

Although it may be obvious, if fellow faculty did not share my interest in classroom management and purchase my books, there would be no fourth edition. Words cannot describe the degree to which I appreciate their support. Thank you.

I want to thank my wife, my colleague, and my best friend, Cecelia, for her unwavering support and encouragement in this, and all, projects. Finally, I want to acknowledge our son, David, his wife, Kate, our daughter, Rebecca, and our son-in-law, Suren. All four of these young people possess a strong sense of self-discipline, the very best form of discipline available.
Preface

Discipline is not a nasty word.
—Pat Riley

THEORY AND PRACTICE: PROFESSIONALS NEED BOTH

Educators need to balance discipline theory with its practice in the classroom. In fact, W. Edwards Deming would say that one (practice) must be connected with the other (theory) in order to acquire true knowledge. The acquisition of knowledge, and the skills that can flow from it, are especially important in today’s educational arena where increased demands for teacher accountability exist. Classroom Management: Sound Theory and Effective Practice is designed for those who are new to teaching or who have had little coursework in discipline and do not have the time to read numerous theory-based articles and books. Among those most likely to benefit from this book are the following:

- College students taking part in early off-campus field experiences. Such activities are increasingly being required by state and regional certification boards. It is never too soon to begin reading and studying classroom management theory and practice.
- College students taking an educational psychology course in which the primary textbook (like most) devotes, at best, a single chapter to discipline.
- Student teachers who are taking part in a semester-long practicum for which effective classroom management skills, and the theories behind them, are a must—not a luxury.
• First- and second-year classroom teachers who, like their student teacher counterparts, need effective discipline techniques for success—perhaps even survival.
• Seasoned teachers who may not have had sufficient coursework (and most have not) in classroom management or who simply wish to review the area of discipline.
• Students enrolled in classroom management courses or seminars.
• Faculty and administrative mentors who wish to offer constructive suggestions regarding discipline that are based upon sound pedagogical theory.

Part I, titled “Introduction, Democracy, and Frameworks,” consists of three chapters. The first chapter offers some upfront, straight talk on discipline. It argues that discipline, as a means to an end, is necessary to “keep the learning act afloat.” Chapter 2, a brand new chapter, examines the concept of democracy, looks at its constituent parts, and then explores how it relates to discipline in the classroom. Chapter 3 presents several theoretical, but very understandable, frameworks within which each of the six “Tried and True” Models of Classroom Management described in Part II can be pigeonholed. By using the knowledge that you will acquire from Chapters 2 and 3, you will be in a much better position to choose and defend one of the “Tried and True” models. Chapters 2 and 3 are particularly valuable to educators who want a sound theoretical basis for their discipline model selection.

Part II, titled “Tried and True” Models of Discipline, presents six classroom discipline models, one per chapter, that have stood the test of time. All of the models work! The key to effective discipline is deciding which model will work best for you—the one that allows you to sleep at night and not feel guilty for having used. The models, arranged from the most to the least interventionist in nature, include:

• James Dobson: A Place for Punishment
• Lee and Marlene Canter: Assertive Discipline
• Fredric H. Jones: Tools for Teaching
• Rudolf Dreikurs: Social Discipline
• William Glasser: Reality Therapy, Choice Theory, and Quality Schools
• Thomas Gordon: Teacher Effectiveness Training

Some popular classroom management texts give equal time to twenty or more discipline authors. First of all, there are not, in reality, that many unique discipline models out there. Second of all, to present so many models makes it necessary to shortchange them all.
Even if you do not end up adopting one of these “Tried and True” Classroom Management models in its entirety, although I hope that you will, learning them will inform you as to the choices of models—from behaviorist to humanist in nature—that are available. You will be in a position to compare and contrast what each has to say about classroom management. You can then evaluate what still others may have to say, now or in the future, on discipline and accept or refute their claims from an informed position as a professional. This new knowledge will allow you to “tweak” and/or “personalize,” as well as continue to update, your discipline model choice.

Part III investigates further the “Theories and Practices Relating to More Effective Classroom Management.” Chapter 10 summarizes what other recognized authors have to say on the subject of classroom management. Chapter 11 presents some surprising (and sometimes controversial) ideas on discipline, as well as some preventative discipline suggestions. Chapter 12 offers a series of specific “A through Z” suggestions that teachers can use immediately to more effectively handle classroom discipline. Chapter 13, Acting and Discipline, a brand new chapter, discusses how teachers can use acting/performance skills to both more effectively engage students (therefore, heading off discipline problems) and/or handle discipline problems when they occur. Chapter 14 deals with the increasing problem of school bullying (including cyber bullying), and Chapter 15 addresses school violence.

WHAT IS NEW ABOUT THIS FOURTH EDITION?

Three chapters are brand new. In fact, it is embarrassing that this material was not included in the 3rd edition of the text. Chapter 2, Democracy and Schooling, recognizes the fact that no choice of a discipline model can be made without first understanding how democracy impacts discipline. One must consider whether students are citizens or they are not; whether they have rights or not. If they are citizens, and the state thinks so, and if school is supposed to be “preparation for life,” then how one disciplines children has to be influenced by one’s vision of democracy.

Chapter 13, Acting and Discipline, first states the obvious—engaged students learn more and misbehave less. It then goes on to discuss how teachers can use acting/performance skills (used in the theatre since the beginning of mankind) to engage students. The chapter offers numerous examples of how these same acting/performance skills can be used to handle discipline problems when and if they occur.

Chapter 14, Bullying, addresses a nationwide problem that goes far beyond truly playful, give-and-take, roughhousing, and teasing. Targets of bullying
often are frightened to such a degree that they stay home from school and, on far too many occasions, actually are driven to suicide. Today’s cyber-bullying exacerbates the problem. Surprisingly, research reveals that much of the bullying goes on in the classroom, right under the teacher’s nose.

Each of the “Tried and True” Classroom Management models, Chapters 4 through 9, has been updated and expanded. Whether it is the fact that some researchers claim that corporal punishment is not always bad in the Dobson chapter, or that the SuperNanny is operating in the Canter chapter, or that a Treasure Chest of Rewards appears in the Glasser chapter, you will find each chapter interesting, sometimes passionate, sometimes challenging, and immediately applicable to teaching (and parenting).

The text is particularly well referenced. Any and all of these resources can help teachers learn more about classroom management. Finally, most readers will find the text easy to read—even enjoyable to read.

**TAKING A POSITION: A PROFESSIONAL THING TO DO**

Some might argue that an author should present all sides, in this case present all six “Tried and True” Classroom Management models in a **neutral** fashion, giving no hint of the author’s personal position—just as if he had none. This is impossible. I have a passion for classroom management and, with any passion, comes opinion—informed opinion. This will seep, sometimes pour, through in this book. My sole responsibility as an author is to practice what I preach. To that end, I preach that teachers should be professionals—meaning that they should regularly turn to a recognized body of knowledge in order to make decisions. I have tried to do just that in preparing this book.

The fact is, at the end of the day you and only you are the one who will decide which of the six classroom management models will work best—for you and for your students. You will decide which model lets you sleep at night without feeling guilty for having used it.

**OTHER TAUBER TEXTS RELATED TO DISCIPLINE**

As mentioned above, I have a passion, literally a heated passion, for classroom management and for classroom management-related topics. Two of those classroom management-related topics matured into texts including:

Both of these texts present content and skills that act as a form of preventative discipline—the very best kind of discipline. Acting/performance skills (i.e., including animation in voice and body, use of humor, suspense and surprise, role-playing, use of props, classroom space, and dramatic entrances and exits) help teachers to engage students who then are less likely to misbehave. And, an understanding of the self-fulfilling prophecy (i.e., expectations) helps teachers to form more positive expectations of all students that, when sensed by students, causes them to misbehave less. It is a win-win situation.
PART I

INTRODUCTION, DEMOCRACY, AND FRAMEWORKS
CHAPTER 1

Introduction:
Some Straight Talk on Discipline

OBJECTIVES

This chapter will help you, among other things, to:

- Define the extent to which discipline is, as well as perceived as, a major problem in today’s schools.
- Defend the philosophy, models, strategies sequence.
- Recognize classroom management skills as an integral part of instructional evaluation.
- Defend the use of discipline models that have stood the test of time.
- Acknowledge that effective teaching is a prerequisite to effective discipline.
- Accept the need for ongoing study in the area of classroom management.
- Challenge the belief that discipline is nothing more than common sense.

DISCIPLINE: A REAL PROBLEM?

The annual Gallup Poll of the public’s attitudes toward public schools, published each September in Phi Delta Kappan, has for almost four decades identified lack of discipline as one of the biggest problems in public schools. In fact, the journal has singled out lack of discipline as the number one problem more often than any other. Classroom management strategies, a more palatable name for “discipline,” clearly need some attention!
Charles (1981, p. 13) best points out the harsh realities of classrooms:

Discipline, class control, classroom management—by whatever name you call it—keeping order in the classroom is a teacher’s greatest concern. You may not like that fact; you may wish it weren’t true. But it is. That’s a given in the daily life of teachers. Discipline is so crucial, so basic to everything else in the classroom, that most educators agree: it is the one thing that makes or breaks teachers.

Wang, Haertel, and Walberg (1994) confirm Charles’ statement when they report in their article “What helps student learn?” that when data from both research analyses and surveys from experts are combined, classroom management tops a list of twenty-eight categories that most influence learning. Thus, for many educators, Charles’ statement is as true today as it was almost two decades ago when it was written. Discipline skills can be taught, but that training in this critical area often is inadequate.

As a concern of both new and experienced teachers, discipline is not a recent phenomenon. A sampling of more than fifty years of discipline articles repeatedly cites classroom management as a major worry of educators. Our experienced colleagues report that the ability to govern is the first essential of success in teaching. For instance, 25 percent of the teachers who fail do so primarily because of troubles growing out of discipline (Brown, 1949). Reinforcing this view, Schubert (1954) reports that one of the most perplexing problems facing many teachers in our schools today—particularly beginning teachers—is maintaining control in the classroom. “To send a future teacher into a school without a functioning understanding of classroom management strategies is unconscionable...” (Morehead, 1996, p. 121). According to Johnson (2004), nearly seven in ten middle- and high-school teachers say their schools have serious problems with disruptive students. Discipline has been, and continues to be, a problem for many teachers. But does it have to be a problem in the future? No, of course not!

WHAT IS YOUR PHILOSOPHY OF DISCIPLINE?

It has been my experience that principals regularly ask at least two questions of those applying for teaching jobs: “What is your philosophy of discipline?” and “What is your philosophy of education?” Actually, the latter is a prerequisite for the former. Although those asking the questions are often thankful that they don’t have to answer them, the questions are fair ones to ask. As
Figure 1.1
Philosophy, Models, Strategies Sequence

PHILOSOPHY → MODEL(S) → STRATEGIES

a parent, I would be deeply disturbed if teachers disciplined my children without any guiding philosophy.

I am not sure whether those asking about your philosophy are really interested in receiving an answer or in simply seeing how you respond under pressure while trying to answer. After all, who is going to say anything other than something suggesting respect for “individual student differences,” helping all students reach their “full potential,” promoting students’ “self-esteem,” recognizing “multicultural factors,” and the like?

Selecting a philosophy of discipline is a necessary prerequisite to choosing a discipline model—one consistent with that philosophy. Strategies of classroom management, then, flow from a chosen model. This sequence, as shown above in Figure 1.1, helps guarantee a congruence among the three factors.

For teachers who are having discipline problems, the temptation exists to grab any strategy that works. A sailor from a sinking ship who cannot swim wants only to be thrown a flotation ring; he does not want to be taught the theory behind swimming. Hopefully, you are not in an analogous position. Instead, you have the luxury to examine and begin to form a philosophy of education, study available classroom management models, and select a model or models consistent with your fundamental beliefs. Once you select a model, it will dictate the day-to-day discipline strategies you implement.

After you synthesize your philosophy of how children learn, grow, and develop, you may want to turn around and question the questioners, interview the interviewers. Ask them to clarify what their philosophy of education and/or philosophy of discipline is. See if it agrees with yours. Whatever your philosophy, you will be happier operating in an environment that reflects your beliefs.

TEACHER EVALUATIONS

Your competency as a disciplinarian will be judged not only during the interview process but throughout your career. The connection between perceived teacher competency and successful classroom management has existed
for more than 150 years. Bettencourt (1982, p. 51), in his description of Concord, Massachusetts, schools of the 1840s, cites that teacher competency was based on the single theme of discipline: “The loss of governance over a class was the highest form of incompetence, taking precedence over poor reading and inadequate moral development.”

Most states require that principals or other designated administrators/supervisors formally evaluate your teaching by sitting in on your classes. Typically, a form such as the one shown in Figure 1.2, is used to collect data. Such forms usually include a question on classroom management. It is clear from the categories of questions included in such a teacher evaluation form that both content expertise and pedagogical expertise will be—in fact, should be—evaluated. Your competence in the eyes of others will be judged by your ability to perform in each of the questioned areas. Your competence in your own eyes will similarly be judged. To be forewarned is to be forearmed. Consider yourself forewarned regarding the importance the profession ascribes to a teacher’s ability to manage (i.e., discipline) his or her classroom.

**LITTLE NEW IN THE DISCIPLINE WORLD**

Little brand-new information has been generated on classroom management in recent years. For example, Overman’s (1979) article on effective student management presents the work of Gordon, Dreikurs, and Glasser. Wolfgang and Glickman’s standard-setting book, *Solving Discipline Problems* (1980), devotes whole chapters to these same authors. Twenty years later, Wolfgang’s book, *Solving Discipline and Classroom Management Problems: Methods and Models for Today’s Teachers* (2005), includes most of the same authors. McDaniel’s “Developing the Skills of Humanistic Discipline” (1984), Cangelosi’s *Classroom Management Strategies* (1988), Edwards’ *Classroom Discipline and Management* (2004), and Charles’ *Building Classroom Discipline* (2005) list these same authors among their highlighted models of discipline. You would be hard pressed to find an article or book on discipline that does not rehash materials presented elsewhere over the past forty years or more.

Having served a six-month-long sabbatical at the University of Melbourne (Australia) studying classroom management, I can attest that little is “new” there, either. A recent return visit to lecture in Melbourne confirmed this earlier observation. For instance, Maurice Balson’s Australian text, *Understanding Classroom Behaviour* (1997), primarily presents the work of Rudolf Dreikurs as well as the several decades of work by William Glasser.

A previous year-long sabbatical at the University of Durham, England, also revealed that little is original in the field of discipline. For example,
### INSTRUCTIONAL EVALUATION FORM

- **Name of Teacher**: _________________________________  **Date**: ________________
- **Name of Observer**: _________________________________  **Room #**: ________________
- **Title of Observer**: _________________________________  **Enrollment**: ________________
- **Observation Length**: _________________________________  **Grade Level**: ________________
- **Subject Observed**: _________________________________

**Instructions to Observer.**

Consider this teacher in relation to the following teacher dimensions. Check the appropriate box using the following scale:

- **5** = Extremely competent
- **4** = Very competent
- **3** = Competent
- **2** = Less than competent
- **1** = Much less than competent
- **0** = No basis for judgment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Dimensions</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>0</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>MANAGEMENT OF STUDENT CONDUCT:</strong> Rule explication and monitoring, quality of details, reference to discipline model, and movement smoothness.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>PLANNING:</strong> Content coverage, utilization of instructional materials, good focusing, and diagnosis.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>INSTRUCTIONAL ORGANIZATION &amp; DEVELOPMENT:</strong> Efficient use of time, review of subject matter, lesson development, teacher treatment of student talk, and management of seatwork/homework.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>PRESENTATION OF SUBJECT MATTER:</strong> Presentation of concepts, clarity of explanations, variety of delivery methods, and demonstration of enthusiasm.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>VERBAL AND NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION:</strong> Control of discourse, emphasis on task, and effective body language.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Additional Comments (Use additional paper if necessary)**

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

I have had an opportunity to discuss this observation with the observer.

Signed: _______________________________  Date: ________________
while examining the training program headmasters had designed for deputy headmasters, the major component on classroom management was Thomas Gordon’s *Teacher Effectiveness Training* (2003). Lee and Marlene Canters’ *Assertive Discipline* (1997), too, is still popular in England.

Because so little is new in the world of classroom management, it is worthwhile to study the literature on discipline, even if the information appears to be dated. It is unlikely that once you spend the energy and time to learn what is currently available on classroom management, such information will become dated. Study it now! Learn it now! Practice it now! I foresee little truly new coming along to take its place.

**HULA HOOPS, PET ROCKS, AND RUBIK’S CUBES**

As Americans, we often find ourselves in a disposable world—diapers, soft drink containers, cigarette lighters, and the latest fads. Hula hoops, pet rocks, and Rubik’s Cubes all hit the market, were big (if short-lived) successes, and then disappeared, only to be replaced by the next year’s new fad. This situation probably is okay in the world of business where new products—cars, fashions, toys—are expected each year.

Unfortunately, that same thinking is not okay when it comes to theories of classroom management. One should not simply dispose of last year’s workable discipline theory and expect that a new one, just because it is new, will be equally effective. It doesn’t work that way.

Only a limited number of theories of effective classroom management are available for our use. It makes no sense to dispose of a theory as long as it is working. Unlike foods that spoil, effective classroom management theory and practice do not carry expiration dates.

I suggest that educators hold on for dear life to any effective theory of classroom management that works. Don’t give up a theory just because it has an earlier publication date. Don’t give up successful theories of classroom management until you know for sure that you have a replacement theory that, when put into practice, is just as, or more, effective.

**PLAYING THE ODDS**

In education we play the odds. Although we might wish for theories that work for all children, at all times, and in all situations, this just does not happen. Instead, we try to use theories that work for *most* children *most* of the time in *most* situations. Our goal is to increase the odds that the theories
we use will work. The fact is that in classroom management there are few absolutes, no panaceas, and none that come with a money-back guarantee. This is real life—the life teachers live in.

So it is with theories and techniques of classroom management. No theory or technique works with all children all the time in all situations. But some theories and techniques work better than others. We should use these theories for what they can do for us. What about the students upon whom our theories do not work? Unfortunately, these exceptions will always exist. Fortunately, they exist in very small numbers. According to Curwin and Mendler (2000), an 80–15–5 principle exists in classrooms. Eighty percent of the students rarely break the rules; 15 percent break the rules on an occasional basis; and 5 percent often break the rules. Matthews (2004) correctly points out, “the number of disruptive students in any classroom is usually small, but if a teacher doesn’t deal with them quickly and firmly, he is toast.” If you are using classroom management theories and techniques that are successful for most children most of the time in most situations, then the majority of students are more often “on task” and, as such, demand less of your time and attention. You can now direct your efforts to either working with the “exceptions” or identifying and enlisting the aid of others who can offer the help you can’t offer.

You need to recognize what you can and cannot do for the child. Be aware of your network of fellow professionals. Use them. Do what you are able to do effectively and then, if necessary, refer (or seek additional help for) those students you cannot help. This is not a sign of weakness on your part; it is the professional thing to do.

**OMISSION AND COMMISSION**

Effective classroom management is influenced just as much by things you don’t do as it is by things you do. The words “you don’t do” and “you do” clearly point out that you have control over the situation. Teacher behaviors don’t occur all by themselves. You can decide to omit certain behaviors that, more often than not, precipitate or worsen discipline problems. You also can decide to commit certain behaviors that, more often than not, lead to effective discipline. Sins of omission are just as unforgivable in a professional as sins of commission. They are also just as ineffective.

**EFFECTIVE TEACHING MUST BE PRESENT**

No classroom management technique will be effective for long if effective and engaging teaching is absent. I cannot stress this point strongly enough.
Classroom management models, and their accompanying strategies, are not substitutes for good teaching. Effective teaching, perhaps the “most difficult job of all in our society” (Glasser, 1990, p. 14), is actually a preventative discipline measure that keeps students so involved and interested that they are not inclined to cause problems.

For instance, the often-made teacher statement, “When you are able to act in an acceptable manner, you will no longer have to stand outside in the hallway,” assumes that what is going on in your class is more interesting and exciting than remaining in the hallway. If ineffective teaching is taking place in the classroom, then the student will not feel that he or she is missing anything by staying in the hall. Hence, your discipline efforts have no impact.

Be on the lookout for more effective teaching methods and more exciting curricula. Pay particular attention in this book to Chapter 13, “Acting and Discipline.” This chapter represents just a small part of the book, Acting Lessons for Teachers: Using Performance Skills in the Classroom (Tauber & Mester, 2006). In this book, a case is made for using acting/performance skills to engage students in the classroom. Recognize that different students may have different learning styles. To the degree that you are able, try to accommodate these styles. Survey school district material and personnel resources. Do the same thing at the regional, state, and national levels. Check with your professional association, such as, if you are an English teacher, the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE). Query the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC). Surf the Web. Contact colleges and universities for ideas.

Excited, as well as informed, faculty are more effective teachers; excited students have neither the time nor the inclination to misbehave. At the same time, though, good teaching will not prevent all classroom management problems. Every classroom management model that I am aware of includes some sort of backup system for the inevitable discipline problems. To that end, even effective teachers must be ready with appropriate strategies of classroom management to “keep the learning act afloat.”

As in medicine, an “ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.” If many (certainly not all) discipline problems can be prevented through effective, stimulating, and interesting teaching, then one would be foolish not to provide such teaching. Be an effective teacher—first and foremost.

Jones, the author of one of the discipline models highlighted in this book, reinforces the need for effective teaching through his dual publications Positive Classroom Discipline (1987a) and Positive Classroom Instruction (1987b). His book on classroom instruction, at 250 pages, is three-fourths as long as his book on classroom discipline, suggesting the importance of instruction in
any overall classroom management plan. Jones’ new book, Tools of Teaching (2007), continues to stress the importance of instruction.

Is effective teaching all that is needed? No. You must understand that children have a personal history and experience that sometimes goes beyond your influence. In the real world, these children cannot simply leave their out-of-school problems at the school’s front door in the morning and collect them at day’s end. Students’ problems will accompany them to your classroom. Skills to manage students, all kinds of students with all kinds of problems, are essential to even the most effective teacher.

WATER SEEKS ITS OWN LEVEL

Picture a scorching hot day. You have been out for a long dusty walk in the hills and are dying of thirst. A cold, clear, sparkling mountain spring flows just ahead. You rush to the water’s edge, grab your trusty tin cup (cold water always seems colder in a metal cup), and scoop up the thirst-quenching liquid. What does this have to do with discipline? Well, note that when you scooped up a cup full of water, no lasting hole was left in the spring. “Of course not,” you say. “Water seeks its own level and quickly fills the temporary void created by my tin cup.” No matter how many cupfuls you scoop out, other water seems to flow in to replace what you removed.

In discipline, though, this does not happen. Discipline problems that have been effectively handled are not readily replaced with still other discipline problems. Although the replacement water may appear to be endless, discipline problems are not endless—really! Jones (2007) reports that 80 percent of classroom discipline problems involve students “talking” (such as whispering to a friend), while another 15 percent involve students “moving” about the room (such as sharpening pencils). This leaves only 5 percent for all other discipline problems combined. Therefore, if we could effectively handle students’ “talking” and “moving,” we would have made a big, nonrefillable hole in the discipline problem.

COURSES IN CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

Few teacher education programs have available, and still fewer programs mandate, specific courses in classroom management for their students. I am not alone in holding this view. More than two decades ago, McDaniel (1984, p. 71) reported:
Most teachers enter the profession, and persevere in it, with little or no training in school discipline techniques. This is indeed strange when discipline problems are so frequently cited as the greatest dilemma facing public schools. . . . Few states mention behavior management in certification regulations. . . . Few colleges or universities require (or even provide) courses in classroom discipline for regular classroom teachers.

Today, the problem continues. "What is necessary is . . . more attention to discipline in teacher training courses" (Matthews, 2004). But, is that happening? In Delisio (2005), Seeman claims that "teachers want effective classroom management to be a priority in their education. It is not." Circumstances are no better for in-service teachers. Informal surveys that are conducted when I present discipline-oriented workshops confirm the continued lack of teacher preparation in the area of classroom management.

The situation probably will not get any better in the immediate future given the public’s mood that teachers in training require, if anything, more content courses, not more pedagogy courses. Today’s “blue-ribbon” committees’ proposals for strengthening teacher education programs clearly carry the message that teachers need more preparation, but that additional preparation ought not to include more education courses (see the National Commission on Educational Excellence, A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Education Reform 1983, which has continued to influence public opinion since its publication). In fact, many of these reports suggest we already offer too much in the way of education-type courses.

Where then will teachers in training learn classroom management skills? Although it is common for educational psychology courses and foundation courses (required of most education majors) to use textbooks that devote at least one chapter to classroom management, this amount of attention probably isn’t enough. In fact, saying that “this amount of attention probably isn’t enough” is putting it mildly. Morehead (1996) says it all in a provocative article titled, “Integrating Classroom Management Strategies in Teacher Education Classes Borders on Professional Malpractice.” He argues that to integrate discipline coursework into other teacher education classes causes us to “lose sight of the comprehensive expertise needed to instruct in the basic elements of classroom management” (1996, p. 120).

My own experience leads me to believe that classroom management theory and practice (the title of this book) gets shorthchanged when “covered” here and “covered” there in other teacher education classes. The reason is that, not the least of which, teachers of these other mainstay teacher education courses generally are not experts—and all that that entails—in classroom management.
WHERE DO TEACHERS DEVELOP COMPETENCY IN CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT?

Richardson (1985) studied teachers’ perceptions of their own classroom management behavior. His research shows that teachers attribute that behavior’s development to actual experiences on the job, subsequent years on the job, and student teaching—in that order of importance. Unfortunately, learning while doing seems to be the norm. Coursework while in college, what little there is of it, is perceived to be less of a factor in the development of classroom management competency.

It must be a lonely, as well as a threatening, situation for new teachers who must learn classroom management skills on the job. To whom can new teachers turn? Administrators rarely discuss discipline with teachers in specific terms, and curriculum supervisors, as well as fellow teachers, are also judged to be of little help. Although in-service training holds the potential for helping both new and experienced teachers develop classroom management competencies, too often these efforts are absent or suffer from one-shot, no follow-up, deliveries.

Just as it is the case that today’s education graduates have had little in the way of training or education concerning classroom management techniques, so it is also true for past graduates—today’s senior teachers and administrators. You may get lucky and find a mentor who can pass on pedagogically sound, well-researched, effective, fair, and constitutionally legal strategies of discipline—all of which are consistent with your philosophy of education. But what if you don’t? What I hope you don’t get from these people are statements such as, “Well, this worked for me, why don’t you try it?”

W. Edwards Deming, the quality guru in both industry and education, once said that experience (what you will get in the classroom) does not lead to knowledge. Knowledge is what occurs only when you connect your experience to theory. This is the focus of this book, Classroom Management: Sound Theory and Effective Practice.

USING A RECOGNIZED BODY OF KNOWLEDGE

Teaching is a profession—one with a long and respected history. Professionals share at least two things in common. These include:

- Professionals regularly turn to a recognized body of knowledge in order to make decisions.
Professionals can explain what they are doing and why they are doing it by referring to a recognized body of knowledge.

J. F. Kennedy once said, “the great enemy of the truth is very often not the lie, deliberate, contrived and dishonest, but the myth, persistent, persuasive, and unrealistic” and that “beliefs in myths allows the comfort of opinion without the discomfort of thought.” Turning to a recognized body of knowledge will help you separate the myths from the truth in the wide world of discipline.

The key, here, is to use a recognized body of knowledge. This is as true for classroom management as it is for any other aspect of pedagogy. By reading and digesting the content of this book, you are on your way to adding to your recognized body of knowledge.

Chances are that as professionals, teachers have invested a good deal of their lives acquiring the knowledge and skills that make up that recognized knowledge base. That knowledge base deserves to be regularly used and, on a continuing basis, updated. People who seek professional treatment—whether they be students, patients, or clients—deserve, at a minimum, knowledge-based responses.

For instance, I hope medical doctors, as professionals, regularly turn to such a knowledge base—especially when they are treating my illnesses. We all know or have heard of the horrors that can occur when such knowledge is ignored or misapplied. Skyrocketing malpractice insurance is a clear sign that the public will no longer blindly trust health professionals. Surely, educators do not think they are immune from similar public challenges. Let’s not wait until we, as teachers, have to purchase malpractice insurance. Let’s regularly use the best knowledge bases, including those in classroom management, available to us. Effective disciplinarians are secure in the belief that they are using techniques that can be defended. All teachers should be prepared to be held accountable to explain to any student, parent, fellow teacher, principal, or school board member what they are doing and why. The “why” part of this responsibility can only be justified by referring to a recognized body of knowledge. This is a sign of a professional!

Make it a regular part of your professional development to read more, more often, on classroom management. Just as you might remind your students that learning is a lifelong endeavor, I remind you that classroom management is not something that can be totally presented between the covers of a single book—even this one. What is presented in this book will certainly get you started in the right direction and, hopefully, should whet your appetite for still more sound theory and effective practices of discipline.
Many teachers, and even more of the general public, believe that what teachers do in their profession is nothing more than common sense. This is simply not true. For instance, common sense might tell you that if a student is repeatedly out of his seat, then the teacher should remind him each and every time that he should be sitting down. Yet, assuming the child’s motive is to gain attention, a far more effective teacher response is to ignore the child’s out-of-seat behavior, praise others who are in their seats, and, when it occurs (even out of exhaustion), praise the misbehaving child when he is sitting down. Which teacher response do you believe works better? Only the latter set of responses has a basis in that “recognized body of knowledge” referred to earlier. Common sense also told us the world was flat, man could not fly, women were suited only for motherhood, and . . . well, you get the message.

Does common sense have a place in education? Sure it does, as long as it has a recognizable foundation in the research literature. It is not uncommon for experienced teachers to dismiss what they do as common sense when, in fact, it should more correctly be described as second nature. They have been using a technique for so long that they may have forgotten its origin. Unfortunately, experienced, as well as inexperienced, teachers use techniques that have become second nature to them that cannot be supported by the research literature.

A recognized body of knowledge in any field, including education, is really an effort to unravel nature’s mysteries and, therefore, should not be in conflict with common sense. Nature’s truths, once unraveled and understood, will be about as much common sense as they are ever going to get.

We are probably all familiar with the temptation to get some free advice from medical doctors if we happen to run into them at a party. Come to think of it, I catch myself trying to get free advice from lawyers, accountants, bricklayers, and septic tank installers when I see them at informal gatherings. It is no different for authors of books on classroom management. You probably have a specific child in mind that you would like to ask about. Your question might begin, “I have this second grader who does such and such. What should I do with him?” Keep that child in mind as you read this book. Read it with a purpose. Continually ask yourself how you could apply this material with your children in your unique set of circumstances. Do it, it works!
SUMMARY

Even the best teachers will experience discipline problems now and again—discipline is an unavoidable and critical part of classroom management. Jones (1979, p. 27) states it best when he says, “In the end, there is no alternative to effective discipline. Discipline is either done poorly, or it is done well. When done poorly, the process often becomes punitive or is abandoned altogether. When done well, however, it can be low key, supportive, and almost invisible.” Ineffective disciplinarians make it look hard and get few results. Effective disciplinarians make it look easy, as if they really are not doing anything at all. You can enhance your effectiveness through increased knowledge (i.e., sound theory) and skills (i.e., effective practices). This book should help.
CHAPTER 2

Democracy and Discipline: How One Influences the Other

OBJECTIVES

This chapter will help you, among other things, to:

- Explore what the concept of democracy means in general and in the classroom.
- Examine terms such as justice, choice, and liberty, and how they can be used to more specifically define democracy.
- Understand the constitutional guarantees offered citizens in a democracy.
- Explore the degree to which students are considered citizens.
- Examine the role teachers should play in creating a democratic classroom.
- Relate an understanding of democracy to a teacher’s selection of a discipline model.

DO YOU BELIEVE IN DEMOCRACY?

Do you believe in democracy? Do you believe in a democratic classroom? Your answer to these two important questions will help you to decide what discipline model to adopt for use in your classroom. Later in this book six Tried-and-True, time-tested discipline models will be presented. They all work. Even though they all work, you will be asked to select the one that works best for you and for your students. An examination of your fundamental beliefs (and your school’s beliefs) regarding democracy will help you make the appropriate choice of a discipline model.
Well. Do you believe in democracy? I hope so. After all, men and women over the years have given their all to establish and preserve this worldwide envied feature of American government. American democracy is a marvel. Democracy may not be perfect, but it is, in Winston Churchill’s oft-quoted words, “the worst form of government except for all those others that have been tried from time to time.” The rest of the world is envious of our democratic government.

Where else can you have spirited campaigns for office that, come November of each year, are decided at the ballot box. Close elections and even hotly contested elections, such as those in Florida in 2004—hanging chads and all—are resolved by the courts. Disappointed, and even sometimes embittered losers, don’t shoot the winners, they don’t advocate the overthrow of the elected government by the military, and they don’t try to disrupt legitimate swearing in ceremonies as was the case in Mexico in 2006. Americans seem able to move forward for the next two or four years believing, “We will use the democratic process, rally our forces, and get them at the next election!”

**ROLE OF TEACHERS IN A DEMOCRACY**

As teachers, you are agents of the state (i.e., government) and, as such, have a role in preparing students to eventually take part in our democratic form of government. If education is supposed to be preparation for “life,” and if “life” as we know it in our country includes taking part in the democratic process, then educators—no matter their formal disciplines (i.e., reading, writing, arithmetic)—must play a role in equipping students for this awesome role come adulthood.

Where better place to begin teaching democracy and practicing democratic discipline than in schools? Teaching democracy not only must include teaching about democracy (i.e., branches of government, Constitutional Amendments), it also must include opportunities to participate in democracy. Why is practice with democracy so necessary? In general, we believe that “practice makes perfect.” This age-old adage holds true just as much for democracy as it does with any other set of knowledge and skills that must be developed in order to be a productive, contributing adult member of society.

**DEMOCRACY: WHAT DOES IT REALLY MEAN?**

When I teach a class or workshop and I ask an audience of educators if they believe in democracy, most, if not all, hands are raised. But the problem is the term “democracy” is a bit abstract and, as such, it is hard to universally
define. And, if it is hard to define, it is then hard to measure. And, what you can’t measure, you can’t achieve! The bottom line is that even educators who believe in the concept of “democracy” find it difficult to tell for sure whether they have created a democratic environment for children in the classroom or tell how much progress they have made toward creating that environment.

This problem with the term “democracy” being so abstract is partially solved when I ask educators to identify specific (i.e., more measurable) terms that they associate with a democratic environment. Thus, the argument goes, the more these specific, measurable terms are present, the more democracy is present. And, if one wants to enhance the democratic classroom environment still further, one need only to enhance one or more of the specific terms associated with a democracy. What then are some of the more measurable ingredients of a democracy?

Ask yourself what terms—concepts in and of themselves—simply must be present in order to legitimately claim that democracy exists? And, without these terms being present little or no democracy can exist. Some of the terms generated by my educator audiences are presented in Figure 2.1.

**Figure 2.1**
Democracy-Related Terms
Where do we find the justification for these terms? One need only examine precious documents such as our Constitution, our Bill of Rights, Court decisions, and listen to famous educator and political speeches to find them. These concepts are guaranteed to citizens of the United States. Chiseled into the east façade of the Supreme Court building we find the words “Justice the Guardian of Liberty.” Note that we are not alone in the reverence that we hold for these terms. Chiseled into many public buildings in France, for instance, we find the words liberté, égalité, fraternité (liberty, equality, and fraternity). These are worldwide concepts valued in any and all democracies.

It would be inconceivable to claim that a democratic environment exists for citizens if that environment lacked the above concepts. Could you envision democracy existing to any degree if citizens lacked, for instance, justice, choice, liberty, or equality? I can’t.

**A “DEMOCRACY-METER”**

Educators see the value of identifying the specific terms that, if present, suggest democracy is present, and if absent, suggest democracy is absent. Democracy, something they all appear to support, all of a sudden becomes less abstract and more concrete.

Their feelings of “I now have the term democracy more under control” evaporate when I ask them, as an exercise, to select four or five of the terms that they most associate with a democracy and then apply a hypothetical Democracy-Meter to them. Selecting several terms is not all that hard. Applying the Democracy-Meter is a bit more difficult. Like a meat thermometer that measures the temperature of meat or fowl to tell you when it is done, a Democracy-Meter, on a scale of 0 to 100 percent, measures how much of each of the specific democracy concepts (i.e., equality, freedom, justice, choice) needs to exist before one can say “Democracy is done (i.e., exists).”

Educators are asked to decide how much of each of their selected democracy terms should be present in order for them to say that democracy now exists in their classrooms. Should they shoot for students having 100 percent freedom, 60 percent justice, 80 percent equality, and 50 percent choice, or should some other degrees of freedom, justice, equality, and choice be set as goals?

The distribution of percents for each of the chosen democracy terms is mind-boggling! Educators run the gamut from assigning very low percents to each specific discipline term to assigning quite high percents to each term. These differences reflect rather clearly the different views that educators hold.
regarding just how much democracy, and the specific terms that reflect it, should exist in a classroom.

The question that arises here is should a child’s (i.e., citizen’s) level of democracy experienced in a classroom be dictated by the beliefs and values held by individual teachers? Or, should a school or school district make these desired level-of-democracy decisions, keeping in mind constitutionally guaranteed rights of all citizens, and then ask teachers, as agents of the state, to provide them?

ARE STUDENTS CITIZENS?

Here comes another tough question. “Do you believe students, including those in your classroom, are citizens?” Humanists say “yes,” and they put their beliefs into practice through their choice of a discipline model. Humanists even go so far as to say that children and adults are “equal.” Recently I reviewed a 1960s-era video tape titled Dynamics of Classroom Behavior. The black and white tape, prepared by the Adler School of Professional Psychology, features Rudolf Dreikurs conducting a workshop for teachers where he stressed that they should promote democracy in the classroom. The tape and its message are almost fifty years old. Have we made any real progress since then in guaranteeing students their democratic rights?

The fact is, whether you believe students are or are not citizens may matter less than the fact that the state believes they are. Except where the state has specifically limited a child’s rights (i.e., must be a certain age to vote or consume alcohol), all rights enjoyed by adults legally are enjoyed (or should be) by children. Whether children know this or not is immaterial. Simply by being born in the United States (or naturalized) certain rights are guaranteed to all citizens—including children.

For those of you who wish to create a democratic classroom, to help prepare children to adequately participate in a democratic society when they leave school and move into the adult world, you will want to choose compatible discipline models. Your choice of a discipline model, probably one of the more humanistic ones, will help you to discipline in a way that gets results, yet minimally infringes on a students’ constitutional rights. Although this may not always be easy, your strong commitment to creating a democratic classroom will help you to stick to your chosen democratic-oriented discipline model even when the going gets tough—and it will!

For those of you who are less comfortable with creating a more democratic classroom, you will likely choose one of the more behaviorist discipline models—models that do things to children arguably for “their own good.”
Shared power and decision-making, too much student freedom and liberty, often will be down-played in your classroom. The adult, the teacher, will be seen as the authority—the boss.

**JUSTICE: A DEMOCRATIC TERM**

Let’s examine one of the terms most often generated by educators when asked those they associate with democracy. That term is justice. No audience can envision a truly democratic environment existing that lacked justice. Well, if students are citizens, then (barring any state declaration to the contrary), they, too, are entitled to justice. But how much justice? Consider the following scenario.

Pretend that you were on your way to class today and you were stopped by a policeman. This policeman accused you of speeding. Because you were from a different county and thus might not come back for a hearing, the policeman decided to take you directly to court. When you got to court, lo and behold, the judge looked exactly like the policeman.

It gets worse. A number of witnesses are called to testify. You guessed it—they, too, looked exactly like the policeman. Your defense attorney and the prosecuting attorney also looked exactly like the policeman. Finally, to make matters even worse, the twelve jurors who will decide your fate all looked exactly like the policeman who had accused you of speeding in the first place. No, your eyes are not playing tricks on you. All of the parties looked like the policeman who accused you because, in fact, they were one and the same person. Your accuser, your judge, your defense attorney, your prosecuting attorney, the witnesses, and the entire jury, were the same person! Do you believe that you could get a “fair trial”? Do you believe that justice could be served? Probably not!

Yet, in classrooms across the country, this is just the sort of justice some students receive. Their teacher accuses them (perhaps of cheating, throwing a spitball, or writing graffiti in a textbook), their teacher acts as the primary witness, their teacher acts as the prosecuting attorney (there is no defense attorney), their teacher acts as the jury, and their teacher announces and carries out the sentence! Where is the justice?

What are the democracy ramifications of the teacher, even one who is well-intended, playing all of these disciplinary roles? Are students entitled to any less justice than that of their adult counterparts? Is there one version of justice for adults and another for children? What does the Constitution say?

At this point someone in the audience will exclaim, “We would not have time to give students all the rights that we, as adults, enjoy. It would bring
education to a stand still.” But, isn’t education supposed to be a preparation for real life? Isn’t the process of providing students justice a part of education? Note that expediency would not be accepted in an adult court as a justification for shortchanging justice. As an adult, you wouldn’t stand for this, would you? Why should students?

Even Superman believed in justice. His long-term motto was “Truth, justice, and the American way.” Even though the motto was rewritten in the latest Superman Returns movie to be “Truth, justice, and...all that stuff” the concept of justice remained intact! Let’s hear it for the man of steel. He fought for justice in the world; will you fight for justice in the classroom?

When teachers conduct the “democracy-meter” exercise described earlier in this chapter, justice is selected as the democracy-correlated term universally closest to 100 percent. This suggests that teachers believe that without maximum justice present in a classroom, democracy cannot truly exist. To learn more about judicious discipline, turn to Chapter 10, Other Noted Authors: What They have to Say about Discipline. One of the featured authors, Forrest Gathercoal, presents a well-argued case for both judicious discipline and, when necessary, judicious consequences.

**CHOICE: ANOTHER DEMOCRATIC TERM**

Another one of the terms most often generated by educators when asked those they associate with democracy is choice. One’s definition of choice is revealed in the discipline model he or she chooses to embrace. A couple of the more behaviorist discipline models offer choice, but it may not be a true choice. These models believe that children are provided choice when a teacher says, “It is my way or the highway!”, “Do it my way or else!”, or “You can choose to do what you are told or you can choose to visit the vice-principal!” One might argue that there is no real choice here because the two options—at least to the student—are equally unacceptable. The student feels he or she is “caught between a rock and a hard place,” or “is dammed if he/she does and dammed if he/she doesn’t.”

More humanistic discipline models would provide a different kind of choice—something closer to a true choice. The difference between these two teacher visions of choice is revealed in the following example.

You are showing a film to the children in your fifth grade class. Joey is standing up, sort of leaning on his desk, watching the film. Unfortunately, his desk is near the front of the room and he is blocking the view of both you and a number of other students. Before you respond, ask yourself what
is your goal? What is it that you want to have happen? Let’s examine two opposing approaches to getting what you want done, done. The first teacher response represents a more behaviorist discipline position regarding choice. The second response represents a more humanistic discipline position regarding choice.

- “Joey, either sit down at your desk like everybody or you will find yourself in detention! You know the rules. It is your choice.”
- “Joey, is there some other place that you could stand or sit so that the rest of us would be able to see the film? It would be a big help to us. Thanks.”

In both cases Joey is provided with a choice. Several of the more behaviorist-oriented discipline models would recommend the first teacher response. The implied statement is “Do it or else I will hurt you.” The more humanist-oriented discipline models would recommend the second teacher response. Trust is implied in that there is an expectation that the student can come up with a solution that meets everyone’s needs—including his own. Both responses have as their goal making sure that all students can see the film. Which teacher response would you be more likely to deliver? Which teacher response best represents a democratic classroom? Perhaps you might want to wait until you have read Chapter 3, Theoretical Frameworks for Selecting a Discipline Model, and have read each of the six Tried-and-True discipline models (Chapters 4–9) before you decide. See Kohn’s (1993) *Phi Delta Kappan* article, Choices for Children, for more information on letting students make important classroom decisions.

**LIBERTY: STILL ONE MORE DEMOCRATIC TERM**

Just how important is liberty—translated “freedom”—to Americans? The first sentence in the second paragraph of *The Declaration of Independence* states, “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.”

In New York harbor we call her the Statue of Liberty—the lady who has welcomed immigrants since its construction in the late 1800s. In the song, *America*, the first line is “My country tis of thee, sweet land of liberty.” In Philadelphia we have the “Liberty Bell” that was rung so enthusiastically that it cracked. We have the much loved or much despised organization called the ACLU—American Civil Liberties Union. And, finally, we have Patrick
Henry, a revolutionary patriot exclaiming, “Give me liberty or give me death!”
Yes, liberty is very important to Americans.

But, liberty for whom? Some people? All people? Croce (1939, p. 12) answered this question by stating “Liberty in the singular exists only in liberties in the plural.” Think about the implication of this statement for classrooms. Should liberty be maximized so that we come as close as possible to “all” participants sharing that liberty?

Herbert Spencer (1945, pp. 15–16) argued that liberty for man is maximized “by the relative paucity of the restraints it imposes on him.” The fewer the restraints the greater the liberty or freedom. One can assume that he was using the word “man” in the generic sense and that it refers to mankind—men, women, and children. If Spencer is correct, shouldn’t teachers work at reducing the classroom restraints imposed on students?

William Bennett, Secretary of Education under President Reagan, once stated that “liberty and law are mutually exclusive.” To maximize one you must minimize the other. No one expects to achieve 100 percent liberty and, hence, live in a world void of laws and rules. This is just not practical. Classroom laws and rules, whether determined by the teacher, alone, or by teachers and students working cooperatively, are with us to stay. But, if Bennett’s assertion is correct, then democratic classrooms must work toward reducing the classroom laws and rules (i.e., restraints in Spencer’s language). This is the only way to maximize liberty.

**FREE SCHOOLS—ARE THEY TOO DEMOCRATIC?**

Some still might argue that it simply cannot be done—providing students with the degree of justice, choice, freedom, liberty, etc., that we provide adults. I disagree. Although not the focus of this text, readers should note that Free Schools such as Summerhill (England), Sudbury Valley Free School (MA), Albany Free School (NY), and the Circle Free School (PA), in fact, establish a structure so that students are provided with all the rights adults enjoy. Teachers and students are equals—everyone has one vote! These schools still have time to effectively teach the necessary reading, writing, and arithmetic. Their graduates, like most school graduates, go on to be plumbers, poets, physicians, politicians, and professors. Not surprisingly, “a disproportionately high number—42 percent—of Sudbury graduates become entrepreneurs” (Marano, 2006, p. 100). Free Schools practice democracy with students in preparation for these same students using democracy later as adults.

While some of these Free Schools serve privileged student bodies (i.e., Sudbury Valley Free School and Summerhill), still other Free Schools serve
middle class students (i.e., Circle School) and lower socioeconomic students (i.e., Albany Free School). Freedom, and all the other democracy-related concepts, can be mastered by all students no matter their background. This point is highlighted in a recent article by Marano, titled, “Class Dismissed” (2006). Children can learn to act with self-discipline—the valued kind of discipline championed by John Dewey and desired by most adults. Adults can foster self-discipline in schools and should do so (Covaleskie, 1994). As a classroom teacher, how much justice will you—in the name of students—shoot for in your classroom?

Consider reading A. S. Neill’s classics, *Summerhill School: A New View of Childhood* (1960) and *Freedom: Not License* (1966), or the more recent *A Free Range Childhood: Self Regulation at Summerhill School* (2000) by Appleton. If you would like to read still more current sources describing how democracy is practiced in Free Schools, examine such documents as *How the School is Governed* and *The Judicial System*. Both, along with many more such resources, are available at www.sudval.org/06_sudb_19.html. Notice the two terms, “governed” and “judicial” in the highlighted documents. In Free Schools, the system under which children learn is just as important as what they learn. “Free schools are the educational expression of pure democracy in action” (Morrison, 2005, p. 25).

A final observation regarding Summerhill (and other Free Schools) is that people seem inclined to believe that *The Lord of the Flies*, a fictional story about youngsters running amuck without adult control, is true, but don’t believe the democratic reality of Free Schools, where youngsters without traditional adult control, act in a civil manner toward one another. Fiction, then, seems believable; reality seems far-fetched! Strange, isn’t it?

**HOW THE TERMS THAT DEFINE DEMOCRACY MAKE A DIFFERENCE**

Simply listing the concepts that define democracy (i.e., justice, choice, liberty, freedom, equality) is not enough—although it is a good start. It also is important how one defines each of these specific terms. And, finally, it is critical how much of each term (i.e., 20 percent, 50 percent, 80 percent, 100 percent) is sought on behalf of students in a teacher’s attempt to create his or her vision of a democratic classroom. I hope that it is clear that one’s vision of a democratic classroom will influence which discipline model one will adopt. This is the whole point of this chapter—helping to prepare you to choose one of the discipline models yet to be presented.
DEWEY, DISCIPLINE, AND DEMOCRACY

Covaleskie (1994), in an article titled, “Dewey, Discipline, and Democracy,” argues that “order in a classroom can be obtained in at least two ways: we can impose it by direct action on the students, or we can present the students with engaging tasks that generate their own order. Both strategies will yield a form of order, but the two are not at all equivalent states. When we are forced to use the former, it is because the tasks are not themselves sufficiently engaging to generate order, and are, therefore, not educative. They also fail to prepare students for democratic citizenship.” The author’s statement clearly suggests that the overall goal of schools is to help students prepare for democratic citizenship. Do you agree?

Educated people, including children, are more likely to take advantage of their democratic rights if they know they exist. This scares some adults so much that they keep information about children’s rights a secret. If information is power, and it is, then children can be kept powerless by denying them information regarding their rights.

Remember that the primary reason our country started school systems in the first place was to make sure its citizens learned to read. Reading, a vehicle for acquiring information, was seen as a fundamental skill to read both the Bible and the capital laws of the land. Intelligent citizens simply must have access to information, including information regarding their rights, in order to participate effectively in the democratic process. Does this apply to children, too? If they are considered citizens, then the answer is “yes.”

OUR CONSTITUTION: ITS IMPACT ON DISCIPLINE

We are a land of laws. The blindfold on the lady who is shown holding the scales of justice suggests that justice (and all other characteristics of a democracy) should be handed out fairly without regards to, among other human characteristics, race, color, creed, gender, and yes, even age! What are some relevant points to discipline that can be found in our constitution?

Preamble

The Preamble of the Constitution states that “We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice . . . and secure
the blessings of *liberty* to ourselves and our posterity. . . .” So, where possible, citizens should enjoy the fruits of justice and liberty. It is guaranteed to them. Should classrooms be an exception?

**Amendment I**

Amendment I of the Constitution guarantees that the state (or agents of the state) shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise of, shall not abridge the freedom of speech or of the press or the right to peaceably assemble, or to petition the state for redress of grievances. In years past, students were told to leave their rights on the doorstep when they entered school. Those days are long gone. Court case after court case has addressed each and every one of these Amendment I rights. Clearly, students now carry their rights with them as they enter school buildings. Should educators inform students of their Amendment I rights? Should they inform students of what they can do when their rights are denied?

**Amendment IV**

Amendment IV of the Constitution reads, in part, “the right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures.” This amendment guarantees citizens a reasonable expectation of privacy. The applicability of this Amendment to schools hinges, in part, on the meaning of the words “persons,” “houses,” “papers,” “effects,” and “unreasonable searches and seizures.” Clearly students are “persons.” Clearly students are “housed” within the school’s walls. Clearly students possess “effects,” i.e., their “stuff,” including among other things, books, wallets and purses, cell phones, pagers, religious materials, keys, make up. Finally, students have “papers,” ranging from notes (maybe even embarrassing ones), personal diaries, telephone directories, and, of course, lots and lots of school-related assignments.

When it comes to “unreasonable searches and seizures” the Supreme Court, in NEW JERSEY v. T.L.O. (No. 83-712, January 15, 1985), ruled that it applies to searches conducted by public school officials. School officials cannot claim the parents’ immunity from the strictures of the Fourth Amendment. The decision took “notice of the difficulty of maintaining discipline in public schools today,” but concluded that “the situation is not so dire that students in the schools may claim no legitimate expectations of privacy.”
Amendment V

Amendment V of the Constitution guarantees that citizens shall not be compelled in a criminal case to be a witness against themselves. From Perry Mason to Law and Order we observe witnesses “taking the fifth”—“I refuse to answer on the grounds that it might tend to incriminate me.” Although most student discipline situations normally are not criminal cases, should students generally be required to bare witness against themselves? Should students be allowed to take the “fifth?” Is at least the spirit of Amendment V being violated if students must testify against themselves? I don’t have the definitive answer here, but I do know that no matter how these questions are answered they will impact student discipline.

Amendment VIII

Amendment VIII of the Constitution says that the state may not impose “cruel and unusual punishments.” This Amendment would appear to have an obvious application to school discipline in that, to many people, discipline in equated with punishment. Well, you would be wrong. As stated earlier, the government can limit rights—i.e., requiring the age for voting or marriage.

The United States Supreme Court has ruled that this Amendment does not apply to students. In a famous court case, Ingraham v. Wright 430 U.S. 651 (1977), two junior high school students were paddled by school administrators. One of the students went to the hospital where bruises on his buttocks were diagnosed as hematoma. The students took the Dade County, Florida, school to court. The case eventually was appealed to the Supreme Court where Justice Powell wrote the 5-4 majority opinion.

The court argued that the use of corporal punishment as a means of disciplining schoolchildren dates back to the colonial period. Despite the general abandonment of corporal punishment as a means of punishing criminal offenders, the practice continues to play a role in the public education of schoolchildren in most parts of the country.

The Supreme Court ruled that Amendment VIII applied only to criminals—those incarcerated and, thus, out of sight of the general public. Powell argued that schoolchildren have little need for the protection of Amendment VIII because of the openness of schools, the support by family and friends, and the constant accompaniment of other students and teachers. Justice Powell further argued that imposing additional administrative safeguards as a constitutional requirement may offer greater protection to
students, but it would also entail a significant intrusion into an area of primary educational responsibility. The court was reluctant to intervene in what were seen as “educational matters.”

Justice White, along with Justices Brennan, Marshall, and Stevens, in a challenging dissent to the majority’s opinion pointed out that nowhere does the Amendment VIII state that its limitations apply only to criminal punishment. Precedent, only, has limited its application to criminals. The 5-4 decision stands today in spite of the fact that three-fifths of the states in our nation have now outlawed corporal punishment in schools.

Amendment XIV

Finally, Amendment XIV guarantees citizens “due process” and the “equal protection of the laws.” With respect to due process, it is noteworthy to point out that the eleven words, “deprived of life, liberty or property without due process of law,” appears twice in our Constitution—in both Amendment V and Amendment XIV.

Prior to possible disciplinary actions, how much notice, if any, of an infraction should a student be given? Should a student be “Mirandized”—the now-familiar warning of a right to remain silent, caution that anything you say may be used against you, and that you are entitled to representation? Should the student have a right to a hearing, a right to tell his or her side, a right to present and/or challenge witnesses? Due process does not come without a cost—time and energy on everyone’s part. At the same time, lack of due process comes at an even greater cost to democracy.

A review of school districts’ Code of Student Conduct publications reveals something interesting regarding students’ constitutional rights. When included, and that is rarely, only two Amendments specifically are mentioned—the First and Fourteenth Amendment. Far less often mentioned is the Fourth Amendment. One wonders why school districts omit a specific reference to the remaining Amendments, especially the remaining first ten Amendments that make up our Bill of Rights.

Equal protection under the law refers to both an actual and perceived sense of fairness in the law. Gender or skin color, level of affluence or poverty, professional or blue collar parents should make no difference in the application of the laws of the land—or the discipline in a classroom. This has not, of course, always been the case. For instance, students of color generally have been disciplined more often and more harshly than their white counterparts. Special education students, too, have been more often disciplined than nonspecial students. Is there a pattern here? Could it be that those least knowledgeable of
their rights or least able to fight for their rights receive one form of discipline while everyone else receives another form of discipline? Where, here, is the equal protection of the law?

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

While we are discussing our Constitution, it seems relevant to mention our Pledge of Allegiance. Our pledge to our flag ends with the words “... liberty and justice for all.” It is important to note that the Pledge does not enumerate exceptions—the word “all” is rather inclusive. Unless the state has legislated otherwise, should children be included in the word “all”?

SIGNING AWAY A CHILD’S RIGHTS

In Chapter 4 you will read about a discipline program that has, as one of its requirements, that parents give their consent when corporal punishment is to be used on their child. This requirement, usually taking the form of a “Corporal Punishment-Parent Signature Form,” asks parents to check either:

- “I do authorize the use of corporal punishment administered according to district policy if my child’s behavior warrants it,” or
- “I do not authorize the use of corporal punishment as a disciplinary consequence for my child.”

One would hope that districts that provide this parental choice do so as part of a larger program to keep parents both informed and involved. Some, I’m suspect, do so to protect themselves. The main problem, though, in a democratic country is, SHOULD parents be permitted to sign away a child’s right to his or her safety and human dignity. As a matter of policy, should one citizen ever be allowed to deny another citizen his or her rights—especially without due process? Is a parent signing a simple consent form sufficient due process? Where is the child’s voice in this crucial decision? After all, it will be the child who may be paddled.

Surprisingly, there still are some schools that do not seek parental approval for paddling. And, there are school districts that include in their Code of Conduct materials distributed to parents, statements such as, “If you are opposed to corporal punishment being used on your child, you must submit a signed written note to the principal each year.” Here the onus is placed on
the parents to take action—to prepare and mail such a signed note for each child every year.

For those schools that continue to view themselves *in loco parentis*—in place of the parents—signing away such children’s rights is not only common, but in their mind, defendable. What do you think? Your answer will help you decide which of the Tried-and-True discipline models presented in Chapters 4 through 9 is for you.

**A REALITY CHECK!**

Some readers might think that this chapter is a bit one-sided—it pushes democracy, and thus, democratic discipline, too much. Some readers might think that I should have been equally diligent in presenting the “other side,” perhaps the “bad side” of democracy. The problem is, given that we live in a country founded on democratic ideals, I don’t know what the “bad side” of democracy would be and I don’t know what justification one might use for implementing less democracy rather than more democracy. I understand that promoting student rights and, of course, student responsibilities, will be challenging. I think that educators and students are up to that challenge. The reality is that just how much democracy will be provided students still comes down to individual teachers operating in their individual classrooms.

If you believe that democracy should be promoted in your classroom, then after reading this chapter you should be better prepared to defend your choice of one of the more humanistic discipline models to be presented in Chapters 7, 8, and 9. And, make no doubt about it, you will have to defend your prodemocracy classroom and discipline ideas. There will be colleagues, administrators, school board members, and parents who will disagree with your democratic position on discipline. You will be held accountable for your democratic views and actions.

On the other hand, if you are less comfortable about extending too much democracy to students, you will probably choose one of the more behaviorist discipline models presented in Chapters 4, 5, and 6. After reading this chapter you should have a better idea of what you might be up against from colleagues, administrators, school board members, and parents who might not agree with your limiting of democracy in your classroom. You, too, will be held accountable for your views and your actions regarding democracy.

In both cases, whether you are comfortable with and want to support democracy in the classroom, or you are uncomfortable with and want to limit democracy in the classroom, to be forewarned is to be forearmed. Consider yourself both forewarned and informed.
This text is all about helping you to answer the question, “How would you address classroom management in your classroom?” If you are still in teacher training, you may well be asked to write a paper on this question. Recently, a graduate student in education at a private university in New York was asked to do just that. His two-page, single-spaced paper, earned him a high grade from his professor. There were parts of his paper that after reading I agreed with such as “working closely with parents,” a recognition of “individual needs,” and instilling “a strong work ethic” into each child. Still other parts I disagreed with such as his lack of support for multicultural education and, especially, his ending sentence, “To sum up the classroom environment, I would run the class like a dictatorship.” But, they were his thoughts, his answer to the instructor’s question.

A copy of his paper was forwarded to the overseer of the school’s graduate program who, after discussing it with university officials, concluded that his thoughts were not in line with those supported by the university. Several days before the spring registration, he was dismissed from the university and told to go elsewhere (“Favor the Rod, Get the Ax,” 2005). Believing democracy to be on his side, he sought justice, first through an organization called FIRE (Foundation for Individual Rights in Education), and then in the courts. The end result was that he was reinstated and has successfully completed student teaching with excellent evaluations.

This story does make one wonder whether you should answer questions posed by a professor by honestly responding, or playing that play-it-safe game, “tell the professor what he or she wants to hear.” In a more autocratic environment one may wish to err on the side of caution—ever mindful that a superior (teacher, boss) is in a position to reward or punish you. In a more democratic environment, where concepts such as justice, due process, and equality prevail, you may be more likely to respond honestly. What kind of classroom environment will you create?

**CONCLUSION**

Forty years ago who would have thought that students would have the rights that they enjoy today? But the fact is today is today and their rights are here and here to stay. The fact that students enjoy more rights today than they did yesterday should not be seen as a case where we have given them something—sort of like a gift. We also should not even think of it as if they have earned these rights. Like it or not, as citizens of our country children are
entitled to these rights—just like you and just like me. All citizens are entitled to certain inalienable rights, at least until they do something that causes the government, using due process, to take them away. Students’ rights are not only here to stay, they will more than likely expand tomorrow. Classroom discipline is not, and cannot be, immune from this evolution of student rights.

The fact is that although your author may have his overall view of democracy and, thus, uses it to defend his preferred discipline model, his view does not have to be your view! Let me repeat this—his view does not have to be your view! Your view should be just that, your view! Your author is prepared to defend his choice of a discipline model and he asks no less of you as a professional. Your defense certainly will include some reference to democracy. I hope that this chapter helps.

A handy booklet titled *American Legacy: The United States Constitution and Other Essential Documents of American Democracy*, is an inexpensive eighty-page pocket-sized booklet that comprises the U.S. Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, together with passages from other documents that represent essential ideas of American democracy. It is available from the Center for Civic Education, 5146 Douglas Fir Road, Calabasas, CA 91302-1467. cce@civiced.org.
OBJECTIVES

This chapter will help you, among other things, to:

- Identify and explain four theoretical frameworks for evaluating “tried and true” discipline models.
- Accept the need for using theoretical frameworks as the basis for selecting a discipline model.
- Compare and contrast Wolfgang and Glickman’s interventionist versus noninterventionist positions as a basis for selecting a discipline model.
- Compare and contrast French and Raven’s five social bases of power as a basis for selecting a discipline model.
- Compare and contrast Skinner and Rogers’ behaviorist versus humanist positions as a basis for selecting a discipline model.
- Compare and contrast Lewis’ control versus influence positions as a basis for selecting a discipline model.
- Explain why eclecticism, a smorgasbord approach to discipline, is inappropriate.

DISCIPLINE MODELS: THEIR ORIGIN

The six “tried and true” discipline models in Part II of this book flow from one or more broad, all-encompassing theoretical frameworks. Such frameworks, several examples of which are presented in this chapter, provide a
wider, balanced view of the beliefs and options within the study of discipline that exist for use by new, as well as seasoned, practitioners.

Everything, including models of classroom management, should have an origin that can be traced. Educators, as well as other professionals, rely upon access to such organized knowledge bases. The four theoretical frameworks presented in this chapter are designed to act as advanced organizers, providing artificial mental structures or scaffolds onto which individual discipline models and the information and skills contained within them can be hung.

The frameworks vary in their number of subcategories, from French and Raven’s five social bases of power to Lewis’ three (control, manage, and influence). They also vary in philosophical positions as revealed clearly in the Skinner-Rogers dichotomy. What these frameworks have in common is their recognition that individual classroom management models are better understood when viewed in comparison to one another.

Understanding where specific discipline models fit within a larger framework will assist you in selecting and defending a preferred model. It will help you become more accountable—better able to explain why you have adopted a particular model and why you have not adopted still other models. The specific classroom model you select should be consistent with your beliefs about how one person (a teacher) should interact with another (a child). Your organized set of beliefs regarding discipline, in reality, will represent your philosophy of discipline.

Your philosophy of discipline will prompt you to adopt, even champion, some models of classroom management while shunning others. Certain models will “feel” right, but others will not. The model that you select, a reflection of your own philosophy, will guide you in your decision making concerning classroom management-related situations. Using a model that you have selected, and that you believe in, sets the stage for your discipline system, not you, to take the strain associated with effective classroom management. Isn’t this how you would prefer things to work? I hope so.

Although an issue of NEA Today (1998) says that “[w]hen it comes to discipline issues, there’s no one right answer” (Dear Dr. Discipline, p. 6), there should be a right answer for you. The right answer will be your using a classroom management model that you believe in—one that reflects your fundamental beliefs on how fellow human beings (including children) should be treated!

For those schools that have a mentoring program to assist newer teachers, one might question why particular mentors are chosen. Are they, in their own right, recognized to be effective teachers? Do they have lots of seniority and
thus are entitled to this position? Were they the only faculty to volunteer? The fact is that giving assistance is far more effective when recommendations and advice are based on a theoretical framework. Therefore, mentors should be chosen because they possess knowledge of such theoretical frameworks and, when offering advice to newer teachers, can cite particular frameworks—chapter and verse. Note how much better this is than simply saying to a newer teacher, “Well, this is what worked for me, why don’t you try it?”

This chapter contains four theoretical frameworks that can help teachers place discipline advice, suggestions, and recommendations into some sort of pedagogical perspective. Readers of past editions of this text have reported these frameworks to be extremely useful in helping them to compare and contrast discipline models and, then, to select and defend a specific model.

Each of the classroom management frameworks presented in this chapter purports to best categorize, usually in the form of some sort of hierarchy, classroom management models. The specific frameworks discussed include those developed by Wolfgang and Glickman, French and Raven, Skinner and Rogers, and Lewis. These frameworks provide the “theory” behind each of the discipline models presented in Part II. The models themselves provide the basis for the effective “practice” of disciplining. A good balance is required between “sound theory” and “effective practice.” One is little good without the other.

A SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT FRAMEWORK: WOLFGANG AND GLICKMAN

Possibly fearful that the word *philosophy* would scare away readers, Wolfgang and Glickman (1980) early on substituted the generic term *school of thought* as the basis for their framework. What is your school of thought regarding how students learn, develop, and grow? What is your school of thought regarding discipline? As shown in Figure 3.1, teachers are either interventionists, interactionalists, or noninterventionists at heart. Although each school of thought comes complete with classroom management models that get the job done—establishing and maintaining discipline—each represents its own unique set of beliefs.
Interventionists believe that children develop according to environmental conditions. As a classroom teacher, you are one of those conditions. A teacher’s job is to control the environment by implementing a logical system (the teacher’s, of course) of conditioning. Anyone who accepts a position as a teacher has not only the right but an “obligation” to modify student behavior. That’s what they are paid to do. To do less would be inconsistent with an interventionist’s perception of the role of a teacher.

Interventionists are proponents of the carrot-and-stick approach. Dispensing rewards and punishments are the tools these teachers use to get otherwise unmoving and unmotivated students moving and motivated. A student’s behavior must be modified, be shaped. Interventionists would argue that this directing of a student’s actions is being done for the student’s own good.

Consistent with this theory, the teacher is seen in the forefront—he or she wields the power. Children are seen in the background, wielding little, if any, power. The less power students have, the easier it will be for teachers to intervene. Skinner (1972, p. 205) describes a desired powerless state for children when he posits, “It is the autonomous inner man who is abolished, and that is a step forward.” Dobson’s New Dare to Discipline (1992) and New Strong-Willed Child (2006), Canter’s Assertive Discipline (1997) and Succeeding with Difficult Students (1993), Canter’s Classroom Management for Academic Success (2006), and Skinner’s thinking (numerous citations) fall within the interventionist category.

At the other extreme, noninterventionists believe in providing a supportive, facilitating environment for students. A faith exists that the student possesses an internal motivation that, if simply nurtured (not controlled), will blossom. Like the flower that requires only nurturing water, soil, and sunlight to bloom, so too the capacity for a child’s growth is dependent upon that child, not a controlling teacher. A student is viewed as having power over his or her own
destiny. By contrast, the teacher, better called “director” or “facilitator,” is no longer in the forefront—no longer a power wielder.

Don’t students have to be motivated by teachers? Isn’t it natural for students to avoid learning, and the work associated with it, if they can get away with it? Won’t chaos develop in the absence of adult direction? Noninterventionists think not. They simply point out the natural desire to learn that exists among the very young when everything about the world is motivating—chemistry, biology, geology, math, history, computers, language, reading. Just try putting an infant to bed when, despite near exhaustion, there is so much of the world to discover. What happens to children’s curiosity about knowledge as they make their way through many school systems?

Lest the reader should jump to the wrong conclusions, noninterventionism is not a synonym for a hands-off or laissez-faire approach. Noninterventionists have complete classroom management models designed to handle every situation interventionists (and their models) must handle. The concepts in Thomas Gordon’s *Parent Effectiveness Training* (2000), *Leader Effectiveness Training* (2001), and *Teacher Effectiveness Training* (2003), and Carl R. Rogers’ *Freedom to Learn* (1969) fit in the noninterventionist category.

Between these two extremes are interactionalists. They believe that conflicts cannot be resolved without shared responsibility, without full participation in decision making by all the participants in a conflict. It takes two to tango! It takes two to cause a problem, and it takes two to solve it. Both share a desire to resolve the problem; both share equally the available power. What is important to interactionalists is not how many conflicts occur, but how those conflicts are resolved so that relationships remain intact, both parties save face, and both feel their needs have been met.

Democracy, with institution-imposed limits, operates. Interactionalists believe that all human beings choose their behaviors—to cheat or not cheat, to hit or not hit a fellow student, to study or not study. With this recognition comes an expectation of greater responsibility for one’s actions. Interactionalists, where possible, provide students with choices. When students are called upon to make choices, much (not all) of the responsibility for their behavior is transferred to their shoulders. See Glasser’s long list of books, Dreikurs and Cassel’s *Discipline without Tears* (1972), and Balson’s *Understanding Classroom Behaviour* (1997).

Whatever your philosophy, you will be happier operating in an environment that reflects your school of thought. Later you will be asked to place the six “tried and true” classroom models that will be described in Part II into Wolfgang and Glickman’s Schools of Thought framework.
A SOCI AL BASES OF POWER FRAMEWORK: FRENCH AND RAVEN

A school is a study in group dynamics, a study of how one person (such as a teacher) exerts power over another person (such as a student). According to Glasser (1986), although exerting power is a basic human need, it carries a cultural taint that does not seem to extend to the other human psychological needs such as loving and belonging. Regardless of cultural bias, the seeking of power itself is neither good nor bad.

Almost fifty years ago, French and Raven (1960) identified five specific bases of social power that can be used by educators to influence students. Social power is exercised in all human contacts. These five bases are coercive, reward, legitimate, referent, and expert power. Together, they represent 100 percent of the power that we have available to wield over others and for others to wield over us. Although we will discuss these power bases individually, in real classrooms they all operate at the same time.

Depending upon your beliefs regarding classroom management, the best you can do is attempt to use some power bases more often than others and attempt to use the remaining ones less often. Thus, your own French and Raven Social Bases of Power Distribution may correspond to the one shown at the top of Figure 3.2, while that of a colleague may correspond to the one at the bottom.

Figure 3.2
Hypothetical Weighted French and Raven’s Power Distributions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>35%</th>
<th>45%</th>
<th>10%</th>
<th>5%</th>
<th>5%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coercive Power</td>
<td>Reward Power</td>
<td>Legitimate Power</td>
<td>Referent Power</td>
<td>Expert Power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coercive Power</td>
<td>Reward Power</td>
<td>Legitimate Power</td>
<td>Referent Power</td>
<td>Expert Power</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Coercive Power

Because students perceive teachers to be in a position to mete out punishment, students allow teachers to dictate their behavior. But how much is really known about the effects of punishment on behavior? How many educators know how to use punishment effectively as a basis for social power? How do students handle punishment?

Students cope with repeated punishment in a variety of ways, including rebelling, retaliating (if not at the teacher, at a weaker classmate), lying, cheating, conforming, apple polishing, submitting, and withdrawing (either mentally or physically) from learning. These coping mechanisms, however, are only outward signs of the student’s inner anger, frustration, embarrassment, feelings of unworthiness, fear, and vindictiveness.

Should teachers avoid using coercive power? That is a personal, or perhaps district-mandated, decision. What I can say, however, is that if teachers continue to rely upon coercive power, they have a responsibility to learn enough about it to use it effectively—recognizing both its strengths and limitations.

Reward Power

Students allow teachers to exert power over them because they perceive that the teacher is in a position to pass out or withhold desired rewards. An entire supporting vocabulary surrounding reward power has been developed including words such as stimulus, response, cueing, satiation, consequence, and schedules of reinforcement.

Some see the dispensing of rewards as providing an incentive; others see it as offering a bribe. What one teacher sees as creating dependent students—working/behaving only for the reward—others see as preparation for the world of work. What one educator sees as training students in the same way we train our pet dog, another sees as the only way to maintain order in schools. Clearly, reward power, like coercive power, is more complicated than it appears at first glance.

Manipulation: The Common Element

Coercive power and reward power share the common element of manipulation. These two power bases do, in fact, work. But how long do they work? The surprising answer lies in the words allow and perceive. These power bases are allowed to work only as long as the students perceive that the teacher controls desired rewards or dreaded punishments. The instant student perceptions change, the teacher’s power changes.
For the elementary child who no longer wants scratch-and-sniff stickers, the teacher handing them out has lost power. For the student who decides that he no longer needs a teacher’s written recommendation, the teacher who has been withholding it as a condition for improved classroom behavior has lost power. For the student who decides that she doesn’t really mind detention, the teacher assigning it has lost power. And so it goes. Students have the ultimate power over the power used on them. This is a scary realization for proponents of these two power bases.

**Overlooked Bases of Social Power and Influence**

Although you have probably had some coursework dealing with coercive and reward power, you have probably never taken a course that focused upon the three remaining power bases—legitimate, referent, and expert. Yet these three power bases have a far greater potential to influence student behavior than do coercive and reward power.

**Legitimate Power**

Students perceive that a teacher has the right to prescribe behavior. Legitimate power operates on the basis that people accept the social structure of institutions—homes, churches, the military, schools. Inherent in this structure is a hierarchy of power. Students recognize and respect the teacher’s position.

Teachers should be aware of their legitimate power—their legitimate authority—and use it to assert a leadership role in the classroom. A teacher, hired by the school board and delegated the responsibility for seeing that conditions for learning are present, might announce, “I have contracted with the district to teach. I have an obligation to live up to the terms of that contract. Any disciplinary infractions that interfere with my efforts to teach cannot be tolerated.”

Administrators could assist teachers by carrying this message of legitimate power throughout the building. They could stress in their contacts with school personnel, parents, and community leaders that within the school’s social structure, teachers have been delegated the legitimate power to do what is necessary to keep the “learning act afloat.”

Teachers, of course, must do their part too. They must avoid overstepping the boundaries of their legitimate power. The position of “teacher” may give one the right to assign homework or direct student behavior within the classroom. It does not give one the right, generally, to comment on students’ hair length, choice of clothes or friends, or dictate student behavior off school
property and after school hours. To do so invites the statement, “Just because you are the teacher, that doesn’t give you . . .”

**Referent Power**

In cases of referent power, probably the most powerful of the five social bases, students identify with the teacher. They respect and are attracted to the teacher personally. The greater the attraction, the broader is the range of referent power. For instance, a teacher may have referent power within a math classroom and, because of the strong sense of identification the students feel for the teacher, he or she also is able to exert influence over them outside the classroom—at a pep rally, in the cafeteria, during hall duty, at a local shopping center, and so on.

What creates this attraction, this feeling of oneness? Those teachers who possess referent power care about their students, and they show it in their actions. They are fair in their dealings with students, sacrificing neither their own convictions nor the students’ rights. They do not solve problems for students but instead respect the students enough to take the posture of facilitator, leaving the responsibility for change with the students. They do more listening than talking. They communicate with students without seeing communication as a sign of weakness.

Teachers, both pre- and in-service, need assistance in developing their referent power. Referent power can be learned; it is not simply some innate charisma that either you have or you don’t. Thomas Gordon’s *Teacher Effectiveness Training* (2003), also available as *Parent Effectiveness Training* (2000), and *Leader Effectiveness Training* (2001) for administrators and other leaders, is a good place to start. Gordon’s communication model combines theory and practice. It provides concrete skills for teachers to show them how to act as facilitators in the problem-solving process, to confront students and influence them to modify their behavior willingly, to substitute a no-lose for a win-lose conflict resolution technique, and more.

**Expert Power**

Finally, we come to French and Raven’s expert power. With expert power, students perceive that the teacher has special knowledge or expertise; they respect the teacher professionally. Take a student who enrolls in machine shop in a district’s vocational-technical high school. Here, discipline problems are almost nonexistent. The apprentice finds himself or herself in the presence of the “master” and behaves accordingly.
For most teachers, though, this source of power and influence lies dormant—unexploited. Students and too often colleagues, administrators, school board members, and parents are unaware of teachers’ expertise. Why is this so? In part, it is because teaching is seen as a helping profession in which teachers are expected to be humble, to get on with the job, to put others’ interests first, and to avoid the limelight. Teachers, unlike professionals in other fields (such as medicine), are uncomfortable tooting their own horns or advertising their own expertise. But at what cost?

How are teachers affected by this lack of recognition of their expertise? Even the most basic understanding of the self-fulfilling prophecy in Pygmalion in the Classroom (Rosenthal and Jacobson, 1968) reveals that the expectations of others can have a definite effect, to the extent that teachers will live up or down to these expectations of others.

Imagine the effect on students if efforts were made schoolwide and communitywide to illuminate the real expertise of a district’s faculty. The effect would be that teachers would then have another long-lasting social base of power to use in establishing and maintaining discipline (Tauber, 1992). Because referent power and expert power are so rarely consciously used by teachers, specific suggestions for incorporating these power bases follow.

**Building Referent Power**

- Use more self-disclosure. Tell pupils how the concepts and principles in the course have impacted upon your life. This helps students see how they apply in their own lives. Thus a sense of common identity is developed.
- Associate with students in nonteaching ways, but keep it professional. Advise a club, coach a sport, participate in a run for charity; such activities give you and the students greater common experiences to draw upon later in class. At the same time, maintain a position of maturity, and do not act as a peer.
- Be fair in the attention you give to all students. Spend time in face-to-face positive interactions with all students, not just with the ones you feel are the most “ideal.” Too often the “ideal” students are those just like yourself!
- Be accepting, yet not patronizing: recognize students’ interests, yet avoid frequent tangents from the academic tasks at hand; show loyalty and trust, yet not at the expense of students’ welfare.
- When disciplining, discipline the student’s behavior, not the student: there is a difference. Students may not know that difference, but they will feel it. Although many youngsters equate a criticism of their behavior as criticism of them as human beings, disciplining in a calm and businesslike manner (not “taking it personal”) and disciplining with dignity (so that you both save face) can help students differentiate between the two.
• Read the book *Teacher Effectiveness Training* (2003) by Thomas Gordon. (Note: Gordon’s model is presented in Chapter 9 of this book.) Begin using the skills of active listening when students let you know they have a problem; send “I-messages” when you know you have a problem; try conflict resolution (working for a win/win solution) when you both acknowledge you share a problem. Better still, take a P.E.T. or T.E.T. course.

• Be a good role model. Students are more likely to do as you do, not as you say—so do it right! A plus when you use referent power is that students want to “get even” with you, doing unto you as you have done unto them, in order to earn your respect!

From my sabbaticals served abroad, I have observed that the British (as well as the Australians) *may* have an advantage when it comes to promoting referent power—in my opinion, the most effectual power base available. Pastoral care (a concept less common in American schools) has faculty, staff, and administration willingly attending to a student’s total needs, at home or school, personal or academic. Such a posture on the part of educators helps to create a sense of common purpose between students and teachers—a main ingredient of referent power. This sense of oneness is heightened through school uniforms (complete with the school’s coat-of-arms) and daily opening exercises that take place in a student/staff-filled auditorium. In the United States uniforms are rare, and opening exercises take place over an impersonal public address system.

**Building Expert Power**

• Demonstrate expertise by being thoroughly prepared. It is not possible to know all there is to know about any subject, but be well versed and willing to say you do not know when you do not know.

• Practice what you preach. Education is a lifelong endeavor—it should not stop. As professionals, our expert power can be enhanced if we continue to take courses and attend, as well as conduct, workshops, seminars and in-service sessions. Let the students know you are keeping up to date.

• Be an informed consumer of the literature in your subject area and in your professional craft, pedagogy. Obviously, you are reading this book, so you are keeping up with the pedagogical research and practice of classroom management. Do the same with your specific subject matter.

• Where possible, teach students how to locate answers on their own. That builds independence; giving answers on a silver platter reinforces dependence. The greatest compliment to your expert power is when your student equals, or outshines, you, the master.
• Tactfully make students and parents aware of your formal education and professional accomplishments. Perhaps, in the school’s entrance foyer some of the display cases full of sports trophies (evidence of student expertise) can be emptied and filled with evidence of teacher expertise—degrees, diplomas, awards. Unlike doctors and lawyers, teachers are too humble when it comes to revealing their expertise. Paper credentials do not guarantee good teaching, but they form expectations in the minds of others. It is then up to teachers to fulfill them.

• Recognize student expertise and incorporate it into class presentations, discussions, and work set. Knowing more about one’s students (which is also referent power) is the first step. Computer whiz-kids are often well known, but other children too may have expertise based on travel, hobbies, sports and part-time jobs. True experts recognize and utilize the expertise of others.

Conclusion

Five social bases of power exist. Each can be or has been used in every social context imaginable—home, industry, and school. It has been argued that teachers have overused and ineffectively used two of the power bases (coercive and reward), while overlooking the potential of the remaining three (Tauber, 1986a, 1986b). This observation holds true across several countries.

Whatever your philosophy, you will be happier operating in an environment that reflects your school of thought. Later you will be asked to place the six “tried and true” classroom models that will be described in Part II into French and Raven’s Social Bases of Power framework.

A BEHAVIORIST-HUMANIST FRAMEWORK: SKINNER VERSUS ROGERS

Of the frameworks for discipline models presented in this chapter, none has a more scholarly basis than this one. Burrhus Frederic Skinner’s and Carl Ransom Rogers’ works go far beyond a simple framework for classifying and organizing popular discipline models. Their respective works address the fundamental issue of how humans learn. Classroom discipline is simply a small, though important, part of what human beings must learn. Hence, the views of both Skinner and Rogers apply to classroom management.
Skinner’s and Rogers’ theories of how human beings learn represent two extremes; they describe opposite ends of a learning continuum. These two opposing views of human nature can be traced back to Skinner’s *Science and Human Behavior* (1953) and Rogers’ *Client-Centered Therapy* (1953). This behaviorism-humanism dichotomy finds its roots in the ancient past, continues in the present, and is predicted to have an impact on psychology and education in the future (Alonzo, LaCagnina, & Olsen, 1977; Bordin, 1981; Krasner, 1978; Milhollan & Forisha, 1972). Their views represent two opposing views of human nature.

Skinner was a prolific writer. His fundamental views of learning are offered in numerous publications over a four-decade period. One needs only to type his name into ERIC (see Appendix II) or some other information retrieval system to locate countless citations written by or about him and his views to begin to appreciate his impact on the American scene. Skinner has had a profound influence on the theory and practice of child rearing, teaching, worker-manager relations, and military training. Among his publications are books such as *Walden II* (1948), *Verbal Behavior* (1957), and *Beyond Freedom and Dignity* (1971), and articles such as “The Science of Learning and the Art of Teaching” (1954) and “The Free and Happy Student” (1973).

Some classroom management books include Skinner as simply another author of a specific classroom management model called “Neo-Skinnerian” in the same vein as they include other recognized authors of discipline models (such as the Canters, Dreikurs, and Glasser). I believe a more appropriate presentation of Skinner’s work is to offer it as the *basis* of several classroom management models, including those popularized by Dobson, the Canters, and Jones.

Whether applying his operant conditioning principles to pigeons, pets, or people, Skinner believes that “by carefully constructing certain ‘contingencies of reinforcement,’ it is possible to change behavior quickly and to maintain it in strength for long periods of time” (Skinner, 1986, p. 106). Constructing contingencies of reinforcement is exactly what is recommended in Dobson’s *New Dare to Discipline* (1992) and *New Strong-Willed Child* (2006), the Canters’ *Assertive Discipline* (1997) and Canter’s *Classroom Management for Academic Success* (2006), and, to a lesser degree, in Jones’ *Positive Classroom Discipline* (1987) and *Tools for Teaching* (2007).

Cultural practices, whether across an entire society or within a single classroom, are aided by the use of language or verbal behavior that can greatly increase the ability of individuals to take advice from others, learn rules, and follow instructions (Bower, 1986). Effective classroom disciplinarians regularly use such verbal behavior when interacting with students to define
good and bad behaviors—reinforcing the former while extinguishing the latter. These teachers consciously set about modifying student behavior.

Skinner contends that one does not learn by doing alone but instead learns as the result of the consequences that follow what one does. Hence, to teach (to discipline) is to arrange such consequences (Skinner, 1986). “It is the teacher’s function to contrive conditions under which students learn” (Skinner, 1973, p. 15). Arranging such consequences or conditions, and doing so immediately and in sufficient quantity and frequency, is as important to the designer of programmed learning machines and Las Vegas gambling devices as it is to parents trying to teach their children right from wrong and to teachers trying to create a necessary learning climate in the classroom. Gamblers, children, and students all pay attention when doing so has reinforcing consequences.

Teachers cannot, Skinner argues, abrogate their responsibility to control these consequences. If teachers do not consciously control them, the environment—for example, peers, media, and the real world—will. Students freed from teachers’ control simply come under the control of other environmental conditions. Whether in scholarship or self-discipline, freedom is an illusion.

With reference to two frameworks already presented in this chapter, Skinner would be classified as an interventionist by Wolfgang and Glickman, and he would make heavy use of reward power, but surprisingly little use of coercive power, in French and Raven’s Social Bases of Power. Skinner is, in the proudest tradition, a behaviorist.
Rogers, too, was a prolific writer. As with Skinner, one needs only to type Rogers’ name into most any information retrieval system to locate countless citations written by or about him and his views. Among his writings are, *Client-Centered Therapy: Its Current Practices, Implications, and Theory* (1951), *Freedom to Learn* (1969), and *On Becoming a Person: A Therapist’s View of Psychotherapy* (1961)—according to Kilpatrick (1985), “the Bible” on Rogers. Almost single-handedly, Rogers initiated the humanistic education field and thereby changed the counseling profession (Kirschenbaum, 1991). From skilled high school and elementary school guidance counselors to highly trained clinical psychologists, Rogerian counseling serves as the primary recognized technique for helping clients, including students, help themselves.

“Reflective counseling,” or mirroring back to a client (student) what he or she has just said, often sounds, when taken out of context, hilariously funny or extremely irritating (like talking to a tape recorder). Yet, when used by those skilled in such techniques, these facilitators often help clients help themselves become better able to confront tomorrow’s problems. The picture of students demonstrating self-discipline moves from just a goal to a reality.

For Rogers, and also Abraham Maslow (*Toward a Psychology of Being*, 1968), students are driven inwardly to perfect themselves outwardly. They possess an inner desire to become the best person they are capable of becoming—to “self-actualize.” For Rogers, humans are endowed with an actualizing tendency to grow, develop, and create. To ignore the learner’s need to self-actualize will produce only inconsequential learning (Rogers, 1977). (Note: Rogers and Maslow were founders of the American Association of Humanistic Psychology.)

The role of teachers, then, is to help facilitate this natural-growth motivation in children. Teachers will have to give away some of their power to empower students. Nowhere is this more evident than in a Montessori classroom where adults are in the background and children are in the foreground, where intrinsic rather than extrinsic motivation is used. Children create themselves through purposeful activity by using their unusual sensitivity and mental powers for absorbing and learning from a prepared environment rather than from an all-knowing teacher. How this is accomplished best with respect to classroom discipline is presented in Chapter 9, which describes Thomas Gordon’s Teacher Effectiveness Training model.

No author of classroom management books that I am aware of offers a Carl Rogers’ model of classroom management. Yet his theories do serve as the primary basis of at least one major discipline model—Gordon’s Teacher
Effectiveness Training. And it is no wonder because Rogers was Gordon’s master’s thesis advisor in graduate school at Ohio State University! They later were colleagues at the University of Chicago.

Both Skinner and Rogers apparently value the concept of student freedom. Where they differ is in how students exercise this freedom. Skinner argues that the struggle for personal freedom in education can be helped best by teachers striving to improve their control of students rather than abandoning it (Skinner, 1973). For Rogers, discipline (control) should not be imposed, but self-discipline, in a “Rousseau-like commitment to natural inner forces of creativity and self-determination” (Bordin, 1981, p. 30), should prevail. Qualities of empathy, genuineness, respect, honesty, and helpfulness should be consciously developed in both teachers and students.

An hypothetical exchange between a behaviorist and a humanist is presented by Kramlinger and Huberty (1990) in the publication, *Training & Development Journal*. The exchange highlights the advantages of each approach, describes the principles of application for both, and addresses the levels of performance expected from workers under each system. The transfer from the workplace to the classroom is obvious.

**Which Are You: A Skinnerian or a Rogerian?**

One way to help determine whether you are basically a Skinnerian or a Rogerian when it comes to classroom management is to complete Exercise 3.1 below (Skinner-Rogers Terminology). No one can be a perfect Skinnerian or a perfect Rogerian, but one can aspire to one view or the other—and act the part. Particular beliefs and actions reflect one view, while other beliefs and actions characterize the other view. Like the statement, “If it looks, feels, and smells like an elephant, then it probably it an elephant.”

If you “believe in one view’s beliefs and effortlessly act in ways that reflect that view’s beliefs, then you are probably—heart and soul—committed to that belief.” What are some of the words that can be used to reflect one view or the other—Skinnerian or Rogerian?

**Exercise 3.1**
**Skinner-Rogers Terminology**

Pretend that you are about to have an altercation with a student. The words below represent a number of possible attitudes and/or actions that one might feel appropriate to hold and/or apply in such an encounter.
Directions:

Check the six or seven terms that best reflect your beliefs regarding the discipline of children. Select the terms that you believe in; ignore the terms that you do not believe in. There are no right or wrong answers. Be prepared for something very surprising to emerge as a result of completing this exercise!

Demand cooperation
Encouragement
Win-Win
Manipulate
Knowledgeable leader
Self-discipline
Praise
Win cooperation
Authority figure
Free will: A reality
Guide
Influence
Free will: An illusion
Facilitate
Control
Win-Lose
External discipline
Dominate

Interpreting the Exercise

How many of you checked “win-win”? If you did, then what I think you are saying is that in an altercation, or some other problem situation, it is desirable for both you and the other person to come out “winners”—in other words, both of you get your needs met. In fact, not only do you believe that it is desirable, you believe that it is possible. After all, you like to win, don’t you? And, one would expect that the other person, too, would like to win. Wouldn’t it be nice if you could both win?

How many of you checked “win-lose”? This would suggest that in your experience when there is an altercation, just like in major league sports, someone has to win and someone has to lose. And, if you can have it your way, you would prefer winning and not losing. Unfortunately, the other person probably feels the same way. Some teachers and parents practice “win/lose” with their children and rationalize their actions with the belief that they are
actually doing the children some good: they are teaching the children a good
lesson in life. Perhaps yes; perhaps no. Perhaps the lesson they are teaching
is an unintended lesson—that is “I lost this time, but I’ll try a lot harder to
make sure that I do not lose next time.”

How many of you checked both “win-win” and “win-lose”? Few, if any,
people circle both. To do so would be illogical. How could you hold a
fundamental belief (i.e., personal philosophy) of “win-win” and at the same
time hold a fundamental belief of “win-lose”? For the quantitative philosop-
phers among the readers, holding both a “win-win” and a “win-lose” set of
beliefs about how to treat other people would fail a Venn Diagram test. At
this point, most people who complete this exercise accept that a “win-win”
and a “win-lose” attitude toward problem-solving situations are diametrically
opposed to each other. They understand, although they may not like it, that
they really should choose one position or the other as representative of their
fundamental beliefs.

In case it is not obvious already, Skinner, and the discipline models that flow
from his beliefs, live, eat, sleep, endorse, and embrace a “win-lose” attitude—
one where the adult knows best and is only making you (i.e., the child) lose
because he or she somehow knows what is best for you. When I quiz workshop
attendees as to how many of them have their lives completely in order, no
one raises a hand. Yet, Skinnerians, with their “win-lose” attitude, believe that
although they may not know what is good for themselves, they sure do know
what is good for others. How do you feel when someone does something that
results in your losing and then that person announces, “I only did it for your
own good.” Does the hair on the back of your neck stand up? Do you feel
like saying, “Hey, it’s my life; let me make my own decisions”? Rogers, and
discipline models that flow from his beliefs, would live, eat, sleep, endorse,
and embrace a “win-win” attitude and, hopefully, acquire the skills to make
it happen.

I promised you a surprise and here it comes. How many of you checked the
term “praise”? Those of you who did apparently see the value of delivering,
as well as receiving, praise. When this question is asked in my workshops,
most hands are raised. How many of you checked the term “encouragement”?-
When this question is asked of workshop participants, lots of hands are raised.
How many of you checked both “praise” and “encouragement”? Once again,
when this question is asked of workshop attendees, many hands go up. At
this point I announce that they have committed a “no-no.” They have made
an illogical response. Selecting both “praise” and “encouragement” once again
fails the Venn Diagram test of logic.

“How so?” you might ask. Skinner, and the discipline models that flow from
his beliefs, live, eat, sleep, endorse, and embrace the use of “praise.” Rogerians,
and the discipline models that reflect Rogers’ fundamental beliefs, would not touch “praise” with a ten-foot pole! Instead, Rogers, and discipline models that flow from his beliefs, would live, eat, sleep, endorse, and embrace the use of “encouragement.” As surprising as it may seem, praise and encouragement are not synonymous. If you don’t believe it, look up both words in a dictionary. Further, praise is not an effective vehicle for encouraging someone.

Chapter 7 (Dreikurs’ Social Discipline Model) and Chapter 11 (Classroom Management-Related Articles: Some Surprises) provide more information on the differences between praise and encouragement. Encouragement is not a synonym for praise. Further, praise is not a tool to encourage. Suffice to say, praise is praise, and encouragement is encouragement. Skinnerians rely heavily upon the use of praise (and rewards); Rogerians rely heavily upon the use of encouragement. Once again a clear dichotomy exists between Skinnerian and Rogerian beliefs and parent/teacher actions that reflect these respective beliefs.

Finally, how many of you checked one of the terms that deal with “free will”? No checked term highlights the dichotomy between Skinnerian and Rogerian fundamental beliefs (i.e., philosophy) more than does this one. Those of you who checked the term “free will: a reality,” apparently believe that mankind (including children) possesses at least some degree of it. Those of you who did not circle the term, or who checked the term “free will: an illusion,” believe otherwise. Skinner believes that there is no such thing as free will. Human beings just pretend that free will exists, so that they can feel more important than the rest of the animal kingdom. Rogers, on the other hand, believes that free will within human beings does exist, and, thus, discipline models must take its existence into consideration. Like being pregnant, you either are or you are not, there is no in-between; either you believe in free will or you do not, there is no in-between. You must choose one side or the other of this Skinnerian-Rogerian dichotomy. Hence, you should choose a discipline model from one side or the other of this same dichotomy. It would be illogical, as well as less workable, to do otherwise.

One way to appreciate the differences between Skinner and Rogers is to examine the representative terminology—the jargon—that typifies both views. Such a listing of terminology is shown in Table 3.1.

“Skinner reduces the science of human behavior to responses to environmental contingencies. Rogers rejects this outward orientation, emphasizing man’s self-determined potential for creative action” (Bordin, 1981, p. 29). The dichotomy, at least for Skinner and Rogers, is clear.

Whatever your philosophy, you will be happier operating in an environment that reflects your school of thought. Later you will be asked to place the six “tried and true” classroom models that will be described in Part II into a Skinner versus Rogers’ Behaviorist-Humanist framework.
While on sabbatical in Melbourne investigating classroom management in Australian schools, I attended several University of Melbourne lectures on discipline. One lecture presented by Ramon Lewis, a senior lecturer in education at La Trobe University (outside of Melbourne), captured my attention—especially because of the categories’ simplicity. Upon summarizing his lecture, he grouped the available models on classroom management into three obvious categories. The models either tried to control, manage, or influence (Lewis, 1991). There it was, right in front of me. It was that simple. A more detailed description of his ideas appears in the book, *The Discipline Dilemma: Control, Management, and Influence* (Lewis, 1997).

Whatever your philosophy, you will be happier, and more effective, operating in an environment that reflects your school of thought. Later you will be
Theoretical Frameworks for Selecting a Discipline Model

asked to place the six “tried and true” classroom models that will be described in Part II into Lewis’ Keeping it Simple framework.

WHY NOT AN ECLECTIC APPROACH?: A FEW FINAL ARGUMENTS

Each time I conduct a workshop or course on discipline theory and practice, I find that initially participants resist the recommendation that they select a single discipline model that best reflects their fundamental beliefs (i.e., philosophy), become trained in that model, and practice it with skill and a sense of commitment. They ask, “Why can’t we use an eclectic approach—a skill from one model for Susie, a skill from another model for Sam, and still another skill from another model for Juan?”

More than a handful of classroom management authors, too, believe that teachers should use an eclectic approach to discipline. I disagree. What follows is Morris’ (1996) points in favor of eclecticism, followed immediately by my rebuttals.

“Individually none of these discipline models appears to be adequate for today’s classrooms—mainly because they were developed around presumptive, ideal classroom characteristics.”

✓ Tauber's rebuttal: Select, learn, and use a model that works most of the time with most students in most situations. It should be the exception, then, rather than the rule, when practices other than those recommended in a teacher’s chosen model should be used! Don’t be tempted to too easily give up on using the model that reflects your fundamental beliefs (i.e., your philosophy) and that you have learned and believe in, even when the going gets tough—and it occasionally will!

“Another internal weakness in the models is their lack of acknowledgment of how teachers must vary their discipline procedures and approaches based on the unique classroom dynamics of each class period.”

✓ Tauber’s rebuttal: This suggests that different discipline models and/or portions of different models would be used for “each class,” maybe even for “each child.” Translated into actual practice, we could have perhaps 30 individual six-year-old first graders or 180 ninth grade junior high students all dictating what discipline model and/or techniques teachers will use with each and every one of them. Not only is this probably impossible to do, this is absurd; it is the “tail wagging the dog.” Shouldn’t it be the other way around? Shouldn’t teachers,
the trained professionals in the classroom, decide the discipline model they use—one that they strongly believe in?

“I am convinced my practical disciplining in the classroom necessitates a blending from these . . . theories.”

✓ Tauber’s rebuttal: Most teachers don’t have the time and energy to learn one discipline model well, let alone learn several discipline models well! Let me repeat this point. Most teachers don’t have the time and energy to learn one discipline model well, let alone learn several discipline models well! Is this not the case in your situation? Without learning all models well, teachers would be ill prepared to do any effective “blending.” Unfortunately, this smorgasbord approach to discipline is deceptively attractive both to teachers and parents. Further, how can one be expected to “blend” discipline practices that reflect very different views about how democracy should be practiced in the classroom?

“Thus, teachers must remain flexible, innovative, and consistent in disciplining their students in the classroom.”

✓ Tauber’s rebuttal: How is picking and choosing discipline strategies from many discipline models, some very different in fundamental beliefs about how to treat fellow human beings, being “consistent”? I agree that it may be possible to combine features of models that are close together philosophically (i.e., Jones and Canters; Glasser and Gordon). Unfortunately many educators who advocate an eclectic approach want to use strategies from discipline models that are philosophically opposed to each other (i.e., Canters and Glasser).

A more scholarly argument against eclectic approaches to problem-solving situations (i.e., classroom discipline) was outlined by Henle (1957). Below are listed several of Henle’s major arguments against eclecticism or smorgasbord approaches to problem solving. Read them and decide for yourself if they have merit even today—over a half-century later!

- Not only does the eclectic lose prematurely the advantages of controversy, he may to some extent give up the advantages of theory as well. (p. 300)
- Eclectics have to a large extent succeeded in resolving conflicts in psychology by ignoring differences and obscuring the issues. (p. 302)
- It seems to the present writer that reconciliations can be reached in psychology only by focusing on the existing differences, examining them, and
carrying on research to settle issues. If this is eclecticism, it is eclecticism after the fact rather than the prevailing eclecticism before the fact. (p. 303)

- Since competing theories on any particular issue in psychology today—or competing psychological systems—each tend to be plausible and to be supported by evidence, it is unlikely that any one will win a clear victory over the others. (p. 303)

- The eclectics are, of course, right in maintaining that where a genuine controversy exists in psychology, and where evidence seems to support both sides, there is likely to be some truth to both positions. But they (eclectics) solve their problem too soon. Existing theories cannot be made more comprehensive by adding divergent ones together. (p. 304)

- Eclectics tend to resolve conflicts in psychology by glossing over real differences and obscuring the issues. Such solutions achieve harmony at the price of specific theory in the area of controversy, and thus sacrifice fruitlessness in the discovery of new fact. (p. 304)

One reason teachers may be drawn to eclecticism is that the terminology within discipline models sometimes sounds the same. For instance, both Fredric Jones and Jane Nelsen, until recently, labeled their discipline models *Positive Discipline*, yet upon examination they clearly are not at all alike. Another, more specific example would be the concept of time-out. Both behaviorist and humanist discipline models use something called time-out, yet the former is punitive and the latter is restorative! A final example, for now, would be the use of I-Messages. Both Canter (a behaviorist) and Gordon (a humanist) have three-part I-Messages. Yet when you read about them you will see them as different as night and day!

When it is all said and done, if you still wish to use some eclecticism, at least limit yourself to using bits and pieces from discipline models that are neighbors—both in theory and practice.

**USING A DISCIPLINE MODEL THAT “WORKS”**

If part of the argument in favor of eclecticism is that teachers must be free to “use what works,” the fact is that all six of the discipline models presented in this book “work”—work with *most* kids, *most* of the time, and in *most* situations. After all, these “tried and true” classroom management models have had decades of testing and refinement. If all of the models work, then using alone the fact that a given model works is an insufficient justification for choosing that model over any others. A classroom management model should be chosen, and then learned, studied, practiced, and used because, and
only because, it reflects one’s fundamental views (i.e., philosophy) about how fellow human beings should be treated.

Having to make a choice of a single discipline model (or at least a choice of ones that are philosophically aligned) is not an easy thing to do, but I believe it is a necessary thing to do. Either a discipline system is designed to make students more obedient or more personally satisfied; either a discipline system is designed to have students be in charge of their destiny or be acted upon by powerful external forces (Blumenfeld-Jones, 1996). Goldberg and Wilgosh (1990) highlight the nature of the two philosophical views by looking at the importance of meeting students’ needs. The Canters (Skinnerians) emphasize teachers’ rights in meeting their professional needs over the importance of students meeting their needs. Dreikurs (a Rogerian) emphasizes students satisfying their personal-social needs as essential for discipline “which he defines as the development of intelligent inner control” (Goldberg & Wilgosh, 1990, p. 41). Freiberg (1997) contrasts these opposing philosophies by labeling students as “tourists” in a Skinnerian classroom and as “citizens” in a Rogerian classroom. In the former, the student is “just passing through”; in the latter, the student is “taking responsibility for self, others, and the classroom environment.”

Swaim, perhaps, sums it up best when he concludes, “The main conclusion is that both Skinner’s and Rogers’ models have their merits, but an educator cannot value both of them equally without creating an inconsistency within his professional practice” (Swaim, 1974, p. 48). It is hard, perhaps impossible, for a teacher to operate effectively from both ends of a philosophical dichotomy. Having said all of this, recently I ran across a tattered paperback titled Humanizing Classroom Discipline: A Behavioral Approach (Dollar, 1972). Although this title sounds like an oxymoron to me, an article by Madeline Hunter (1977), while she was still a school principal, wrote that the Humanism/Behaviorism argument was simply “a silly squabble” (p. 98). Is it? You decide.
One of the positive sides to presenting the six Tried-and-True discipline models that follow is that each has stood the test of time—several decades to be exact! Each has been out there long enough to be tested, both by university researchers and by real teachers in real schools. Do not let the original early publication dates of the books associated with the models influence your expectations. Most of these publications have been continually updated. And, don’t let the fact that a couple of the model’s authors have died influence your expectations.

Perhaps the true test of a successful discipline model is that it is able to continue even after its founder has passed on. This is exactly what has happened with the founders of two of the Tried-and-True models—Dreikurs’ and Gordon’s. Rudolf Dreikurs died some time ago, but as you will learn, his model has continued through the work of Linda Albert, Maruice Balson, Don Dinkmeyer, and Jane Nelsen. Thomas Gordon died in 2002, but his work, too, has continued through his Effectiveness Training organization and through those the organization has trained.

I suggest that you study each of these Tried-and-True discipline models, select the one that will work best for you and for your students, get trained in that model, and then move forward with using it! Add to the selection of your preferred model and to your training in that model any and all additional information that you can gain through continued further study and through your experience of actually using the model. In this way, you will start out with a Tried-and-True model, as a solid base, and then be able to update it and personalize it as time goes by.
James C. Dobson (1936–) holds a Ph.D. in child development and, prior to establishing the nonprofit organization Focus on the Family, was associate clinical professor of pediatrics at the University of Southern California School of Medicine. Focus on the Family employs more than one thousand three hundred people and receives thousands of calls, e-mails, and letters every day. His organization receives so much mail that it has its own ZIP code. Dr. Dobson's syndicated radio programs, concentrating upon parenting and related issues, are heard daily on hundreds of radio stations. Dobson's
estimated listening audience is over 200 million people each day. His book Dare to Discipline (1970), reissued as The New Dare to Discipline (1992), and his book, The New Strong-Willed Child (2006) continue to be big sellers. Dr. Dobson also has been heavily involved in governmental activities related to the family, child-rearing, and education. He is an outspoken critic of permissive parenting and permissive teaching.

Dobson’s support and counsel frequently is sought by conservative, most often Republican, candidates for office. He continues to provide guidance to politically right-wing causes and politicians. National magazines often feature him in articles and interviews, as well as on their covers. Dobson filled the entire cover of U.S. News & World Report on May 4, 1998, and recently, he shared the cover, but was center stage, of Time on February 17, 2005. When Dr. Dobson speaks, a sizable number of Americans listen!

**OBJECTIVES**

This chapter will help you, among other things, to:

- Use the material presented on democracy in Chapter 2, weigh the degree to which Dobson’s model does or does not support democracy in a classroom.
- Classify, using the theoretical frameworks presented in Chapter 3, James Dobson’s A Place for Punishment model.
- Explain the popularity of Dobson’s views regarding the use of punishment.
- Identify guidelines for using punishment.
- Identify the common challenges to the use of punishment.
- Identify organizations that call for the abolishment of punishment.
- Explain the demographics of punishment.
- Explore how Dobson’s model supports your vision of a democratic classroom.
- Explore whether Dobson’s A Place for Punishment model is for you.

**WHERE DOES DOBSON’S MODEL FALL WITHIN THE FOUR THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS IN CHAPTER 3?**

Now is an opportunity also for you to apply what you have learned in Chapter 3, “Theoretical Frameworks for Selecting a Discipline Models.” Dobson’s A Place for Punishment model clearly finds a place in French and Raven’s Social Bases of Power framework under “coercion.” It finds a home in Wolfgang and Glickman’s Schools of Thought framework as the most extreme
“interventionist” strategy. With its emphasis upon the use of punishment, Dobson’s position is aligned with the Skinnerian side of the Skinner-Rogers’ dichotomy although, in reality, Skinner believed that one could more effectively condition animals (including children) solely through the use of rewards. In Lewis’ Keeping It Simple framework, punishment is equated with “control.”

INTRODUCTION

Within the field of discipline, more has been written on the topic of punishment and its variations than on any other single topic. Much of what has been written says that the use of punishment should be reduced, if not stopped, no matter its goal—retribution, deterrence, or reform.

Yet punishment, whether corporal (such as paddling, spanking, slapping, shaking, scratching, shoving, cuffing, dragging, choking, pinching, hair pulling, excessive exercise, finger jabbing a child’s face or ribs, banging a child against the wall, hurling objects at a child, forcing the child to remain sitting, standing, or motionless for long periods of time, taping a child’s mouth shut, tying a child to a desk, confinement in an uncomfortable place, denying the use of the lavatory, forcing a child to swallow his or her gum, and forcing noxious substances into a child’s mouth) or nonphysical (such as verbal beratement, neglect, using fear of punishment to motivate a child, insulting a child about the quality of his or her work, making a child the butt of the teacher’s humor, using sarcasm or put-downs when addressing a child, loss of privileges, detention, and suspension) has not stopped, and in some schools, has not been significantly reduced (Riak, 1998).

It is important to keep in mind that in order for something to be considered true punishment, it must hurt. The person receiving the punishment must truly find it to be an aversive stimulus, otherwise no real punishment has been supplied. Behaviorism tells us this is true and followers of behaviorism, e.g., Dobson, tell us this is true. When asked, “Should a spanking hurt?” Dobson’s response is “Yes, or else it will have no influence” (1978, p. 47). He further claims that pain is a marvelous purifier. How many educators, having chosen a helping profession and knowing what they know about child development, are willing to paddle, shake, slap, pinch, jab, berate, or insult a child so much so that it “hurts”? I hope, not many.

CORPORAL PUNISHMENT DEFINED

Because many parents and teachers immediately think of some form of corporal punishment when they think of the term “punishment,” it seems like
a good idea to define the term. But, keep in mind that many of the nonphysical means of punishment listed above are equally, if not more, serious measures.

Corporal punishment is physical force used with the intention of causing pain, but not injury, in order to correct or control a child’s behavior. (The spanking debate, 2002, p. 1)

“*I GOT PADDLED AND I TURNED OUT OKAY!*”

This is one of those statements that if I had a quarter for every time I heard it I would be a very rich man. The fact is, I was the recipient of corporal punishment and I turned out okay! Just ask me and I will tell you so. The fact is that this is a shallow, and certainly uninformed, defense for administering punishment—especially corporal punishment. Remember, one definition of a professional is that it is someone who regularly turns to a recognized body of knowledge in order to make decisions. Recognized bodies of pedagogically oriented knowledge, by and large, do not support the administration of punishment.

Using some of the logic found in Riak’s (2007), *Plain Talk about Spanking*, I offer the following examples. When I was young my parents owned a 1956 Ford. Although it featured the latest piece of safety equipment, a deep dish steering wheel, it lacked seat belts, air bags, and anti-lock brakes. *And I turned out okay!* I also had parents (and grandparents) who smoked and thus I grew up in a home (and car) where cigarette smoke was ever present. I, like Riak, was even exposed to smoke while being carried in my mother’s womb—she smoked during her pregnancy. *And I turned out okay!* Finally, all of the places where I lived—from single family homes to project housing—brought me in contact with lead-based paint. *And I turned out okay!* But now I know better.

*OLD WOMEN IN A SHOE*  
by Jordan Riak (nospank.net)

There was an old woman  
Who lived in a shoe.  
She was a kind-hearted mom  
Who knew exactly what to do.  
She raised all her children  
With patience and love.  
Not once did she give them  
A spank, shake or shove.
Her children all learned
To be gentle toward others.
And good parents too
When they become fathers and mothers.

From their days in the shoe
They learned this about living:
Kindness, not force,
Is the gift that keeps giving.

SPANKING THE TONGUE: A FACT OF LIFE

One of the examples of corporal punishment, listed earlier, was “forcing noxious substances into a child’s mouth.” I can identify with this because more than once I had my mouth washed out with soap.

For those old enough to remember the 1980’s sitcom, Facts of Life, one of the four teenage girls living at the boarding school was Lisa Whelchel. She played the affluent, good-looking blond. Now as an adult with several children, she has commented upon discipline. For lying or other offenses of the tongue, she recommends spanking a child’s tongue! When her kids were young she is said to have placed a tiny drop of hot sauce on the end of her finger and then dabbed it on the child’s tongue. The sting lasts for just a short time; the memory lingers. Popkin (2006) argues that, in reality, the memory of a parent intentionally hurting them in the name of teaching is what stayed with them. Apparently this is a form of punishment, also called “hot saucing” children, that has its roots in Southern culture. Virginia’s child protective services agency calls the controversial tactic “bizarre” (Buckholtz, 2004).

Other noxious substances used for punishment include administering spoonfuls of foul-tasting cod liver oil for swearing, and forcing a child found smoking to smoke an entire pack of cigarettes until he turned green.

THE BURNER WITHOUT A BRAIN

Still another example of corporal punishment listed earlier was that of forcing a child to remain standing or motionless for long periods of time. In seventh grade we had an English teacher named Mr. Burner. That was the same year that gas stoves came out with some sort of sensor, just like electric stoves, to control the amount of heat desired. The gas company called it the “burner with a brain.” As a punishment, Mr. Burner used to make us
stand with our arms outstretched holding heavy English literature books. If you faltered, you received a swat. What did we learn? We learned to dislike anything that had to do with Mr. Burner, including “his” English literature. We also learned to fight back the only way we knew how. Behind his back we called him “The Burner without a Brain.” To this day I still chuckle.

WHAT ARE THE LEANINGS OF THE AMERICAN PUBLIC?

Does the public generally support less punishment? No one realistically expects a ground swell to ban all forms of punishment. Besides, such an all-encompassing ban probably would be unenforceable. What about public support for less corporal punishment? As of 2005, Pennsylvania becomes the twenty-ninth state to ban corporal punishment. But, it is still okay to administer in Pennsylvania private schools.

What does the future hold? In 1992, Kentucky revoked its one-year-old statewide prohibition on corporal punishment, allowing instead, individual school districts to decide whether or not to administer it. Much more recently, Pike County, Ohio, Laurel School District, Mississippi, and Everman Middle School, Texas, also have reinstated corporal punishment. The Office of Civil Rights reports that more than 1.5 million students are physically punished every year. These are probably conservative estimates.

What is the mood of the American public? Referring to the Patterson, New Jersey, high school principal who made himself famous by using a bullhorn, wielding a baseball bat, and expelling 10 percent of his students during the first week on the job, William J. Bennett, former Secretary of Education under President Reagan, once said, “Sometimes you need Mr. Chips, and sometimes you need Dirty Harry” (Hyman, 1989, p. 20). In his portrayal of Joe Clark in the film Lean on Me, Morgan Freeman brought Clark’s take-charge approach to the motion picture screen. The American public loved it.

How many remember Michael Fey, the young man who vandalized several automobiles in Singapore a decade ago? Bad move on his part. His punishment, being struck with a wet rattan cane, was carried out on May 5, 1994. What did America think of his being caned? A call-in poll in Fay’s hometown of Dayton, Ohio, found residents backing the caning by nearly two-to-one. One can only wonder what America’s reaction would be today.

May teachers legally punish children? According to Zirkel and Gluckman (1988, p. 105), in Ingraham v. Wright, “the Supreme Court clearly settled the question insofar as the Eighth Amendment’s cruel and unusual punishment clause and the Fourteenth Amendment’s right of procedural due process.” The Court held that corporal punishment by public school personnel does not
violate these two rights “so long as state law provides for subsequent redress against unwarranted or excessive punishment through tort suits or criminal prosecution” (Sendor, 1987, p. 32). The key words here are *unwarranted* and *excessive*.

Liberals such as A. S. Neill of *Summerhill* fame may claim that “thousands of teachers do their work splendidly without having to introduce fear of punishment. The others are incompetent misfits who ought to be driven out of the profession” (Neill, 1968, p. 124). Actions, though, speak louder than words. The sole fact that punishment is so pervasive in our society (home, school, military, correction facilities) makes it worthy of study.

The term *punishment* carries with it a cultural or traditional stigma that does not exist in the scientific community. Dobson, as we will see later, disagrees. Technically, *punishment* is simply a word used to describe a consequence that, when supplied, reduces behavior. In daily practice, though, the word is emotionally laden. For many adults there is a blur between punishment for the sake of punishment (retribution, eye-for-an-eye) and punishment for the sake of therapy (behavior reduction). Further, punishment is “tainted by an association with brutality, child-battering, and control achieved by sheer force” (Walters & Grusec, 1977, p. 2).

**VIRTUES OF PUNISHMENT**

Standing out as a champion for the use of punishment in child-rearing (home or school) is James Dobson. His views, having a strong biblical foundation, are outlined in his book *The New Dare to Discipline* (1992)—first published in 1970 as *Dare to Discipline*. The Bible is often quoted to provide the rationale for punishment. Solomon’s familiar admonition, “Spare the rod and spoil the child,” has a biblical basis in Proverbs where we read “Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die. If you beat him with a rod, you will save his life from hell” (23:13–14).

Chastisement by rod, according to Dobson, is the primary biblically ordained response to a child’s challenge to authority—woodshed therapy in action. “He who spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is diligent to discipline him” (Prov. 13:24). Spanking is not some harebrained idea man invented for disciplining children. Spanking is not optional, and it is not old-fashioned. Dobson argues that “some strong-willed children absolutely demand to be spanked, and their wishes should be granted” (*Strong-willed Child*, 1978, p. 61). Spanking, according to Lessen (1979), is God’s idea—it is an expression of love. One could almost be convinced that one is doing a child a favor by beating him.
An acceptance of the doctrine of biblical literalism thus sets the stage for some adults’ enthusiastic support for corporal punishment (Ellison & Sherkat, 1993). “Add to these biblical sanctions the traditional Christian concept of children born into sin, and it becomes clear why it was thought that God sanctioned the molding of children’s character through severe punishment” (Cryan, 1987, p. 148). “If the punishment is of the right kind, it not only takes effect physically, but through physical terror and pain, it awakens and sharpens the consciousness that there is a moral power over us. . . . a law which cannot be broken” (Christenson, 1970, p. 100). There seems to be a lingering belief that harsh punishment is necessary for children to develop as decent human beings (Webster et al., 1988).

What reaction does Dobson have to those scientific principles of childrearing that may appear to challenge a literal interpretation of the Bible? “The American public has been subjected to many wild-horse opinions about child discipline. . . . The principles of good discipline cannot be ascertained by scientific inquiry. . . . The subject is too complicated and there are too many variables involved” (Dobson, 1970, p. 13). Dobson believes that child development authorities have muddied the water with permissive philosophies that contradict the very nature of children. For educators, who as professionals have been told to consult a recognized body of knowledge (i.e., the scientific literature) before making decisions, Dobson’s assertion is disturbing. Further, Dobson’s ignoring of scientific inquiry seems at odds with his recommendation: “The wise parent must understand the physical and emotional characteristics of each stage in childhood, and then fit the discipline to a boy’s or girl’s individual needs” (Dobson, 1978, pp. 38–39). How do parents and teachers, then, acquire this wisdom? By trial and error? One hopes not—for the sake of the child.

Dobson believes that parents (and presumably teachers) should do their best to influence a child’s choices. “My entire book, you see, is a product of the biblical orientation to human nature. We are not typically kind and loving and generous and yielded to God. Our tendency is toward selfishness and stubbornness and sin. We are all, in effect, ‘strong-willed children’ as we stand before God” (Dobson, 1978, pp. 174–175). Strong-willed children need strong parents and teachers to shape that will. There is no doubt that Dobson’s heart is in the right place when it comes to advising parents and teachers on how to discipline. This point should never be suspect.

Discipline should be part of a child’s early experiences, both at home and at school. On a “Focus on the Family” radio broadcast a guest asserted that “If discipline begins on the second day of life, you’re one day late.” Dobson apparently agrees. While at home, children should learn to
yield to the loving authority of their parents. Dobson is not simply advocating that parents become dictators. He points out that any rule enforcement by adults must be accompanied by relationship building, otherwise, rebellion may ensue (Gerson, 1998). By doing so, the child learns to submit to other forms of authority—teachers, principal, police, employers—that will confront him later in his life. At school, discipline should begin with the crucial interaction between a primary or elementary teacher and his or her students. These contacts help form the attitudes toward authority the child will carry into junior and senior high school. How teachers approach their classes, especially on the first day, can make all the difference in the world.

FIRST-DAY APPROACHES OF TWO TEACHERS

Dobson (1992) describes the first-day approaches of two teachers: one, Miss Peach, condemned to a long year of frustration and student behavioral problems; another, Mrs. Justice, destined for a productive and satisfying year for both teacher and students. On the first day, Miss Peach conveys the message, “We are going to have a fun, fun year; you are going to love me—and a long string of other peachy stuff.” The first student’s challenge (and there will be a first) to Miss Peach’s authority is ignored. The unsaid message is clear: “Miss Peach is a pushover.” The challenges increase in number and intensity. It soon is called lack of control.

In contrast, Mrs. Justice conveys her first-day message, “This is going to be a good year . . . Your parents have given me the responsibility of teaching you some very important things this year . . . That’s why I can’t let one or two show-offs keep me from doing my job. Now, if you want to try and disrupt what we’re here to do, I can tell you it will be a miserable year for you. I have many ways to make you uncomfortable, and I will not hesitate to use them. Any questions? Good, let’s get back to work” (Dobson, 1992, p. 142). The inevitable first student challenge is made. Mrs. Justice “socks it to him.” Everyone gets the message: “Mrs. Justice means business.”

Dobson’s hypothetical Miss Peach and Mrs. Justice scenarios are mirrored in a Phi Delta Kappan article titled, “Learning to Discipline” The author confesses, “At the start of her teaching career . . . she ricocheted between being a drill sergeant and Mary Poppins” (Metzger, 2002, p. 77). Surely this is an experience with which many teachers can identify.

Dobson has observed that students at all levels prefer and respect, even love, more strict teachers. First, when a class is out of control, particularly at the
elementary level, the children are afraid of one another. Without adult control, who controls the bullies? Who protects the less able and less strong? No one did in *Lord of the Flies*, and the results were painful. Second, children love justice. Children admire the teacher who can enforce an equitable system of rules. Third, undisciplined classrooms reek of chaos. They are nerve-racking, tiring, and irritating (Dobson, 1970).

Freedom of choice and democracy have little place in Dobson’s model. Choice would only encourage rebellion against authority, egocentric conduct, and further disposition toward selfishness (Dobson, 1978). Democratic conceptions of adult-child relations are irresponsible because they encourage the abrogation of crucial parental and teacher authority (Dobson, 1978). Adherence to adult-imposed standards is an important part of discipline. Clearly, Dobson’s advice to parents, “When that nose-to-nose confrontation occurs between generations, it is extremely important for the adult to win decisively and confidently” (Dobson, 1978, p. 32), typifies a win-lose model of discipline.

Dobson is serious about shaping the will of children. And, he appears willing to go to almost any lengths to accomplish this goal. In describing his own interactions with his teen-age son, Brian, Dobson says that “admittedly you’re too big and grown up for me to spank, but I can still make you uncomfortable . . . I’ll lie awake nights figuring how to make you miserable” (1978, pp. 200–201). In his *New Dare to Discipline* book (1992), Dobson offers similar advice to a question posed (What are these things?) regarding Mrs. Justice’s announcement to “her class that she had many ways to make her rebellious students uncomfortable” (p. 144).

It is important to note that Dobson does not simply favor administering punishment. He recommends that parents and teachers represent the two sides of God—loving compassion and decisive justice—to their youngsters. “God is loving, merciful, and forgiving. At the same time, however, because God’s punishment of sin is understood as inevitable and consistent, it is vitally important for parental discipline to embody these characteristics” (Ellison & Sherkat, 1993, p. 134). The “loving compassion” side of this approach cannot—must not—be overlooked.

One way to clarify what one means is to contrast it with something just the opposite. In *The Strong-Willed Child* (1978), Dobson does this in a chapter titled “An Evaluation of Parent Effectiveness Training.” Thomas Gordon’s noninterventionist discipline model presented later in this book. For instance, Dobson “wishes” that Gordon’s assessment of human nature were accurate, “that the tendency to lie is not natural in youngsters. It is a learned response” (Gordon, 1970, p. 179). He argues, however, that it contradicts scripture:
“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?” (Jeremiah I 7:9). Hence, strong-willed adult interventionist responses are required.

In summary, Dobson sees three major flaws in Gordon’s model: (1) his failure to understand the proper role of authority in the home, (2) his belief that children are born innately good and then learn to do wrong, and (3) his lack of resolve regarding the parent’s duty to instill spiritual principles in a child during his or her most teachable years (Dobson, 1978, p. 177). Humanistic thinking—the concept that children are basically good and if left to themselves will grow into fulfilled adults—hinders discipline (Lessen, 1979). These fundamental differences in beliefs dictate drastically different adult strategies of child management at home or school.

The difference between Dobson, an interventionist, and Gordon, a non-interventionist, is revealed in their views about what motivates children. “To say that children have an innate love of learning is as muddle-headed as to say that children have an innate love of baseball. Some do. Some don’t” (Dobson, 1992, p. 135). Gordon would disagree, at least with Dobson’s beliefs about whether or not children have an innate love of learning. These differences in beliefs influence the design of their respective classroom management models. Prodding, even punishment, has a place in Dobson’s model; it has no place in Gordon’s model.

OTHERS WHO SUPPORT PUNISHMENT

Although Dobson may appear to be extreme in his legitimization of punishment, he has, in fact, plenty of company. Walters and Grusec (1977, p. 115), for instance, state that “a large body of research, all of it carried out with children, suggests that punishment for incorrect behavior leads to faster learning than does reinforcement for correct behavior, and a combination of reinforcement and punishment is no better than punishment alone.” Just the opposite recommendation is offered by others who claim that it is desirable to combine punishment with positive statements. In this way the undesirable behavior is weakened and the correct behavior taught.

In a now classic study of the real world of education, Rutter and his colleagues (1979, p. 186) state in Fifteen Thousand Hours that “obviously a certain amount of firm disapproval, and also punishment, is necessary in the control of disruptive behaviour.” Also representing the real world, Paul Armstrong, then president-elect of the West Virginia Association of Elementary
School Principals, believes that corporal punishment is needed as an option with students who do not respond to other methods of discipline. Armstrong (1984) argues that although corporal punishment is banned in police stations and prisons, schools are different because they have “professional educators who are trained to deal with children and can be trusted to use the paddle” (p. 79). The courts apparently agree.

In a well-documented article in *Education and Urban Society*, Bauer and others (1990) comment on whether or not corporal punishment is effective. They answer, “Yes, at least under certain conditions . . . It can serve as a useful behavioral management instrument for suppressing undesirable behaviors” (p. 288). Rich (1991, p. 184) concludes his recent article “Should Students Be Punished?” by stating that “in certain cases punishment may help restore classroom order; it may promote discipline and early moral development by teaching students to obey rules and follow instructions.” Skiba and Deno (1991) claim that research data “have consistently contradicted assertions that punishment is ineffective” (p. 299) and that “contingent negative consequences, in fact, have been shown to be more effective in reducing behavior than a variety of other procedures” (p. 300).

Some of you may remember Vice President Dan Quayle’s book, *The American Family*, where he endorses control and punishment as a way to shape children’s behavior and secure their respect and obedience (*U.S. News & World Report*, 1996). He and the families he surveys in his book reject the advice of so-called child-rearing experts who document the pitfalls surrounding the use of spanking.

Three specific advantages of corporal punishment are outlined by Vockell (1991): (1) It is very likely to be perceived by the recipient as unpleasant (and therefore punishing), (2) it can be administered quickly and life can return to more productive activities, and (3) its meaning is clear and easily communicated. According to Vockell (p. 282), “The judicious use of corporal punishment will not necessarily thwart the development of self-discipline.” Like it or not, some researchers have built a theoretically-based case for the use of punishment.

In a report by Families First (2001), titled “Not without reason: The place of physical correction in the discipline of children,” Larzelere reports that “Spanking can be inappropriately used as a short-term solution to problems arising from the child’s needs for more attention, nurturance, understanding and praise. However, this does not necessarily mean that spanking is always detrimental when used moderately by parents who are competent in these other aspects of parenting” (p. 6). Elsewhere, Larzelere (1996) concludes that there simply are not enough quality studies that document detrimental
outcomes of nonabusive physical punishment to support advice or policies against this age-old parental practice (1996).

More often, though, trends in approval of corporal punishment are revealed in general surveys of attitudes toward spanking. For instance, Straus, Gelles, and Steinmetz (1980) found that 77 percent of parents surveyed believed that spanking a twelve-year-old who misbehaved was both normal and necessary. In fact, Straus and Donnelly (2005, p. 4), in their book on corporal punishment, claim that “the overwhelming majority of adult Americans approve of it.” Another parent survey found that 84 percent agreed that a good hard spanking is sometimes necessary (Lehman, 1989).

Trumbull (1998) and other prospanking advocates take their challenges to antispamkng advocates to another level. They suggest that the reduction in use of physical punishment may actually contribute to increased child abuse. Their rationale is that by giving up spanking, parents have totally abdicated disciplining, and when a child one day goes too far, the parents lose it and resort to more severe abusive physical punishment (Pitzer, 1998).

A LOOK AT THE PAST

No one would be surprised to learn that punishment generally was more harsh in days past. When I present a class or workshop on discipline I usually cite quotes from an 1888 book by Hobbs, titled Classroom Discipline: A to Z. These quotes help educators to understand how things were back then. Some of the quotes include:

- Discipline is an attitude. It is a matter of will over will. (p. 9)
- Children are cruel, and teachers are fair game. Until you have established yourself as sole ‘King of the Mountain,’ the one in control of the classroom, they are going to ‘take you on.’ (p. 11)
- No discipline is complete, no child is properly disciplined until he immediately and completely responds to the spoken word of those who have duly constituted authority over him. (p. 60)
- For children to respond to your instructions with voice obedience, there must of necessity be a reverential fear present. (p. 60)
- Paddling must inflict pain so that it will be remembered when you speak to him/her on future occasions. (p. 78)
- A switch may not last as long as thicker and heavier instruments, but it will fulfill the requirement of burning without causing bruises that can be photographed and shown in a court of law. (p. 77)
Most audiences are a bit surprised when they review these quotes. They are even more surprised and shocked when I admit my purposeful error. In fact, this text for teachers was published in 1988, not 1888!

THE HEADLINE READ “SPANKING IS OK!”

Dr. Diana Baumrind delivered an attention-getting presentation at the 2001 annual convention of the American Psychological Association. She asserted “social scientists had overstepped the evidence in claiming that spanking caused lasting harm to the child” (Goode, 2001). She went on to say that while she did not advocate spanking, “the scientific case against the use of normative physical punishment is a leaky dike, not a solid edifice” (Goode, 2001). Further, “after stripping out parents who doled out unusually harsh physical punishment, Baumrind and co-author Elizabeth Owens found that children who were spanked moderately were no worse off than if they were spanked seldom or not at all” (Simerman, 2001). Apparently a mild to moderate spanking has no detrimental effects.

The major problem with the headlines that followed Baumrind’s assertion, such as “Spanking is OK!” (a headline guaranteed to sell lots of newspapers), is that “it cuts out the very context she emphasizes most” (Study’s no endorsement of discipline by spanking, 2001)—the assumption that the child will have loving and firm parents who communicate well with the child. Baumrind “distinguishes between impulsive, reactive spanking and spanking as a planned response to misbehavior and part of a child-rearing strategy” (Simerman, 2001). This may be a big assumption for many families.

A ROSE BY ANY OTHER NAME IS STILL A ROSE: OR IS IT?

Although this is not an exact Shakespeare quote, it is close. As you review the PROs and CONs of punishment you will note something peculiar, but on second thought, expected. Those who support the supplying of punishment, in particular corporal punishment, call what they do paddling or spanking. Gary Ezzo, a self-styled childcare expert calls it smacking. Because most of us at one time or another have been paddled, spanked, or smacked (We turned out okay!), we are a bit more accepting, or at least, understanding of these two familiar terms. In fact, most parents admit to having spanked or paddled their own children. On the other hand, those who do not support the supplying of corporal punishment, call it something else—hitting or beating! All of a sudden, terms (paddling, spanning, and smacking) that sounded familiar
and/or at least defendable as a parent, no longer seem palatable. Hitting or beating another person just is not acceptable. If you don’t believe it, try hitting someone out on the street. If they don’t hit you back, you probably will find yourself accused of assault!

Murray Straus, the author of the books such as *Beating the Devil out of Them: Corporal Punishment in American Children* (2001), is an outspoken opponent of corporal punishment. Challenging his opposition on corporal punishment is the Family Defense Network of Ohio. In a point-by-point challenge, the Family Defense Network counted the number of times Straus used the word “attack,” “hitting,” or “hit” in chapter four of one of his books. The total was seventy! It is hard to have an intelligent, rational, and informed discussion of corporal punishment when one side calls it spanking and the other side calls it hitting, or one side calls it getting smacked and the other side calls it taking pops or licks!

Haim Ginnot, author of *Parent and Child* and *Teacher and Child*, added fuel to this hot topic years ago when he stated:

- When a child hits a child, we call it aggression.
- When a child hits an adult, we call it hostility.
- When an adult hits an adult, we call it assault.
- When an adult hits a child, we call it discipline.

**GUIDELINES FOR ADMINISTERING PUNISHMENT**

If you feel you must punish students, do it effectively. The literature is replete with guidelines regarding procedures for supplying punishment, especially corporal punishment. Read them. Follow them. If you must err, do so on the side of caution. I could cite specific guidelines for how to administer punishment properly, especially physical punishment. Although such descriptions are widely available, to provide them may leave you with a false sense of security that if you simply follow the guidelines, you are protected.

Instead, I have chosen to present Essex’s (1989) ten costly mistakes one should avoid when administering corporal punishment:

1. Administer corporal punishment for offenses that clearly do not warrant such force.
2. Neglect to inform students ahead of time that specific infractions will result in punishment.
3. Overlook student characteristics such as age and physical or emotional state.
4. Fail to use a reasonable instrument.
5. Deny any, or even minimal, prior due process.
6. Fail to have an appropriate witness present.
7. Administer punishment with malice or anger.
8. Use excessive force or exercise poor judgment.
9. Ignore alternative options and/or administer punishment over a student’s or parent’s objection.
10. Fail to follow district or state policy.

Note that all of the warnings start with a verb, something someone can choose to do or not to do. In each case, the educator must make such choices and then be prepared to be held accountable for those choices. Make the right choices! Note that Essex’s list is a set of DON’Ts. The two DO guidelines that I would add are: DO learn lots and lots more about punishment before you use it, and DO have a very good insurance policy.

The guideline of using a “reasonable instrument” bears a comment. What is a reasonable instrument? One’s hand? Dobson says no. “The hand should be seen by the child as an object of love rather than an instrument of punishment” (1978, p. 46). Neutral objects, though, such as a switch, a belt, or a paddle would be acceptable. One wonders what Dobson’s reaction would be to the application of today’s technology to the supplying of corporal punishment. In a newspaper article titled “Man Pleads Guilty to Shocking Sons with Dog Collar” (Erie Daily Times, 1996, p. 9A), a parent admitted to shocking his two sons with an electrically powered dog collar when they disobeyed.

Some people are appalled by this. Are you? Is an electrically powered dog collar a reasonable, neutral instrument? In principle, an electric shock, a swat with a paddle, or a barrage of belittling and embarrassing comments have one thing in common, they all are designed to hurt! And hurt they do. All three are used successfully in training household pets. Why not children? Is this so outrageous? Recall that many of the prospanking authors include the word “train” in their book’s titles.

Dobson’s own magazine, Newsletter of Focus on the Family: With Dr. James Dobson, offers guidelines for administering disciplinary spankings. Two of these guidelines merit comments. One guideline, “Spanking should always be a planned action, not a reaction, and should follow a deliberate procedure” (Trumbull, 1998, p. 4), seems to fly in the face of a basic principle of operant conditioning whereby consequences are supposed to follow immediately after the behavior in question has occurred, and appears to challenge directly Dobson’s own recommendation of “it is important to spank immediately [Dobson’s italics] after the offense, or not at all” (1978, p. 47). A second
guideline, “Spanking should never cause physical (or I assume, psychological) injury” (Turnbull, 1998, p. 4), suggests that parents and teachers are capable of remaining calm, cool, and collected, in the emotional heat that often accompanies the testing of wills between children and adults. This is a lot to ask of anyone; I know.

When my two children were infants and it was my time for the 2:00 A.M. feeding, my son David took his bottle and went back to sleep immediately. With my daughter Rebecca, it was another story. She seemed to sense it was me and not her mother giving her the bottle and that now was the time for her to test her strong will with her dad. I remember being dead tired, worried about how I would make my early morning class, and wanting to just get back into my nice warm bed. I recall giving her some very healthy “squeezes” to the point, later, of wondering whether I came close to squeezing the breath right out of her. What scared me then, and scares me now, was that I already was in my early thirties, had a Ph.D., a secure job, a sound marriage, a supportive mate, two incomes, and a promising future and, yet, I almost “went over the edge.” If I came that close to causing my daughter physical injury, and I had all the advantages listed above, I can’t begin to imagine how parents (or just one parent) without all of these advantages cope!

Skinner’s research offers two more guidelines regarding punishment. First, punishing only serious infractions encourages students to misbehave just about up to that point. “Continual, gentle, non-emotional, clearly directed punishment lessens the emotional overtones that accompany much punishment” (Sylwester, 1970, p. 72). Second, the imaginative teacher should take advantage of the period of suppressed response that typically follows punishment to encourage and strengthen desired behaviors (Sylwester, 1970). Dobson, too, suggests using this period of time to reassure and teach.

THREE SWATS AND YOU ARE OUT

Prior to the 2005 banning of corporal punishment in schools, one Pennsylvania elementary school’s guidelines for administering corporal punishment read, “A maximum of three swats with a paddle is permitted.” A county school district next door to where the author currently resides in Florida still mentions “no more than three (3) licks . . . ” in its 2006–2007 Code of Student conduct publication. These guidelines raise a number of questions. Where in the scientific literature is the fact that administering three swats is acceptable, yet delivering four or more swats is unacceptable? I phoned the school district and asked what research they had used to justify three swats. I thought the
telephone had gone dead—there was dead silence on the other end. No one had an answer.

About two months ago I expanded my inquiry into why three swats were so commonly included in a school’s discipline guidelines. I searched the Web and located a number of mid-western and southern states (i.e., Alabama, Texas, Oklahoma, Missouri, New Mexico, Kentucky, Louisiana, and Mississippi) that still permit corporal punishment and whose online student guidelines cite the possibility that a student might receive three swats for misbehavior. Note, Texas has the most reported paddlings (75,994), 1.9 percent of their student body. Mississippi has far fewer paddlings (48,627), but this represents 9.8 percent of their student body. Overall, paddlings are going down—there were 350,000 public school students paddled in the United States in 2000, down from approximately 1.5 million in 1976 (U. S. Department of Education).

I phoned school districts in several of these states, talked with senior administrators, and asked what research they had turned to in order to recommend a maximum of three swats. No one had an answer—it just had always been three swats. The best response I got was “Well, the state permits four swats, but we only allow three.” One assistant superintendent ended the conversation by saying, “Dr. Tauber, if you ever find out why it is three swats, please call me!”

I have no way of knowing what image comes to your mind when you envision three swats being administered. If you are up to it—and have a strong stomach—you may want to take a look at what happened to a young man in Texas back in 1994 who back-talked his coach. He received three solid whacks from a wooden paddle. His mother said that you could see blood through his underwear. His doctor said the bruises were consistent with traumatic injury. School officials said it was a matter of policy and that they would do it again (Oberman, 2004,. http://www.nospank.net/causby.htm). Of course, not all spankings end up this way, but perhaps even one is one too many! It could happen to your (or my) son or daughter.

To my horror, I recently learned that some school districts, even those with a declared three-swat maximum, actually administer more than three swats. How can this happen? The answer is that the school district has a three-swat maximum per infraction! Students guilty of multiple infractions can, in the same day, receive more than three swats. I suppose, as a sign of compassion for the victim, a time period usually is allotted between sets of swats.

How hard should the swats be? I am a six foot one and one-half inch male who weighs 220 pounds. My wife, also a teacher, is five feet and weighs about 110 pounds. Now, whose swat are we talking about, mine or hers? It surely would make a difference to the child who is being paddled.
One commonly stated corporal punishment guideline of school districts states that “reasonable force” may be used, but under no circumstances may that reasonable force cause “bodily injury.” What training, if any, do administrators, teachers, or for that matter parents, have in order to decide what is reasonable force and at what point such force may or may not cause bodily injury? I mention parents because some schools, most often private schools, require “parent-administered corporal punishment.” Trial and error on the part of parents or teachers would not be a recommended way to establish how severe spankings can be to represent “reasonable force” on the part of the paddler.

Another common punishment guideline is that “Corporal punishment should be used infrequently and as a last resort.” Dobson, though, says otherwise. “A spanking is to be reserved for use in response to willful defiance, whenever it occurs [Dobson’s italics]. Period!” (Dobson, 1978, p. 36). Dobson says that to wait and then paddle later often results in the parent or the teacher being perceived by the child as nagging, in other words, using less effective techniques over and over again such as screaming, reminding, and hand-wringing. All of which, he says, don’t work. A major problem with recommending that corporal punishment be a “last resort” is that too many educators and parents are unaware of the many “first resorts” that can effectively be used and thus jump too quickly to administering corporal punishment.

While much of the discussion in this chapter centers upon physical or corporal punishment, similar cases could be made for forms of psychological punishment—that is, humiliation, embarrassment, and fear. Where is it written just how much humiliation, embarrassment, and fear can be administered so that a teacher or parent doesn’t exceed the equivalent of this school district’s “three swat” policy? Yet, many of these other forms of punishment can hurt more, and hurt longer, than corporal punishment. They just do not leave the obvious swelling and scars observable to a parent or emergency room physician. Surely no one still believes the old adage, “sticks and stones will break my bones, but names will never hurt me.” Names do hurt! The rest of the words regarding how much names can hurt are as follows:

**STICKS AND STONES**

Sticks and stones may break my bones,
But words can also hurt me.
Sticks and stones break only skin,
While words are ghosts that haunt me.
Slant and curved the word-swords fall
To pierce and stick inside me.
Bats and bricks may ache through bones,
But words can mortify me.

Pain from words has left its scar
On mind and heart that’s tender.
Cuts and bruises now have healed;
It’s words that I remember.

(Author unknown)

When delivering punishment one must be sure that what one actually is delivering is, in fact, punishment! Whether or not something is punishing is not decided by the punisher, but by the person being punished. A teacher’s scolding, designed to be punishing, may be taken as a successful bid for attention—in other words, a reward. An application of the “board of education” to one’s hindquarters could be seen by a misbehaving child as a right of passage into manhood, something earning him admiration (reward) from his peers.

Accurately determining ahead of time just how an individual child will perceive an intended punishment is about as hard (and unsuccessful) as other efforts to read the future. The true test of whether or not an intended punishment was perceived as punishment is determined by its impact on the child. If the punished behavior lessens in intensity, duration, and/or frequency in the future, it was perceived as punishment. If the punished behavior does not decrease in the future, it was not perceived as punishment.

CHALLENGES TO PUNISHMENT

So far, the overall point of this chapter is that there may be a place, if ever so cautious, for punishment in classrooms. Now it must be said that the preponderance of evidence, as well as informed opinion, supports the other side of the argument. Such evidence can be found in even the most superficial review of the literature.

Alvin Toffler (1990), for instance, describes three forms of power—force (violence), wealth, and knowledge. Force, even when it “works,” produces resistance. Victims either try to escape or fight back. He describes force—the use of punishment—as “low-quality power” (p. 15). Further, the effects of punishment are not the opposite of reward. Punishment does not “subtract” responses where reinforcement “adds” them (Milhollan & Forisha, 1972).
Typically, the arguments against the use of punishment, particularly physical punishment, center around several points.

Experimental research on punishment reveals, for instance, that “many of the characteristics of effective corporal punishment are not achievable or acceptable in the classroom setting” (Orentlicher, 1992, p. 3207). These include, among others, that it is most effective when delivered (1) with complete surprise (eliminates due process), (2) immediately after the occurrence of the misbehavior (impossible with a classroom full of students), (3) following every occurrence, and (4) with an intensity severe enough to cause pain.

A second regularly cited argument against the use of punishment is that educators could use more effective alternatives to accomplish the same end. For instance, Skinner’s views (the basis for behavior modification) ignore the punishment of undesired behaviors, instead concentrating upon the reinforcement of desired behaviors. Teachers could do likewise. Kessler (1985) argues that kids for whom corporal punishment will work can be controlled in other ways, whereas the students who are the “real problems” won’t be deterred by it.

Other arguments against retaining corporal punishment as an educator option include (1) that what is often claimed as a last-resort tool, when all else fails, is used too soon and too often, therefore undermining the search for appropriate alternatives; and (2) that punishment turns kids off to learning and inadvertently teaches them that “might makes right.” It teaches them, by example, that force is the solution of choice in any conflict—home, school, community. The bottom line is “punitive methods . . . don’t work in the long run” (Skinner, 1980, p. 79).

Given the negative connotation that the term punishment carries, should we call it something else? Perhaps. But, according to Kohn (1991), punishment is such a disagreeable style of interaction that it cannot be disguised by referring to it by some other name. Perhaps people continue to use punishment because to do so reinforces the punisher. I recall one of my graduate professors saying, “Although punishing a child may not have any long-lasting impact on the child’s behavior, if it makes you feel better, go ahead and do it.” When a behavior occurs that is aversive to us, we punish it. By our response of punishing, the annoying behavior is removed (at least temporarily), constituting reinforcement of our punishing behavior.

“Anyone can beat a child with a rod as the primary way of conditioning his behavior. That takes no sensitivity, no judgment, no understanding, and no talent. To depend on corporal punishment as the principal method of discipline is to make that critical error in assuming that discipline equals punishment” (Campbell, 1977, p. 84). Given that so little is known about the long-term consequences of punishment, especially physical punishment,
reason dictates caution. It makes sense to explore alternatives, including reasoning, discussion, use of logical consequences, time-out, isolation, and setting boundaries, rules, and limits (Greven, 1991).

The statement, “Spare the rod and spoil the child,” has special meaning to me in that I have spent a year in northern England (sheep country), six months in Australia (also, sheep country), and some time in New Zealand where there are more sheep than people. To the best of my recollection I never saw a shepherd using a rod to hit a sheep. The rod, even in biblical times, was used by the shepherd to *guide* the sheep and to *protect* them from the menace of wolves. Somehow over the years the meaning behind “Spare the rod and spoil the child” has changed whereby the rod is no longer viewed as an instrument for guiding and protecting, but seen as an instrument for hitting and inflicting pain upon one’s charges. Personally I prefer the guidance and protection connotation.

**CORPORAL PUNISHMENT: SHOULD IT BE A STUDENT’S CHOICE?**

A creative slant on corporal punishment, described by Yancey (2001), is that of allowing students to choose whether they want to be paddled or be suspended. The program required that all males under age seventeen must have parental permission and all females, no matter their age, must have parental approval, in order to choose being paddled.

The problem is that neither choice is a good choice. Being paddled is fraught with all the dangers identified in this chapter. In-school suspension (ISS), apparently, does not improve attendance and has a high recidivism rate. And, out-of-school suspension (OSS), among other downfalls, keeps students, especially academically weak students, away from the learning environment.

Although I have claimed that the problem is that neither choice is a good choice, the district in question apparently feels otherwise—even though prior to instituting the program, no students had been paddled in almost a decade. They labeled the program as “working” because one of the district’s goals was to reduce the number of students in ISS and that is exactly what happened!

Even though it sounds as if all parties should be happy—educators have fewer students in ISS or OSS and students got that all-important, democracy basic, choice—a major problem exists. Should we allow a child to choose to be hit? Given that public safety is a constitutionally guaranteed right, can we allow a government agency such as a school to place students in a situation where their safety could be threatened? In the same way, could we allow high school students to avoid wearing safety glasses in a metal shop or kindergarten students to run out into traffic even if it were their choice to do so?
It should be noted that the program that Yancey describes was terminated at the start of the 2006–2007 school year. The high school where it operated now has a new principal who does not support the use of corporal punishment (Roberts, 2006). But, the right of students, even elementary and middle school students, to choose corporal punishment in lieu of other forms of punishment still exists in many American schools.

Finally, I especially would recommend that one never paddle girls. I understand that our country aims for equality, especially gender equality. So, shouldn’t what is good for the gander (boys) be good for the goose (girls)? In a perfect world, with a history of gender equality, the answer might be “yes.” But, because historically men have held positions of power over women, often enforcing that power by force, a male teacher or administrator “spanking” a female student reinforces that dreadful history. Further, it is not hard to read into the male paddling of females a sexual component. One young girl (gave testimony before the U.S. Senate, 1984) reports showing up to the principal’s office, told to bend over his desk, spread her legs, and then, after feeling the paddle “caress her buttocks,” received her medicine—six swats—two at a time with a brief interval of time in between. She likened the experience to being raped.

**ORGANIZATIONS FAVORING ABOLISHMENT OF CORPORAL PUNISHMENT**

The following list of organizations, although certainly not exhaustive, shows the wide support that exists for the abolition of corporal punishment.

- American Academy of Pediatrics
- American Association for Counseling and Development
- American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education
- American Association of School Administrators
- American Bar Association
- American Humanist Association
- American Medical Association
- American Nurses Association
- American Personnel and Guidance Association
- American Psychiatric Association
- American Psychological Association
- American Public Health Association
- Association of Junior Leagues
THE DEMOGRAPHICS OF PUNISHMENT

Of note in the study of corporal punishment is the fact that physical punishment is not the educator’s tool of choice for all students in all schools in all communities, states, or countries. Demographic factors clearly exist. The child of choice is the frail male. “Students who are more capable of striking back are treated more humanely” (Boonin, 1979, p. 395). It is not the school bully who is the object of corporal punishment, but students in elementary schools and pupils of small stature in junior high schools (Ball, 1989).

Nationwide, is it sheer coincidence that the ten worst states by percentage of students struck by educators just happen to be in the South—Arkansas, Mississippi, Alabama, Tennessee, Georgia, Texas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, South Carolina, and Missouri (U.S. Department of Education, 1997)? Could it be that all of the “bad kids” in our nation just happened to be born in, or have moved to, these states? Of course not.

Within my home state of Pennsylvania, school districts in the west have had a higher incidence of allowing and using corporal punishment than did schools in the east. Could it be that more “bad kids” gravitated to the western part of the state? Probably not. At least I hope not because this is exactly where I grew up!

There was a man who was recently capitalizing on this migration of so-called “bad kids” to western Pennsylvania by making and distributing wooden paddles. I ordered one of the paddles to use for “demonstration” purposes.
Much more recently an Oklahoma auto mechanic suspended his sales of “The Rod,” a cushioned-handled 22-inch nylon device, for administering corporal punishment after a public protest brought it to light.

According to Orentlicher (1992), corporal punishment occurs more often in rural schools and in smaller schools. Male students are disciplined more frequently (and more severely) than female students, with black males receiving more disciplinary actions than white males (Radin, 1988; Gregory, 1995). African American students and those with special learning disabilities are more likely to receive corporal punishment. Monroe (2005, 46), in a telling article titled, “Why are ‘Bad Boys’ always Black?”, cites Skiba et al.’s (2000) research that Blacks “receive harsher punishment than their peers,” the claim by Gordon et al. (2000) that African American boys are overrepresented on indexes of discipline . . . including suspensions and expulsions, and Irvine’s (1990) assertion that “black pupils are two to five times more likely to be suspended than their white counterparts.”

Socioeconomically, poor white males are paddled more often than middle-class whites (Baker, 1987). Less-educated families and those with a greater number of children living in the household are particularly supportive of corporal punishment (Ellison & Sherkat, 1993). Schools with more inexperienced teachers are more likely to use corporal punishment.


In 1998 England extended the ban to all private schools. Imagine, even England, a country that for centuries imprisoned, flogged, keel-hauled, branded, beheaded, and burned its enemies, as well as its citizens, has been able to outlaw corporal punishment. Many countries also have outlawed the use of corporal punishment by parents (i.e., Austria, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Italy, Israel, Norway, and Sweden). With its newly elected government, Germany, too, is moving toward banning parents from striking children.

In one of my more spirited class lectures on discipline, I approached a student who I knew recently had served in the military and, as part of a
classroom demonstration, “slapped” him across the face. The “slap,” exaggerated for the benefit of the audience, barely touched him. Still, a slap is a slap, and he noticeably recoiled with surprise. I asked him whether or not his superior officers in the military had a right to slap him. He answered “No! Of course not.” I then asked him (and the rest of the class) if they found it at all strange that the military (an organization designed to prepare well-trained, physically fit, macho young men and women who “can take it”) does not permit soldiers to be slapped, and yet schoolchildren, many of whom are young and frail, can be hit by their “superiors”—their teachers. An extended silence followed my question. With only twenty-nine states in the United States having banned corporal punishment in schools, let alone in homes, we have a long, long way to go. What are we waiting for?

James Dobson, when asked, “Do you think corporal punishment will eventually be outlawed?” responded, “It is very likely.” When asked “Why?” he responded, “There are those in the Western world who will not rest until the government interferes with parent-child relationships . . . it has already happened in Sweden, and the media seems determined to bring that legislation to the United States. To date, Sweden has been joined by more than 10 European countries in banning spanking. In the first month of 2007, an Assemblywoman from California tried to get passed legislation that will make spanking a toddler or infant (age 0 to 3) a misdemeanor, punishable by up to a year in jail or a fine up to $1,000. It will be a sad day for families” (Dobson, 1992, pp. 63–64).

More than a decade later, a school board member in Memphis who was unconvinced by the research against corporal punishment, said, “teachers and principals say this is our last line of defense, and if you take away this we’re in trouble” (Gehring, 2004). One wonders what strategy he expects that teachers and administrators will turn to if the “last resort” of punishment doesn’t work.

CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF CORPORAL PUNISHMENT IN SCHOOLS

No discussion about punishment, in particular corporal punishment, would be complete without a reference to the work of Irwin A. Hyman, recently deceased director of the National Center for the Study of Corporal Punishment and Alternatives in the Schools (NCSPAS). Hyman is internationally known for his research, his advocacy, and for dissemination of materials concerning corporal punishment and its alternatives.

As an expert on corporal punishment, Hyman has written and delivered scholarly papers, published journal articles, written books, designed workshops, and delivered testimony before the U.S. Congress.

Another organization concerned with corporal punishment is End Physical Punishment of Children-USA (EPOCH-USA). They are located at 155 West Main Street, Suite 1603, Columbus, Ohio 43215. EPOCH-USA is an American affiliate of EPOCH-WORLDWIDE, a multinational federation committed to ending corporal punishment through education and legal reforms.

**WHAT IS YOUR BEST CASE FOR PUNISHMENT?**

As a class exercise, I have repeatedly asked graduate students seeking a master’s degree in elementary education to pretend that they were a behaviorist (some may well have been one), pretend that they supplied punishment, and pretend that they were challenged by a colleague or parent for their use of punishment. I then asked them to offer their best case or justification for using punishment. Here are some representative responses.

- “It gets results INSTANTLY. Punishment shows students that what they are doing is wrong and that it will not be tolerated. It shows them who is BOSS!”
- “I think my role is to have control over my students. They need to know I’m boss and punishment is a good way to show them that I am in control. If I punish them, they will respect me because they’ll know I mean business.”
- “Rather than explain my reasoning—which a child may or may not agree with or even understand, one can simply punish. It is simpler and immediate.
- “Children with major behavior problems will not behave unless they are spanked! They get spanked at home by mom or dad, so what does ‘time-out’ do to the child at school? Nothing! The child needs to be spanked in order to change his or her behavior.”
- “It is the only way they will learn. No one likes to be punished. Eventually after they’ve been hurt by it, the offenses will stop.”
- “Children need to know who is in charge and what is right or wrong. Although it may hurt now, it will help them to be stronger later in life.
- “Punishment enables a person to remember the consequences for misconduct or bad decisions.”
- “The child will remember the pain and be conditioned to not continue that bad behavior.”
“If you spare the rod you will spoil the child. A child must be punished in order to learn right and wrong behaviors.”

“Pain is lasting. If you punish students enough, they will start acting and learning the way you want them to.”

“Punishment can instill fear in a child and will make him submissive to you. You will have control over him and he will, therefore, listen to you and do what you want.” [Note, Dr. Tauber, I do not really feel this way at all!]

My sense is that these responses represent both truth and fiction. Some respondents probably believe what they wrote. Some respondents may simply be repeating what they have heard others say. Still others, like the last respondent, had no problem creating an answer, but felt obliged to explain herself.

How would you have responded to the question, “Give me your best case or justification for using punishment”? How many of the above responses, or ones very close to them, have you heard others offer? How many of these responses do you believe? How would you react to others who offer such responses?

**WHAT PARENTS CAN DO IF THEIR SCHOOL DISTRICT PERMITS CORPORAL PUNISHMENT**

Does your school district use corporal punishment? Listed below are some of the things that you can do, including writing a letter (see Figure 4.1) to your child’s teacher, as suggested by the Center for Effective Discipline, Columbus, Ohio (1998).

- Check with your school district’s administration to see if corporal punishment is allowed.
- If it is, get a copy of the district’s discipline policy regarding how and when corporal punishment can be administered.
- You may be able to write a letter stating that you do not want your child to receive corporal punishment. A sample letter follows. Even if the district says that it does not have to honor your wishes, write the letter anyway. If possible, have your family physician or pediatrician sign it.
- Tell your child that you do not want him/her paddled and tell him/her to tell you if it happens.
- If a teacher paddles your child, request a written copy of your rights to a due process hearing procedure.
Figure 4.1
Sample Letter to a Child’s Teacher

A sample letter to your child’s teacher or principal regarding your position on corporal punishment might read as follows:

Dear ___________________,
Please be advised that _____________________, who is a student at ________________ school, should not be disciplined by using corporal punishment (hitting, paddling, spanking, switching, swatting, shaking, forced exercise, punitive restriction of movement, denial of normal bodily functions, etc.) in any circumstance. We believe that it sends children the message that hitting or otherwise hurting people is a way to solve problems.

We know that our child will make mistakes. When that happens, we hope that you will help our child learn what is appropriate behavior and how to act more appropriately in the future. If you are having problems with our child, please contact us, and we will make every effort to come to school to help you. Do not use corporal punishment on our child.

Sincerely,
Parent/Guardian ____________________________

Name: ________________________________
Address: ______________________________
Telephone Number: ____________________
cc: superintendent: ______________________ principal: ______________________

- If your child is injured take the child to a physician or to an emergency room. Take colored pictures of the injury. Ask the physician to report the injury to the police and the child protection agency.
- Talk with your child. He or she may be fearful that you will blame him/her. While your child may have deserved punishment for misbehavior, assure him/her that he/she should not have been paddled leading to an injury.

HOW DOES DEMOCRACY FIT IN DOBSON’S MODEL?

Keeping in mind what you learned in Chapter 2, Democracy and Discipline, how would adopting Dobson’s discipline model fit with your perception of a democratic classroom? It is important to address this question
whether or not you adopt his model. Because you will not teach in a vac-
uum, you must be prepared to defend your own choice of a discipline model
and challenge models proposed or used by others. A sound basis for a de-
fense or a challenge is that of how a model impacts democracy in the class-
room.

**PROs AND CONs OF DOBSON’S MODEL**

As you study each discipline model you need to identify their respective
PROs and CONs. In the space below, identify the PROS on the left side
and the CONs on the right side. Your listing of the PROs and CONs should
help you decide which is the best discipline model for you and your stu-
dents! You may want to compare your PROs and CONs with those listed in
Appendix I.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>James Dobson: A Place for Punishment Model</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PROs</td>
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<td>CONs</td>
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**WHEN IS A MODEL NOT A MODEL?**

Although Dobson’s views on discipline have been included among the six
discipline models presented in this text, technically, Dobson does not really
have a model. At least it is not a model in the same sense that the other
five discipline authors presented in this book have a model. All of the other
authors outline specific hierarchical teacher/parent responses to children’s
misbehavior.
For instance, the Canters have their names-on-the board type responses (do this, then do this, then do that), Jones has his “layer cake” set of responses, Dreikurs has his progressively more severe goals of misbehavior-triggered responses, Glasser has his steps in Reality Therapy, and Gordon has his effectiveness training schematic that identifies what skill to use in what situation. My wife, a high school English teacher, and I had a similar response, recently, when listening to a one and one-half hour cassette tape by Dobson. When the tapes were over, we turned to each other and, like that television commercial years ago showing the two older ladies examining their hamburgers, asked each other “Where’s the beef?” There was no doubt that both of us felt better after having listened to the tapes, but we could not recall one specific thing that we had learned that we could apply Monday morning when we went back to school.

Why, then, have Dobson’s ideas been included? His is the only discipline position that sees a real place for supplying punishment. And, because so many Americans still seem to rely on punishment, what Dobson has to say should be of interest. Although Dobson’s model has been placed on the behaviorist or Skinnerian side of the Skinner-Rogers’ dichotomy, B. F. Skinner himself has said, “I believe that there is no longer any use for corporal punishment in school and much is to be gained by suppressing it.” But the fact is that punishment, whether being supplied at home or in school, is here to stay for the foreseeable future. Only by studying the subject can parents and teachers make more educated decisions on whether the use of punishment will increase or decrease.

Dobson’s “A Place for Punishment” model has been the focus of very little scientific research, although, two prospanking authors, Debi and Michael Pearl, recently have coined the scientific sounding term “spankinology.” When students of mine in a course titled Psychology of Discipline are studying the chapter on Dobson, they regularly write or e-mail expressing the difficulty they are having in locating anything in the scientific literature regarding Dobson’s model. I write or e-mail back that the frustration they have experienced was, in fact, part of the lesson. I then ask them to consider how such an independently untested model such as Dobson’s can be so popular among the masses.

Most of the sources on Dobson’s views that do exist have been written by Dobson himself. His model, although popular among some laypeople and selected religious groups, has not been a major focus of master’s theses, doctoral dissertations, or other empirical studies. Hence, a review of Dobson’s model in the academic literature on classroom management comes up almost empty-handed. Although Dobson’s model itself is not widely referenced
in the academic literature, numerous citations on the subject of supplying punishment are available.

**LEARNING MORE ABOUT DOBSON’S “A PLACE FOR PUNISHMENT” MODEL**

Are you interested in Dobson’s model? Are you ready to try some of his techniques? If you are, be sure first to consult some of his original sources. In addition, you should read more on the short-term and long-term effects of supplying punishment. What has been presented in this chapter, or any other single chapter, is not enough for you to run out, start using the abbreviated knowledge and skills, and expect to get results. There is no substitute for the original. Learn more about teaching respect and responsibility to children, about barriers to learning, discipline in morality, the strong-willed adolescent, and shaping a child’s will. Buy Dobson’s books, borrow his books, read his books!

Note that unlike the five discipline models that will follow, there is no single “course” that one can take to learn how to punish. Be careful, practice does not make perfect with punishment—even thousands and thousands of years of it.

- To learn more about James Dobson and his ideas on classroom (as well as home) management, contact:
  Focus on the Family
  P.O. Box 35500
  Colorado Springs, CO 80935
  Phone: (800) A-FAMILY
  www.family.org or focusonthefamily.com
  E-mail: mail@fotf.org
- If you would like to view more of Dobson’s ideas, check into his Web site www.fotf.org
- Search one or more of the many Internet Web sites using such terms as “James Dobson,” “Focus on the Family,” “discipline,” “strong-willed child,” and “corporal punishment,” as keywords. Note that typing “corporal punishment” into the Web site, MySpace.com generated 78,000 hits in .05 seconds!
- Subscribe to Dobson’s *Focus on the Family* magazine.
- Search popular Web sites such as www.Amazon.com to locate books written about Dobson’s work.
- Search various Web sites entering key punishment-related terms. Although there are too many sites to list here, two are singled out for special attention:

**TEST YOURSELF**

This is a sampling of the kinds of factual and open-ended questions that you should be able to answer after having read this chapter.

1. What are several reasons to explain the continued popularity of punishment?
2. How would you classify Dobson’s views according to the four theoretical frameworks presented in Chapter 3?
3. Name two of Dobson’s more popular books outlining his views on how to discipline children.
4. What is the title of Dobson’s Colorado-based organization?
5. What are three guidelines for administering punishment?
6. How do words such as “spank” and “paddle” versus “hit” and “beat” color the discussion of corporal punishment?
7. Offer two examples to support the claim that punishment is related to the demographics of our population.
8. What does the research literature have to say about the commonly included “three swats” into discipline Code of Conduct guides?
9. What are three things that parents can do if schools use corporal punishment with their children against their will?
10. According to Dobson, should punishment be a “last resort”? Why? Why not?
11. Defend or challenge the statement, “Spare the rod and spoil the child.”
12. Defend or challenge Dobson’s belief that you cannot learn how to rear (teach) children by turning to the scientific inquiry.
13. How do Skinner’s and Dobson’s views on the use of punishment differ?
14. Should students be permitted to choose between corporal punishment and other disciplinary measures (i.e., detention)? Why? Why not?
15. How difficult would it be to find articles by or about Dobson’s views in the professional literature read by educators? Why? Why not?
16. Behaviorist’s claim that for punishment to be punishment, “it must hurt!” Do you agree?
17. How democratic is Dobson’s model?
18. Do you support the often-offered statement, “I got paddled and I turned out okay”? Why? Why not?
ASK YOURSELF: IS THIS MODEL FOR YOU?

Although you would want to defer making any final decision until you read still more, at this point what are your feelings toward Dobson’s approach to discipline? What strengths and weaknesses do you see in his approach? Does his approach to discipline reflect your fundamental views on how you believe people should be treated? Could you defend the use of this approach to your students and their parents, to your colleagues, and to your administrators? Could you remain committed to his approach—even when the going got tough? If you were to adopt his approach, could you go to sleep at night and not feel that there simply has to be a better way to discipline? At this point, is Dobson’s approach for you?
Chapter 5
Lee and Marlene Canter: Assertive Discipline: A “Take-Charge” Approach to Classroom Management

Lee J. Canter (1947–), prior to founding Lee Canter and Associates in 1976, worked with child guidance agencies throughout California. Marlene Canter (1948–) began her career teaching students with special needs. Known for their work in the fields of education and parenting, together they have written more than forty books and produced more than ten video programs—as well as producing...
a myriad of support materials geared to helping educators teach and parents raise responsible children. Most recently they have worked with several universities to develop course materials for delivery in a distance-learning master’s program for educators. Through professional development workshops, seminars, and graduate courses, the Canters have taught the Assertive Discipline model, a model that holds to the underlying principle that teachers have a right to teach and that students have a right to learn. Their model has been taught to more than one million people, both in the United States and abroad.

In 1997, the Canters retired and sold their company, Canter and Associates. Their books now are available through Solutions Tree (www.solutions-tree.com; 800-733-6786). Graduate courses based on Canters’ ideas remain available by contacting Laureate Education, Inc. (www.canter.net; 800-669-9011). Lee Canter’s retirement was short-lived, as his 2006 book, Classroom Management for Academic Success, reveals. Marlene Canter, too, is still active in education. She was reelected in 2006 to her second consecutive term as board president of the Los Angeles Unified School District.

OBJECTIVES

This chapter will help you, among other things, to:

- Use the material presented on democracy in Chapter 2, weigh the degree to which Canters’ model does or does not support democracy in a classroom.
- Classify the Lee and Marlene Canter’s Assertive Discipline model using the theoretical frameworks presented in Chapter 3.
- Explain the popularity of Lee and Marlene Canter’s views regarding the use of assertive discipline.
- Identify and explain Canters’ three response styles.
- Explain the importance of teacher-prepared rules.
- Explain the importance of positive recognition.
- Identify the parts of a Canter-type I-Message.
- Explain Alfie Kohn’s challenge to the use of rewards.
- Explain how the SuperNanny exemplifies Canters’ approach.
- Explore how Canters’ model supports your vision of a democratic classroom.
- Explore whether Canters’ Assertive Discipline model is for you.
WHERE DOES THE CANTERS’ MODEL FALL WITHIN THE FOUR THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS IN CHAPTER 3?

The Canters’ Assertive Discipline model clearly finds a place in French and Raven’s Social Bases of Power framework under “coercive” and “reward” powers. It finds a home in Wolfgang and Glickman’s Schools of Thought framework as an interventionist strategy. The Canters’ position falls on the Skinnerian side of the Skinner-Rogers’ dichotomy. In Lewis’ Keeping It Simple framework, Assertive Discipline is equated with “control.”

“C” FOR CONTROVERSY; “C” FOR CANTER

Of all the models of classroom management, none may be more controversial than the Canters’ “take-charge” Assertive Discipline model. Advocates swear by it; nonadvocates swear at it. It seems that no one occupies a middle ground. Although the controversy continues, it came to a head in the late 1980s. This is when Educational Leadership, the journal for the Association for Curriculum and Supervision Development, published a series of good guy/bad-guy articles on assertive discipline.

Curwin and Mendler (1988) started it off in an article titled “Packaged Discipline Programs: Let the Buyer Beware.” They argued that prepackaged training programs may save time, but that obedience models (their belief about assertive discipline) often yielded quick results at the expense of developing responsible students who understand the important principles underlying school rules. In the same issue of Educational Leadership (1988), in “Let the Educator Beware: A Response to Curwin and Mendler,” Lee Canter defended his approach as an effective and practical behavior management strategy that leads to improved student and teacher self-concepts.

Later that same academic year, Render, Padilla, and Krank (1989) argued in “What Research Really Shows about Assertive Discipline” that the claims for assertive discipline made by the Canters were not supported by the limited research that has been conducted. McCormack’s (1989) rebuttal, “Response to Render, Padilla, and Krank: But Practitioners Say It Works,” immediately followed. Curwin and Mendler (1989) stepped forward once again and in “We Repeat, Let the Buyer Beware: A Response to Canter” defended their challenge to assertive discipline.

The debate did not end here. In the professional journal Phi Delta Kappan, Lee Canter published “Assertive Discipline: More Than Names on the Board and Marbles in a Jar” (1989). In this article, Canter argued that many
people who speak against assertive discipline misinterpret or misunderstand the model. They have “selective hearing,” paying attention only to one or two parts of a total program—names on the board and marbles dropped in a jar.

An overlooked key element in assertive discipline is its reliance on catching students being good and letting them know that they have been caught. This theme, actually present since the conception of assertive discipline, is heavily stressed in the Canters’ revised *Assertive Discipline* (1997), whose telling subtitle is *Positive Behavior Management for Today's Classroom*. Appropriate use of praise is an integral component of the Canters’ discipline program. In fact, the Canters “suggest that teachers should find something for which to praise every child at least once a day” (Ferguson & Houghton, 1992, p. 84). Although the Canters recant nothing in the original book, the 1997 edition hopes to take the reader beyond “taking charge” in the classroom.

**A “TAKE-CHARGE” ATTITUDE: BECOMING THE ALPHA MALE**

One of the best ways that I have heard to describe the posture and position that an assertive discipline-trained teacher should assume is to try to become the classroom equivalent of an *alpha* male wolf. Just as the *alpha* male wolf controls the pack, the *alpha* male teacher (male or female) controls a classroom of students. Although some readers might react negatively to this wolf pack/classroom analogy, it should be stressed that in both situations the welfare of those under the *alpha* male may be heightened.

Every nature program that I have ever watched that described the hierarchy of power within a wolf pack has pointed out the benefits to the entire pack of having a clearly established *alpha* male—the one at the top, the one that directs, the one that settles arguments, the one that ensures the well-being of the community. For many parents and teachers, what works for the family of wolves can work for the family at home or in the school classroom. Everyone would be better off if someone was clearly in charge, if someone had the authority. Who better than the parent or the teacher? What might be overlooked in this wolf pack/classroom analogy is that where there is an *alpha* male (the wolf with all the power), there also is an *omega* male (the wolf at the bottom of the pack with absolutely no power). At least, as shown in the nature programs, the life of the *omega* male can be very difficult.

Critical to the effectiveness of the Canters’ assertive discipline is that teachers assume a “take-charge” attitude in the classroom. The idea of assertion
Lee and Marlene Canter

is one of the most important features of the Canters’ model (Davidman & Davidman, 1984). Teachers must develop an assertive attitude. The importance of feeling assertive—and acting assertive—is so important to the Canters that this single point dominates the first three chapters of the revised Assertive Discipline (1997). See Canter, 1993 and 1994, for still more on the importance of being assertive.

Taking charge, in a Canter sense, does not mean trampling over others, although critics of assertive discipline claim otherwise. Taking charge is simply a less palatable way of saying that teachers should be “empowered”—a concept that has gained and continues to gain widespread acceptance within the educational community. If “take charge” is too harsh a way of saying what the Canters want to say, perhaps it should be restated as “assertive teachers are empowered teachers.”

TEACHER EXPECTATIONS

The Canters camouflage some of their Alpha Male teacher posturing by emphasizing teachers’ expectations of students. Normally the word expectations refers to having high or low expectations of another person, often influenced by factors such as race, gender, beauty, body build, and socio-economic status. [See the article, Teachers as Pygmalions: Good or Bad, What We Expect We Generally Get!, in chapter 11.] We would, of course, like to see teachers have high expectations for all of their students.

The Canters use the term expectations as a synonym for the word demands. When they say, “I need you to . . . ,” “I’d like you to . . . ,” “I want you to . . . ,” or “I expect you to . . . ,” what they are really saying is, “Do what I demand (usually following a teacher-generated rule) or I will hurt you” (an uncomfortable consequence will be supplied). Students soon learn that in an assertive classroom the teacher is the boss and one would be well-advised to do what he or she expects (i.e., demands). Not only will doing so allow you to avoid punishment, it may well earn you rewards.

On the positive side of the expectations discussion is the fact that the Canters recommend that teachers state their expectations/demands so clearly that even a student new to the class would know how he or she is to behave. General expectations such as “be polite,” or “work hard,” would be unacceptable. In fact, providing specific expectations such as “Raise your hand and be recognized before speaking” or “Complete an annotated bibliography similar to the sample that I have passed out” probably would be beneficial to any and all discipline models. The clearer the communication the better it is.
RESPONSE STYLES

Teachers, according to the Canters, fall into one of three categories regarding their response styles—the major factor affecting the tone in a classroom. The three response-style categories are assertive, hostile, or nonassertive.

An assertive teacher protects the rights of both the teacher and the students. With this style, teachers make their expectations known to students and in a calm and businesslike manner continually insist that students comply with those expectations. The term expectation as used here can be equated with the term demand. Elsewhere in this book, the term expectations will be discussed under the topic of the self-fulfilling prophecy whereby its meaning will be closer to one of “I have confidence in your ability to succeed at a given task.” Assertive teachers back up their words with actions—with positive and negative consequences.

A hostile teacher resorts to aversive techniques such as sarcasm and threats. These teachers view the classroom world as one of us (teachers) versus them (students). They feel they must rule with an iron fist or else chaos will reign. Hostile teachers, and the behaviors they use, hurt students’ feelings, provoke disrespect (odd given that hostile teachers actually are desperately trying to gain respect) and a desire to retaliate, and undermine students’ needs for security, safety, and belonging. It is hard to imagine any positive and lasting learning taking place in such a hostile environment.

A nonassertive teacher is passive, often inconsistent, and reluctant to impose demands on student behavior. It becomes clear to students that such teachers lack direction and focus. Nonassertive teachers do not know where they are going, and, because of this, it is hard for them to do what any leader must do—secure the willingness of others to follow. No clear standards are evident, and, still further, no evidence exists that actions would be taken by the teacher to back up such standards even if they did exist.

- Assertive teachers get their needs met first, and then go on to act in the best interests of their students.
- Hostile teachers get their needs met first, but do not go on to act in the best interests of their students.
- Nonassertive teachers do not get their needs met and do not go on to act in the best interests of their students.

Some teachers are uncomfortable with the idea of “getting their needs met first.” They believe that teaching is a service profession of sorts and, therefore, they are there to serve the needs of the customer. The customer’s (student’s)
needs come first. The best way to explain the Canters’ feelings on this point is to call the reader’s attention to the standard speech delivered by airline flight attendants just before takeoff. They say something to the effect of, “Should we lose cabin pressure and oxygen be required, oxygen masks will drop from the ceiling. If you are traveling with small children or elderly companions, first place the mask on yourself, and then attend to the needs of those around you.”

The message here is clear. If you help yourself first, you will be in a better position to render assistance to those around you. But if you attend to their needs first (such as helping an infant or child), it is unlikely that they will be able to assist you. By taking care of your immediate needs first, you are not being selfish or greedy; you are actually acting in the best interests of everyone. As in other human service professions, if professionals meet only the needs of their clients to the exclusion of meeting their own needs, they will soon burn out and be of little help to either their clients or themselves.

As a teacher, what are the minimum needs that you must have met in the classroom before you can get on with the task of helping students? Do you have a need for students to be in their seats ready to start class when the bell rings? Do you have a need for students to raise their hands and be acknowledged before speaking? Normally, the list is not too long. As a teacher you are entitled to have your legitimate needs met first. Nonassertive teachers do not realize this fact. You then have a responsibility to do your best to help meet the needs of your students. Hostile teachers ignore this responsibility. Clearly, the Canters believe that an assertive response style best serves both teachers and students.

Personally, as a teacher I have a need to:

- start class on time;
- have students stay awake and do only work related to the class while in class;
- have assignments submitted on time;
- be treated, and have them treat each other, civilly; and
- be formally addressed as “Dr. Tauber” and not by my first name.

That’s it! These are the needs that I feel I must have met before I can help my students meet their own needs. These and other similar needs are reasonable—they are legitimate. I have a right to expect that these needs be met. Some teachers are comfortable with students strolling in after the class has started; I am not. Some teachers overlook students’ lack of civility; I do not. Some teachers do not mind (some even prefer) being called by their first name; I do mind.
Not only are these my legitimate needs, but most serve as sort of on-the-job training for teacher education majors who, in a very short time, will become classroom teachers themselves. My behaviors, my demands that certain legitimate needs be met, act as modeling for them. Chances are they, too, will enumerate these same needs to their students.

RESPONSE STYLES IN ACTION

You are teaching, and two students toward the back of the classroom are chattering to each other and not paying attention to the lesson.

Nonassertive Response: “Please (almost pleading) try to stop talking while I am teaching. How many times do I have to warn you?”

Comment: Even while enforcing legitimate rules in the classroom, nonassertive teachers have a tendency to plead. Doing so is demeaning. It also undermines the teacher’s effectiveness as a disciplinarian. Asking students to “try” to stop talking is not really what you want. What you want is that the students should actually stop talking. Asking, “How many times do I have to warn you?” opens the door to unwanted sarcastic student responses such as, “How about five hundred times?”

Hostile Response: “Hey, you two. Where are your manners? You are the most inconsiderate kids I have ever had the misfortune of teaching. Now turn around and shut up if you know what is good for you.”

Comment: Hostile teachers see the situation as “me versus them.” They take everything personally. All tactics—sarcasm, put-downs, challenges to one’s heritage—are deemed appropriate to use if they get results. Any means to the end of the teacher’s “winning,” complete with angry body language and tone of voice, is acceptable. If students comply, it is usually out of fear.

Assertive Response: While continuing to lecture, the teacher moves over to the chattering students and says, “Bill and John, the rule in this class is that while one person is talking the rest of the class will remain quiet and listen. I want you to stop talking, turn around and face front, and pay attention to the lecture.”

Comment: Assertive teachers act in a calm, confident, and businesslike manner. They let their discipline plan do all of the work. The response they desire is clearly communicated. It is also clear that they are prepared to enforce their discipline plan.

LESSONS FROM BAYWATCH

You may be wondering how Baywatch applies to assertive discipline. Well, it does. I used to watch this popular television program, paying close attention
to how David Hasselhoff (Mitch Buchcannon) would resolve problems in the water and on and off the beach. I, of course, paid little attention to the red-suited female lifeguards!

In two episodes of *Baywatch*, an assertive discipline fundamental was demonstrated. Just as the Canters would tell teachers to be “assertive,” meaning to take care of their own needs first, Mitch told his lifeguards-in-training that “[i]f you are attempting to rescue a drowning victim and the two of you are being swept in towards pilings encrusted with sharp barnacles, you should place the victim between you and the pilings!” The logic, just like the Canters’ logic, is that if you do not take care of yourself, you will be in no position to assist the drowning victim.

**RULES AND A DISCIPLINE PLAN**

To be assertive, one must assert something. For the Canters, that something is rules. Rules form the basis for a teacher’s discipline plan, what the Canters call “limit setting.” The Canters are realistic; they accept the fact that discipline problems in the classroom will occur. Given that the best defense is a good offense, they plan for the inevitable student misbehaviors by designing a well-thought-out discipline plan—one organized in a hierarchy of severity of teacher-supplied consequences to match degrees of student behavior—both unacceptable and acceptable. The plan should be approved by the administration, shared with (taught to) students on the first day of class, sent home to parents (asked to sign and return), and enforced fairly with all students.

The rules, as with all effective rule making and rule enforcing, are few. They might include, among others:

- No one may interfere with my teaching for any reason.
- No one may interfere with any students’ efforts to learn for any reason.
- No one may cause physical or psychological harm to himself or herself or to other students.
- Good behavior will be rewarded.

Still other rules might be more specific such as:

- Raise your hand and be acknowledged before speaking.
- Only one person may speak at a time.
- Walk quietly to and from lunch and all specials.
- Come to class prepared with paper and pencil.
- All homework is due when assigned.
### Table 5.1
Names on the Board

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MISBEHAVES</th>
<th>CONSEQUENCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First time</td>
<td>Name on the board (warning)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second time</td>
<td>One check (15 minutes after school)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third time</td>
<td>Two checks (30 minutes after school)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth time</td>
<td>Three checks (30 minutes after school, and call parents)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fifth time</td>
<td>Four checks (remove from room—principal or vice-principal)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students understand that negative consequences will follow when they break the rules, and they know that positive consequences will follow when they observe the rules. The rules are few in number, simple, direct, and unambiguous. A clear if-then, cause-and-effect relationship exists between the rules and desired outcomes. If you follow such and such rule, then such and such will follow. These rules protect both the teacher’s and the students’ rights. They constitute a classroom’s version of a Magna Carta or Bill of Rights.

Who forms the rules in a Canter classroom? The answer is simple. Canter recommends, “Before the school year begins, determine the rules you want for your classroom” (Canter, 2006, p. 207). In a Canter classroom the rules are ones that “you” want for “your” classroom. It is clear here who the boss is. This behaviorist approach of forming the rules well before students arrive differs significantly from the approach that would be taken by more humanistic teachers.

Fairness in enforcing a discipline plan requires some sort of record keeping. The Canters’ record keeping methods of using “names on the board” (so often attacked by critics as being too public an admonition [Gartrell, 1987]) and “marbles in a jar” are nothing more than instruments to keep these records. Placing a student’s name on the board (or on a clipboard) for breaking a rule and then adding a check mark next to it each time that rule is again broken is simply a way of recording data (see Table 5.1, Names on the Board). Canters’ discipline hierarchy (Canter, 2006) has not changed in three decades.

Dropping a marble in a glass Mason jar (as shown in Figure 5.1) when students do something that the teacher approves of, such as following a rule, is simply an audible signal to all that the class has earned a reward—for example, two extra minutes of recess.

If you find “names on the board” and “marbles in a jar” objectionable, the Canters argue that you should select other, more acceptable, methods. Use your creativity.
In specific instances when names are placed on the board, complete with possible check marks next to them for repeated violations of the rules, the Canters instruct teachers to enforce the discipline plan’s consequences and then wipe the slate clean. Once the sentence has been served, the student has a clean slate. Tomorrow is a new day. No grudges are held.

The fact is, to implement fairly any discipline plan, you must collect data—lots of data—and then use some method to record such data. Teachers need to be very good bookkeepers (the only word I know that has three double letters in a row). How much data needs to be handled each day? Canter recommends that “[a] good rule of thumb is that students need to earn at least 10 points per hour, or approximately 50 points per day” (2006, p. 67). With a typical class of twenty-eight students that would be 1,400 pieces of data a day or 7,000 pieces a week to record. For teachers with more than one class a day, you can do the math regarding the amount of data to be handled.

After you collect all of this data, your work is not done. In the Canters’ model, it is the analysis of the data, not the possible capricious behavior of a teacher, that should trigger the supplying of positive or negative consequences in the discipline plan. All of these consequences, positive or negative, are still additional data. They, too, need to be established, administered, monitored, and evaluated—all while reading, writing, and arithmetic are being taught.

Note the many workbooks that the Canters publish—most complete with awards, certificates, and banners that can be duplicated, filled out, and then
distributed to students and to parents. Time and energy, two resources often in short supply in a teacher's world, must be expended.

**POSITIVE RECOGNITION: A CANTER EMPHASIS**

Positive recognition of students following rules is more important in the Canters’ model than most people realize. In fact, one of Canters’ posters says that the teachers should “Praise Every Child Every Day!” Although critics, the Canters claim, have overlooked this fact, rewarding a student or an entire class for engaging in desirable behavior has always been a cornerstone of their model. This stress upon the positive is made abundantly clear in the revised edition of *Assertive Discipline* (1992). Of the seventeen chapters in the book, the three longest are chapter 6, “Creating Your Classroom Discipline Plan, Part 2: Positive Recognition”; chapter 10, “Teaching Responsible Behavior, Part 2: Using Positive Recognition to Motivate Students to Behave”; and chapter 15, “Using Positive Support to Build Positive Relationships.”

As with all behavior modification systems, the teacher must identify what it is that *each student* values as a reward. This can be hard to do, whether for an elementary teacher having a classroom of 30 students or for a secondary teacher meeting with 180 students throughout the day. Once having determined what each student values as a reward, the teacher must decide what schedule of reinforcement (fixed interval, fixed ratio, variable interval, variable ratio) to use with *each* student in distributing the rewards. All the while the teacher must guard against handing out too many rewards too often or the student may become immune to their effect. Once again, this can be hard, time-consuming work. While all of this is going on, the teacher must proceed with the business of teaching reading, writing, and arithmetic and all else that must be taught in today’s busy classrooms.

Canter-produced supplemental materials, such as collections of ready-to-fill in awards, seasonal motivators, monthly citizen slips, and bulletin boards for reinforcing positive behavior, can help with the supplying of rewards. Many of these resources can be duplicated, filled in, and handed out with minimal teacher time and effort being expended.

Still other reward systems require that teachers prepare “pretend dollars” just like *Monopoly*, and then distribute them (or assess them) depending upon the child’s behavior. Some schools provide students with a stack of colored cards—orange, yellow, blue, green, and red. One card at a time is removed from each student’s pile throughout the day. At the end of the day, the child “pays the piper.” Orange is a “good behavior all day,” and red is a “parents will be notified and possibly a paddling will be administered.”
Other schools dangle very tangible and very attractive rewards in front of students in order to modify their behavior. Using a raffle, one Kentucky high school recently offered a 40th-anniversary-edition Ford Mustang to those students who had earned good grades or attendance. The concern here is that students will work, but only when a reward is offered. Some say it belittles the value of learning for its own sake. Others say that incentive programs such as these simply reflect real life.

The Canters’ emphasis shows up in other ways, too—even surrounding the dispensing of negative consequences. For instance, by making the classroom rules clear and taking the time to teach students these rules, teachers put students in a knowledgeable position. They now have information that they can use to gain control over their own destinies. They can choose to follow or choose to break the rules. They also know what the consequences (positive or negative) will be. Being in a position to make an informed choice is, the Canters would argue, positive. Please review, in Chapter 2, the concept of “choice” as it applies to Democracy and Schooling.

Holding all students—minorities and nonminorities, boys and girls, socioeconomically privileged and socioeconomically deprived—accountable for obeying the rules is also positive. Not making excuses for students (“What can you expect, he comes from a single-parent family”) and not letting them make excuses for themselves (“But he called me a bad name first”) sends a message that no matter what their circumstances, you think enough of them to expect that they will obey the rules just like any other student. To expect less would be condescending.

“I LIKE THE WAY THAT CISSIE. . . .!”

Over the years the Canters have trained teachers to deliver praise-directed statements such as “I like the way Cissie has her paper and pencil out ready to take notes,” “I like the way that Randy put all of his materials back on the shelf,” or “I like the way that Robert lined up so quickly and quietly for lunch.” One could just picture the children receiving these messages smiling ear to ear—they have satisfied their teacher!

Although well intended, such “I like” messages have a flip side. What the teacher may have unwillingly done is to introduce competition into the classroom. Now everyone is in a contest to see who can be the nicest, quietest, obedient student—just what the teacher really wanted in the first place. Further, in “I like” statements, the teacher is pretending to speak to Cissie, Randy, and Robert, but he or she is really using these three students to manipulate (i.e., control) the behavior of all the other students in the classroom.
Some might say that these three students are being “used.” Note the italicized words—all representative of a behaviorist world.

To Canter’s credit, a change is in the wind. In Lee Canter’s most recent book, *Classroom Management for Academic Success* (2006), Canter acknowledges that this sort of praise is judgmental and is problematic for several reasons. Not the least of which is that “I like” messages encourage children to behave or cooperate for no other reason than to please the teacher. Canter now recommends teachers use “behavioral narration”—descriptive messages to direct student behavior. An example would be, “Cissie has her paper and pencil out ready to learn,” or “Randy has put all of his material back on the shelf.” Although the “I like” might be implied, it is no longer specifically stated.

**PITTING ONE CHILD AGAINST ANOTHER**

When I ask an audience, “At home, how comfortable would you be pitting one of your children against the other(s),” almost no one feels comfortable. An example might be that there is only so much money to send one of two children to college, or there is only enough money to take one child in the family on a scuba diving vacation, or there is only enough time to help one of the children with his or her homework. Sounds far-fetched? Actually, in days past, there are many instances of where family resources, especially those directed toward education, went to the male child(ren) and were denied to the female child(ren). Hardly sounds fair does it!

But, pitting children against each other for limited rewards is exactly what happens in schools—a supposed extension of the family—across the nation. Not everyone can be praiseworthy, at least in practice. And, if everyone is said to be praiseworthy, the value of that praise is diminished. Consider the cartoon that shows a crowd of parents standing around, each wearing t-shirts that say “My child is an honor student” or “So’s mine.” The joke is revealed when you see one parent’s t-shirt that says, “Whose kid isn’t!” The message is that the value of a reward is diminished when everybody has that reward. The value of diamonds exists only because everyone doesn’t have one!

There have to be winners and losers in a behaviorist world that pits people (including children) against each other. Although this is clearly observable, and apparently acceptable, in sports, it also regularly happens in classrooms. Students are pitted against each other in the name of competition to earn the most gold stars, to read the most books, to finish their paper first, or to score the highest on state and federal tests—all of which carry rewards for the winner! Winning students get pizza parties and scratch-and-sniff stickers.
Winning schools get state administrators that arrive with handfuls of dollars that the principal (standing in a wind-driven plastic bubble—really happens) can grab for his or her school. Losers just watch.

**SEVERAL OTHER ASSERTIVE DISCIPLINE TACTICS**

Other strategies recommended by the Canters help capture the flavor and tone of their model. Two of these strategies are the “broken-record technique” and the “consistency of consequences.”

The broken-record technique involves a teacher’s insistent, but matter-of-fact (not mean) repetition of his or her original message. This is especially effective with students who try to divert the teacher’s attention. Each teacher request, no matter what the student’s argument, merely repeats the request as originally stated—like a broken record. Teachers should use the exact words, same tone, same volume, and so on, each time the request is delivered. For example:

*Teacher:* Becky, stop talking and turn around.

*Becky:* But Heather was asking me a question.

*Teacher:* I understand that Becky, but I want you to stop talking and turn around.

*Becky:* But Heather wants my help with the assignment.

*Teacher:* I understand, but the rule in this classroom is that no one may talk during the review period.

*Becky:* But, but, I just wanted to help Heather.

*Teacher:* I understand. That may be the case, but right now I expect you to stop talking and turn around.

*Becky:* Oh, all right! (she sulkingly turns around in her seat).

*Teacher:* Thank you (polite and sincere).

The Canters warn, though, that three times repeating a request is plenty. After that, the student has, in effect, “chosen” to have a predetermined consequence supplied. Because assertive teachers know what they will do if and when a student does not comply, there is less chance that they will get upset. After all, their discipline plan has been designed to handle just such contingencies. At the same time, when a student does quickly comply, be sure to inform him or her of how pleased you are that he or she “chose” to cooperate.

One concern often expressed regarding Canters’ broken-record technique, especially when teachers say “I understand . . .,” is the fact that the teachers really do not “understand.” In order to understand another person one needs
actually to listen to them. Canter does not recommend that teachers “listen” to students as this would be a sign of “negotiation,” something that normally only is permitted between equals. In an assertive discipline classroom, the teacher and the students are not equals. Examine Canter’s materials for yourself. See if you can find much of an emphasis upon training teachers ‘how” to listen so that the next time they say, “I understand,” they will actually mean it.

The consistency of consequences equates with the saying, “It is as sure as death and taxes.” The consequences “chosen” by the students through their behavior will be administered. Students who misbehave during the early morning periods and get their name on the board will receive their consequence (for example, loss of recess time). No matter how good they are all afternoon or no matter how many fellow students’ lives they save using the Heimlich maneuver during lunch, the consequence of losing recess time will occur. Earned negative consequences, as well as positive consequences, are consistently applied. Positive and negative consequences, the key to any conditioning-oriented model, “are clearly linked to Skinnerian conceptions of human behavior and behavior modification” (Davidman & Davidman, 1984, p. 171).

**DELIVERING YOUR ASSERTIVE MESSAGE ASSERTIVELY**

Delivering an assertive message does not mean having to be mean, loud, abusive, or threatening. Instead, assertive messages should be delivered in a firm, calm, confident, businesslike manner that leaves no doubt in a student’s mind that the teacher will accept nothing less than total compliance with the reasonable rules and limits of the classroom. Although all limit-setting messages include a nonverbal (i.e., body language) component, how one delivers the verbal portion of an assertive limit-setting message is more open to adjustment by a teacher. Teachers can (and should) work on several components of their verbal messages including:

- *Tone of voice* in the delivery should be firmly neutral and businesslike. It should not be harsh, sarcastic, or intimidating. At the same time, it should not be weak, squeaky, wispy, or crackly, implying a lack of commitment.

- *Eye contact* is important for messages to have their greatest impact. Teachers should look at students straight in the eyes. However, teachers should not insist that students look them back in the eyes. First of all, there is no easy way to enforce this and, second of all, there may be students who come from homes where it is disrespectful of children to do so with adults. Although some teachers may find looking students directly in the eyes difficult to do, the Canters argue
that because the assertive teacher has a well-prepared, comprehensive discipline plan, he or she is operating from a position of strength—and knows it.

- **Gestures** can add much to verbal messages. A palm of the hand held upright (“stop”), a deliberate pendulum-type swing of a palm-up hand (“no more of that”), an index finger held to one’s lips (“quiet now”), or two hands, palms open, pushing down together (“tone it down”—all can strengthen a verbal message. Notice that in each of these examples an openness (i.e., palms open) or a slow deliberateness (i.e., pendulum swing of the palm-up hand) is exhibited. Openness and deliberateness convey a message of strength and confidence. Clenched fists and rapid movements convey a message of weakness, frustration, and nervousness. Teachers are cautioned not to wave their fingers or fists in students’ faces.

- **Use of a student’s name** grabs the attention of the offender, even over long distances, and makes the assertive message that follows more powerful, personal, and penetrating. Note: Even at a noisy party it is possible to tune into messages from across the room when one’s name is heard.

## I-MESSAGES: THE CANTER WAY

One particular verbal message advocated by the Canters is the I-message. I-messages tell students how their behavior is affecting the teacher and how the teacher wants that behavior to change. I-messages contain three parts. They include:

- “I feel (name the feeling) . . . .”
- “When you (state the problem) . . . .”
- “I would like (say what you want to happen to make things better) . . . .”

Consider Miss Karns, a teacher who has a student, David, who is talking while she is trying to explain to the class a concept in British history. Miss Karns’ I-message might go something like this. “David, I feel annoyed when you are talking to students while I am trying to lecture, and I want you to stop talking and give me your full attention.” The I-message contains the feeling (annoyed), the problem (you are talking while I am lecturing), and the preferred behavior (I want you to stop talking and give me your full attention). There is little doubt as to what the teacher wants to have happen in order to “make things better”—presumably for both the teacher and the students.

The point of a Canter-type I-message is clarity, leaving no room for misinterpretation by students as to how they are supposed to mend their ways. Underlying an I-message is the fact that consequences will follow—cooperation
will be rewarded and lack of cooperation will be punished. This position is consistent with a Skinnerian-type view of human nature. Students will likely alter their behavior in order to enhance the chance that reward consequences will follow and that punishment consequences will be avoided.

To point out the drastic differences between a Skinnerian-type view and a Rogerian-type view of human nature, one needs only to look at the specific design of I-messages as advocated by the Canters and those proposed by Thomas Gordon (a discipline model you will study later in this book). Their respective I-messages, although both contain three parts, are as different as night and day. Where the Canters’ ends by telling the students exactly how they are to change their behavior in order “to make things better,” Gordon’s leaves the decision of how and whether to change their behavior up to the students. Of note is the fact that Gordon has included I-messages as a successful confrontational skill since the conception of his Teacher Effectiveness Training model more than two decades ago. The Canters’ version of an I-message is a much more recent addition to their Assertive Discipline model of discipline.

**DOES ASSERTIVE DISCIPLINE WORK?**

It depends upon what you mean by “Does it work?” Does it help new, as well as experienced, teachers gain (regain) control over the classroom? Yes. According to Hill (1990, p. 73), “Teachers and administrators who use Assertive Discipline do tend to gush about its benefits.” Hill (1990) describes a Connecticut middle school principal as having nothing but praise for the program. Yet, still another Connecticut school, believing that they “were manipulating and controlling behavior instead of instilling values” (Wade, 1997, p. 34), dropped their emphasis upon assertive discipline. They substituted schoolwide celebrations for rewards and problem solving for teacher-supplied consequences.

In a more formal investigation, McCormack (1986) reports that in her elementary school study, assertive discipline works to reduce off-task behavior of students of varying reading levels, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, sex, and parental influence. Further, assertive discipline works for teachers who have varying qualifications, experience, and knowledge of the subject. Ferre (1991) reports that rural teachers who used assertive discipline over a nine-week period reduced the off-task and disruptive behavior of kindergarten students.

Student teachers trained in assertive discipline reported feeling “adequately prepared to employ appropriate techniques of classroom discipline” (Barrett
University supervisors and supervising teachers also rated these assertive discipline-trained student teachers higher than those not so trained.

If “Does it work?” means that it creates a classroom where shared ownership exists, then the answer may be “No.” After all, the classroom is the students’ classroom too, isn’t it? While the Canters clearly want the teacher to be the “boss” in the classroom, other educators would prefer the teacher to be the “leader”—a position more fitted to a democratic environment (Crockenberg, 1982). To be fair, a recent article by Lee Canter (Learning, 1996) suggests that teachers first establish a rapport with learners, then deal with rules. Such an emphasis upon rapport first, rules second, should help in the development of a classroom sense of community.

If you are uncomfortable using a model that is “only a common-sense combination of behavioral psychology and traditional authoritarianism” (McDaniel, 1986, p. 65), then again the answer may be “No.” If you believe that Assertive Discipline, like other behavior modification-based programs, treats the symptoms, not the causes, offers only short-term benefits, has limited transfer value to out-of-school environments, and devalues self-discipline (Palardy, 1996), then the answer is “No.”

If you believe that praise and rewards, fundamental to assertive discipline, can be interpreted by the learner as a sign of low teacher expectations as do Miller and Hom (1997), then the answer may be “No.” If you are uncomfortable using a “single-mandated” model, one that dictates rather than reflects, you may even view the Canters’ assertive discipline as detrimental (Ashton & Urquhart, 1988).

If you are swayed by people “voting with their feet,” then the answer to whether or not assertive discipline works is an emphatic “Yes.” Walk into any store that sells teaching-related materials, and you will find Assertive Discipline displays. No discipline model has more books, workbooks, plan books, record-keeping books, videocassettes, audiocassettes, and other supplementary materials (for teachers, bus drivers, paraprofessionals, and parents) available than does Assertive Discipline. Assertive Discipline workshops continue to be widely available and eagerly attended—throughout the world.

Whether or not assertive discipline works is one question. Another question is even if it does work, should it be used in today’s classrooms? The answers to these two questions can partially be found by reading the works cited at the end of this chapter. Given the controversy surrounding the Assertive Discipline model, more citations than usual are included here. The final answer to whether the system works—and if it does work, whether it should be used—lies with individual educators.
IS IT ALWAYS THE STUDENT’S FAULT?

In an assertive discipline classroom, like most behaviorist-oriented classrooms, if there is a discipline problem, it must the student’s fault. The student is expected to “mend his ways,” “tow the line,” and “get into step.” Assertive discipline proponents simply don’t give a lot of thought to the fact that what one is asking a child to do may be interfering with the child meeting his needs OR to the fact that the system under which the child is forced to operate is unfair or flawed OR to the fact that it may be the teacher, not the student, who is the problem. Behaviorist discipline models thus construct elaborate systems of rewards and punishments (i.e., carrots and sticks) designed to modify or manipulate students’ behavior. In later, more humanistic discipline models, you will read where these discipline authors most often believe that we should work toward changing the system, not the child.

WELCOME TO THE SUPERNANNY STATE

Although the message may not have made it across the ocean, Prime Minister Tony Blair recently (November, 2006) announced that approximately eighty trained psychologists, or super-nannies, will work to improve parenting in areas with higher levels of antisocial behavior. Like the popular reality ABC television program, SuperNanny, these resource people will step in to assist parents who need child-rearing help—most often with discipline.

And, like the television program, the SuperNanny’s method of resolving discipline problems is one where parents are taught to be more authoritative (not necessarily authoritarian), and to rely heavily upon rigid parent-imposed schedules and rules and parent supplied consequences and rewards. It is as if the SuperNanny is following an assertive discipline primer. The SuperNanny even has a “Naughty Step” and “Naughty Room” (i.e., punitive time-out) that she sends a child to after she announces, “You have been a naughty boy.” Jo Frost, a.k.a. SupperNanny, is sort of a modern-day Mary Poppins who brings order to chaotic households out of control. Well, some classrooms are out of control, too.

To assertive discipline supporters, a SuperNanny might seem like a godsend. Kohn (discussed in the next section) thinks otherwise. He titled his 2005 article in The Nation, “Atrocious advice from ‘SuperNanny.’” He refers to the SuperNanny as a despot, one who sees a child’s world as either chaos or control. We see the chaos at the start of each week’s SuperNanny program and root for and applaud the control parents finally establish by the end of the show.
I don’t suppose that Lee and Marlene Canter would call themselves a SuperNanny, but their assertive discipline books and workshops for parents and teachers, alike, mirror what the nanny believes in and what she does. But, reading a book or attending a one-off workshop on discipline is one thing; putting it all into practice in a real classroom with real kids is another thing altogether.

If you are an assertive discipline proponent, perhaps it would be a good idea to have educator versions of super-nannies available in school districts to come into classrooms and work one-to-one with teachers. The upfront investment of time and money would be well worth it if this in-the-classroom hands-on training were successful. I suspect that the Canters think that many struggling teachers would appreciate this kind of help.

PUNISHED BY REWARDS—LET KOHN TELL IT

Any behavior modification-based system, and Canters’ Assertive Discipline model is no exception, heavily depends upon teachers dispensing rewards when students exhibit desirable behaviors and withholding rewards when students exhibit undesirable behaviors. As Kohn argues in his book, Unconditional Parenting: Moving from Rewards and Punishments to Love and Reason (2006), society embraces the widespread use of rewards (and punishment). Society takes for granted that the teacher must be in control of the classroom (Kohn, 2006). Nothing could be more fundamental to Skinner’s operant learning principles than the wielding of rewards by the person in power.

Yet, Alfie Kohn, in his book with the rather startling title Punished by Rewards: The Trouble with Gold Stars, Incentive Plans, A’s, Praise, and Other Bribes (2001), argues that for children, adolescents, and adults alike, the best way to lower performance and to lower creativity at school or at work is for the person(s) in power to use a system based upon rewards! Kohn argues, in this book as well as in others (listed at the end of the chapter), that rewards:

- punish
- rupture relationships
- ignore reasons
- discourage risk taking, and
- discourage self-discipline.

One example of a nationwide program dependent upon the use of rewards is the popular pizza chain’s Book-It program, whereby students or classes are
given pizzas as a reward for reading books. Although at first glance this seems like a good idea, Kohn and others would argue that rewarding people for doing something such as reading substitutes external motivation for internal motivation. Sought-after rewards begin to take the place of students reading and, among other things, experiencing suspense and excitement, gaining knowledge and information, and learning about exciting worlds near and far. Kohn (Beyond Discipline, 1996) argues that if you really want to get kids hooked on reading, give them real literature, not workbooks; give them more choices about what to read and who to work with.

When students are rewarded for reading, the underlying message to them is, “We know that reading is an awful thing to do, and we know that you would never want to do it on your own, so we are going to reward (bribe) you into engaging in this dastardly undertaking.” Yet, most of us know that reading is, in and of itself, not only fun, but fundamental. Perhaps teachers should spend more time thinking about how to make reading activities fun and less time designing reward systems.

Over the years, I have surveyed many of my college students who themselves participated in one form or another of a Book-It program. One student reports, “I remember how excited I would be to read my books to get my free pizza—excited enough to lie. I sometimes did not read the book at all or else chose easy books.” Another student reports, “I don’t think that this program teaches anything to students except how to cheat and lie. Every student in class wanted to win the pizza party at the end of the year, so they were going to do whatever they had to do to win. I would go to the library and pick the shortest and easiest book possible. Most of the time I didn’t even read the book. I would just tell the teacher the summary that was written on the back cover of the book.”

A third student confessed that she loved to read then as she does now, but in fourth grade she thought, “Well, this is a stupid exercise so who cares if I lie? Well, I knew, and I felt like a real heel, but I still did it.” Another student says that she remembers her third grade classroom where a chart hung in a prominent place showing the stars next to the students’ names for every book that they read. Although lying was less likely because of the report that had to accompany every completed book, “picking the easy ones to avoid more work than was necessary was definitely true.” A final student reports watching a child get beat up out on the playground at recess because he had not read a sufficient number of books and so the entire class was going to miss out on its promised pizza party.

It has been asserted that such programs connecting academics (i.e., reading) to food will simply result in a bunch of fat kids who hate reading. It might be
argued that the Book-It program, as well as similar reward-based programs, would enjoy more long-term success if instead of giving a pizza for every book read (claimed to be read), they would give a book to every student who purchased a pizza! What do you think?

While conducting a workshop on discipline, a physics teacher in the audience came up to me at break and shared something that she had just received in the mail. She knew that I would be interested because it dealt with our shared love of physics (my college major). She showed me an advertisement for a reward-based system called the “Jimmy Joule Physics Incentive Program.” (Note: Joules are units of work in physics). The kit, for only $159.95 at the time, consisted of two hundred Jimmy Joule tokens (similar to poker chips), thirty stickers, twenty heat sensitive pens, twenty pencils, ten balsa gliders, ten rulers, twelve bumper stickers, twelve window decals, and more. The earned Jimmy Joule tokens could be used to purchase one or more of the incentives. Having taught physics, I am convinced that the subject matter, itself, when exploited by a creative teacher, possesses the potential for student motivation. Jimmy Joules are not needed.

To learn more about Kohn’s views on the value of rewards, review his books and articles found in the reference section of this text. They include, Beyond discipline: From compliance to community, 10th anniversary edition (2006), Rewards versus learning: A response to Paul Chance (1993), By all available means: Cameron and Pierce’s defense of extrinsic motivators (1993), Should we pay kids to learn? (1996), and Bribes for behaving: Why behaviorism doesn’t help children become good people (1994). For a more complete listing of Kohn’s books and articles access his Web site at www.alfiekohn.org/index.html.

**PUNISHED BY A LACK OF REWARDS**

Behaviorists, like the Canters, believe in a win-lose world, whether in school, on the sports field, or in business and industry. Humanists believe otherwise. They think that there are enough win-lose situations generated by mother nature (i.e., who is born with healthy genes and who is not, who is struck by lightening and who is not), that homes and schools ought not to artificially create still more win-lose situations.

Although the more humanistic discipline models (Dreikurs, Glasser, and Gordon) have yet to be presented, a quick way to differentiate Canter’s and other behaviorist’s orientations from theirs is to describe versions of the ever-popular children’s game—musical chairs.
The traditional, behaviorist-oriented version of the game is one where there is a winner and lots and lots of losers. A win-lose structure exists. It is played as follows:

With one fewer chairs than people, a short snippet of music is played while the children move around the room. When the music stops everyone tries to sit on a vacant chair. (Only ONE child per chair). The child who doesn’t find a chair is out (fancy word for LOSER!). One chair is taken away and the game continues until only one child (The Winner) is left. The behaviorist win-lose version of the game has a winner and many losers. The losers stand off to the side and watch the game continue to be played. They feel punished by not receiving the rewards—being able to continue playing the game—that the winners do.

How might musical chairs be played if it reflected a humanist’s orientation? Well, first of all, a win-win structure would have to exist. One would design the game where there was the opportunity for everyone to win (and, of course, have fun)! It would be played as follows:

With one fewer chairs than people, a short snippet of music is played while the children move around the room. When the music stops everyone tries to sit on the remaining chairs. The goal is to get everyone to sit so that their feet are off the floor. The music starts again and another chair is removed. When the music stops everyone, once again working together, tries to sit on the remaining chairs with their feet raised off the floor. As the game continues some very creative solutions come forth—sharing chairs, sitting on a person’s lap, building a bridge between chairs using students’ legs, etc. All children continue to be part of the game, all are part of coming up with creative solutions to the common problem, and all are included in the group called “winners.” There are no losers.

In his book, *No Contest: The Case against Competition*, Kohn (1992) claims that competition, especially where success is achieved at another’s failure, is destructive. For those who might argue that having a game with everyone working together, having only winners, is unrealistic. It does not represent the real world. I might argue otherwise in that the major problems facing our world—from a cure for cancer to a stopping or reversal of global warming—will most likely find solutions by people working together toward their common goal. Everyone, then, would be a winner.

**HOW DOES DEMOCRACY FIT IN CANTERS’ MODEL?**

Keeping in mind what you learned in Chapter 2, Democracy and Discipline, how would adopting the Canters’ Assertive Discipline model fit with
your perception of a democratic classroom? It is important to address this question whether or not you adopt his model. Because you will not teach in a vacuum, you must be prepared to defend your own choice of a discipline model and challenge models proposed or used by others. A sound basis for a defense or a challenge is that of how a model impacts democracy in the classroom.

**PROs AND CONs OF CANTERS’ MODEL**

As you study each discipline model you need to identify their respective PROs and CONs. In the space below, identify the PROS on the left side and the CONs on the right side. Your listing of the PROs and CONs should help you decide which is the best discipline model for you and your students! You may want to compare your PROs and CONs with those listed in Appendix I.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lee &amp; Marlene Canter: Assertive Discipline Model</th>
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<td><strong>PROs</strong></td>
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**LEARNING MORE ABOUT CANTERS’ ASSERTIVE DISCIPLINE MODEL**

Are you interested in the Canters’ model? Are you ready to try some of their techniques? If you are, be sure first to consult several of their original sources. What has been presented in this chapter, or any other single chapter, is not enough for you to run out, start using the abbreviated knowledge and skills, and expect to get results. There is no substitute for the original. Learn more about empowering the teacher, roadblocks to being assertive, response
styles, positive recognition, defusing confrontations, and redirecting off-task behavior. Buy Canters’ books, borrow their books, read their books!

The Canters’ Assertive Discipline model has been the focus of much research. A search of any the Internet or academic library will reveal many such sources, some written by the Canters, others written about their model. You are likely to find a wide variety of citations and the variety of responses—some pro and some con. Clearly, no one is neutral regarding the Canters’ Assertive Discipline model!

- To learn more about Lee and Marlene Canter and their ideas on classroom management, contact:
  Solution Tree
  304 West Kirkwood Avenue
  Bloomington, IN 47404
  Phone: (800) 733-6786
  E-mail: info@solution-tree.com
  www.solution-tree.com

- To enroll in a Canter-based graduate courses offered at universities across the country, contact:
  Laureate Education, Inc.
  12975 Coral Tree Place
  Los Angeles, CA 90066
  Phone: 800-669-9011
  E-mail: www.canter.net

- Search popular Web sites such as www.Amazon.com to locate books written about the Canters’ model.
- Search one or more of the many Internet Web sites using “Lee Canter,” “assertive discipline,” “rewards,” “Alfie Kohn,” and “Canter & Associates” among other terms as keywords.

**TEST YOURSELF**

This is a sampling of the kinds of factual and open-ended questions that you should be able to answer after having read this chapter.

1. What are three reasons to explain the continued popularity of Canters’ Assertive Discipline model?

2. How would you classify the Canters’ views according to the four theoretical frameworks presented in Chapter 3?
3. Defend or challenge the *alpha* male analogy used in the chapter to explain the position a teacher is to assume in assertive discipline.

4. Contrast the Canters’ three response styles (assertive, nonassertive, hostile).

5. Create an “original” statement for each of these three response styles that a teacher might deliver to a misbehaving student.

6. Explain how the airline host/hostess preflight announcement to passengers can be used by advocates of assertive discipline to justify teachers getting their needs met first.

7. Identify four needs you believe that you must have met before you can get on with teaching the needs of your students.

8. What do the Canters mean by their recommendation that teachers use a “broken-record” technique?


10. Explain what the term “marbles in a jar” means and how you might use the concept in a school environment.

11. How can a childhood game like “musical chairs” be played without winners and losers?

12. What are the three components of the Canters’ I-messages and how do they differ from Gordon’s I-messages?

13. Who is the author of the book *Punished by Rewards* and what is your reaction to his claims that rewards and incentives do more damage than good?

14. What parallel exists, if any, between the SuperNanny’s tactics and the Canters’ tactics?

15. Explain how a major pizza chain’s Book-It program could be doing more harm than good.

16. Are discipline instances always the fault of students?

17. How democratic is Canters’ model?

18. Do you see yourself using Canters’ Assertive Discipline model in your classroom? Why?

**ASK YOURSELF: IS THIS MODEL FOR YOU?**

Although you would want to defer making any final decision until you read still more, at this point what are your feelings toward the Canters’ approach to discipline? What strengths and weaknesses do you see in their model or in models similar to theirs? Does their approach to discipline reflect your fundamental views on how you believe people should be treated? Could you
defend the use of this model to your students and their parents, to your colleagues, and to your administrators? Could you remain committed to their model—even when the going got tough? If you were to adopt their model, could you go to sleep at night and not feel that there simply has to be a better way to discipline? At this point, is the Canters’ approach for you?
Trained as a clinical psychologist, Fredric H. Jones (1940–) began his professional career on the faculty of the Neuropsychiatric Institute at the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA), designing and implementing programs for retarded, autistic, and schizophrenic children. He has served on the faculty of the University of Rochester, working in the areas of nonadversarial classroom management and teacher training. Since 1978, Dr. Jones has been an independent consultant working directly with individual school districts. His earlier work is best revealed in his books *Positive*

OBJECTIVES

This chapter will help you, among other things, to:

- Use the material presented on democracy in Chapter 2, weigh the degree to which Jones’ model does or does not support democracy in a classroom.
- Classify, using the theoretical frameworks presented in Chapter 3, Fredric Jones’ Tools for Teaching discipline model.
- Describe the value of using body language rather than words to discipline.
- Explain the use of classroom structure as a discipline strategy.
- Explain the use of limit setting as a discipline strategy.
- Explain the use of responsibility training as a strategy of discipline.
- Explain the use of backup systems as a discipline strategy.
- Defend the importance of positive classroom instruction to the disciplinary process.
- Explore how Jones’ model supports your vision of a democratic classroom.
- Explore whether Jones’ Tools for Teaching discipline model is for you.

WHERE DOES JONES’ MODEL FIT WITHIN THE FOUR THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS IN CHAPTER 3?

Jones’ Tools for Teaching discipline model clearly finds a place in French and Raven’s Social Bases of Power framework under “coercive,” “reward,” and, most appropriately, “legitimate.” It finds a home in Wolfgang and Glickman’s School of Thought framework as an interventionist strategy. Jones’ position leans toward the Skinnerian side of the Skinner-Rogers’ dichotomy. In Lewis’ Keeping It Simple framework, Tools for Teaching discipline is equated with some “control” and some “manage.”

FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE

Dr. Jones’ work with classroom management began when he found two teachers who could cause a room full of emotionally and behaviorally
handicapped junior high school students to function as a productive, respectful group of young people. From the outset two things were clear: (a) these teachers were not working as hard as their colleagues who were rapidly becoming candidates for a burnout workshop, and (b) their classroom atmospheres were warm, relaxed, and nurturing. When asked how they got such wonderful results, these teachers could not describe specific skills. Rather, they attributed their results to amorphous variables such as “meaning business.” Thus began a decade-long process of exploring the skills of the “natural teachers” in conjunction with research on classroom management.

**LAYER CAKE APPROACH**

Like a chocolate layer cake, Jones arranges the skills of discipline management into four layers as shown in Figure 6.1.

- **Classroom Structure**: the prevention of discipline problems by arranging the classroom environment so that problems will be relatively unlikely to occur. Classroom structure includes topics as diverse as room arrangement, working the crowd, procedures for the first day and week of school, classroom rules, classroom chores, and communication with parents.

- **Limit Setting**: the subtle process of meaning business in the classroom by which rule enforcement becomes both relaxed and nearly invisible. Limit setting focuses upon the body language by which the natural teacher signals to the students both a commitment to high standards and a calm resolve to follow through.

![Figure 6.1] A Layer Cake Approach
✓ **Responsibility Training**: the implementation of group incentives whereby students learn to internalize responsibility for their own actions. These advanced incentive systems allow patterns of cooperation to be taught to the entire class rapidly and economically.

✓ **Backup Systems**: the use of nonadversarial negative sanctions to resolve severe or repetitive behavior problems while avoiding the more public, stressful, and self-perpetuating measures that comprise the discipline codes of most schools.

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**PREVENTION OF DISCIPLINE PROBLEMS:
CLASSROOM STRUCTURE**

Preventing discipline problems from occurring in the first place is the best way for students and teachers alike to handle classroom discipline. Discipline prevention starts with effective, engaging, and enthusiastic teaching. According to Jones, this kind of instruction must be front and center to any comprehensive program because the cost of remediating problems later can be so high.

Jones repeatedly claims that “discipline comes before instruction.” Having said that, his primary emphasis upon using effective, engaging, and enthusiastic instruction may seem inconsistent. But, the fact is, engaged students learn more and—to the point of this text—misbehave less. By concentrating first upon quality instruction, Jones also is actually concentrating first upon discipline—in effect concentrating upon them both at once!

Quality instruction—especially when it contributes to effective classroom management—has several key components. A number of these components follow.

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**Working the Crowd**

One of the more prominent characteristics of natural teachers is that they spent a great deal of their time working the crowd. They spent a minimum of time in front of the class presenting and a maximum of time circulating among the students who were busy doing work. When asked why they spent so much of their time in this fashion, the teachers responded, “Well, students are not learning unless they are doing something, and I want to see what they are doing.” Yet, the teachers were also quite aware that their movement among the students had a strong impact on the willingness of students to begin fooling around. Either you work the crowd, or the crowd works you. Jones observed that the single most powerful factor that governed the likelihood of
a student’s fooling around was the physical distance between the teacher and the student.

**Room Arrangement**

Working the crowd quickly led to an analysis of the arrangement of the furniture in the classroom since broad walkways seemed a precondition to easy cruising by the teacher. To make working the crowd easy, the teacher must be able to get from any student to any other student with a minimum number of steps and without tripping over furniture.

What’s important is not where to place the furniture, but where not to place it. Remove the furniture barriers between you and the students! More effective room arrangements were characterized by an interior loop that allowed teachers to easily see every student’s work with an easy stroll among the students. Typically, the teacher’s desk was removed from the middle front of the classroom so that the students’ desks could be brought up near the chalkboard. Moving the class forward so that the front row was approximately eight feet from the wall allowed the teacher to write on the board and then turn to address the group at the proximity of normal conversation.

Another structural component of the classroom of the natural teacher was assigned seating. These teachers could not even imagine a classroom in which the students simply sat where they wished. They said, “Well, without assigned seating, the ones who want to talk will sit in the back of the classroom next to their buddies. Those are the kids you want to place right under your nose.” Being proactive by nature, these teachers understood that anything that they did not arrange to their advantage would ultimately be arranged to their disadvantage.

**Helpless Hand Raisers**

Imagine a teacher’s timeless words as he or she transitions to the seatwork portion of a lesson: “... and I’ll be coming around to see how you are doing. If you have any questions, look at my example on the board. But, if you still need help, raise your hand, and I’ll be around to help you as soon as I can.”

These words hardly leave the teacher’s lips before a half dozen hands begin waving helplessly in the air. The teacher goes to the first student and asks, “Where do you need help?” The student responds, “I don’t understand how to do this.” The teacher asks, “What part don’t you understand?” The student says, “All of it.” The teacher begins to tutor the stuck student, which takes several minutes. At this point the teacher relinquishes working the crowd for the life of a tutor, and classroom management bites the dust.
When this happens, guided practice should be used. Guided practice is a technique used to provide corrective feedback to students so that you make them independent learners instead of helpless hand raisers.

If you want to experience something hysterically funny, read and try to visualize Jones’ “four basic positions” that student hand raisers assume as they tire waiting endlessly for the teacher to get to them. The positions include the Beginning position, the Half-Mast position, the Broken-Wing position, and finally, the Out Cold position.

**Praise, Prompt, and Leave**

Specifically, Jones defines guided practice as using “Praise, Prompt, and Leave.” He recommends that after praising what you can about the student’s work, you should deliver a clear, quick, and simple prompt—a statement beginning “The next thing you need to do is . . .” Then, you should leave and turn your attention to another student. Jones claims that Praise, Prompt, and Leave guided practice reduces the average duration of corrective feedback from four-and-a-half minutes to thirty seconds!

The prompt step deserves some elaboration. The prompt is designed to get the child started. Providing too much detail and direction is counter-productive. It is overwhelming. How many of you, while driving, have stopped and asked for directions, only to feel swamped and confused by too much information? Provide just enough information to get the student moving in the correct direction—even a step or two. You can always cruise by later to check on the student’s progress and offer another clear, quick prompt.

**Say, See, Do Teaching**

Another skill that enhances instruction is the teacher’s use of “Say, See, Do Teaching.” Here, teachers deliver the “meat and potatoes” portion of their lesson by teaching through all three “modalities” that capture the essence of the Chinese proverb that states:

I hear, and I forget.
I see, and I remember.
I do, and I understand.

Students who understand the lesson become more involved in the lesson—and in what comes next. And, because “Idle hands are the devil’s workshop,” students active in “doing,” are less likely to misbehave. Finally, nothing breeds
success like success, and once students are successful, they have even more reason not to misbehave.

**Specific Procedures and Routines**

contained in Jones’ section on classroom structure is a collection of specific procedures that he has observed good teachers using to their great advantage. These include procedures for the first day of school, procedures for getting the class period started, the organization of classroom chores, and specific routines for “how to do this and how to do that.”

A part of this section particularly worthy of note is Jones’ discussion of classroom routines. As he rightly points out, rules are ultimately embodied in specific procedures and routines. Primary teachers, of course, work on them all year long. By contrast, high school teachers typically make a few announcements about procedures on the first day of school and then launch into the curriculum.

Such a shortchanging of the time required to teach routines is a false economy. The notion that students should know how to behave by now is both true and irrelevant. Students will naturally test to see what they can get away with, and they will adjust their behavior from one teacher to the next depending on what the market will bear.

Each procedure has to be taught like any other lesson in the curriculum complete with setting the stage, explanation, modeling, and practice, practice, practice until they get it right. Such an investment in training teaches not only what is expected but also how seriously you as a teacher take these procedures. Once again, the natural teachers seem to instinctively understand the role that investing in classroom procedures plays in setting the tone of the class for the entire semester.

**Remediation of Discipline Problems: Limit Setting**

While classroom structure deals with the prevention of discipline problems, limit setting deals with their remediation once they occur. According to Jones, limit setting says “no” to unacceptable behavior. It is with limit setting that the skills of the natural teacher become most difficult to decode because they are subtle and nearly invisible. A simple look can get a hard-to-manage student back on task. How do these teachers get such control at so little effort?

Jones describes meaning business as being 99 percent nonverbal communication—it is all body language. He reminds us that students can read you like a book. They know when you are tired or impatient or frazzled;
they know exactly how long your fuse is; and they certainly know at any time during the day how far they can push you, how committed you are to dealing with a situation, and whether you will follow through. So, what are the nonverbal cues that the students are reading? And, how do teachers train their students what “No” means?

Jones stresses that the whole human race speaks the same body language (cultural differences being trivial compared to the similarities) so that, when you study body language, you are really studying biology—an area known as behavioral biology. Jones’ analysis of the body language of meaning business is a contribution to that field. He has isolated three major factors: (1) the teacher’s priority; (2) the teacher’s emotional response; and (3) the teacher’s physical response.

**The Teacher’s Priority**

The priority is very simple: discipline comes before instruction. Bennett, Finn, and Cribb in *The Educated Child* (1999) quote from a 1907 book titled *Classroom Management*. The authors report that “[t]here is no explicit formula that will cover each specific case, but one general suggestion may be given: Get order. Drop everything else, if necessary, until order is secured” (p. 513). The authors say that this advice, more than a century old, is no less true today.

Yet, while most teachers would agree that discipline must come before instruction as a general principle, few teachers embody it in the moment-by-moment interactions of the classroom. Imagine, for example, that you are helping a student at his or her desk who is “stuck.” You have spent two minutes with the student, and shortly you will be able to get closure and move on. You look up to see two students on the far side of the classroom disrupting.

Jones then asks his trainees, “Now, how many of you would like to finish helping the student you are working with before dealing with the talking across the room?” His trainees candidly respond that they would like to finish because they have invested time and effort and are close to closure. Indeed, that is exactly what teachers typically do. Unfortunately, they have just taught a crucial lesson to the class.

“Class, did you see what I just did? I talk a good game about standards and time on task, but talk is cheap. In fact, I find discipline management to be inconvenient, and I don’t like to do it. So, when discipline and instruction are happening at the same time, which they typically do, I will deal with the instruction and ignore discipline. Instruction is on the front burner in my class, and discipline is on the back burner.”
Dr. Jones reiterates that, if discipline management is not worth your time, it will certainly never be worth a student’s time. So, terminate instruction and deal with the disruption now! Discipline comes before instruction anytime and anywhere because, ultimately, you do not have a choice. Either “No means no,” or all of your classroom rules are just hot air. Children determine boundaries by testing, and unstable boundaries obligate the students to test you all year long.

The Teacher’s Emotional Response

Our first response to a disruption in the classroom is a “fight-flight reflex”—that primitive response of all vertebrates to any event that they did not expect or do not like. We tense up, we dump adrenaline into the bloodstream, and our brain begins to “downshift” from the cortex to the brain stem. This response can range from becoming mildly upset to going “ballistic.”

But, because it takes adrenaline time to clear the bloodstream, and because a room full of students generates problem behaviors at a high rate, some teachers live on adrenaline or nervous energy all day long. The result for the teacher could be very destructive—hypertension and exhaustion. Yet, for the students it is not much better because the fight-flight reflex is by its very nature confrontational. When you add a verbal component to the fight-flight reflex you get *nag, nag, nag*.

An appreciation for the fight-flight reflex yields the first major principle of social power in the classroom: calm is strength and upset is weakness. If you are calm, who is in control of your mind and body? You are. If you are upset, who is in control of your mind and body? You are—nobody else!

Discipline management is first emotional and second physical. Training teachers to mean business begins, therefore, with gaining voluntary control of the relaxation response as a means of aborting the fight-flight reflex before it dumps much adrenaline into the bloodstream. Jones repeatedly refers to “training” and “practice” in his book because he knows only too well that body language is performance, and performance is acquired only through coaching and practice.

His focus for the teacher, however, is always upon doing as little work as possible. The natural teachers, after all, are not working themselves to death, so why should you? For that reason, he examined the beginning of the teacher’s response to the disruptive student in order to understand why a student might respond positively to a simple look. If, for example, students will get back to work simply because you look at them, then you will not have to walk all the way over to them in order to prompt them back to work. So, how do you begin to respond to a disruption?
The Teacher’s Physical Response

Meaning business or failing to mean business happens very rapidly in the classroom. If we are going to fly off the handle, we will do so in a second or two. If the teacher can get off on the right foot in the first second or two by remaining calm, he or she will probably be in fairly good shape to deal with the situation.

By the time the teacher has turned toward the student, several seconds have passed. Consequently, Jones focuses on “the turn.” By the time the teacher has turned, the emotional part of the response has been determined, and the teacher’s body language has signaled to the students in a dozen different ways that the teacher either does or does not mean business.

While an experienced teacher can mean business at any time as he or she moves around the room, “the turn” as a practice exercise breaks down the initial response of the teacher into key behavioral components so that they can be studied and practiced. Key elements of “the turn” are as follows.

**Excuse Yourself.** Imagine that you are helping a student on one side of the classroom when you look up to see a disruption on the other side. Common courtesy would dictate that you excuse yourself from the student you are helping before dealing with the disruption. In addition, take a relaxing breath and give yourself a moment to clear your mind. When you stand and turn toward the disrupter, you may be met with an immediate escalation of the disruption such as back talk, and you will need to be calm before this occurs.

**Stand Slowly and Turn Slowly.** When you are calm you move slowly, and when you are upset you move rapidly. As you stand and turn, the students can literally “take your temperature.” Jones has his trainees complete the turn “in a regal fashion” as though their body were exuding Queen Victoria’s famous quote, “We are not amused.” This is not as easy as it sounds. When you turn, turn from the top down in four parts—head, shoulders, waist, and feet.

If the teacher is animated at the moment the disruption occurs—for example, talking to the class—the change in speed is even more dramatic, and everyone in the class will know that the teacher has just gone from “instruction mode” to “discipline mode.” By relaxing and slowing down, your body signals that something has just occurred in the classroom that must be dealt with before we proceed with instruction.

**Point Your Toes.** When you turn slowly toward the disruptive student, turn completely so that your toes are pointed toward the disruption. A partial turn indicates a partial commitment. With a full turn away from instruction and toward the disruption, the teacher sends a clear message—discipline comes before instruction.
A partial turn is a mixed message. It says to the students, “I know I ought to deal with this situation, but I don’t really want to stop now and spend the time and effort.” The teacher literally has one foot in and one foot out of discipline management. This half-baked response tells the students that they can give you pseudocompliance—some “smiley face” accompanied by a momentary return to work—and you will leave them alone. When the teacher returns to instruction, the disrupters return to fooling around.

In contrast, the more effective teacher conveys, what Jones calls, signal clarity. If all of the teacher’s body messages say, “When this occurs, I will stop everything and deal with the problem,” then the students will learn to respond to those signals. If, on the other hand, the teacher sends mixed messages indicating a general unwillingness to follow through unless forced, the students will continue their normal testing to see where the real limits lie.

The sudden change in the teacher’s speed of movement from animated to slow tells the students that this same shift in the teacher’s priorities is taking place. That change, however, is first of all in the teacher’s mind. Body language, therefore, simply signals to the students what the teacher is thinking. Whatever you are thinking will be signaled. For this reason, the setting of priorities, the relaxation, and the body language are simply facets of the same response.

Get a Focal Point. Good eye contact creates an expectancy on the part of the teacher that grows the longer the teacher waits. That expectancy is easy for the students to decode—“I expect you to get back to work.” When teachers glance around the room while waiting for the students to get back to work, they undermine the growing sense of expectation.

Good eye contact is another signal that tells the students you are focused on this event rather than being preoccupied with other events in the classroom—like instruction. Yet, it is important for teachers to realize that this is not a stare down. The teacher’s body, as well as facial expression, is relaxed, and he or she is simply waiting. The teacher’s recommended look at this point should be one of boredom—“I’ve seen it all before”; “I am not amused”; “Are you finished yet?” Teachers need to hone their bored look—even to the extent of practicing it before a mirror at home. They also should be careful not to end their “look” with even the hint of a smile. This can convey to the disrupting student that, in spite of everything, “I really did find what you did to be amusing.” Ultimately, the student is in control of the situation. The student can either terminate the interaction with the teacher by getting back to work, or he or she can continue the interaction.

Hands Down. If you relax your biceps, your hands will be down at your sides rather than on your hips or folded across your chest. Waist-high gestures are animated, and shoulder-high gestures are ballistic. So relax your arms and find a comfortable position for your hands. At the beginning, teachers may
find that placing their hands behind them is a forgiving posture because any nervous gestures in the hands cannot be seen.

_Jaw Down._ Relax your jaw. Clenching your teeth is one of the more predictable parts of a fight-flight reflex, and students can see it from anywhere in the room. Relacing your jaw not only wipes any perturbed expression off of your face, but it also helps you relax the rest of your body and lower your blood pressure.

_Move the Body, Not the Mouth._ If the student does not give the teacher the body language of returning to work, the teacher must walk over to the student to prompt him or her from close range. Avoid “silly talk” such as, “Am I going to have to come over there?” or “This is the second time I’ve had to talk to you.” Such nagging on the part of the teacher simply indicates a reticence to deal with the situation.

If you have to walk over to the students, stay until you get a stable commitment to work on their part. A common error on the part of teachers is to leave as soon as they prompt the students back to work. Do not be surprised if the students return to their disruption very quickly. Rather, put your palms flat on the table and simply watch (with your now perfected look of boredom) the students’ work until they have done enough of the assignment to represent a meaningful commitment.

Walking over to the students to get them back to work, therefore, cannot be cheap. And, the price can certainly not be reduced by leaving quickly after you get there. This reality puts all the more premium on doing the first part of the limit setting correctly (i.e., the turn) so that you can save yourself the time-consuming trip.

_Relax with Back Talk._ Back talk on the part of the student, even innocuous back talk, has a very high likelihood of triggering a fight-flight reflex in the teacher. After all, the student has just escalated the situation by “calling the teacher out” in front of their peer group. Obviously, the student has just raised the stakes.

It is helpful for the teachers to realize, however, that they do not have to prove anything in front of the class. Rather, the student is taking all of the chances and doing all of the work. Simply let the student continue to do all the work, and sooner or later he or she will run out of gas. Clear your mind, relax your body, and let the words go in one ear and out the other. By relaxing and keeping your mouth shut you have left all of your management options open. You can still respond when you see fit and how you judge to be appropriate.

Without training, teachers typically have a fight-flight reflex and open their mouths. No matter what teachers say, they lose. Everything the teacher says simply provides the structure for the student’s rejoinder. Consequently, during
training, Jones teaches that “[i]t takes one fool to back talk, but it takes two fools to make a conversation out of it.” Most office referrals result from the teacher back talking with the student until the two of them have dug a hole so deep that there is no other way out. By being the “second fool,” the teacher engages in “mud wrestling” with the student.

Camouflage. While the teacher may occasionally have to stop what he or she is doing and walk over to the student, doing so risks making limit setting that invites both the participation of peers and the embarrassment of the target student obvious to the peer group. One of Jones’ rules is “Never go public if you can help it.”

The natural camouflage for walking over to a student while limit setting is working the crowd. When teachers are working the crowd, they are continually walking toward every student, in turn, as they cruise around the room to check work. Strolling toward a student, therefore, would not cause any classmate to look up, particularly if the teacher pauses occasionally to look down at other students’ work as he or she normally would. The disrupter, of course, sees the teacher moving his or her way. As the teacher draws near, most students typically decide that returning to work is a sensible thing to do.

That is to say, most of the real limit setting in the classroom is invisible because it is preventative. It is a by-product of working the crowd. One might think of working the crowd and limit setting as simply the preventative and the remedial versions of the same body language.

RESPONSIBILITY TRAINING (INCLUDING PATs)

Training students to be responsible is perhaps the central issue in discipline management because in learning to be responsible, the students learn to manage themselves. The more the students manage themselves, the less the teacher has to manage them.

What makes the management of responsibility tricky is that responsible behavior requires cooperation, and cooperation is voluntary. You cannot force someone to cooperate. If you try, you get the opposite—resistance.

Yet, before teachers can get cooperation from all of their students, they will have to answer one simple question thousands of times a day. That question is, “Why should I?” Why should a student be on time if the alternative is to socialize with his or her friends in the hall? Why should a student remember to bring three pencils to class if it robs them of the opportunity to stretch their legs and go sharpen a pencil whenever they want to? In classroom management, virtue is not its own reward. Quite to the contrary, goofing off is always the easy and pleasurable alternative to work.
Add to this the fact that moderate improvement in the area of cooperation does not really improve the quality of the teacher’s life that much. For example, what is the practical difference between four students not having a pencil as opposed to two students not having a pencil? The teacher still has to manage pencils every class period. To set the teacher free, he or she needs cooperation from everyone. Getting cooperation from everyone in the class is the objective of Responsibility Training.

Responsibility Training is an incentive-management program for the classroom. It is group management that seeks to gain cooperation from all of the students with enough fail-safe mechanisms built in to prevent the few chronic disrupters from ruining it for everyone else.

To help trainees relate to the novel features of Responsibility Training, Jones uses a parent’s attempt to train a teenager to be responsible with money as an analogy. Jones asks, “What is the one thing a teenager must have in order to learn to be responsible with money?” Trainees respond in unison, “Money!” Indeed, you cannot learn money management without having money to manage.

So, what is the precious resource that students waste all day at school? Once again, the trainees answer in unison, “Time!” In order for students to learn time management, they must first have time to manage. So, Responsibility Training begins with a gift of time from the teacher—like an allowance for the teenager learning to manage money.

The teacher’s gift of time to the class is called PAT—Preferred Activity Time. It is a time set aside for activities, typically creative learning activities that the students would eagerly anticipate. PAT would occur more often with younger students—perhaps three times a day with first graders, and once a day with fifth graders. For secondary students in departmentalized settings, once per week per class period is common. The amount of time given is enough to allow a meaningful enrichment activity or learning game—typically fifteen to thirty minutes.

From the perspective of training students to be responsible, however, PAT is merely a “pump primer.” The mechanism that really drives behavior is bonus PAT. It is through bonus PAT that students gain control over their own destiny by being able to lengthen the duration of PAT.

The types of bonus PATs include the following.

**Hurry-up Bonuses**

Hurry-up bonuses reinforce hustle and reduce time wasting. A classic example of a hurry-up bonus in family life would be the bedtime routine. The parent might say, “Kids, time to get upstairs, wash your face, brush your
teeth, get your pajamas on, and get into bed. It’s 8:30 now, and as soon as you’re in bed, we will have story time. But, remember, lights out at 9:00.” The PAT is story time, of course, but the children control the length of it. The faster they move, the longer they get to snuggle in bed and listen to stories—something that they prefer. The more they dawdle, the shorter PAT becomes.

One of the prime opportunities to utilize PAT in the classroom is in lesson transitions. Typically, lesson transitions take from five to seven minutes because students dawdle. Students get out of their seats to hand in papers, sharpen pencils, get drinks of water, return to their desks, get out materials, and so on, at an unhurried pace, to say the least. Note, students don’t mind wasting the teacher’s time. The students know that as soon as the transition time is over, they will have to go back to work.

This lesson transition, however, can often be done in thirty to forty seconds if the students have a reason to hustle. The time saved is found time for learning. But the teacher must share this found time with the students. The teacher might say, “Before you get out of your seats, let me tell you what I want during this transition. First, I want you to hand in your papers. Then you may sharpen your pencils and get a drink of water. I want the cleanup committee to erase the board and straighten up the bookshelves. I will give you two minutes to get all of this done, but you know you can get it done in less than a minute if you try. So, let’s see how fast you can get it done, and all the time you save will be added to your PAT. Let’s look at the clock and . . . begin.”

Time gained is real time on the clock as opposed to being an arbitrary amount that the teacher awards. As soon as the lesson transition begins, the teacher begins to work the crowd. He or she prompts students to hurry as needed and breaks up side conversations between small groups of students that amount to incentives for dawdling.

The cleanup committee has, of course, been trained to do its job properly and has no doubt that, if it is done sloppily, it will have to be done again. And the class has been trained to move furniture safely and arrange it properly as one of many classroom routines. In addition, teachers may set additional limits as needed as they work the crowd.

A common error of untrained teachers is to use PAT in isolation as a management gimmick. Incentives, no matter how good, cannot bear the entire weight of classroom management. To the contrary, the greatest investment in management is always made at the level of classroom structure through working the crowd and well-established routines. Thus, hurry-up bonuses give trainees their first look at how Positive Classroom Discipline functions as a system.
**Automatic Bonuses**

Automatic bonuses increase the flexibility of Responsibility Training by permitting the teacher to include behaviors that cannot be timed. The most common behaviors are being at the right place at the right time with the right stuff.

Imagine, for example, that, as part of the routine for beginning class, the teacher awards one minute each if the students (1) are in their seats when the bell rings, (2) have a pencil, and (3) have their books. Imagine, further, that a student realizes with a half minute to go that he or she does not have a pencil. If the student simply says, “Hey, you guys, I need a pencil!” chances are someone will produce a pencil. When the whole class shares a vested interest in something happening, it will probably happen.

The beauty of this program from the teacher’s point of view is that the student has not borrowed the teacher’s pencil, and the teacher does not care if the student who lent it gets it back. Pencils are not the teacher’s problem anymore—one less hassle that the teacher has to worry about.

**Individual Bonuses**

Once a teacher has a simple form of group accountability operating in the classroom, he or she can make a hero out of anyone by giving that student an opportunity to earn bonus minutes for the group. Such individual bonuses tend to be far more powerful than traditional behavior modification programs for students because they tap into the greatest source of social power in the class—the peer group.

A special case of an individual bonus is a program for highly oppositional students called Omission Training. Omission Training is so powerful that it can all but eliminate office referrals and is so important that Jones deals with it as a special topic. Omission Training is the general name given to an incentive system that trains someone *not* to do something. Since you cannot reinforce the nonoccurrence of a discrete event (I like the way you didn’t just hit him), the only thing you can do is reinforce the student for not getting into trouble for a preset amount of time (you get a bonus minute for getting through the group discussion without interrupting).

A highly oppositional student could be made a hero by earning a bonus minute of PAT for the group by getting through half a class period without getting into trouble. The boundaries for PAT are simple—the student must want it, and the teacher must be able to live with it. Often, angry students are so busy being oppositional that they fail to perceive that PAT is for their enjoyment, too.
While the protocol for Omission Training is fairly complex as incentive systems go, it does give the teacher an alternative to the backup system that is both cheaper and more forgiving for the student. It is not only a win-win program, but it also provides a direct route for the teacher’s helping a highly unpopular student to be accepted by the peer group.

Omission Training also provides a fail-safe mechanism for automatic bonuses. What if, for example, your students can earn a bonus minute for being in their seats when the bell rings? However, your most oppositional student decides not to be in his or her seat just to prove that he or she does not have to. The oppositional student, trying to prove his or her power, has just put the entire class in jeopardy of not earning PAT. This dilemma points out how tricky group management can be unless you are trained in the fine points.

One simple way of protecting both the group and the automatic bonus should this problem occur repeatedly is to simply omit the problem student from the bonus—called “cutting them out of the herd.” If the rest of the students are in their seats when the bell rings, for example, they get the bonus minute. But if the problem student is not in his or her seat, the teacher deals with that student separately.

**THE BACKUP SYSTEM**

The backup system largely overlaps with the school discipline code—a hierarchy of negative sanctions ranging from a verbal warning to expulsion—that has as its purpose suppressing obnoxious behavior. Its problems are twofold. First, it tends not to work for the students who need it most because the same 5 percent of the student body are repeatedly sent to the office. Second, it is expensive for teachers who end up with extra conferences, phone calls, and incident reports and for administrators who must deal with all of the referrals.

Yet, some teachers almost never need to send a student to the office. Why? Three things seem to be crucial. First, they are good at classroom management and are perceived as meaning business. Consequently, most problems are either prevented or nipped in the bud. And, when the teacher has to give a warning, it is taken seriously because the teacher is taken seriously. Second, the teacher never embarrasses a student. Once again, working the crowd serves as camouflage so that a warning looks like any other private teacher/student interaction. During training, Jones focuses on the warning messages and small sanctions that the teacher can use while working the crowd to signal that “enough is enough.” These small backup response options are private
and invisible to the other students. And, third, these teachers never engage in back talk with a student.

Thus, the power of the backup system comes not from the size of the negative sanction, but from the person delivering it. No policy down in the office can compensate for a lack of skill in the classroom.

**HOW DOES DEMOCRACY FIT IN JONES’ MODEL?**

Keeping in mind what you learned in Chapter 2, Democracy and Discipline, how would adopting the Jones’ Tools for Teaching discipline model fit with your perception of a democratic classroom? It is important to address this question whether or not you adopt his model. Because you will not teach in a vacuum, you must be prepared to defend your own choice of a discipline model and challenge models proposed or used by others. A sound basis for a defense or a challenge is that of how a model impacts democracy in the classroom.

**PROs AND CONs OF JONES’ MODEL**

As you study each discipline model you need to identify their respective PROs and CONs. In the space below, identify the PROS on the left side and the CONs on the right side. Your listing of the PROs and CONs should help you decide which is the best discipline model for you and your students! You may want to compare your PROs and CONs with those listed in Appendix I.
LEARNING MORE ABOUT JONES’ TOOLS FOR TEACHING DISCIPLINE MODEL

Are you interested in Jones’ model? Are you ready to try some of his techniques? If you are, be sure first to consult the original sources, his books *Positive Classroom Discipline* (1987) and *Positive Classroom Instruction* (1987), as well as his newest book, *Tools for Teaching: Discipline, Instruction, Motivation* (2007). Another good source to read is Jones’ article, “Discipline alternatives. Did not! Did too!” (1997). What has been presented in this chapter, or any other single chapter, is not enough for you to run out, start using the abbreviated knowledge and skills, and expect to get results. There is no substitute for the original. Learn more about establishing rules and routines, recognizing the variations and limitations of limit setting, using omission training, using body language, initiating preferred activity time, praise, prompt, and leave, and using backup systems within and beyond the classroom. Buy his books, borrow his books, read his books!

- To learn more about Fredric Jones and his ideas on classroom management, contact:
  Fredric H. Jones & Associates, Inc.
  103 Quarry Lane
  Santa Cruz, CA 95060
  Phone: (831) 425–8222
  www.fredjones.com
  E-mail: info@fredjones.com


- Search popular Web sites such as www.Amazon.com to locate books written about Jones’ model.

- Search one or more of the many Internet Web sites using “Jones,” “body language,” “rules,” “procedures,” “back up systems,” “motivation,” “positive discipline,” “positive instruction,” and “incentives,” among other terms, as keywords.

TEST YOURSELF

This is a sampling of the kinds of factual and open-ended questions that you should be able to answer after having read this chapter.
1. How would you classify Jones’ views according to the four theoretical frameworks presented in Chapter 3?
2. What is the title of Jones’ popular book that outlines his views on how to discipline children?
3. Identify two of Jones’ four teacher-controllable skill (or layer cake) areas.
4. Contrast traditional classroom seating patterns with those suggested by Jones as it relates to more effective discipline.
5. What does Jones mean by “proximity control” and how might you make use of it in your classroom?
6. Complete the phrase, “Calmness is _______” and explain why Jones believes this is true.
7. Complete the sentence, “Discipline always comes before _______” and explain why Jones believes this is true.
8. Jones suggests that teachers should do much of their disciplining, not with words, but with “body _______.“ Complete this sentence and explain why this is so.
9. Explain why Jones believes that a teacher should appear bored (i.e., thinking about their dirty laundry that needs to be washed) when looking at a misbehaving student.
10. Why might even a slight smile on a teacher’s face at the end of his or her correcting of a disruptive student be counterproductive?
11. What does Jones mean by, “It takes one fool to backtalk. It takes two fools to make a conversation out of it”?
12. How does Jones suggest that teachers use Omission Training to address highly oppositional students so that they do not ruin PAT for the rest of a class?
13. Identify two examples of what Jones means by having “backup systems.”
14. In Jones’ “Praise-Prompt-Leave” skill that is used as a teacher cruises the classroom while students are doing seatwork, what does he mean by “prompt?”
15. Do you see yourself using Jones’ Tools for Teaching discipline model in your classroom? Why? Why not?
16. If “discipline comes before instruction,” why does Jones place so much initial importance on providing effective, engaged, and enthusiastic teaching?
17. Describe how PATs capitalize upon the students’ desire to waste the teacher’s time, but not their own time.
18. Discuss Jones’ teaching of procedures “until we get it right,” and how this enhances classroom discipline.
ASK YOURSELF: IS THIS MODEL FOR YOU?

Although you would want to defer making any final decision until you read still more, at this point what are your feelings toward Jones’ approach to discipline? What strengths and weaknesses do you see in his model? Does his approach to discipline reflect your fundamental views on how you believe people should be treated? Could you defend the use of this model to your students and their parents, to your colleagues, and to your administrators? Could you remain committed to his model—even when the going got tough? If you were to adopt his model, could you go to sleep at night and not feel that there simply has to be a better way to discipline? At this point, is Jones’ approach for you?
Rudolf Dreikurs (1897–1972), a native of Vienna, Austria, was an associate of psychologist Alfred Adler with whom he worked in family and child counseling. Dreikurs immigrated to the United States in 1937 and in 1952 founded the Alfred Adler Institute of Chicago, which reflects the optimistic approach that people are capable of changing and that human problems are interpersonal and socially embedded. Dreikurs espouses the values underlying Adler’s Individual Psychology—an emphasis on equality, respect, cooperation, and
self-discipline. Dreikurs’ work has been continued and/or repackaged by such educators as Don Dinkmeyer, Sr., Don Dinkmeyer, Jr., Linda Albert, and Jane Nelsen. In Australia, Maurice Balson is recognized as a major proponent of Dreikurs’ ideas.

**OBJECTIVES**

This chapter will help you, among other things, to:

- Use the material presented on democracy in Chapter 2, weigh the degree to which Dreikurs’ model does or does not support democracy in a classroom.
- Classify, using the theoretical frameworks presented in Chapter 3, Dreikurs’ Social Discipline model.
- Identify the clues children give as a basis for their goals of misbehavior.
- Identify alternative teacher responses to children’s misbehavior.
- Compare and contrast natural, logical, and contrived consequences.
- Compare and contrast praise and encouragement.
- Describe how to deliver effective encouragement statements.
- Explore how Dreikurs’ model supports your vision of a democratic classroom.
- Explore whether Dreikurs’ Social Discipline model is for you.

**WHERE DOES DREIKURS’ MODEL FALL WITHIN THE FOUR THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS IN CHAPTER 3?**

Dreikurs’ Social Discipline model clearly finds a place in French and Raven’s Social Bases of Power framework under “legitimate” and “referent” powers. It finds a home in Wolfgang and Glickman’s Schools of Thought framework as an interactionalist strategy. Dreikurs’ position falls midway between the Skinner-Rogers’ dichotomy. In Lewis’ Keeping It Simple framework, Social Discipline is equated with “manage.”

**A DEMOCRATIC MODEL**

Dreikurs is the first of the three humanistic discipline models (Dreikurs, Glasser, and Gordon) to be discussed that acknowledges that good discipline works best in democratic classrooms and works least (perhaps not at all) in autocratic classrooms. His definition of good discipline will unfold further as you read this chapter. Good discipline is not about doing something to
misbehaving children, although Dobson, Caners, and Jones might argue otherwise. Good discipline recognizes that students have needs and engage in behaviors—sometimes antisocial behaviors—that they believe can help them meet their unmet needs. Teachers should help students recognize their needs (i.e., their goals) and then help them select more appropriate behaviors to achieve these goals. Dreikurs believes, as do other humanists, that children who feel they are getting their needs met, or who feel they are on a definite path to meet their needs, are far less likely to misbehave.

His model also is the first of the humanistic discipline models that sees no place for punishment. When asked at a workshop what place he saw for corporal punishment in the classroom, he responded, “He saw a definite place for corporal punishment. Teachers who use corporal punishment should be punished!”

Dreikurs instructs teachers to model democratic behavior by providing guidance and leadership that involves students in, among other things, setting rules and logical consequences. A teacher’s guidance is directed toward helping students to impose limits on themselves and helping them to realize that following the rules—their rules, too—will best lead to getting their goals met.

KIDS ARE PEOPLE, TOO

According to Dreikurs, children are social beings. Like all humans, they have a need to know that they belong. “Nature has not fitted him (man) to survive singlehanded” (Dreikurs, 1950, p. 1). Children want evidence that they are significant. They want to be recognized. Is this too much to ask? I think not. A problem occurs, though, when children are unable to achieve these goals through socially accepted means; they may then resort to antisocial methods.

When students operate under the mistaken belief that misbehaving will gain them recognition and status, teachers must take action. But what action? As a practical matter, teachers should not—in fact, cannot—decide what action to take until they first identify which goal misbehaving students are seeking.

Dreikurs identifies four goals that describe the purpose of children’s misbehavior. They include, from least to most serious:

1. Bids for attention
2. Power struggles
3. Revenge seeking
4. Displays of inadequacy
Table 7.1
Behaviors with Undesirable Goals

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<tr>
<th>Student’s Goal</th>
<th>ATTACKING BEHAVIOR</th>
<th>DEFENDING BEHAVIOR</th>
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<tr>
<td>Attention seeking</td>
<td>The clown</td>
<td>Lazy</td>
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<td>The nuisance</td>
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<td>The smart aleck</td>
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<td>Walking question mark</td>
<td>Excessively pleasant</td>
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<td>Power seeking</td>
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<td>Rebels</td>
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<td>Defiant</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Temper tantrums</td>
<td>Forgetful</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Disobedient (carries out forbidden acts)</td>
<td>Disobedient (won’t do what he or she is told)</td>
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<td>Revenge seeking</td>
<td>Stealing</td>
<td>Sullen</td>
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<td>Vicious</td>
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<td>Destructive/Violent</td>
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<td>Revenge</td>
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<td>Delinquent behavior</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Children, in the mistaken belief that they do not belong, are discouraged and turn to disturbing behaviors to achieve their goals. By doing so, “they can be something special, be admired by peers, feel important, and gain status, merely by defeating the adults and violating their commands” (Dinkmeyer & Dreikurs, 1963, p. 42). In other words, if you can’t be the best at being the best, be the best at being the worst. At least you will be noticed!

Misbehaving children will engage in purposeful behavior—behavior designed to achieve one or more of these goals. The key point is that the behavior is purposeful. “It is impossible to understand a person correctly unless one recognizes the purpose of his behavior” (Dreikurs, 1977, p. 176). Whether consciously or unconsciously, a child’s choice of behavior is goal directed. Table 7.1 outlines student behaviors that typify each of the four goals (Balson, 1982, p. 50). Note that a student’s behavior may manifest itself as either an “attacking” or “defending” behavior—actively or passively pursuing the same goal.
A hierarchy of sorts exists within these student behaviors. If bids for attention are unsuccessful in reassuring the child that he or she belongs, that child may well resort to more serious tactics such as revenge seeking or displays of inadequacy. Teachers would be well warned to deal with misbehaving children while they are seeking one of the less serious goals—for example, bids for attention or power struggles.

CLUES TO A CHILD’S GOAL FOR MISBEHAVING

How can teachers tell which goal of misbehavior a student is seeking? Dreikurs describes several distinct clues teachers can use to help them identify a child’s goal:

- How do you feel when the child displays the misbehavior?
- How have you typically responded to the child’s misbehavior?
- How has the child responded to your attempts at correction?

Two of these three clues deal with teachers examining themselves—their feelings and their previous efforts at correcting the child’s misbehavior.

Teachers’ Feelings

Teachers typically feel annoyed when a student is making a constant bid for their attention. The child is like a gnat that is always in their face; they wish the child would go away and stop bothering them. When a child is engaged in a power struggle, teachers feel their authority has been threatened. They feel angry. They feel a need to pull the child down off his or her high horse and show him or her who is the boss. A feeling of hurt accompanies situations in which a student is seeking revenge. Teachers feel, “How could this child have done this to me?” Finally, teachers feel a sense of despair when a child is displaying helplessness or inadequacy. The point is to take a moment before acting and ask, “How am I feeling right now while the child is misbehaving?” An honest answer can go a long way toward identifying the child’s goal of misbehavior.

A Teacher’s Typical Response to Child’s Misbehavior

When a child is making a bid for attention, it is common for teachers to remind and coax. They might remind a child twenty times a week to raise
his or her hand before calling out an answer. For a child involved in a power struggle with teachers, too often teachers resort to fighting back or giving in: “No student of mine is going to get away with such and such” or “Why bother? What’s the use? I may as well look the other way and give in.” Where a child appears to be seeking revenge, teachers may retaliate in an effort to get even. Finally, teachers are often overheard to say, “I’ve tried everything with this student, I give up,” when a child is displaying inadequacy.

These typical teacher responses to a student’s misbehavior in most cases simply make matters worse. Reminding and coaxing lead only to more reminding and coaxing. Fighting back or giving in results in an unproductive and unhealthy win-lose or lose-win situation. Retaliating only confirms to the child that his or her initial efforts at revenge were justified—“See everyone is out to get me; look at what the teacher just did.” Giving up on a student who has given up only helps confirm his or her inadequacy.

**CHILD’S RESPONSE TO A TEACHER’S CORRECTIVE EFFORTS**

When a child is making a bid for attention, reminding and coaxing seem to work—but only temporarily. The child stops the unwanted behavior only to resume it or another unwanted behavior soon afterward. The reason is that reminding and coaxing in no way help to make the child more responsible or more independent. In fact, these typical teacher responses do just the opposite; they make the child less responsible and more dependent. Remember also that the student’s bid for attention is his or her mistaken way of trying to belong and be recognized. Belonging is a basic deficiency need as described by Maslow. It is episodic; just like eating and breathing, it is a need that must continually be replenished.

For those children who find themselves in a power struggle with the teacher, fighting back results only in an escalation or intensification of the struggle. If the student complies at all, he or she does so defiantly. Misbehaving children are discouraged; their inappropriate behavior is a last resort effort to belong and gain status. Pulling children down off their high horses or cutting them down to size and showing them who’s boss by fighting back only increases this discouragement. On the other hand, if a teacher responds by giving in, then students are sent clear but unintended messages—their needs come first, they can be boss, and no one can make them do anything they don’t want to do.

If a teacher responds with an eye-for-an-eye, revenge-for-revenge strategy, one can expect children to do likewise. Like a snowball rolling downhill, getting bigger and bigger, where will it ever end? It is common for students
seeking revenge not only to become violent or hostile but to feel justified in doing so. Before the teacher actually retaliated, the students only thought others were out to hurt them. When a teacher falls into the trap of actually retaliating, the students now have concrete evidence that others are out to get them!

Passive response or failure to respond at all can be expected of children who have teachers who throw their hands up in despair and give up. It is all too easy for a teacher, in frustration, to “take the picture of him as a student worth teaching out of her picture album” (Glasser, 1986, p. 53). Having teachers give up confirms those children’s beliefs that they are incapable of doing anything—just what they mistakenly thought in the beginning. Now they have their teachers agreeing with them. They think, “Both of us can’t be wrong. I must, in fact, be inadequate.” Remaining passive and doing nothing enables students to guard what little self-esteem they have left by removing it from social tests (Charles, 1985, p. 76).

### Recognition Reflex: A Final Clue

After examining your feelings while the child is misbehaving (noting how you have typically responded in the past and looking at how the misbehaving child has reacted to your responses), you are in a good position to judge which of Dreikurs’ four goals of misbehavior the child is seeking. One final litmus test is to confront the child with a statement that represents that goal of misbehavior and look for a recognition reflex. The four confrontation statements are:

- “Could it be that you would like to keep me busy with you?”
- “Could it be that you would like to be boss and show everyone that no one can make you do anything?”
- “Could it be that you would like to hurt others as you think they have hurt you?”
- “Could it be that you would like to convince others that you are not capable?”

How long will it take, and what, exactly, is a recognition reflex? According to Dreikurs, Grunwald, and Pepper (1971, p. 41):

The recognition reflex may not come immediately because the child may have to think it over first. Therefore, one has to wait for his reaction. It is most dramatic to watch the child, how he first considers it, and then the corners of his mouth begin to expand in a knowing smile and a gleam appears in his eyes. He begins to recognize what he was up to.
Table 7.2
Alternative Teacher Responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BEHAVIOR</th>
<th>GOAL OF BEHAVIOR</th>
<th>TEACHER RESPONSE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clowning</td>
<td>Attention</td>
<td>1. Refuse to give special attention on request.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Showing off</td>
<td></td>
<td>2. Allow consequences to take place.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being late</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stubborn</td>
<td>Power</td>
<td>1. Refuse to fight.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apathetic</td>
<td></td>
<td>2. Admit your inability to make students do anything.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disobedient</td>
<td></td>
<td>3. Allow consequences to take place.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Untruthful</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stealing</td>
<td>Revenge</td>
<td>1. Refuse to hurt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delinquent</td>
<td></td>
<td>2. Avoid retaliation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personally abusive</td>
<td></td>
<td>4. Allow consequences to take place.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Truant</td>
<td>Withdrawal</td>
<td>1. Avoid criticism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unable to learn</td>
<td></td>
<td>2. Look for slight improvement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gives up easily</td>
<td></td>
<td>3. Acknowledge effort.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indolent</td>
<td></td>
<td>4. Never give up.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With the child’s goal now out in the open for both the child and the teacher to see, real progress can be made. Teachers can now respond in ways more likely not to reinforce the mistaken goals of misbehavior. Keep in mind that in the world of operant learning, “not reinforcing,” is the only way to extinguish an unwanted behavior.

ALTERNATIVE BEHAVIORS FOR TEACHERS

Once a teacher has determined a child’s goal of misbehavior, the teacher can make corrective responses. Alternative teacher responses to each goal of misbehavior are described in Table 7.2.

Bids for Attention

Teachers should ignore a student’s bid for attention, where possible, and give attention to positive behavior when the student is not making a bid for it. Student misbehavior that threatens to cause harm either to the student, fellow students, or the environment, of course, cannot be ignored. But much
of the type of misbehavior that teachers find annoying (Dreikurs’ signal for students making a bid for attention) can be ignored.

However, ignoring, alone, is ineffective because it results only in the student either escalating the misbehavior or moving to more serious misbehavior—for example, power struggles. Keep in mind that the student’s bid for attention is a goal-directed behavior. Ignoring that behavior interferes with the child’s achieving that goal. On the other hand, supplying attention when the child is not making a bid for it reinforces the cause-and-effect relationship between engaging in acceptable behavior and receiving attention. The student soon realizes that if the work is done—that is, he or she obeys the norms (rules)—then acceptance, belonging, and recognition will be achieved.

Something else occurs when a student sets to work believing that in doing so he or she will receive attention. The more learning that takes place and the more confidence that is gained the better the grades achieved on tests and the more that student feels to be the master of his or her own fate. Internal motivation starts to replace external motivation. Locus of control shifts from without to within. As a result, the student needs less and less of the teacher’s overt attention, for now he or she is better able to get the same feelings of worth and recognition through his or her own achievements.

**Power Struggles**

As stated earlier, fighting back or giving in simply does not work. Both are win-lose situations. Teachers should disengage from a power struggle. Just as it takes “two to tango,” it takes “two to tangle.” The steam quickly goes out of a power struggle when students find themselves trying to sustain it when there is no one with whom to struggle.

Part of disengaging from a power struggle is helping the child understand the goal of the misbehavior (such as the need to be boss). According to Dreikurs, Grunwald, and Pepper (1971, p. 199), this “removes from him the conviction that he is just a bad child, and opens avenues for alternatives.”

Just as it is ineffective simply to ignore a student’s bid for attention, it is equally ineffective simply to withdraw from a power struggle. A teacher must do more. Remember that the child’s behaviors are goal directed. “A child driven by the desire for power is always ambitious. But his ambition is directed exclusively at the defeat of the power of those who try to suppress him” (Dreikurs, 1968, p. 50). Withdrawing from the power struggle leaves that goal unattained. Teachers must redirect the student’s need for power into constructive endeavors. But how?
Admit to a child that you don’t know what to do about his misbehavior and then ask him or her, “What do you think we can do to solve the problem?” This gives the misbehaving student a prosocial opportunity (and responsibility) to “be the boss.” Who knows, as a teacher you may be surprised by the quality of solutions generated. As is the case in Glasser’s Reality Therapy, corrective plans generated by a student should be accepted only if they meet the teacher’s need. Further, does it really matter who comes up with a solution to the problem behavior as long as it stops?

Admitting to students that you cannot make them complete a particular assignment or force them to turn in a paper if they do not want to acknowledges the fact that they and only they have the final power over their behavior. Students know this to be true, and by your saying so, students know you know it to be true. Once it is out in the open, students have less of a need to continue trying to prove it to be so. The fact is the incomplete assignment or nonsubmitted paper is a smoke screen to hide the student’s feeling of powerlessness. Often students act “big” to conceal just how “small” or discouraged they really feel.

Few people in this world want to take on the responsibilities of being the boss or the leader; why not capitalize upon those students who do? Assign them posts of responsibility. Let them be lunch monitor, take messages to the office, help younger children, oversee the distribution of materials, be a crossing guard, and so on. Most people, including children, take assignments of responsibility quite seriously. By doing so they are getting their needs for power, status, and recognition met. At the same time, they are going about it in a socially acceptable way. For more information on power struggles, see article V, Defusing Power Struggles, in Chapter 11.

Revenge Seeking

The first piece of advice is “don’t retaliate” and “don’t take it personally.” Although the student’s behavior is goal directed, it is not normally directed at you in particular. The child is striking out, you just happen to be there. As difficult as it may be, teachers must show that they care for the student and for his or her well-being.

I am reminded of the situation where a teenager says to a parent, “I hate you! I wish you weren’t my parent!” These are razor-sharp, hurting words. The urge to retaliate is great. Think what it does, though, when the parent responds by saying, “Well, I still love you.”

If the child’s goal of misbehavior is acknowledged (“Could it be that you want to hurt others as much as you believe they have hurt you?”) and then followed by sincere caring statements and caring actions, there will be less
of a need for the student to continue seeking revenge. Once students begin to believe that they belong, there is little motivation to continue acts of revenge against the teacher or their peers. To do so would undo their sense of belonging, their sense of recognition.

**Displays of Inadequacy**

When a child exhibits displays of inadequacy, find something the child can do and at which he or she can succeed. Focus on the child’s assets. Statements such as “I know you have it in you” and “I really believe you can do it” can motivate the child to try. Once the child is making an attempt, any attempt, the opportunity then exists for the teacher to offer encouragement.

Eventually you will want to wean the child from all of this external encouragement and praise. But for now, load it on. If you don’t begin to convince the student that he or she is a capable person, who is going to? According to Balson (1982, pp. 72–73), these children “need positive reassurance by teachers of their worth and ability so they can begin to function usefully, constructively and cooperatively.”

**NATURAL, LOGICAL, AND CONTRIVED CONSEQUENCES**

The effective alternative teacher responses identified in Table 7.2 consist of supplying consequences—but not just any consequences. There is no doubt that people’s future behavior is influenced by the consequences of their present as well as past behavior. Teachers have control over supplying many of these consequences. But what consequences are we talking about? If we were to list examples of specific consequences that could be provided to learners, the list would be virtually endless and thus of little use to educators. If instead we were to group these specific consequences by categories, we would find that there are only three: natural, logical, and contrived.

**Natural Consequences**

Natural consequences are those that “naturally” flow from someone’s behaviors. They are not imposed by anyone else—teacher, parent, spouse, boss. If anyone is responsible for supplying natural consequences, it is nature itself. If a child has body odor, nature has designed it so that others will sense (smell) the odor and naturally avoid the child’s company. No adult has to tell the other children to engage in avoidance behavior. Of course, when adults, as responsible caregivers, “decide to let the child bear the consequences of his
behavior, they must be a little bit cunning about it and sometimes look the other way and give him plenty of scope” (Dreikurs, 1950, p. 80).

If a student does not study for a test, then, naturally the odds are that the results will not be as good as if the student had studied. In this case, the fact that nature has designed a relationship between studying and performance supplies the unpleasant consequence—doing less well on the test. Adults who drive too fast for icy weather conditions are more likely to skid off the road. The relationship between tire adhesion and weather conditions may supply the unpleasant consequence of an accident.

There are, of course, times when teachers cannot let natural consequences unfold. A child using a Bunsen burner in an unsafe manner in chemistry lab or using a metal grinder in shop without safety glasses is likely to experience a “natural” accident. Should the child survive the accident, he or she would certainly be more cautious in the future. However, as teachers we must anticipate where such serious natural dangers exist and take preventive measures to avoid them. Letting nature take its course in these kinds of situations would be unconscionable.

**Logical Consequences**

Logical consequences are those supplied by someone else, not by nature. To a reasoning person, supplying logical consequences makes sense. There is a recognizable connection between a student’s behavior and the consequence supplied by a teacher. The consequences must be “experienced by the child as logical in nature, or the corrective effect may be lost” (Dreikurs & Grey, 1968, p. 66).

If a child has body odor, it would be logical (reasonable) for a principal to require that the child attend to personal hygiene before being permitted to return to class. If a student does not study for a test and does poorly, it would be logical for a teacher to require that the student continue studying the material and take a makeup test before being permitted to go on. For the adult who drove too fast and had an automobile accident, it would be logical for the insurance company to raise his or her premiums or for the police to issue a ticket. In each case, the consequence is seen as related to the inappropriate behavior.

The three R’s for logical consequences include related, respectful, and reasonable (Nelsen, 1987). If any one of the three R’s is missing, it is not truly a Dreikurs-type logical consequence. Having a child clean up his or her spilled food in the cafeteria is a related consequence. If the teacher is not respectful and adds humiliation to his or her request that the spilled food be picked up—for example, saying aloud for all to hear, “Joe, when will you ever learn
to stop being so messy when you eat? Don’t be such a pig. Now clean up that mess”—it is no longer a proper logical consequence.

Further, if the teacher instructs Joe to pick up the spilled food from the entire cafeteria, not just the food he has spilled, this request is not reasonable—it doesn’t follow logically. Suffering, either from being shown a lack of respect or from consequences that are not reasonable, has no place among Dreikurs’ logical consequences.

**Contrived Consequences**

Contrived consequences (Shrigley, 1985) are invented or fabricated by someone else. A reasoning person would have difficulty understanding the connection between the misbehavior and the contrived consequence. With contrived consequences—unlike logical consequences—it is not at all clear why they follow from one’s behavior. No logical connection exists. If a child has body odor, a contrived consequence would be to have the student write five hundred times, “I will always come to school clean.” This type of writing-related punishment probably will have an effect, but not the desired one. Instead, the student will learn to hate writing! (Hogan, 1985). If a student does poorly on a test, a contrived consequence would be one hundred laps around the gym. For the adult who had the automobile accident, a contrived consequence would be seventy-five hours of public service work in the park. It is almost as if the consequence came out of thin air.

What might be a synonym for contrived consequences—those that do not logically or naturally flow from a student’s misbehavior? If you guessed punishment, then you are correct. Contrived consequences are usually just another way of making a child suffer. Contrived consequences, or punishment, evoke the three R’s of punishment: resentment, revenge, and retreat in the form of rebellion and/or reduced self-esteem (Nelsen, 1987).

Where possible, structure the environment so that natural consequences will likely occur. They are the best teachers. They accompany each of us out in the real world. Body odor will cause us to lose friends; chances are, we will take corrective measures. Not studying for tests will cause lower performance; chances are, next time we will adjust our studying habits. Driving too fast will cause accidents; chances are, we will be more careful in the future.

When natural consequences are not likely to occur, try your very best to supply logical consequences. They work because students can see that the consequences you supply are somehow connected or related to their behavior. The consequences are predictable; they make sense. They may even be judged as fair.
Table 7.3
Logical Consequences versus Punishment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LOGICAL CONSEQUENCES</th>
<th>PUNISHMENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Expresses the reality of the social order.</td>
<td>1. Expresses the power of a personal Authority.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Is intrinsically related to the misbehavior.</td>
<td>2. Connection between misbehavior and Consequences is arbitrary, not logical.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Involves no element of moral judgment.</td>
<td>3. Inevitably involves some moral Judgment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Is concerned only with what will happen now.</td>
<td>4. Deals with the past.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This is not to say that students graciously accept logical consequences; they don’t always. But logical consequences depend less upon the whim or capriciousness of the consequence-supplier. They are more impersonal. A student’s behavior, something over which he or she has control, triggers a logical consequence. It is entirely in the hands of the misbehaving student. This sets the stage for students to take responsibility for their own behaviors.

Educators normally have a difficult time justifying contrived consequences since no logical connection exists between them and the misbehavior. Contrived consequences are taken “personally.” This undermines their effectiveness. Avoid contrived consequences at all costs. Use the more effective alternatives—natural and logical consequences.

Handling students’ misbehavior with Dreikurs’ natural and logical consequences demonstrates that “mistakes are wonderful opportunities to learn” (Nelsen, 1987, p. 67). Dreikurs (1964, p. 64) agrees when he says, “If we allow a child to experience the consequences of his acts, we provide an honest and real learning situation.”

Of the three available consequences—natural, logical, and contrived—teachers have most control over delivering the last two. Table 7.3 contrasts these two consequences (Dreikurs & Grey, 1968, p. 82).

**ENCOURAGEMENT OR PRAISE?**

Dreikurs’ answer to this question is clearly shown in the title of his coauthored book, *Encouraging Children to Learn* (2000). The word “encouraging” in the book’s title is not there by accident. According to Dreikurs (1964, p. 36), “Encouragement is more important than any other aspect of
child-raising. It is so important that the lack of it can be considered the basic cause for misbehavior. A misbehaving child is a discouraged child.” Balson (1985) states that “The most important obstacle to learning in school is discouragement” (p. 3). Nelsen (1987) supports this position when she declares, “It is obvious that the best way to help a misbehaving child is through encouragement. When discouragement is removed, the motivation for misbehavior will be gone also” (p. 87).

All human beings require encouragement; some human beings desire praise. Problems arise when praise is mistakenly delivered as intended encouragement. Praise and encouragement are not synonyms. Praise focuses on the person or product; encouragement focuses on the process or effort.

Not all persons or products are praiseworthy. That is a fact of life. Further, praise loses its associated honor if too many people receive it. The Super Bowl is designed to honor the best football team—not the one that tried the hardest, practiced the longest, or was the most dedicated. There will be one, and only one, winner—one team worth public acclaim, one team glorified. Although this may be acceptable in the world of professional sports, its applicability to education is questionable.

On the other hand, all students can be encouraged in the process of creating, or for their effort related to completing, a product. Every child can be encouraged—should be encouraged—must be encouraged. Dinkmeyer, McKay, and Dinkmeyer (1980, p. 51) have delineated the basic differences between praise and encouragement, which are described in Table 7.4. Other authors, such as Nelsen (1987), offer similar distinctions.

In his paper “Some Words of Encouragement,” Reimer (1967, pp. 71–73) offers teachers some language for encouragement. Examples include:

- “You do a good job of . . .”: This stresses the activity itself, not its finished product. Even a comment about something small and insignificant to us may have a great impact on a child.
- “You have improved in . . .”: Growth and improvement are the nuts and the bolts that build student self-worth and confidence. Students may not be where we would like them to be, but if they are making progress, note that progress. It does wonders.
- “You can help me (us, the school, and so on) by . . .”: To feel useful and helpful is important to everyone—including children; we have only to give them the chance.
- “You are really working at . . .”: Recognition of one’s diligence and persistence from teachers helps sustain learners on their way to turning an activity attempted into an activity completed. Further, these two work habits themselves will transfer to other endeavors.
Dinkmeyer and Losoncy (1966), too, in their book, *Skills of Encouragement*, offer parents and teachers help in promoting the use of encouragement with children. “In summary, encouragement recognizes effort and improvement, shows appreciation for contribution, accepts students as they are now, minimizes mistakes and deficiencies, focuses on assets and strengths, and separates the deed from the doer” (Balson, 1982, p. 112). Teachers who continue to use praise, rather than encouragement, perpetuate the erroneous link between the student’s self-worth and his or her achievement.

**PRAISE VERSUS ENCOURAGEMENT RESEARCH—AN EYE-OPENER!**

Dreikurs believes, like most humanists, that encouragement, not praise, holds the potential for motivating students and building their self-esteem, self-confidence, and self-discipline. Most things written by or about Dreikurs, such as Hitz and Driscoll’s (1988) article, “Praise or Encouragement,” stresses the importance of choosing either encouragement or praise—not both. Dreikurs recommends that we choose encouragement. Hanko (1994, p. 166) comes right out and says “There is a danger in perceiving praise and encouragement as synonymous.” See Table 7.4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRAISE</th>
<th>ENcouragement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Praise is a reward given for a completed achievement.</td>
<td>1. Encouragement is an acknowledgment of effort.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Praise tells students they’ve satisfied the demands of others.</td>
<td>2. Encouragement helps students evaluate their own performance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Praise connects students’ work with their personal worth.</td>
<td>3. Encouragement focuses on the strength of the work, helping students see and feel confident about their own ability.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Praise places a cold judgment on the student as a person.</td>
<td>4. Encouragement shows acceptance and respect.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Praise can be cheapened by over-use or can be withheld as punishment.</td>
<td>5. Encouragement can be freely given because everyone deserves to receive it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Praise is patronizing. It’s talking down. Praiser enjoys a superior position.</td>
<td>6. Encouragement is a message between equals.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
While I had read many articles contrasting the two terms, encouragement and praise, I remained unconvinced that there really was any great difference between them. That all changed several years ago when I asked a student assistant to do some library research on these two terms. I asked her to go to the library and examine psychology and educational psychology books with the aim of answering four questions. In each case she was to note the author, title, and pages where the answers to these questions could be found. These questions included:

- Which authors/books offer a definition of praise and of encouragement?
- Which authors/books offer concrete examples of praise and of encouragement?
- Which authors/books offer positive effects of using praise and of using encouragement?
- Which authors/books offer negative effects of using praise and of using encouragement?

The student reported back to me after she answered each question. In the first three instances, the pattern was the same. She came to my office with a confident air about her, suggesting that she was successful in completing the task I had assigned. In each of these instances she presented me with a two-column (“praise” and “encouragement”) list of authors/books where the answers to the questions could be found. For the first three questions, each of the two columns that she presented contained about the same number of responses. In other words, she had found a similar number of sources that provided definitions, concrete examples, and positive effects of using praise and encouragement.

When she appeared at my office door after setting about to answer the fourth question, her shoulders were slouched, her voice was meek, and she seemed anything but the poised, self-confident young lady I knew. I asked what the problem was. She said “Dr. Tauber, I don’t think that I did what you wanted me to do.” She was almost in tears. Reproduced below in Table 7.5 are her actual two-column responses to the question, “Which authors/books offer negative effects of using praise and of using encouragement?”

No matter how hard she had looked, and knowing her I have every reason to believe that she was diligent in her search, she could not find anyone, anywhere, who had something negative to say about the use of encouragement. Whereas my research assistant thought she had let me down by not generating an equally long, two-column list of responses, in reality she had opened my
eyes to the difference between praise and encouragement and how one may be fraught with danger, while the other seems to have no detrimental side effects. According to Albert (1996), “Encouragement is the most powerful tool we possess” (p. 15).

No single piece of “evidence” that I have ever presented to a class or workshop has been more successful in changing ones attitudes regarding praise and encouragement than this exercise. There always is a hush across the room as the realization sets in, when the “Negative Effects of Using Praise and Encouragement” responses are shown. I normally end this session by challenging the audience to locate even one credible source that “badmouths”

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### Table 7.5
**Researching Praise and Encouragement**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Negative Effects of Using Praise and Encouragement</th>
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the use of encouragement in teaching. I even offer a $50.00 reward. To date I have never had to “pay up!”

Read the Chapter 11 article, “The Negative Side of Praise” in order to learn about three specific situations when teachers and parents should be cautious in delivering praise. Stanley and Baines (2001) comment on the negative side of praise when they say that praise is routinely expected “as if students existed in some kind of perpetual pre-toddler stage where every form of progress—walking, babbling, jumping—seems miraculous” and thus deserving of praise.

**IS PRAISE A BASIC HUMAN NEED?**

Some teachers’ dependence upon delivering praise springs from their belief that children need praise. Well, children may want praise (especially if that is what they are used to receiving, or if more humanistic alternatives such as encouragement are absent), but do they need it? After examining various lists of basic human needs (i.e., Maslow’s) I have yet to find praise listed as one of them! Other teachers might argue that praise helps build self-esteem in students. That, too, might be argued. After all it is called “self-esteem”—the operative word is “self.”

Note that this point is supported when you look at the highest level of Maslow’s (a humanist) Hierarchy of Needs. His highest need is “self-actualization,” not “others will actualize” you. Once again, the operative word is “self.” Unlike Maslow’s lower needs, you have to actualize yourself, no one can do it for you or to you! Teachers and parents can help, but only to the extent of creating a democratic environment—one that encourages self-determination (i.e., choice), self-evaluation, and self-discipline.

**AN ENCOURAGEMENT EXPERIMENT**

If you are still unconvinced about the fact that humanists believe they can substitute encouragement for praise, try your own experiment. Practice delivering encouragement statements to children (or others) and see if they either state outright or through their body language express, “Where is my praise?” Keep in mind that for students “hooked on praise” it may take several trials. Stick to your goal and you will soon experience the success of weaning students off of their dependence upon praise.
Following one of my graduate classes, a student of mine e-mailed me to tell me about her little experiment with delivering encouragement. The e-mail went as follows:

Dear Dr. Tauber,

I just wanted to write and say thank you for presenting the material on praise and encouragement. I never realized how much I use praise and after listening to your presentation, I made a conscious effort to *just* (italics added) use encouragement last night when talking to friends. I can’t believe the difference it makes. They feel more inspired and it makes me feel much better, too.

Thank you again,

Sincerely

XXXXXXXX

It always feels good to know a message that you delivered and beliefs that you hold have had an impact on others. This apparently was the case with this student. I want to call your attention, though, to the italicized word “just.” I would caution teachers and parents who use encouragement not to devalue what they are doing by inserting the word “just” before it as in “just encourage.” Another word to avoid is “only.” Encouraging a fellow human being is too powerful of a tool to be devalued. A similar caution will be made about another humanist skill in Chapter 9, the chapter that presents Thomas Gordon’s, Teacher Effectiveness Training model. His model relies heavily upon the use of active listening. Users are cautioned to avoid saying (or thinking) “I just listened” or “I only listened.”

**DELIVERING ENCOURAGEMENT MESSAGES**

Pretend that you have a student who turns in his or her completed project that you know he or she has been working diligently on for several weeks. This student expects some kind of response from you. You, depending upon the discipline model that you embrace, must decide what sort of response to deliver. First I will present “praise” messages and then I will present Dreikurs’ recommended “encouragement” messages. See if the differences are evident. In both cases I will “deliver” them in an enthusiastic manner—the positive person’s most obvious characteristic (Dinkmeyer & Losoncy, 1996).
Praise Messages

- “That’s wonderful!”
- “It is one of the best projects I have seen in years.”
- “I am very proud of you.”
- “I knew that you were going to do a great job.”
- “Now this is the kind of work all students should be doing.”
- “I am going to display it right here on the wall (equivalent to the refrigerator door at home) for everyone to see.”

Encouragement Messages

- “What was the most difficult part of project?”
- “Can you suggest any way that I could better present the skills to next year’s students so that they can complete this project more easily?”
- “If you were to do this project again, how might you proceed differently?”
- “How does it feel to work on a task for so long and finally have it completed?”
- “You must feel really proud of yourself!”
- “May I send some of the other students who are still struggling with their projects to you for help?”
- “Would it be okay if I put your project on display for others to view?”

Let me repeat, the student who submitted his or her project wanted some reaction from the teacher. He or she didn’t necessarily want praise. Did you spot some major differences in the two forms of teacher feedback? For instance, in the praise messages, the teacher said that he or she was proud of the child. In the encouragement messages the teacher acknowledged that the child must really feel proud of himself or herself. In the praise messages the teacher took it upon himself or herself to display the child’s work. In the encouragement messages the teacher asked the student to evaluate his or her own work. This is a major difference. In the encouragement messages we see the teacher actually asking the student’s opinion (i.e., “how could I better present these skills to next year’s students?”), a sign of respect, and asking for the student’s help (i.e., “May I send some of the other students who are still struggling?”), a sign, that at least in this instance,
both the teacher and the student are colleagues or equals in the learning process.

At least one other major difference exists between the two types of messages. When a teacher praises a student, that is the end of it. There is little or nothing else to be said by either party—especially by the student. Reread the above praise messages. These messages provide little if any opportunity for the student to respond except, perhaps, to blush and say “thank you.” When a teacher encourages a student, a continued dialogue is expected. The stage is set for the student to, among other things, evaluate his or her own work, analyze his or her own efforts, examine his or her own feelings, provide sought-after input for improvement, grant his or her permission, and so forth. The learner becomes an active participant in the learning process.

**IF A CHILD. . . .!**

Examine the following acclimations delivered by Dreikurs almost forty years ago. Do they hold as true today as they did then? Is it clear that it is the democratic (humanistic) terms, such as honesty, tolerance, fairness, acceptance, security, justice, and, of course, encouragement, that he associates with positive outcomes?

- If a child lives with criticism, he learns to condemn.
- If a child lives with hostility, he learns to fight.
- If a child lives with ridicule, he learns to be shy.
- If a child lives with fear, he learns to be apprehensive.
- If a child lives with shame, he learns to feel guilty.
- If a child lives with tolerance, he learns to be patient.
- If a child lives with encouragement, he learns to be confident.
- If a child lives with acceptance, he learns to love.
- If a child lives with approval, he learns to like himself.
- If a child lives with recognition, he learns it is good to have a goal.
- If a child lives with honesty, he learns what truth is.
- If a child lives with fairness, he learns justice.
- If a child lives with security, he learns to have faith in himself and those about him.
- If a child lives with friendliness, he learns the world is a nice place in which to live, to love and be loved.

(Dreikurs & Cassel, 1972, pp. 28–29)
How Does Democracy Fit in Dreikurs’ Model?

Keeping in mind what you learned in Chapter 2, Democracy and Discipline, how would adopting Dreikurs’ Social Discipline model fit with your perception of a democratic classroom? It is important to address this question whether or not you adopt his model. Because you will not teach in a vacuum, you must be prepared to defend your own choice of a discipline model and challenge models proposed or used by others. A sound basis for a defense or a challenge is that of how a model impacts democracy in the classroom.

Pros and Cons of Dreikurs’ Model

As you study each discipline model you need to identify their respective Pros and Cons. In the space below, identify the Pros on the left side and the Cons on the right side. Your listing of the Pros and Cons should help you decide which is the best discipline model for you and your students! You may want to compare your Pros and Cons with those listed in Appendix I.

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Learning More About Dreikurs’ Social Discipline Model

Are you interested in Dreikurs’ model? Are you ready to try some of his techniques? If you are, be sure first to consult several of his original sources. You should also consult original sources by Linda Albert, Don Dinkmeyer, and Jane Nelsen—all of whom have continued to champion Dreikurs’ ideas.
What has been presented in this chapter, or any other single chapter, is not enough for you to run out, start using the abbreviated knowledge and skills, and expect to get results. There is no substitute for the original. Learn more about encouragement as a prime motivator, deterrents to encouragement, discipline as an educational process, classroom meetings, and logical consequences versus punishment. Buy Dreikurs’ books, borrow his books, read his books!

Dreikurs’ Social Discipline model, an extension of the ideas first proposed by Alfred Adler, the founder of Individual Psychology, has been the focus of much research—master’s theses, doctoral dissertations, books, and journal articles. A search of the Internet and any academic library will reveal such sources.

- To learn more about Rudolf Dreikurs and his ideas on classroom management, contact:
  The Adler School of Professional Psychology
  65 East Wacker Place, Suite 2100
  Chicago, IL 60601–7203
  Phone: (312) 201–5900

- Dreikurs’ ideas—for example, goals of misbehavior and natural/logical consequences—serve as the basis for the popular STET (Systematic Training for Effective Teaching) books, guides, and workshops. Further, the work of contemporary authors, such as Jane Nelsen of Positive Discipline fame (not the same as Jones’ Positive Discipline model) and Linda Albert of Cooperative Discipline fame, repackage Dreikurs’ ideas in their books and workshops. A summary of the works of these two Dreikurs-oriented authors appears in Chapter 10. Thus, although Dreikurs has died, his ideas are alive and well and still widely read.

- To learn more about STET programs, as well as Linda Albert’s Cooperative Discipline, contact:
  American Guidance Service
  5910 Rice Creek Parkway
  Shoreview, MI 55126
  Phone: (800) 321-3106
  www.agsglobe.com

- To learn more Jane Nelsen’s Positive Discipline, contact:
  Empowering People, Inc.
  P. O. Box 1926
  Orem, UT 84059-1926
  Phone: (800) 456-7770
  www.empoweringpeople.com
To contact Jane Nelsen for information on keynote lectures and workshops e-mail: jane@positivediscipline.com. (See if she has a demonstration school)

To learn more about Alfred Adler, contact:
The North American Society of Adlerian Psychology (NASAP)
614 Old West Chocolate Avenue
Hershey, PA 17033
Phone: (717) 579-8795
http://www.alfredadler.org

NASAP’s mission is to foster and promote the research, knowledge, training, and application of Adlerian Psychology, maintaining its principles and encouraging its growth. For an excellent summary of books (i.e., Adler, Dreikurs, Dinkmeyer, Albert, Nelson, and others), see http://www.alfredadler.org//NASAP_Books.htm.

Search popular Web sites such as www.Amazon.com to locate books written about Dreikurs’ model.

Search one or more of the many Internet Web sites using “Dreikurs,” “power struggles,” “goals of misbehavior,” “Linda Albert,” “Cooperative Discipline,” “Jane Nelsen,” “Positive Discipline,” “Alfred Adler,” and “logical and natural consequences,” among other terms, as keywords.

**TEST YOURSELF**

This is a sampling of the kinds of factual and open-ended questions that you should be able to answer after having read this chapter.

1. How would you classify Dreikurs’ views according to the four theoretical frameworks presented in Chapter 3?
2. Name two of Dreikurs’ books that outline his views on how to discipline children whether at home or in school?
3. What famous psychologist influenced Dreikurs’ views on discipline?
4. Identify, in order from least to most serious, the four goals of misbehavior identified by Dreikurs.
5. Children’s desire to pursue these goals of misbehavior is fueled by their need to meet what basic human need?
6. Which of the goals of misbehavior is associated with a teacher feeling “angry,” feeling his or her “authority has been threatened,” and feeling that it is time to “pull the child down off his or her high horse?”
7. Identify the typical, yet ineffective, ways that teachers usually respond to students seeking these four goals, and then identify the Dreikurs-recommended alternative teacher responses.

8. What feelings do adults experience with each of these four goals of misbehavior?

9. Of the three types of consequences identified by Dreikurs, which one is most preferred? Which is least preferred? Why?

10. What is another name for a “contrived consequence?”

11. Which of the two teacher-supplied consequences, praise or encouragement, is recommended by Dreikurs and his followers? Why?

12. What was the eye-opening result of the author’s research student’s library investigation regarding praise and encouragement?

13. Is “praise” a basic human need?

14. How realistic is the Dreikurs’ model, a model without punishment?

15. Create three “original” praise responses and three “original” encouragement responses that you might deliver to a student and explain how the statements differ.

16. Although Dreikurs is dead, what other authors have continued to promote and deliver his ideas to parents and teachers?

17. How democratic is Dreikurs’ model?

18. Do you see yourself using Dreikurs’ Social Discipline model in your classroom? Why?

ASK YOURSELF: IS THIS MODEL FOR YOU?

Although you would want to defer making any final decision until you read still more, at this point what are your feelings toward Dreikurs’ approach to discipline? What strengths and weaknesses do you see in his model? Does his approach to discipline reflect your fundamental views on how you believe people should be treated? Could you defend the use of this model to your students and their parents, to your colleagues, and to your administrators? Could you remain committed to his model—even when the going got tough? If you were to adopt his model, could you go to sleep at night and not feel that there simply has to be a better way to discipline? At this point, is Dreikurs’ approach for you?
William Glasser (1925–) is a board-certified psychiatrist and founder/president of the Institute for Reality Therapy which in 1996 was renamed The William Glasser Institute. He is best known for *Reality Therapy: A New Approach to Psychiatry* (1965), a book that describes a method of psychotherapy recognized worldwide. Reality Therapy operates on the premise that it is more important for the client to confront his or her inappropriate behavior by dealing with the present rather than dwelling upon the past. Glasser translated his Reality Therapy counseling techniques into
school-based procedures in his book *Schools without Failure* (1969). His recent interests have been in the application of *Choice Theory* (1998) and W. Edwards Deming’s definition of “quality” to schools and school curricula. Glasser continues to write and lecture on these ideas. His books have been translated into seven major languages.

You can learn more about his work by contacting The William Glasser Institute at (800) 899-0688 or using e-mail wginst@wglasser.com.

**OBJECTIVES**

This chapter will help you, among other things, to:

- Use the material presented on democracy in Chapter 2, weigh the degree to which Glasser’s model does or does not support democracy in a classroom.
- Classify, using the theoretical frameworks presented in Chapter 3, William Glasser’s Reality Therapy, Choice Theory, and Quality Schools model.
- Identify the steps in reality therapy.
- Identify the elements necessary for the school to be seen as a good place.
- Explain how classroom rules should be formed.
- Explain the concept of choice theory.
- Name the basic human needs as identified by Glasser.
- Explain how these basic human needs can be used as a basis for motivating students.
- Defend how learning is the key to meeting all human needs.
- Explain the concept of quality schools.
- Explore how Glasser’s model supports your vision of a democratic classroom.
- Explore whether Glasser’s Reality Therapy, Choice Theory, and Quality Schools model is for you.

**WHERE DOES GLASSER’S MODEL FALL WITHIN THE FOUR THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS IN CHAPTER 3?**

Glasser’s model clearly finds a place in French and Raven’s Social Bases of Power framework under “legitimate” power. It finds a home in Wolfgang and Glickman’s Schools of Thought framework as an “interactionalist” strategy. His position falls on the Rogerian side of the Skinner-Rogers’ dichotomy. In Lewis’ Keeping It Simple framework, Glasser’s model is equated with “manage” and “influence.”
INTRODUCTION

Recently, I met with a principal, and the subject of “Glasser” came up. He mentioned that a few weeks earlier he had traveled to Johnson City, New York, where he observed a school in which all the teachers had been trained in Glasser’s model. To put it mildly, he was impressed. This reinforced two ideas of mine. First, no book on classroom management would be complete without Glasser. Second, there is little that is new in the world of discipline. Glasser’s theories are as applicable now as they were twenty-five years ago when he introduced Reality Therapy to educators in *Schools without Failure*.

Of all the models presented in this book, none is recognized more often than is Glasser’s. Educators around the world recognize Glasser’s name and believe that they understand his model. Many state that they use his model, or at least use portions of it. Herein lies a major problem. Most educators do not fully understand Glasser’s ideas. Further, when they state that they use his model, or at least parts of it, they are not, in fact, using it at all. Like all of the major classroom management models, Glasser’s is meant to be used in its entirety, not piecemeal.

Glasser’s Reality Therapy, Choice Theory, and Quality Schools model provides a basis, in fact, a solid and very workable mechanism, for introducing democracy into today’s challenging classrooms. Wanting a democratic classroom is one thing, being able to create it is another thing. Glasser takes it from the “wanting” stage to the “reality” stage. His ideas are well worth a look by today’s educators.

The best way to present Glasser’s views is to highlight his work as it appears in several of his most influential books—*Schools without Failure* (1969), *Control Theory in the Classroom* (1986), *The Quality School: Managing Students without Coercion* (1990), *Choice Theory* (1998), *The Quality School Teacher* (1998), and *Every Student can Succeed* (2000). The first book applies Glasser’s Reality Therapy, as then practiced in the world of psychiatry, to school classrooms. It provides teachers with a specific set of skills to use in sharing the responsibility for problem resolution—a strategy new to the American educational scene. The latter three books concentrate more upon what the school, as a total entity, must do to help students better meet their needs.

SCHOOLS WITHOUT FAILURE

In *Schools without Failure*, Glasser introduced educators to his concept of Reality Therapy. Why is it called Reality Therapy? Most educators don’t know. Yet, to understand Reality Therapy, one first must understand the origin of
the name itself. Keep in mind that Glasser is a trained psychiatrist who, through the publication of his earlier book *Reality Therapy: A New Approach to Psychiatry* (1965), challenged the traditional psychoanalytic approach to helping clients. He reasoned that clients could do little if anything to change past events. Hence, there was no reason to concentrate upon solving previously unresolved conflicts—for example, relationships with a parent. Clients could, however, do something about their lives right now—that is the reality of the human condition. People can control their behavior; they can, if helped, make good (prosocial) choices.

**ELEMENTS OF REALITY THERAPY**

Glasser stresses in *Schools without Failure* that before introducing Reality Therapy, the school must first be a good and fair place (rule formation). After that prerequisite has been established, Reality Therapy may be put into motion. The steps include securing student involvement, identifying problem behavior, evaluating inappropriate behavior, planning new behavior, gaining commitment, accepting no excuses, and avoiding punishment. The core of Reality Therapy is that, regardless of what has happened to us in our lives, we can choose present and future behaviors that are likely to help us meet our needs more effectively.

**SCHOOL MUST BE A GOOD PLACE**

Before any classroom management strategy can be expected to succeed, students must first perceive school as a good place to be. The strategy of supplying time-out (for example, in-school suspension or removing students from the classroom and placing them in the hall) or removing a child from a rewarding situation works only if that child perceives his or her school/classroom experience to be rewarding.

Similarly, in Glasser’s model there is a shared responsibility between the teacher and the student. This acceptance of responsibility by students is far more likely to occur if they perceive school as a good place. Increased student choice is an outcome of increased student responsibility. A school that is a good place to be is, in fact, a school where students would normally choose, given alternatives, to be. They are getting their needs met. According to Gough (1987, p. 658), “Discipline problems do not occur in classrooms in which students’ needs are satisfied.”
Once students have chosen to be there, they have a stake in making their school an even better place to be. Students have less motivation to misbehave; there is less need for teachers to use strategies of classroom management.

What makes school a good place? “A good school could be defined as a place where almost all students believe that if they do some work, they will be able to satisfy their needs enough so that it makes sense to keep working” (Glasser, 1986, p. 15). It is one where students believe that they are important and that they have power. Both beliefs lead to increased self-esteem (Brandt, 1988, p. 39). More specifically, Glasser (1977, p. 61) describes a good school as a place where:

- People are courteous, especially the adults.
- One frequently hears laughter that springs from genuine joy brought about by involvement with caring people engaged in relevant work.
- Communication is practiced and not just preached. People talk with, not at, one another. Rules are formed together.
- Administrators actively support and participate in an approach to discipline that teaches self-responsibility.

**FORMING RULES**

Of the criteria listed above for making school a good place, the one referring to reasonable rules deserves further elaboration. It does so because it is the one criterion that educators are best able to use tangibly to share the responsibility for solving problem behaviors. Reasonable rules do not just happen; they come about as a result of reasonable people using reason. This process is as important as the sensible rules that emerge. The process, as Glasser views it, is one involving both students and teachers.

Specifically, what does Glasser say about rules? First, “Reasonable rules, firmly enforced through separation from the program (not punishment) . . . are a necessary part of helping students become responsible enough to take advantage of what is made available to them” (Glasser, 1969, p. 194). He believes that students should know the rules. Although ignorance of the law (rules) is no excuse for breaking the law, there is little to be lost and much to be gained by clearly displaying the school rules. And because sharing the school rules is so easy to do, it would be a shame if problem behaviors occurred simply because the student did not know his or her action was against the rules. Copies of the rules can be passed out, included in student handbooks, sent home to be shared with parents, displayed in individual classrooms,
and so on. Within reason, students should agree with the rules. The more reasonable the rule, the more likely the student will agree with it. What determines whether or not a rule is reasonable? Reasonable rules are those in which cause-and-effect relationships are clear. Walking in the halls (cause) is more likely to have students arrive safely to their next class (effect). On the other hand, running in the halls (cause) is more likely to result in accidents (effect). Such cause-and-effect relationships can easily be identified regarding activities such as throwing things, hitting other people, and taking turns to talk in class.

In fact, if you cannot show the existence of a cause-and-effect relationship for a rule, I would question the need for the rule in the first place. Without the logic of a cause-and-effect relationship, rules appear capricious, dictatorial, and unreasonable. Woe to the teacher or administrator who tries to make students obey unreasonable rules! You are doomed before you start. Further, in Glasser’s model, unreasonable anything, including rules, would interfere with students believing schools are good places to be.

There will be those cases where, in spite of explaining the cause-and-effect reason for a rule, some students still will not agree with it. So be it. You can do little more. Chances are that reasonable rules will prevail. Peer pressure, exerted by the masses of students convinced by the explained logic of the rules, will help convince some holdouts.

Students should also play a role in both forming the rules and, when necessary, changing the rules. Although it may be more expedient for teachers simply to form the rules themselves, type them, and distribute them, Glasser suggests teachers do otherwise. There is no doubt that students who have part “ownership” in a rule have more incentive to follow it. Ownership is obtained by helping to form the rules in the first place.

As an assignment, education majors of mine who are placed in sophomore-level field experiences in local schools ask their elementary students to participate in forming five or six rules that would help the classroom run more smoothly. Sure enough, these students come up with almost exactly the same rules that the teacher would have formed if he or she had created them. “Walk, don’t run,” “One person talks at a time,” “Keep one’s hands to oneself,” and “Be quiet when the teacher talks to another adult” are common favorites.

Of course, these elementary students are the products of prior years in school, complete with dictated rules, and as such would be expected to veer little in their rule formation. Still, when students help form the classroom rules, they do experience some degree of ownership. The rules are now partially their rules. Who wants to break something of their own? Not me. Not you. Not students.
STEPS IN REALITY THERAPY

Glasser's Reality Therapy carries more information than meets the eye. Reality Therapy is not a psychoanalytic-based approach to problem behaviors. Glasser is less interested in the experiences found in a child's past that might explain his or her problem behaviors than in having the child deal with the here and now—reality. The reality of a child's life, in or out of school, is that only in the present, not the past, can choices be made. He or she cannot do anything about the past; it is gone forever.

On the other hand, something can be done about the future, a point in one's life influenced by present choices. As a rational being, one can make tomorrow what one wants it to be. It depends upon the behaviors chosen now. Through a clearly defined set of steps, teachers can use Glasser's Reality Therapy to help create the facilitative and supportive environment necessary for children to embark upon a path of assuming increased responsibility for their own lives.

Glasser believes students are rational beings. They choose their behaviors. They can choose to be good, or they can choose to be bad. Teachers need to structure the environment to help students make better choices. Reality Therapy helps to provide this structure.

The steps in Reality Therapy read somewhat like a recipe in a cookbook. As with any recipe, the finished product—in this case, improved student behavior—will not turn out as you expect unless you follow all the steps.

**Step One: Secure Student Involvement—Be Personal**

When school is seen as a good place, in which teachers display warmth and caring behaviors toward students, such involvement is relatively easy to achieve.

**Step Two: Identify the Problem Behavior**

The mutual trust and personal involvement begun in step one continue when the teacher asks a student to identify his or her own misbehavior. Although it would be more expedient for the teacher to simply tell the student what he or she has done wrong, this would rob the student of the chance to take responsibility for the behaviors.

Deal only with the present, not with the past. Simply ask, in as caring a manner as possible, “John, what are you doing?” If he tries to distract you by telling what someone else did, say, “John, at this point I do not want to know what so-and-so did. I want to know what you are doing.” Keep at this
question, even to the point of sounding like a broken record. Avoid bringing up John’s history of past sins—his “rap sheet.” Don’t encourage John to give excuses for his misbehavior by asking him why he misbehaved.

Asking “why” implies that the reasons for the student’s misbehavior will help bring about change. In fact, the opposite is likely to occur. Concentrating upon why a child has misbehaved gives him or her a way to avoid change. “Gaining insight into the unconscious thinking that accompanies aberrant behavior is not an objective; excuses for deviant behavior are not accepted, and one’s history is not made more important than one’s present life” (Glasser, 1965, p. 32). Ginott (1969) describes another major drawback to asking “Why?” Often when a teacher asks “why,” as in “Why don’t you ever finish your work on time?” the teacher actually is conveying his or her disapproval or assigning blame to the student. In this situation, the teacher does not actually expect the child to answer the question. So, why ask the question in the first place?

We should be more interested in the responsible person we know the child can be and less concerned with the irresponsible person he or she was. “What are you doing?” not “Why are you doing it?” is the question to be asked. If it sounds incredible to expect a student to admit what he or she has done wrong, keep in mind two points. First, you have already set the stage for cooperation in step one by securing student involvement. Second, the main reason students avoid owning up to their misbehavior is fear that they will be punished. Step seven in Reality Therapy, “Don’t punish,” removes this roadblock to honesty.

As a little experiment, try asking a student on purpose “why” he misbehaved. Although you probably have done this many times before, this time you will be listening specifically for the child’s response. Listen for the child’s justification—what you will hear as his or her excuse—for the misbehavior. I predict that you will be rewarded with some very creative answers. Write them down; publish them. You could make a million!

**Step Three: Call for Value Judgments**

It would, of course, also be more expedient for the teacher to judge the misbehavior and tell the student exactly why this behavior is bad for him or her. But to do so would be counterproductive to students assuming greater responsibility for their actions.

The judgment sought in this step is a cause-and-effect, not a moral one. A student who is caught copying homework (cause) will not learn the material (effect). A child who constantly bothers other children in the classroom (cause) will interfere with their ability to study (effect). A student who throws stones
on the playground (cause) may cause a serious injury (effect). One chooses to
display or not to display misbehavior.

Moral judgments, on the other hand, connect a child’s misbehavior to
something about his or her character as a human being—something most of
us find difficult to change. A student who is caught copying homework is
labeled a cheat; a child who constantly bothers others is labeled as lacking
self-control; a child who throws stones on the playground is labeled a bully
or troublemaker.

When students understand the cause-and-effect relationship between what
they have done and what happens as a result, they are better able to come up
with a concrete plan (Glasser’s step four) for changing their behavior. Most
important, the more practice students have in evaluating their own behavior,
the more likely they are to internalize the value of changing their behavior. It
is this act of internalizing that equips students with the commitment to make
the change in behavior more lasting (Raffini, 1980, p. 103).

**Step Four: Plan a New Behavior**

By now, the strategy is clear—let students assume the primary responsibility
for their misbehavior and for developing a plan to change that behavior. The
teacher might ask, “Susan, what is your plan to make sure that this misbehavior
does not occur in the future?” For those students new to the responsibility of
planning new behaviors, a teacher might suggest a couple of plans and then
leave it to them either to choose one or to make an original plan of their own.
The key is that students choose; they start to take responsibility.

As students gain experience in planning new behaviors, the teacher will
have to make fewer suggestions. With experience comes confidence; with
experience and confidence comes an increased feeling of responsibility over
one’s life. Students make more good choices of behavior and fewer bad choices
of behavior.

Occasionally, a student will come along who you believe is simply unwilling
to take the responsibility for planning new behaviors. He might respond to
your request to do so by saying, “I can’t think of a plan.” The temptation
might be to give him one of yours and get the problem behavior settled. Don’t
give in to temptation. Instead, put the student in a time-out situation (such
as a safe, comfortable, but rather sterile corner of the room) and tell him
that he will remain there until he does formulate a plan. Alfie Kohn calls a
Glasser time-out experience, *restorative* time away, in contrast with the more
traditional behaviorist time-out that is *punitive*.

When the student comes up with a plan—and he will—acceptable to
both of you, he can rejoin the class. The student holds the key to when
he or she returns to class. This works, of course, only if you have relatively interesting lessons and exciting activities going on in the classroom, so that the misbehaving student would rather join in than remain in the time-out area.

As with much of what human beings tackle, the first time is the hardest. If we can get the misbehaving child to formulate one plan, even a simple plan as long as it works, we have set the stage for future student planning. Student planning is the basis for taking responsibility.

**Step Five: Get a Commitment**

Don’t overlook this simple, yet important step. Whether orally or in writing (the better choice), get a commitment. The sense of mutual trust that Reality Therapy is built upon increases the chance that plans for new behaviors will be carried out. After all, you “shook hands on it.”

**Step Six: Accept No Excuses**

Asking for excuses, encouraging excuses, listening to excuses, and accepting excuses are all counterproductive. Excuses deal with the past. For Glasser, the goal is to deal with the future. If a plan for new behavior is not working, then either it must be reexamined to see how it can be made to work, or a new plan must be constructed. Our sights are ever-forward—coming up with and successfully implementing a plan that does work. That is our collective goal. There is no place in Reality Therapy for accepting excuses.

**Step Seven: Don’t Punish**

Punishment lifts responsibility from the student’s shoulders. If a plan for new behavior is broken, it cannot be fixed by punishing the student. Punishment, or even the threat of punishment, destroys the warmth, trust, and feeling that school is a good place—all so necessary for Reality Therapy to work. Remember how important it is in step two, Identify the Problem Behavior, to have the student feel free of punishment in order to have him or her admit wrongdoing? Further, punishment is a contrived consequence that bears little relationship to the misbehavior.

Glasser is not saying that students should suffer no consequences for their misbehavior. He sees, as part of planning a new behavior, a place for supplying logical consequences—those that are a logical result of the misbehavior.
Step Eight: Never Give Up—Be Persistent

How long is never? You decide. Glasser (1977, p. 61) offers a good basic rule of thumb: “Hang in there longer than the student thinks you will.”

The steps in Reality Therapy might be summarized as follows:

- **Involvement.** Get into the student’s world. Create a positive, caring atmosphere.
- **Behavior.** What is the student doing? What does the student want? Focus on the present. Do not bring up past sins.
- **Evaluate.** Is what the student’s doing against the rules? Is it helping the student get what he or she wants?
- **Make a plan.** Make a plan that is simple, small, specific, independent, positive, immediate, repeatable, and revisable (if needed).
- **Commitment.** Document the plan. Have concerned parties sign it or shake hands on it.
- **Never accept excuses.** Did the plan work? If not, what is the student’s new plan?
- **Never, never punish.** Punishment addresses the past, something that can’t be changed. Reality Therapy addresses today and tomorrow. Allow natural and logical consequences to occur.
- **Never, never give up.** Make it clear that Reality Therapy is the only game in town.

**CHOICE THEORY IN THE CLASSROOM**

Glasser originally labeled Choice Theory as Control Theory. His reasoning was that the only persons we can control in our life are ourselves. The sooner one learns this message the better. Unfortunately, Control Theory, at first glance, appeared to be more behaviorist than humanist in nature. Nothing could have been further from the truth. Hence, Glasser’s recent renaming of Control Theory as Choice Theory.

**TEN AXIOMS OF CHOICE THEORY**

Effective practice, as stated in the title of this book, is based upon sound theory. Hence, putting Glasser’s Control Theory into practice is based upon an understanding and acceptance of the following ten axioms (http://www.wglasser.com/whatisct.htm, 2006):
• The only person whose behavior we can control is our own—all of our behavior is our best attempt to satisfy our needs.
• All we can give another person is information.
• All long-lasting psychological problems are relationship problems.
• The problem relationship is always part of our present life.
• What happened in the past has everything to do with what we are today, but we can only satisfy our basic needs right now and plan to continue satisfying them in the future.
• We can only satisfy our needs by satisfying the pictures in our Quality World.
• All we do is behave (act, not react).
• All behaviors are Total Behaviors and are made of four components: acting, thinking, feeling and physiology. We have direct control over acting and thinking components.
• We can only control our feeling and physiology components indirectly through how we choose to act and think.
• All Total Behavior is designated by verbs and named by the part that is most recognizable.

**BASIC HUMAN NEEDS DETERMINE OUR CHOICES**

Glasser argues that “at least half of all students are making little or no effort to learn because they don’t believe that school satisfies their needs” (Gough, 1987, p. 656). He has not, since, changed his mind. Hence, the emphasis of the first element in Glasser’s Choice Theory is needs.

Normally, in any discussion of needs, educators immediately think of Abraham Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs: physiological, safety and security, belonging, esteem, and self-actualization. Glasser, however, has his own hierarchy, one parallel to yet different from Maslow’s. See Erwin’s (2004) book, “The Classroom of Choice: Giving Students What They Need and Getting What You Want,” for an entire chapter devoted to each of Glasser’s needs. See Figure 8.1.

If you were in a school where your needs were being met, you would behave, too. After all, who would want to soil the very environment that allows these needs to be satisfied? I wouldn’t. Would you?

Glasser asserts that our behavior, even our misbehavior, is our best attempt to alter the external world to fit our perception of our internal need-satisfying world. Although we all possess the same five human needs, each of us fulfills them differently. We develop an inner picture album of our own quality world and move forward trying to make reality better fit that quality world.
Figure 8.1
Glasser’s Hierarchy of Needs

- Need to survive
  [i.e., air, water, food, shelter, sex]

- Need to belong
  [i.e., relationships, friendships, community, collaboration, intimacy]

- Need to be free and make choices
  [i.e., options, self-determination, freedom, liberty, autonomy, independence]

- Need for power and influence
  [i.e., competence, achievement, be listened to, competition (with self), recognition]

- Need to play and have fun
  [i.e., laughter, learning (learning is “fundamental”), pleasure, enjoyment]

My personal picture album, my definition of a quality world, includes the Florida Keys—fishing, diving for lobster, listening to music at Sloppy Joes in Key West. Ever since Key West entered my mind as a significant part of my quality world, I have spent much of my waking time trying to get my reality (then, working full time in the cold, snowy North) closer to my picture album of a quality world—the Keys. I take vacations in Keys, I eat key lime pie, I read everything that I can find on the Keys. I search the Internet for Key West Web sites. I review my finances to see if (when) I can move there. I talk about the Keys with anyone who will listen. And the list goes on and on.

Beyond the physiological need of survival and the psychological need of belonging, Glasser’s and Maslow’s hierarchies differ. Consistent with his belief that individuals are capable of making choices, Glasser cites such a need—the need to be free and make choices. He also cites as a basic human need, even for children, the need for power and influence. This need may be hard for some adults to acknowledge—harder still to accommodate. The last need is the need to play and have fun. Fun is, as Glasser asserts, nature’s reward for learning. Marano (2006) says “play—it’s by definition absorbing” (p. 96).
Do today’s schools provide sufficient avenues for students to meet their “choices,” “power,” and “fun” needs? Glasser would answer, “No, but they should—they must.” If schools don’t provide students socially acceptable ways of meeting these needs, come “h—” or high water, students will find ways of meeting them even if they have to resort to socially unacceptable ways of doing so. Hence, the emergence of discipline problems.

Students’ innate need for “choices,” “power,” and “fun,” once recognized and acknowledged by teachers, can be harnessed for use as a strong motivational tool. With appropriate and sufficient teacher direction (for example, structuring assignments), students can meet these three fundamental needs and learn, too. School, then, is perceived by students as helping, rather than thwarting, the meeting of these important needs.

Of these three needs, the one dealing with power raises the most eyebrows among educators steeped in the stimulus/response, behavior modification tradition. Yet power itself is neither good nor bad. “As a genetic need, it has no morality” (Glasser, 1986, p. 27). Like all needs, this need pushes us toward its fulfillment. In doing so, some students find themselves in conflict with the system. In those schools where appropriate avenues have not been provided for students to meet their needs, especially the need for power, inappropriate avenues will be found. Hence, discipline problems arise.

Glasser believes that “frustration of the need for power, even more than the need for belonging, is at the core of today’s difficulties, not only in school, but every place else in our society where there are problems” (Brandt, 1988, p. 40). Students in a situation where they are unable to say “I’m at least a little bit important” will not work very hard to preserve or improve that situation (Brandt, 1988). Would you?

One often overlooked avenue for fulfilling this need for power, as well as fulfilling the other needs, is addressed in Glasser’s *Reality Therapy* (1965). This avenue is through the use of groups or teams—the focus of his Learning-Team model. One need not look any further for an example of the importance of teams than the satisfaction most students experience in athletics, music (band, chorus), school government (model United Nations), drama, newspaper, and other team-related school efforts.

As social beings, we can gain a sense of belonging through the use of teams. The need for fun is also more satisfactorily met for most of us by doing things, even school-related tasks and assignments, together. School-related learning teams increase the opportunity for more people to exercise more choices—a Glasser need in and of itself—and thus experience more power and influence than is possible when working as individuals.
Most young people alone can exercise little power—either on the athletic or the academic field. A student’s power springs from the collective strength, talent, knowledge, and dedication of all team members. “Only individuals who are very exceptional can obtain a sense of power by themselves. The rest of us have to obtain a sense of power through membership in some sort of team” (Gough, 1987, p. 660). Teachers must begin to create more experiences centered around learning teams.

Together, Glasser’s needs can, and should, serve as the basis for real internal motivation on the part of learners. In the Performance Learning Systems’ course, Teaching through Learning Channels, these basic human needs are identified as “compelling whys’ for students—meaningful, personal reasons for wanting to learn” (Pruess, 1997, p. 3).

If it isn’t obvious so far that a need satisfying environment contributes to fewer discipline problems, let Glasser speak for himself. He says, “Creating a need-satisfying environment is what actually eliminates discipline problems.” Yep! The solution to discipline problems is just that simple. Visit one of his Glasser-designated Quality schools and see for yourself.

RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

Creating a school that is perceived by students as a “good place,” one where they not only get their needs met but that each day gets their real world closer to their vision of a Quality World, depends upon relationship building. Glasser identifies seven “caring” and seven “deadly” habits that, respectively, can help or hinder relationship building. These habits are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Seven Caring Habits</th>
<th>Seven Deadly Habits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supporting</td>
<td>Criticizing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouraging</td>
<td>Blaming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>Complaining</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accepting</td>
<td>Nagging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trusting</td>
<td>Threatening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respecting</td>
<td>Punishing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negotiating differences</td>
<td>Bribing or rewarding to control</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Take note of how the list of “Caring Habits” reflects the concept of democracy discussed in Chapter 2. Listening to, trusting, and respecting students, as well as negotiating with students, are all teacher behaviors found in democratic classrooms. On the contrary, no truly democratic classroom would find teachers who criticized, nagged, threatened, or punished.
WHAT CHOICES WE MAKE ARE INTERNALLY MOTIVATED

Nothing will change for the better until educators understand that the premise of Stimulus/Response theory—that human behavior is caused by external events—is wrong (Gough, 1987). Instead, Choice Theory holds that all human behavior is generated by what goes on inside the person. The outside world only supplies us with information. “We then choose to act on that information in the way we believe is best for us” (Gough, 1987, p. 656). As living creatures we never react; all we can do is act (Glasser, 1986). Our choices are guided by our perception of our unmet, important needs. Hence, the emphasis of the second element in Glasser’s Choice Theory is individual choice.

Many people still mistakenly believe that they are not in control of their own lives. Ask depressed-looking students why they are depressed and chances are high that their responses will suggest that somebody or something has done something that made them depressed. They have no choice but to be depressed. “My boyfriend dumped me,” “I did poorly on a math test,” “My mom and dad are fighting again.” Glasser would argue that people choose to be depressed. Perhaps it gives them an excuse for inaction; perhaps other people will feel sorry for them. Who knows for sure why they blame their predicament on other people or other things.

Glasser states that all behavior has four components: actions, thoughts, physiological reactions, and feelings. Although one can do little, directly, to control one’s feelings and physiological reactions, one can control the other two components—actions and thoughts. Pretend you are an automobile where your rear tires, respectively, are labeled feelings and physiological reactions. Now, pretend your front tires, the ones that steer the car, are labeled, respectively, actions and thoughts. The fact is that the tires that steer the automobile—the parts over which you have complete control—determine the overall direction the car takes.

In a real-life example, take the college student who did poorly on a math test and, as a result, returns to her room all alone, pulls down the shade to make it dark, and puts on some depressing music. When a friend comes to the door and asks if she would like to go out for pizza, the response is, “I’m too depressed to go out.” Chances are that these responses (actions and thoughts) will contribute to still further depression. On the other hand, the college student could have chosen the actions of going out for pizza, getting out into the warmth of the sunshine, and mingling with friends. The student also could have begun to think more positive thoughts such as, “Well, it was only the first of several math tests,” “I could make plans to see the math
tutor for help,” “I could put more effort and time into doing the homework problems.” Chances are that choosing these actions and these thoughts, just like the car’s front tires, would begin to steer the college student’s negative feelings and physiological reactions in a more positive direction!

**LEARNING: THE KEY FOR MEETING ALL BASIC HUMAN NEEDS**

What single activity in life best enables one to meet all of his or her basic human needs? The answer, and lucky for educators it is the answer, is learning and the acquired knowledge that results! Learning can, and most often does, lead to gaining knowledge and skills that, in addition to being personally rewarding, are salable on the job market. The diploma, the degree, the “sheepskin” awarded to successful learners can open many career-oriented doors that otherwise would remain closed. As a result, successful learners meet their need for safety and security. While learning, as argued earlier, the use of team-related activities helps one meet his or her need for belonging. This belonging need is further met throughout successful learners’ lives as they join organizations, companies, divisions, departments, project teams, and so forth. In my own life, my sense of belonging was reinforced when I received my chair as recognition of twenty-five years’ service to Pennsylvania State University. In a large way, I feel a sense of belonging to Penn State.

Learning also often results in the acquisition of power, the kind of power and influence, unlike simple physical power, that can last a lifetime. Everyone has heard the statement, “Knowledge is power.” No truer statement was ever uttered! The need to be free and make choices is definitely enhanced through learning. Successful learners have more freedom and more choices than unsuccessful learners. Where one lives, what job one secures, how rapidly one advances in the job, how successful one is in child-rearing, how good a school one’s child attends, how healthy one is (and stays), and more are all choices that are enhanced through learning. Finally, as the popular banner reading is fundamental proclaims, learning is (or at least it should be) fun. When one is learning something interesting, exciting, challenging, and useful, the time seems to fly by, little effort is needed, and one generally is self-motivated.

Think back over your own experiences. When have you ever had more fun than when you were actively learning something? Think of when you first learned to read, when you first learned about dinosaurs or King Arthur’s Knights of the Round Table, when you first learned to ride a bike or to snorkel,
when you first learned to use a computer or calculator, when you first learned to make something in shop or home economics, when you first watched a seed germinate or a baby chick be born in biology class, when you first learned about the sinking of the Titanic or about the struggle of minorities while listening to Martin Luther King’s inspirational “I Have a Dream” speech.

Truly, knowledge—both gaining it and using it—is a universal vehicle for meeting one’s needs! This message, starting with literally placing a banner stating this point above all classroom doorways, needs to be driven home to learners. Teachers should spend more time designing interesting and challenging lessons and less time trying to figure out how to use “carrot and stick” approaches to make students learn. Once students actually begin to believe that learning is the key to their meeting their needs, students will be self-motivated. Discipline problems will cease to exist, since people, including students, who find themselves in an environment where their basic human needs are being met have little time, energy, or inclination to misbehave. Why should they misbehave; why should they disturb an environment that is conducive to their meeting their needs? Learning, something much more productive, is a lot more enjoyable!

A brief postscript regarding one of Glasser’s identified needs is in order. Glasser argues that most animals seem to have a basic need to have fun. He cites nature programs showing the endless romping of lion cub siblings. Although the lion cubs appear simply to be having fun, they are, in fact, learning—watching their parents and practicing on each other how to bring down and kill prey.

Glasser goes on, though, to say that there is one animal that appears to have no basic need to have fun. That animal is the sea turtle. Before the reader begins to think that Dr. Glasser has become senile, consider the following. The mother sea turtle climbs up the beach, digs out a hole in the sand, deposits her eggs, and then disappears into the ocean. When the sea turtles hatch, there is no parent around to teach them anything; they are on their own. Baby sea turtles come into this world knowing all that they need to know. Therefore, they have no need to learn; hence, they have no need to have fun! Personally, I am glad that human beings must learn, otherwise life as we know it would be very, very boring.

The reader should be cautioned that not all educators believe that learning should be fun. Jago (2000) believes that educators have gone wrong in promoting the idea that learning is fun. The author argues that what follows from this faulty premise is the assumption that anything that isn’t fun is not worth completing. But, students exercising Choice Theory in a Glasser Quality School understand that although every second of learning might not be
fun, the learning they are being asked to undertake holds promise for helping them turn their reality into their Quality World. Hence, they are more than willing to do things, study things, and learn things that at the moment might not be full of fun, with the expectation that in doing so they soon will reap the fun-related benefits.

**WHAT DEFINES A QUALITY SCHOOL?**

Glasser encourages schools, at least those schools that incorporate his theories, to declare themselves as a Quality School. Characteristics of a Quality School include:

- Relationships are based on the democratic principles of trust and mutual respect, and ongoing discipline problems (not necessarily individual incidents) are nonexistent.
- Measurable continuous improvement is sought. Competence is stressed, as is self-evaluation. Any evaluation below competence, or what now is judged as a “B,” has been eliminated. Student failure is not permitted.
- All students do some Quality Work each year that is judged significantly beyond competence. This work receives a grade of “A” or higher.
- Educators, students, and parents, alike, perceive school as a joyful place where they like to be.
- Students know and actively use Choice Theory, both at school and in their personal lives, thus eliminating the need to control one another.
- Students do better on state and national tests.

**THE QUALITY SCHOOL: MANAGING STUDENTS WITHOUT COERCION**

Glasser’s most recent book builds upon the work of W. Edwards Deming, the man who has taught countless managers. It was Deming who, with the aid of the MacArthur government after World War II, taught the Japanese to achieve high quality at low cost (Aquayo, 1990). Deming proceeded to teach the Japanese the same effective methods that American managers rejected—primarily to establish a trusting relationship between managers and workers.

The Japanese learned well. They now threaten the American auto industry, have captured the motorcycle market (except for Harley-Davidson and
BMW), and dominate the electronics field. Only recently have we fought back. American automakers now aim for producing a quality product that equals the public's perception of that of a Toyota or Honda. Glasser believes that schools must also fight back. They must become Quality Schools.

To fight back, American schools must have leaders who are dedicated to quality. Remarkable parallels exist between the American manufacturers who ignored Deming when he suggested that they make quality their number one priority after World War II and today's school managers who seem unconcerned that only a few students in any school do what we—or even they—would call high-quality work (Glasser, 1991). Doing enough simply to “get through” never was enough for students, teachers, or administrators.

Glasser (1990, p. 3) explains that “Dr. Deming's ideas can be brought undistorted into our schools so that the present elitist system, in which just a few students are involved in high-quality work, will be replaced by a system in which almost all students have this experience.” Creating a Quality School consists, in large part, of school leaders (from state superintendents to teachers) moving from coercive “boss-managing” to noncoercive “lead-managing.” To do so successfully, schools must create (teach) a quality curriculum (Glasser, 1992).

Reduced to its essentials, boss-managing contains four elements:

- The boss sets the task and the standards for what the workers (students) are to do, usually without consulting the workers. Bosses do not compromise.
- The boss usually tells, rather than shows, the workers how the work is to be done. Rarely is worker input solicited.
- The boss, or some designee, inspects (grades) the work. Workers tend to do just enough to make an acceptable “grade.”
- When workers resist, the boss uses punishment (coercion) almost exclusively to try to make them do as they are told. An us-against-them, adversarial relationship develops (Glasser, 1990).

Lead-managing, the needed reform suggested by Glasser, contrasts point by point with boss-managing. Lead-managing contains four basic components:

- The leader engages the workers in discussion about the quality of work and makes an effort to fit the job to the needs of the workers.
- The leader models the job to be done and solicits suggestions for improvement.
- The leader asks the workers to inspect and evaluate their own work.
• The leader is a facilitator, providing workers with the tools and a supportive (noncoercive), nonadversarial atmosphere to get the job done (Glasser, 1990).

The crucial difference between these two managerial styles lies in an understanding of how people, workers or students, are motivated. Boss-managers continue to believe that motivation is something one does to another person: workers must be made to work—often through the use of coercion. Lead-managers hold a different view. They believe that people have innate needs that can be met if a facilitating environment exists. In doing so, these people will engage in productive, as well as prosocial, behavior. Discipline problems, as we know them, would be minimized.

Glasser’s preferred lead-manager style addresses how we treat others. What we teach them, too, is important. “Workers will not work hard unless they believe there is quality in what they are asked to do” (Glasser, 1990, p. 89). Hence, a Quality School requires a quality curriculum. Among the many Glasser ingredients for a Quality School is an emphasis upon useful skills, not on information simply committed to memory. Students are asked to demonstrate how what they have learned will be used in their lives, now or later. There is a greater emphasis upon writing than upon reading. The former guarantees the latter—the reverse is not true.

A Quality School (teachers) will not accept low-quality work from any student. Students set their own ever-increasing standards for quality in the same fashion that an athlete continues to try to better his or her standing record. Effective teaching, perhaps in the mold of Jaime Escalante in the film Stand and Deliver, would exist. According to Glasser (1991), a Quality School would probably look much like the public schools in Johnson City, New York. We simply need more of them.

A TREASURE CHEST: REWARDS WITHOUT STRINGS ATTACHED

My students often ask “What is so wrong with rewards?” I say “Nothing, if delivered in a humanistic way.” They follow up by asking, “What would be an example?” I tell them about a teacher’s use of a treasure chest.

Specifically, I tell them:

• Buy an inexpensive Styrofoam cooler, one that is shaped sort of like a pirate’s treasure chest.
Paint (or simply use magic markers) the chest so that it looks like an old-time treasure chest—hinges, crusty sides, skull, and crossbones.

Fill the chest with inexpensive “student-desired” rewards such as scratch and sniff stickers, pencils, and erasers.

Place the treasure chest off to the side of the classroom.

Tell the students that you don’t believe in handing out rewards, and even if you did, you don’t have the time and energy to do the job. But, you understand that they are used to receiving rewards and it would be unfair to cut off their rewards cold-turkey.

Instruct the students that whenever they feel they deserve a reward, they may go (except when you are teaching) to the treasure chest and take a reward—or for that matter take a whole handful of them.

What will happen is that for the first week you may be required to fill the “treasure chest” several times. But, soon students will become satiated with these external rewards and no longer desire them. In a relatively short time, you will have weaned the entire class off of their “need,” really “expectations,” for rewards.

**HOW DOES DEMOCRACY FIT IN GLASSER’S MODEL?**

Keeping in mind what you learned in Chapter 2, Democracy and Discipline, how would adopting Glasser’s Reality Therapy, Choice Theory, and Quality Schools model fit with your perception of a democratic classroom? It is important to address this question whether or not you adopt his model. Because you will not teach in a vacuum, you must be prepared to defend your own choice of a discipline model and challenge models proposed or used by others. A sound basis for a defense or a challenge is that of how a model impacts democracy in the classroom.

**PROs AND CONs OF GLASSER’S MODEL**

As you study each discipline model you need to identify their respective PROs and CONs. In the space below, identify the PROS on the left side and the CONs on the right side. Your listing of the PROs and CONs should help you decide which is the best discipline model for you and your students! You may want to compare your PROs and CONs with those listed in Appendix I.
LEARNING MORE ABOUT GLASSER’S REALITY THERAPY, CHOICE THEORY, AND QUALITY SCHOOLS MODEL

Are you interested in Glasser’s model? Are you ready to try some of his techniques? If you are, be sure first to consult several of his original sources. What has been presented in this chapter, or any other single chapter, is not enough for you to run out, start using the abbreviated knowledge and skills, and expect to get results. There is no substitute for the original. Learn more about the differences between Reality Therapy and conventional therapy, the needs that drive us all, why Control Theory was changed to Choice Theory, how all motivation comes from within, learning teams, and boss versus lead management. Buy Glasser’s books, borrow his books, read his books.

Glasser’s writings have been the focus of much research—master’s theses, doctoral dissertations, journal articles, and books. Several of these resources can be found in the reference section of this text. They include, The Control Theory Manager (1994), “A new look at school failure and school success” (1997), “The theory of choice” (1996), “Quality: The key to discipline” (1989), and The Glasser Quality School: A New Approach to Character Education (2003). A search of the Internet and any academic library will reveal still more such sources, some by Glasser, others written about his model.

- To learn more about William Glasser and his ideas on classroom management, contact:
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• Search popular Web sites such as www.Amazon.com to locate books written about Glasser's model.
• Search one or more of the many Internet Web sites using “William Glasser,” “reality therapy,” “control theory,” “choice theory,” and “quality schools,” among other terms, as keywords.
• Subscribe to the *International Journal of Choice Theory* by contacting the editor, at ChoiceTheoryJournal@gmail.com or by contacting the William Glasser Institute.
• Subscribe to the *Journal of Reality Therapy* by contacting the editor at journalofrealitytherapy.com. This journal would be a fine addition to an institution's professional or an educator's personal library.

To whet your appetite, I have included the titles of several articles published in the *International Journal of Reality Therapy*.


**TEST YOURSELF**

This is a sampling of the kinds of factual and open-ended questions that you should be able to answer after having read this chapter.

1. How would you classify Glasser’s views according to the four theoretical frameworks presented in Chapter 3?
2. Give the title of three of Glasser’s books that outline his views on how to discipline children.

3. What are the three elements necessary for school to be seen as a “good place”?

4. How would Glasser’s method of forming classroom rules differ from Dobson’s or the Canters’ method of forming classroom rules?

5. What is so unique about “Step Two: Identify the Problem Behavior” as it exists within Glasser’s Reality Therapy?

6. What is so unique about “Step Four: Plan a New Behavior” as it exists within Glasser’s Reality Therapy?

7. What step in Glasser’s Reality Therapy is most difficult for more traditional teachers to accept? Why?

8. What is Glasser’s current nomenclature (i.e., name) for Control Theory? Why the change?

9. Which of Glasser’s basic human needs raises the most eyebrows among educators steeped in the stimulus/response, behavior modification, tradition? Why?

10. Glasser’s Choice Theory holds that all human behavior is generated by what goes on _______ the person. Supply the missing word and explain how his view is diametrically opposed to the views held by behaviorists.

11. Explain how “learning” can be the vehicle for students meeting all of their basic human needs.

12. Contrast boss-managing with lead-managing as it applies to the organization and supervision of a classroom.

13. Glasser cites what person from industry as his model for developing the Quality School?

14. Do you see yourself using Glasser’s Reality Therapy in your classroom? Why?

15. Offer a reaction to the belief that “failure is not permitted in a Glasser Quality School!”

16. How democratic is Glasser’s model?

17. How does a “treasure chest” filled with rewards fit with a Glasser model, one that does not believe in dispensing rewards?

18. Explain how you would translate Glasser’s Choice Theory into the design and operation of your classroom.

ASK YOURSELF: IS THIS MODEL FOR YOU?

Although you would want to defer making any final decision until you read still more, at this point what are your feelings toward Glasser’s approach to discipline? What strengths and weaknesses do you see in his model? Does
his approach to discipline reflect your fundamental views on how you believe people should be treated? Could you defend the use of this model to your students and their parents, to your colleagues, and to your administrators? Could you remain committed to his model—even when the going got tough? If you were to adopt his model, could you go to sleep at night and not feel that there simply has to be a better way to discipline? At this point, is Glasser’s approach for you?
A licensed clinical psychologist, Thomas Gordon (1918–2002) has served on the faculty of the University of Chicago and is the founder and president of Effectiveness Training, an education corporation that operates a network of professionals (I was one of them) in thirty-one countries offering training programs in conflict-resolution and relationship building for parents, teachers, administrators, and leaders in business, industry, and organizations of every type. Thomas Gordon’s master’s thesis advisor at Ohio State University was Carl R. Rogers—hence the Rogerian influence shown in
his work. Gordon’s book *Parent Effectiveness Training* (2000), has sold more than four million copies in thirty-three languages. His other books, including *Teacher Effectiveness Training* (2003), *Leader Effectiveness Training* (2001), and *Sales Effectiveness Training* (Zaiss and Gordon 1993), apply his Effectiveness Training model to targeted audiences.


As part of his system, he advocates that parents and teachers use nonjudgmental “active listening” to facilitate others meeting their needs, and to use nonaccusatory “I-Messages” instead of “You-Messages.”

**OBJECTIVES**

This chapter will help you, among other things, to:

- Use the material presented on democracy in Chapter 2, weigh the degree to which Gordon’s model does or does not support democracy in a classroom.
- Classify, using the theoretical frameworks presented in Chapter 3, Thomas Gordon’s Effectiveness Training model.
- Identify the parts of a T.E.T. Rectangle.
- Identify how the T.E.T. Rectangle is used as the basis for selecting appropriate teacher responses.
- Explain the concept of problem ownership.
- Identify the twelve roadblocks to communication.
- Identify alternatives to roadblocks.
- Define the concept of active listening.
- Identify the three parts of a properly stated I-message.
- Explain the differences between a Canter-type and Gordon-type I-message.
- Identify the steps in Gordon’s conflict resolution or win/win skill.
- Explore how Gordon’s model supports your vision of a democratic classroom.
- Explore whether Gordon’s Effectiveness Training model is for you.
WHERE DOES GORDON’S MODEL FALL WITHIN THE FOUR THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS IN CHAPTER 3?

Gordon’s Teacher/Parent Effectiveness Training model clearly finds a place in French and Raven’s Social Bases of Power framework under “referent” power. It finds a home in Wolfgang and Glickman’s Schools of Thought Framework as a noninterventionist strategy. Gordon’s position most clearly reflects the Rogerian view within the Skinner-Rogers’ dichotomy. In Lewis’s Keeping It Simple framework, his views are equated with “influence.”

A CREDO

If you solve the relationship problem, you solve the misbehavior problem. A good way to set the tone for Gordon’s suggested way of interacting with other people, including schoolchildren is to review his Credo. When you first read the Credo you may be thinking, “This all sounds fine, but how can one carry it all off in real life?” But, as you read this chapter, the “how” should become more clear. You should note that, like all humanists, the power of relationship building is stressed—in fact, it is mentioned in the very first line of the Credo.

A Credo

You and I are in a relationship which I value and want to keep. Yet, each of us is a separate person with unique needs and the right to meet those needs.

When you are having problems meeting your needs, I will listen with genuine acceptance so as to facilitate your finding your own solutions instead of depending on mine. I also will respect your right to choose your own beliefs and develop your own values, different though they may be from mine.

However, when your behavior interferes with what I must do to get my own needs met, I will tell you openly and honestly how your behavior affects me, trusting that you respect my needs and feeling enough to try to change the behavior that is unacceptable to me. Also, whenever some behavior of mine is unacceptable to you, I hope you will tell me openly and honestly so I can change my behavior.

At those times when one of us cannot change to meet the other’s needs, let us acknowledge that we have a conflict and commit ourselves to resolve each such conflict without either of us resorting to the use of power to win at the expense of the other losing. I respect your needs, but I also must respect my own. So let us always strive to search for a solution that will be acceptable to both of us. Your needs will be met, and so will mine—neither will lose, both will win.
In this way, you can continue to develop as a person through satisfying your needs, and so can I. Thus, ours can be a healthy relationship in which both of us can strive to become what we are capable of being. And we can continue to relate to each other with mutual respect, love and peace. (Thomas Gordon, Ph.D.: Founder and President; Effectiveness Training, Inc.)

**TWO COMMON PROBLEMS**

Two interpersonal communication problems regularly occur in the classroom: how to respond when a student “owns” a problem, and how to respond when the teacher “owns” a problem. In the first case, the student’s behavior is acceptable to the teacher; it does not interfere with the teacher’s meeting his or her needs. In the second case, the student’s behavior is not acceptable to the teacher; it interferes with the teacher’s meeting his or her needs. Different, yet precise, responding skills are required in each case. Gordon’s Teacher Effectiveness Training gives teachers a model to which they can refer to help them decide which skill to use and when.

**T.E.T.: SOME BACKGROUND**

“Effectiveness Training” is a communication model that translates a humanistic ideology into a complete and consistent set of practical skills.

Gordon first described the model in his book *Parent Effectiveness Training* (1970, now 2000), followed by *Teacher Effectiveness Training* (1974, now 2003) and *Leader Effectiveness Training* (1977, now 2001). The general applicability of the model, including his *Sales Effectiveness Training* (Zaiss & Gordon, 1993) exists because of the similarities in all interpersonal relationships and the corresponding need for communication skills, whether the relationship is one between parent and child, teacher and student, or manager and employee. The Effectiveness Training model describes the process of communication between two people.

**THE T.E.T. RECTANGLE**

The Teacher Effectiveness Training model is best represented by a rectangle or window through which one views the behaviors of all other people (see Figure 9.1). The top part of the window depicts behaviors of the other person (student or teacher) that you find “acceptable”; the bottom part of
the rectangle depicts behaviors that you find “unacceptable.” The user of the model must first decide whether the other person’s behaviors are acceptable or unacceptable.

According to Gordon, “acceptable” means that the other person’s behavior does not interfere with your meeting your needs. It does not mean that you give
your blessing to the behavior or that you necessarily wish it would continue. “Unacceptable” means that the other person’s behavior does interfere with your meeting your needs. It does not mean that you find the behavior to be repugnant or immoral; you would just like it stopped.

We normally have little difficulty identifying examples of both categories of behaviors. The dividing line separating the acceptable from unacceptable is fluid; it moves up and down. Self, Others, and Environment all affect the line’s movement. There are days when you (Self) feel especially good, when all is going well; you judge many behaviors of the other person to be acceptable. On those days when, for whatever reason, you don’t feel so good, the line moves up; you judge far fewer behaviors to be acceptable and many more to be unacceptable.

Others themselves influence the line. Teachers are simply more or less accepting of some students than of others. It is not being unprofessional; it is simply being human. It could be how Others dress, act, respond in class, or attend to personal hygiene that causes teachers to be more or less accepting of their behaviors. Reasons aside, the fact is that it happens. We cannot be equally accepting all the time of all of our students (or bosses, friends, peers). It would be a superhuman task to do so.

Finally, the Environment in which the Other’s behavior occurs influences whether or not we will find it acceptable. An acceptable student behavior that occurs when the principal is not present may suddenly be judged unacceptable when the principal walks into the classroom.

It is crucial to use the T.E.T. rectangle to decide first whether the other person’s behavior is acceptable or unacceptable. Gordon identifies one responding skill for the former and several for the latter. Proficiently applied, the best of responding skills are of little value if the circumstances surrounding the situation do not warrant that particular response. The responding skill must be congruent with the initial acceptable-unacceptable decision.

An acceptable behavior may or may not warrant a responding skill. When the other person’s behavior is deemed acceptable and he or she shows no sign of experiencing a problem, then no responding skill is necessary. It is in this part of the model that maximum student learning can take place. The goal of the T.E.T. model is to enlarge this “No Problem” area.

On the other hand, when the other person’s behavior is deemed acceptable but it is obvious that he or she is experiencing a problem, a responding skill is necessary. Although people may not come right out and say they are experiencing a problem, they often give verbal or nonverbal signals that such is the case. People experiencing a problem act atypically. They may cry, sulk, scream, give curt responses, express feelings of sadness, bitterness, disappointment, frustration—and more. All of these, if they represent unusual behaviors for him or her, are cues that the person is experiencing a problem.
Here we have a situation in which you can accept the other person’s behavior (he does have the right to cry, to be disappointed, doesn’t he?), but you want to facilitate his solving his problem. Remember, he owns the problem; it belongs to him. Don’t steal it!

**PRACTICE WITH “OTHER OWNS THE PROBLEM” SITUATIONS**

In the following situations, assume that you accept the other person’s behavior, that what he or she is saying or doing does not tangibly interfere with your meeting your needs. At the same time, it is obvious the other person is experiencing a problem. You want to help. What would you say in response to the following personal problems? (Some suggested responses appear later.)

- You are eating lunch in the faculty room. Mr. Sivarajah, a fellow teacher, comes up to you and says, “Nothing I do with my students seems to work. I’m not sure I’m cut out to be a teacher. What do you think?”

- You have a primary student named Rebecca who usually works extra hard to overcome her lack of natural ability in mathematics. When you ask her why she is not working on her math assignment, she responds by saying, “This work is too hard. I can’t do it. I am just too stupid!”

If you are like most people, despite good intentions, you would probably respond with what Gordon calls “roadblocks to communication.” Their net effect is to close off the very communication you want to enhance, that which could help the other person come to grips with, and possibly solve, his or her problem. Roadblocks not only cause the other person to want to escape your presence, they also make it less likely he or she will seek you out as a listener the next time a problem occurs.

**ROADBLOCKS TO COMMUNICATION**

There are twelve roadblocks to communication:

1. Ordering, directing
   (“You must . . .” “You have to . . .” “If you know what is good for you . . .”)

2. Admonishing, threatening
   (“You had better . . .” “If you don’t, then . . .”)

3. Moralizing, preaching
   (“You should . . .” “You ought . . .” “A good student would . . .”)

4. Advising, giving solutions
   (“What I would do is . . .” “Let me suggest . . .” “Why don’t you . . .”)
5. Lecturing, giving logical arguments
   (“The facts are . . .” “Yes, but . . .” “Don’t you realize . . .”)

6. Judging, criticizing
   (“Have you lost your marbles . . .” “You are acting foolishly . . .”)

7. Praising, agreeing, me-tooing
   (“You are absolutely right . . .” “The same thing happened to me . . .”)

8. Ridiculing, shaming
   (“That is a dumb attitude . . .” “You are just talking silly . . .”)

9. Analyzing, diagnosing
   (“I know why you are upset, you are just . . .” “Your problem is . . .”)

10. Sympathizing, consoling
    (“Don’t worry, I know how you feel . . .” “You’ll feel better tomorrow . . .”)

11. Probing, questioning, interrogating

12. Withdrawing, humoring
    (“Let’s talk about it later . . .” “Say, have you heard the one about . . .”)

Several response categories sound as if they would be obvious roadblocks (for instance, “threatening,” “criticizing,” and “ridiculing”), while other response categories (such as “praising,” “advising or giving solutions,” and “consoling”) seem, at least at first glance, to be quite appropriate ways of responding. Let’s examine further some of these seemingly appropriate response categories.

**Advising or giving solutions**

When another person owns a problem, avoid giving advice or solutions. How committed to your solution of his or her problem do you expect the other person will be? Not very. If your solution does not work, who takes the blame? You do. After all, it was your solution. If the solution actually does work, how does the person who had the problem feel? Initially, relieved, but later, perhaps a little humiliated. Why? If the other person had been given the chance to talk out the problem, he or she may also have come up with a solution—maybe even a better one than yours.

Do we so readily offer solutions because it makes us, as the solution-giver, feel good? Do we feel that unless we offer solutions, we haven’t been of any help? Do we offer solutions because we do not have enough faith in the other person’s ability to come up with his or her own? If we keep handing people solutions, when, if ever, will they develop the confidence to solve their own problems?
Underlying our temptation to give solutions is a feeling that good teachers or good parents are supposed to lift problems off their charges’ shoulders. But when we do for others what they (if given the chance) can do for themselves, we hurt them, not help them. When someone asks for your opinion or solution, do not be so ready to give it. The person with the problem who says, “What do you think I should do?” or “What would you do in my place?” may not really want you to answer. Often, such statements are just an awkward way to end, for the moment, what he or she has to say and turn the dialogue over to you, the listener. Don’t respond by telling the person what you would do in his or her situation. You are not in that situation!

Further, responding with a solution to the person’s problem assumes that the words he or she has used adequately reveal the real, often underlying problem being faced. The real problem may not surface until much later in the dialogue. For instance, if a person says, “I am so mad at him, I could kill him,” do we really believe his words? Do we actually think he is contemplating murder? Or do we take his words as simply a signal of some other problem that he has not revealed?

Because giving advice or offering solutions is so often volunteered by well intentioned parents and teachers, the following quotations are offered.

- Advice! Fools won’t heed it. Wise men don’t need it! (anonymous)
- I have found the best way to give advice to your children is to find out what they want and then advise them to do it. (Harry S Truman)
- Advice is what we ask for when we already know the answer but wish we didn’t. (Erica Jong)
- The only thing to do with good advice is pass it on. It is never any use to oneself. (Oscar Wilde)
- Advice is one of those things it is far more blessed to give than receive. (Carolyn Wells)
- Too bad that all the people who have the best advice are busy driving taxi cabs and cutting hair. (George Burns)
- Good advice is always certain to be ignored, but that’s no reason not to give it. (Agatha Christie)
- Never play cards with any man named “Doc.” Never eat at any place called “Mom’s.” (Nelson Algren)
- I owe my success to having listened respectfully to the very best advice, and then going away and doing the exact opposite. (G. K. Chesterton)

Don’t be surprised if the last quotation by Chesterton happens a lot! Don’t take it personally.
Probing, Questioning, or Interrogating

Another roadblock is “probing,” “questioning,” or “interrogating.” Although probing and interrogating seem inherently inappropriate, what could be wrong with questioning? The moment you ask a question, the person who owns the problem must typically answer your question. This is especially true in schools where students have been conditioned to answer when teachers ask. By asking questions, you take control of the conversation. Chances are, once started you will ask questions until you have enough information to offer your solution. Note the number of references to “you(r)” in the preceding sentence. Can parents and teachers know just the right question to ask out of the thousands that could be asked? How are they able to select that question based on just a sentence or two from the person who owns the problem? Even trained clinical psychologists would not act on such little information.

Analyzing or Diagnosing

“Analyzing” or “diagnosing” is another roadblock to communication when a teacher responds to a student who owns a problem. This is a Catch-22 situation. If the teacher’s analysis or diagnosis is incorrect, the student feels as if the teacher has not really listened at all; if the analysis or diagnosis is correct, the student may feel exposed. He may not be ready to handle the fact that someone else has him figured out even before he himself has.

Lecturing, Giving Logical Arguments

Finally, “lecturing and giving logical arguments” is rarely successful in changing a child’s behavior. Do you remember the arguments delivered by your teachers that said something to the effect, “Now you know students who graduate from high school earn “X” amount more in income than those who drop out.” How many students do you think this statement, alone, persuaded to stay in school? Although what the teachers were saying was absolutely true (i.e., logically sound), it is almost impossible to use logic to counter someone’s feelings, emotions, or attitudes. This is why Gordon’s model presents skills to deal with feelings—the students’ and the teachers’!

ALTERNATIVES TO ROADBLOCKS

At this point some readers may feel a little guilty, for it is all too easy to remember times when we have responded with roadblocks to communication.
But if not roadblocks, what then? Gordon suggests “silence,” “noncommittal responses,” “door openers,” and, finally, “active listening.”

To keep communication lines open, attentive silence often works. Body posture and eye contact show the person with the problem that you are tuned in, yet silence leaves him or her with the responsibility to continue. Both the pressure and the respect that silence displays convey a faith in the other person’s own problem-solving ability.

Noncommittal responses are simply grunts of one sort or another that, if properly delivered, convey that the listener is not only tuned in to the sender’s problem, but tuned in to the intensity of the problem. “Oh,” “My gosh,” “You don’t say,” “I see,” and “No fooling” are all powerful ways to interact with a sender while simultaneously avoiding any roadblocks to communication. Selecting the proper noncommittal response demonstrates that you are in tune with the intensity of the sender’s feelings. A response such as “No fooling” may be appropriate for a child who tells you he got drenched on the way to school, but inappropriate for the high school student sobbing that she just bombed on her College Board exams.

Door-openers are fairly straightforward. “Do you want to talk about it?” and “Let’s hear more of what you have to say” convey the message that you are ready and willing to listen to whatever the sender wants to say about his problem. If he chooses not to talk, so be it. It is his problem; he has the right to talk about it or not talk about it. If he doesn’t take you up on your offer, have you failed him? No. What you have done with the door-opener is let him know that you are ready now, and probably are the kind of person who will be ready in the future, to listen to him. A door-opener that is not immediately taken advantage of when given still has the benefit of setting a positive foundation for the future.

Active listening is even more effective than silence, noncommittal responses, or door-openers. It is, in theory, the same as Carl Rogers’ Reflective Listening—listening to the client (student) and mirroring the message and feelings behind the message for his or her immediate confirmation. If this form of response seems unusual, remember that it is not at all uncommon for people seeking professional help with their personal problems to pay hard-earned money to a counselor who does little else but listen! Listening, especially active listening, is therapeutic.

Figure 9.2 diagrams the active listening process. In the diagram, the student is experiencing strong feelings that are debilitating to his or her moving on with the everyday demands of life. The teacher’s job, acting in the role of a Rogerian-type facilitator, is to help the child understand the underlying feelings he or she is experiencing. Strange as it may seem, teachers should not necessarily believe the student’s actual words. Words are a code, often a poor
Figure 9.2
Decoding the Feelings-Oriented Message behind the Student’s Words

Student’s actual words:
“These problems are too hard. I don’t see why we have to do math anyhow!”

Teacher’s Active Listening response:
“Wow. It sounds as if you feel overwhelmed by this assignment?”

Code, used to convey an underlying message—one usually rooted in strong feelings.
Consider the following statement:
The problem with the problem is not the problem. The problem with the problem, are the strong debilitating feelings surrounding the problem. That is the problem!

Is this just some sort of tongue-twister? Nope! For instance, two students, both juniors in high school, could have basically earned the same relatively low Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT) scores. The first person could feel devastated, discouraged, and reluctant to ever take them again—all but ruling out going to college. The second person could feel that although he or she wishes the score had been higher, there is not much that can be done about it now except to buckle down and prepare better for the SATs that will be offered during his or her senior year. Hence, very different feelings can surround the exact same problem. It is these feelings that must be addressed. Gordon’s model does just this. In effect, the feelings surrounding a problem are often more important to address than the actual problem itself (i.e., feeling overwhelmed by the demands of schoolwork, feeling scared because your parents have been fighting, feeling embarrassed because you did not make the basketball team and you had been bragging that you would).

Active listening operates like the sounding board of a guitar. The hollow box of the guitar makes no sound of its own. Its sole job is to amplify the faint sounds of the plucked strings so that they can be heard. Active listening, too, amplifies. It helps amplify the feelings—sometimes quite faint—of the person who owns the problem so that he or she can “hear” them better.
An active listener should respond by using emphatic leads. Gazda et al. (1995) categorize such leads as visual (“Looks as if you . . .,” “From your point of view . . .”), auditory (“As I hear it, you . . .,” “What you seem to be saying is . . .”), olfactory (“You smelled trouble when . . .,” “You experienced the sweet smell of success when . . .”), gustatory (“It soured you when . . .,” “You wanted to savor the moment . . .”), and generic (“You sense that . . .,” “You seem to believe . . .”). In each case, the sender (the person with the problem) has the chance to affirm or disaffirm the listener’s attempt to decode his message. The sender might say, “Yes, that’s exactly how I feel,” or “No, it’s not that; it’s more like . . .”

What might be appropriate responses to the two situations identified earlier (Mr. Sivarajah and Rebecca), in which it is clear that they own a problem and that you want to help?

- “Mr. Sivarajah, you really seem to be upset today. Do you want to talk about it?” Just think how tempting it would be to send one or more of the roadblocks to communication. For example: “I know just how you feel” (consoling); “You are just feeling upset because you had an argument with the principal” (diagnosing); “I think you are one of the best teachers in the school” (praising); “Why don’t we forget about it and have a cup of coffee?” (withdrawing).
- “If I hear you correctly, Rebecca, you feel pretty frustrated with today’s mathematics assignment. Is that right?” (Note that you do not tell her she is frustrated. You ask her if that is how she thinks she feels. She will affirm or disaffirm your active listening response.)

Each of these alternative responses is designed to keep the lines of communication open. Each conveys faith that the individual with the problem is the best person to solve, or at least handle, the feelings associated with the problem.

The phrase, handle the feelings, points out the reality of our world because many student (as well as adult) problems cannot be solved. At best, only the debilitating feelings associated with the problem can be handled. A fellow teacher’s spouse becomes ill, a child’s parent is suddenly unemployed, a student is not selected to his first-choice university—all are problems without immediate solutions. Yet the feelings about the problem are still there. This is where active listening shines.

Do these two active-listening responses seem too artificial or too clinical? They will not seem that way to the person who is knee-deep in a problem. For a moment, put yourself in Mr. Sivarajah’s or Rebecca’s place. Haven’t each of the active-listening statements above left the door open for you to talk more about your problem if you want to? When used in a real situation, in which
the owner of the problem is looking for a listener, wouldn’t each of these statements convey a degree of trust and confidence in your ability to solve your problem?

Finally, teachers also can actively listen to students who have positive problems (i.e., William just found out that he won a financially significant academic college scholarship; Susan just passed a dreaded calculus exam. Both have to tell someone the great news). Once again, until the feelings, positive or negative, are handled, little learning will take place.

DONT’ TALK; LISTEN!

Well-meaning parents and teachers too often feel it is their responsibility to intervene. They mistakenly see it as their job to step in, most often with words, and solve problems for other people—even before either party actually knows for sure what the problem is. Although not all people (including kids) experiencing a problem will actually deliver the following admonition, they probably would like to.

When I ask you to listen to me and you start by giving me advice, you have not done what I asked.

When I ask you to listen to me and you begin to tell me why I shouldn’t feel that way you are trampling on my feelings.

When I ask you to listen to me and you feel you have to do something to solve my problem, you have failed me, strange as that may seem.

Listen! All I asked was that you listen, not to talk or do—just hear me. . .

And if you want to talk, wait a minute for your turn—and I’ll listen to you.

(Source unknown.)

I-MESSAGES: WHEN YOU OWN A PROBLEM

What skill does Gordon recommend using when you, the teacher, own the problem? My professional training, first as a classroom teacher and then as a guidance counselor, stressed what I should do to serve the needs of those of my students who owned problems. After several years of teaching and counseling, I wondered what I was supposed to do when I owned a problem.

How could I get my needs met? I found the answer in Gordon’s Effectiveness Training model. It has a set of responding skills not only to help me to help others who own problems but also to help me when I own a problem.
When I own the problem, I look through Gordon’s T.E.T. rectangle, classify the other person’s behavior as unacceptable (by interfering with my meeting my needs), and recognize the need to confront the other person to get him to stop his behavior. How you confront another person can be the key to getting your needs met.

For those who have power over others who cause them a problem, too often their answer is to make others alter their behavior. When others interfere with our needs, it is tempting to send power-based messages. Gordon calls these “you-messages.” “You stop that talking while I am teaching or else!” “If you know what is good for you, you will stop acting like a crybaby and start cleaning up the garage.” One can picture the teacher (or parent) shaking his or her finger at the other person while uttering these messages. Perhaps it is obvious, but it bears saying: you-messages incorporate one or more of Gordon’s twelve roadblocks to communication. They send solutions (yours), moralize, lecture, ridicule, threaten—sometimes all at one time. In short, they close off communication.

But don’t teachers (and others in power) have the right to bark these kinds of commands? Perhaps they do; but should they? You-messages may force the other person to alter his or her behavior, but at what cost? They often result in defiant compliance, cause the other person to lose face, and weaken the relationship between the two of you. After all, you have won, and he or she has lost. Why take this chance when an alternative to you-messages, “I-messages,” exists?

A properly constructed I-message consists of three parts:

- A nonblameful description of the other person’s behavior that is interfering with your meeting your needs
- A tangible effect now or in the future that the behavior is having on you
- A feeling that tangible effect is causing you

Below are two situations in which, as a teacher, you might judge student behaviors to be unacceptable. Immediately following each situation is an I-message designed to confront the student, get him to change his behavior willingly, allow you both to save face, and to do as little damage as possible to the relationship.

- **Situation One:** John, an eager third-grade student of yours, continually blurts out answers before being formally called upon. The effect of his behavior is that no one else has an opportunity to answer, and you are not sure the other students are following your lesson.
• *I-Message:* “John, when you call out the answers before I have had a chance to call on other students, I am not sure the whole class knows the material. As a result, I may not be doing as good a job as your parents pay me to do.”  

• *Situation Two:* Before leaving school, you rearrange the students’ desks into a semicircle in preparation for a theater exercise you plan to do first thing the next morning. You write a note asking that the pattern of the desks be left untouched. The next day you come in only to find that the custodian has put the desks back into a straight-row pattern.  

• *I-Message:* “When you ignore my note asking that you leave the student desks in their semicircle pattern and place them back into straight rows, I must take time at the beginning of class to rearrange them. As a result, I feel really pressured by not having enough time adequately to present my theater exercise.”  

From the teacher’s point of view it would be tempting to send a you-message such as, in the first example: “John, stop trying to show everyone how smart you are” (diagnosing); “John, a good little boy would raise his hand and wait to be called” (moralizing); or “If you blurt out the answer one more time without raising your hand, you are in real trouble” (threatening). Each of the alternative I-messages contains the necessary three parts. In reference to John, who blurs out answers, the first sentence of the I-message points out the behavior that is interfering with the teacher’s meeting his or her own needs and then describes the tangible effect the behavior is having on the teacher. The second sentence describes the teacher’s feelings.  

An I-message does not tell the student how to change his or her behavior. That is left up to the student. Further, an I-message does not say anything about the other person; it concentrates only upon the speaker. I-messages tell how “I” am being tangibly affected and how “I” feel. Unlike you-messages, in which the other person is likely to dig in his or her heels and resist or fight back, I-messages are received differently. It is hard for the other person to get defensive when the focus of the I-message is not on him or her. An I-message conveys, as does active listening, a trust in the other person. It says that our relationship is strong enough that if I tell you that what you are doing interferes with my meeting my needs, you will probably volunteer to alter your behavior.  

Gordon’s three-component confrontation model consistently shows positive results (Watson & Remer, 1984) when compared to messages consisting of just one (behavior, tangible effect, or feeling) or two (behavior and tangible effect, behavior and feeling, or tangible effect and feeling) components. The evidence is convincing for using the complete, three-component I-message to resolve interpersonal conflicts.  

On the outside chance that the other person will get defensive when you send an I-message, you have a skill to help handle the problem the student
feels he or she has: active listening. After using active listening to defuse the student’s defensive feelings, you would once again present your I-message.

No doubt some teachers are skeptical about exposing their feelings so openly to a student. I-messages require a teacher to be honest with students and acknowledge that they have the power through their behaviors to interfere with teachers meeting their own needs. This is the “tangible effect” portion of the message. When one adds admitting true human feelings such as fear, discouragement, frustration, or vulnerability—the “feelings” portion of the message—sending an I-message may take more courage and trust than teachers possess. To these doubters I respond by saying that there is one other very strong reason why I-messages work so well. If, as a teacher, parent, boss, spouse, or good friend, you have helped others by active listening when they had problems, they will be looking for opportunities to reciprocate—to pay you back. They will want to help you as they feel you have helped them. Your I-message gives others the opportunity to respond by altering their behavior so that you may get your needs met.

I-messages work on the assumption that you and the other person have an ongoing relationship. It is one that has basically been beneficial to both of you. Teachers need students, and students need teachers. Further, it is assumed that as a teacher you probably have had opportunities to use active listening with one or more of the students to whom you are sending your I-message.

Thus, they have a reason to reciprocate your earlier helping behaviors. Remember that the alternative to an I-message is a finger-shaking you-message. Often the other person will say, “Gee, I’m sorry. I didn’t realize that it was affecting you. How about if I . . .”

Most people use I-messages with others who possess equal power, realizing that they are not in a position to enforce the demands of a you-message. Almost by default and, perhaps somewhat reluctantly, I-messages are used when you-messages are perceived to be ineffective. Gordon suggests that we not wait until we have no choice but to use I-messages. I agree.

**DIFFERENCES BETWEEN A CANTER AND A GORDON I-MESSAGE**

At this point you may wish to review Chapter 5 on Assertive Discipline in order to determine how the Canters’ version of an I-message differs from Gordon’s. To help make this contrast clearer, the design of both I-messages is shown below. The first one is a Canter-type I-message; the second one is a Gordon-type I-message. Can you spot the fundamental differences in the two messages? Do you understand how these fundamental differences clearly reveal the contrasting philosophical positions held by the Canters and by Gordon?
A Canter I-Message

- I feel (name the feeling) . . .
- When you (state the problem) . . .
- I would like (say what you want to happen to make things better) . . .

A Gordon I-Message

- When you do (nonblameful description of other’s behavior) such and such . . .
- The tangible effect on me (now or in the future) is . . .
- That makes me feel (name the feeling) . . .

A Canter-type I-message tells the other person exactly how he or she is supposed to change—supposed to mend his or her ways. It is, I suppose, assumed that the other person is too insensitive or too uncaring to voluntarily respond in a way that would make your life better. Thus, you must tell them how to change. A Gordon-type I-message never tells the other person how to change. Instead, the message leaves it up to the other person to decide voluntarily how to respond in order to make your life better.

A Canter I-message carries with it an air of enforcement—change in the way I tell you to change—“Here is exactly how I want you to change your behavior!” The threat, “Change your behavior or else,” is implied. A Gordon I-message carries with it an air of trust and mutual respect—“I trust that if I share with you how your behavior is interfering with my meeting my needs, you will respect me enough to voluntarily change that behavior.”

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

There are times, as shown in Gordon’s T.E.T. rectangle, when both person’s needs conflict. A skill is required to resolve a conflict of needs. In a more power-based model, the conflict would be resolved in either a win-lose (method 1) or lose-win (method 2) fashion. Resolutions in which either party “wins all” are not considered acceptable. Why? Philosophically, such a resolution is inconsistent with a noninterventionist’s beliefs. Practically, such a resolution harms the ongoing relationship—it causes resentment. After all, who likes to be around someone who always wins at your expense?

Gordon offers an alternative, no-lose, win-win, “conflict resolution” skill referred to as “method 3”—a skill that does not endorse compromise. In compromise, both parties lose! Therefore, they play a game of sorts whereby they demand more than they know they will receive in the hope that compromise will get them what they really wanted in the first place. A lack of trust exists
between the two conflicting parties. It does not have to be that way. Others, too, support a win-win resolution to problems (Kagan, Kyle, & Scott, 2004).

Gordon’s conflict resolution consists of six steps:

1. Define the problem. Using active listening to help determine the other person’s needs and I-messages to convey your needs; define the problem in terms of those needs, not in terms of conflicting solutions.

2. Generate possible solutions. This is also known as brainstorming. When quantity is sought, quality will emerge. Now that the problem has been defined in terms of needs, not conflicting solutions, both parties are free to be creative in generating solutions. Write down these solutions. No evaluation is done in this step.

3. Evaluate solutions. Both parties evaluate the solutions with an eye to whether or not the solution(s) will meet their needs. Discard solutions that do not meet one’s needs. The odds are, if step two was done well, one or more solutions will survive that are deemed to meet both people’s needs. Hence, no compromise!


5. Implement the solution. Agree upon who is to do what, when, and how well. Remember that both parties now are motivated to make this solution work because they see it as a means of getting their needs met. Approach parties not living up to their part of the bargain with an I-message, not punishment. No nagging is permitted.

6. Monitor the solution. Build in an agreed-upon “check-back” time to determine if the solution works. If it does, great. If the solution proves to be unsatisfactory, review previous steps to identify the breakdown. If all else fails, you still have other solutions that survived your step three. Conflicts resolved using method 3 stay solved. Further, because the conflict is resolved in a manner that meets both person’s needs, the ongoing relationship is strengthened, setting the basis for resolving future conflicts of needs more easily. It worked once, and both came out winners. Who would not want to use this mutually acceptable conflict resolution process with future conflicts?

**DON’T KEEP T.E.T. A SECRET**

Tell your students that you value your relationship with them and, as a result, have decided to use some skills that should enhance that relationship. Explain at an appropriate level for the audience (for instance, elementary or high school) the philosophy behind Gordon’s model—trust and faith in the other person. Explain the fundamentals of active listening and I-messages. Acknowledge that you may sound a little phony when you first practice these
skills, but because of the value you place on strengthening your relationship, you feel it is worth it. Gordon’s Teacher Effectiveness Training model and the skills contained within it work best when both parties are informed. In this way, no one feels that something is being used on them.

A significant side benefit of using the T.E.T. skills with others is that, through modeling, they too may start to use it as their vehicle for problem solving. Just imagine the decrease in discipline problems in schools if students were to use active listening and I-messages on one another. It is a fact that students are going to confront one another, with or without the knowledge of Gordon’s communication model—for that matter, so are teachers and administrators. The alternative of an I-message is a less desirable and less effective power-based you-message. Combine the benefits of active listening and I-messages to bring about a win-win solution using Gordon’s conflict resolution steps. Conflicts solved this way stay solved!

Do active listening and I-messages work all the time? Does method 3 guarantee results every time? The answer is definitely “No!” Human interaction is not an exact science. We are playing the odds, looking for those skills that work with most people in most situations most of the time. Active listening works better than roadblocks to communication. I-messages work better than you-messages. Method 3 works better than a win-lose or lose-win method of resolving conflicts of needs. Gordon’s skills help keep the lines of communication open between a teacher and a student or, for that matter, between any two people.

Having once taught physics and mathematics at the high school level, I thought my greatest achievement as a teacher would be to have graduated students knowledgeable of such material as Newton’s laws and quadratic equations. In hindsight, although subject-specific information is certainly important, if I had to choose with what knowledge and skills students left school, I would choose communication skills. Such skills promote the most effective discipline—self-discipline—in school as well as in society. Until something better comes along, the communication model I would use would be Gordon’s.

“If you solve the relationship problem, you solve the misbehavior problem.” If this sentence sounds familiar it is because it appears in the first paragraph of this chapter. It is that important! Establishing relationships, maintaining relationships, and repairing strained or broken relationships, requires two-way communication. That is why Gordon’s model is really a communication model, not a discipline model. The more the communication, the better the relationship, and the fewer discipline problems. Two-way communication is the basis for mutual respect—it is also the basis of Gordon’s communication-based discipline model.
HOW DOES DEMOCRACY FIT IN GORDON’S MODEL?

Keeping in mind what you learned in Chapter 2, Democracy and Discipline, how would adopting the Gordon’s Effectiveness Training model fit with your perception of a democratic classroom? It is important to address this question whether or not you adopt his model. Because you will not teach in a vacuum, you must be prepared to defend your own choice of a discipline model and challenge models proposed or used by others. A sound basis for a defense or a challenge is that of how a model impacts democracy in the classroom.

PROs AND CONs OF GORDON’S MODEL

As you study each discipline model you need to identify their respective PROs and CONs. In the space below, identify the PROs on the left side and the CONs on the right side. Your listing of the PROs and CONs should help you decide which is the best discipline model for you and your students! You may want to compare your PROs and CONs with those listed in Appendix I.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thomas Gordon: Teacher Effectiveness Training Model</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>PROs</strong></td>
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LEARNING MORE ABOUT GORDON’S TEACHER EFFECTIVENESS TRAINING MODEL

Are you interested in Gordon’s model? Are you ready to try some of his techniques? If you are, be sure first to read *Teacher Effectiveness Training* (2003). What has been presented in this chapter, or any other single chapter, is not enough for you to run out, start using the abbreviated knowledge and
skills, and expect to get results. There is no substitute for the original. Learn more about active listening, I-messages, win-win, problem resolution, and Gordon’s Rectangle. Learn more about what teachers can do when students own a problem, what teachers can do when they own problems, the many uses for active listening, modifying the environment, the no-lose method of resolving conflicts, and what to do if values collide. Learn more about a communication model that builds upon the ideas of Carl R. Rogers. Buy Gordon’s books, borrow his books, read his books.

Gordon’s writings have been the focus of much research—master’s theses, doctoral dissertations, journal articles, and books. A search of the Internet and any academic library will reveal many such sources, some by Gordon, others written about his model.

- To learn more about Thomas Gordon and his ideas on discipline, whether at home, in the classroom, or in the world of business, contact:

  Gordon Training International
  531 Stevens Avenue
  Solana Beach, CA 92075–2093
  Phone: 800–628–1197
  www.Gordontraining.com

  T.E.T. workshops in NY, PA, and FL also are delivered through the Teacher Education Institute in Winter Park, Florida (800–331–2208).

- Search popular Web sites such as www.Amazon.com to locate books written about Gordon’s model.

- Search one or more of the many Internet Web sites using “Thomas Gordon,” “active listening,” “I-messages,” “conflict resolution,” and “values clarification,” among other terms, as keywords.

TEST YOURSELF

This is a sampling of the kinds of factual and open-ended questions that you should be able to answer after having read this chapter.

1. How would you classify Gordon’s views according to the four theoretical frameworks presented in Chapter 3?

2. Give the title of two of Gordon’s books that outline his views on how to discipline children whether at home or in school.

3. What special relationship did Gordon have with Carl R. Rogers and how did it ultimately affect the design of his Effectiveness Training model?
4. Why is it important for a teacher to determine who owns the problem before he or she decides upon a course of action?

5. Define the terms “acceptable” and “unacceptable” as presented by Gordon and contrast them with their more traditional definitions.

6. Of all the areas in a Gordon Effectiveness Training rectangle, which one does Gordon want to increase in area? Why?

7. Identify four of Gordon’s more surprising roadblocks to communication and then explain why they are roadblocks.

8. Identify three alternatives to roadblocks that are recommended by Gordon.

9. Define the Gordon-recommended skill of active listening and explain how it can help others who own a problem.

10. Complete the tongue twister, “The problem with the problem is not the problem, the problem. . . .” Explain its significance.

11. Identify the three parts of a properly stated I-message.

12. Create an “original” I-message and then defend how it should help get the desired results, help both parties save face, and do the least damage to the ongoing relationship.

13. Describe how the skills of active listening and I-messages are crucial to Gordon’s win/win skill of conflict resolution.

14. Why is the term “compromise” an inappropriate description of what happens in Gordon’s conflict resolution?

15. How democratic is Gordon’s model?

16. Reflect upon the game of “musical chairs” discussed in the Canter chapter. Describe how this popular childhood game could be played with a Gordon recommended win-win outcome.

17. Do you see yourself using Gordon’s Effectiveness Training model in your classroom? Why?

18. Do you see yourself using Gordon’s Effectiveness Training model in your personal life? What results would you expect?

ASK YOURSELF: IS THIS MODEL FOR YOU?

Although you would want to defer making any final decision until you read still more, at this point what are your feelings toward Gordon’s approach to discipline? What strengths and weaknesses do you see in his model? Does his approach to discipline reflect your fundamental views on how you believe people should be treated? Could you defend the use of this model to your students and their parents, to your colleagues, and to your administrators?
Could you remain committed to his model—even when the going got tough? If you were to adopt his model, could you go to sleep at night and not feel that there simply has to be a better way to discipline? At this point, is Gordon’s approach for you?

**TIME TO CHOOSE ONE OF THE SIX “TRIED AND TRUE” DISCIPLINE MODELS**

By this point in your reading and study you have been exposed to a discussion on democracy and its related terms (i.e., Chapter 2) and to four theoretical frameworks (i.e., Chapter 3). You should have used these chapters to evaluate the six Tried-and-True discipline models presented in Chapters 4 through 9. At the end of each of the six discipline model chapters—Dobson, Canters, Jones, Dreikurs, Glasser, and Gordon—you were asked whether the discipline model was one that you could enthusiastically adopt.

It probably would be a good idea to review both the discussion on democracy and the theoretical frameworks before selecting a discipline model in which you will make a major investment of time, energy, and commitment (see Figure 9.3). Remember, some discipline models, those reflecting Skinner’s beliefs, assume that the system is fine; it is the child that needs changing. Other

**Figure 9.3**

**Choosing a Discipline Model that Is Right for You and Your Students**

CONTROL  

INFLUENCE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Three Skinnerian Views</th>
<th>Three Rogerian Views</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>James Dobson</td>
<td>William Glasser</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lee and Marlene Canter</td>
<td>Thomas Gordon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fredric Jones</td>
<td>Rudolf Dreikurs</td>
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<td>Social Discipline</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Reality Therapy</td>
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<td>Teacher Effectiveness</td>
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Place for Punishment  
Assertive Discipline  
Tools for Teaching  
Social Discipline  
Reality Therapy  
Choice Theory  
Teacher Effectiveness
discipline models, those reflecting Rogers’ beliefs, assume that the curriculum and the child are okay; it is the system that needs changing. Unless you have the time and energy to learn more than one model well, which model do you think is best for you? Now is the time to choose!

**WHAT IS MY NEXT STEP?**

Choosing a discipline model, one consistent with your fundamental beliefs about how to treat fellow human beings—including children—is the most difficult part. Having said this, you still have some work ahead of you. You need to learn still more about your chosen discipline model. This task is easier than you might think because, having chosen a particular discipline model, you are more than likely motivated to learn more about it! Here are several specific actions that you can take:

1. You could (and should) read still more about your chosen discipline model by using many of the sources cited in this book and/or by surfing the Internet for additional resources.

   By reading this book and thinking about what it has to say, you have made a significant first step in developing competence in your chosen model. You need to build on this base by reading other books and articles about this model. Although no one could read them all, start down this valuable road as soon as possible. Begin to build a personal professional library. The discipline authors themselves and/or their organizations publish lots of relevant materials—usually at minimum cost. Further, because you are a professional and have promised to turn to a recognized body of knowledge in order to make decisions, you also can turn to professional journals for still more information.

2. You could go visit schools that have adopted your chosen discipline model and talk to colleagues—just like you—who are using the model.

   The majority of the six Tried-and-True discipline models, through their authors and organizations, have worked with schools throughout the country. They have come into schools and offered onsite training ranging from one day to an entire year. A number of these schools, then, have become demonstration schools for a particular discipline model. Where better to see your chosen model in action than in a real school, with real students and faculty, and with real every day problems—probably just like your situation? Visit such schools and ask some hard questions of their teachers. Begin the process of identifying professional colleagues that you can contact (phone or e-mail) in the future when the going gets a little tough as you attempt to implement your chosen discipline model.
3. You should contact the organization that promotes the model, find out where they are offering training, and then attend such a training session.

Nothing beats getting trained—trained by those closest to and most knowledgeable of whatever it is you want to learn. This is as true for learning the skills of successful discipline as it is for learning the skills to be a successful tennis player, quilter, or plumber. We all start out as teaching apprentices—even with a baccalaureate degree (or higher) under our belt. Training, from those well equipped to provide this training, helps move us along toward becoming the equivalent of a journeyman in our craft of teaching. This is particularly true with effective discipline in that it should be based on sound theory and effective practice—both teachable in a workshop or training environment. It is no accident that the title of this book is *Classroom Management: Sound Theory and Effective Practice*.

I recommend that you contact the organization or group that is championing your chosen discipline model—Dobson, Can ters, Jones, Dreikurs (Albert, Dinkmeyer, Nelsen), Glasser, or Gordon—and find out when they will be “in town” (or at least in a town not all that far away) conducting training workshops. You could, in fact, become the catalyst to initiate training right in your school or school district. Why not?

Are such training workshops widely available? I offer just two examples, one from the behaviorist camp and one from the humanist camp. Jones, for instance, has upcoming workshops scheduled in Phoenix (AZ), Santa Cruz (CA), Colorado Springs (CO), Houston (TX), and Rockville (MD). Glasser has personal speaking engagements scheduled in Colorado Springs (CO), Mobile (AL), Myrtle Beach (SC), and Huntington, (WV). There also are Glasser workshops scheduled in, among other communities, Seattle (WA), The Villages (FL), Birmingham (AL), Dothan (AL), Atlanta (GA), Charleston (RI), Bemidji (MN), and Wenatchee (WA), as well as in cities across Canada and Australia.

When it comes to investing your limited time and money, you probably will not seek training in all six Tried-and-True discipline models. Philosophically you would not want to, and realistically most educators do not have a lot of money to attend workshops. But, there may be a couple of ways to help offset the expense.

One way is to seek support from your school. You may, in turn, be asked to provide some “in-service training” for fellow staff. Although this may seem like an extra burden, having fellow colleagues (including administrators) informed about and on board with your discipline thinking will pay off in the end. You can support one another as your school moves forward implementing the discipline model.
One also may be eligible for a tax deduction given that this “training is designed to help you do your present job, teaching, better.” Normally such education-related expenses are deductible. Check with the IRS.

Money savings or not, the benefit derived from becoming skilled at using the discipline model of your choice is priceless! The benefits include, at a minimum, feeling more competent and more confident. Part of this feeling of competence and confidence comes from the fact that by knowing and using one of the six Tried-and-True discipline models, it is the model—not you the teacher—who ends up doing the disciplining! I can’t stress the importance of this fact enough.

By the way, what you learn at these workshops will serve you beyond the confines of your school and classroom. They will serve you at home too—especially in your own child rearing.

WHAT DO I DO WITH THE REST OF THIS BOOK?

First of all, read it. Second of all, read it with an eye toward determining how what you read might be used to support your chosen discipline model. Read on.
The following chapters present articles on discipline-related topics that are often underrepresented, incorrectly presented, or overlooked completely in studies of classroom management. Chapter 10 summarizes the views of other recognized theorists who have something to say on the subject of discipline. Although none have had the impact that the six Tried-and-True discipline authors have had, they clearly offer something of value. Chapter 11 presents some surprising, and perhaps controversial, ideas about discipline. Chapter 12 presents, in an “A through Z” format, brief teacher suggestions that address both prevention and correction of problem behaviors in the classroom. Chapter 13 discusses how teachers can use acting/performance skills to help establish and maintain classroom discipline—and maybe even have some fun doing it! Chapter 14 tackles the impact of school bullying. And, Chapter 15 addresses school violence.
CHAPTER 10
Other Noted Authors: What They Have to Say about Discipline

OBJECTIVES

This chapter will help you, among other things, to:

- Identify the works of discipline authors other than the “tried and true” authors presented in Chapters 4 through 9.
- Connect the works of these authors with one or more of the “tried and true” discipline models presented in Chapters 4 through 9.

INTRODUCTION

The authors presented in Chapters 4 through 9 represent major “tried and true” discipline models, in most cases complete with structure and strategies that have undergone the scrutiny of scholarly testing and can be traced back to one or more of the theoretical foundations presented in Chapter 3. Each of these models has stood the test of time—two decades or more! But there are other noted authors who have written on the subject of discipline. A number of these authors and their views on classroom management are presented in this chapter.

As you read what these authors have to say, try to pigeonhole their approaches into one of the four theoretical frameworks presented in Chapter 3. This should not be a difficult task. Also, try to determine which of the six “tried and true” models presented in Chapters 4 through 9 would be best aligned with each author’s approach. Once again, the task should not be difficult because most of these authors’ approaches simply restate or repackage one
of these “tried and true” discipline models. You especially will see the views of Dreikurs (i.e., as revealed in the work of Linda Albert and Jane Nelsen), Glasser, and Gordon seeping through in the approaches of these newer authors. Of note is the fact that not one of the authors in this chapter advocates the use of punishment as a classroom management tool.

If, after reading this chapter, your appetite has been whetted regarding one or more of these authors, you should read some of their original works (some are cited in this chapter) and, if you are still interested, consider attending a workshop on the author(s) of your choice.

- Linda Albert: *Cooperative Discipline*
- Richard Curwin and Allen Mendler: *Discipline with Dignity*
- Forrest Gathercoal: *Judicious Discipline*
- Haim G. Ginott: *Communication Discipline*
- Herb Grossman: *Multicultural Discipline*
- Madeline Hunter: *Enhancing Teaching (Preventative Discipline)*
- Spencer Kagan: *Win-Win Management*
- Larry Koenig: *Smart Discipline*
- Jacob S. Kounin: *Withitness (and more) Discipline*
- Ramon Lewis (Australian Author): *Student Misbehavior, Responsibility, and Discipline*
- Jane Nelsen: *Positive Discipline* (not the same as Jones’ *Positive Discipline* model)
- John Riak: *Corporal Punishment of Schoolchildren*
- William A. Rogers (Australian Author): *Decisive Discipline*
- Michael Valentine: *A Family-Systems Approach Adapted to Schools*
- Harry K. Wong: *The First Days of School*

**LINDA ALBERT: COOPERATIVE DISCIPLINE**

Linda Albert, Ph.D., has been a classroom teacher, college professor, educational consultant, syndicated columnist, and author of a number of books, a video series, and other publications on discipline in school and at home. As a former student of Rudolf Dreikurs, Albert draws heavily upon his work in the development of her Cooperative Discipline program. She has been providing courses on the Cooperative Discipline approach to discipline for more than two decades. Like Jane Nelsen (discussed later in this chapter), Albert has taken, as well as expanded, the ideas of Dreikurs and packaged them in a way that many educators and parents find both attractive and useful. Linda Albert may be contacted by e-mail at LindAlbert@aol.com.
Cooperative Discipline

Reflecting the fundamental beliefs of Dreikurs, Albert believes that students choose their own behaviors. She further believes that the long-term goal of student behavior is to overcome feelings of discouragement and to fulfill a basic human need to belong. She believes that students misbehave for a reason. They are trying to achieve one of four short-term goals—attention, power, revenge, and avoidance of failure. Unfortunately, when children seek these inappropriate short-term goals they can actually become more discouraged and less able to meet their need to belong. Hence, matters worsen. Cooperative Discipline instructs parents and teachers on how to recognize which short-term goal a child is seeking and then to influence the child’s behavior in a positive manner.

As a comprehensive program, Cooperative Discipline deals with, among other topics, helping students satisfy their need to belong, addresses the importance of building a student’s self-esteem, discusses three styles of classroom management, and stresses the importance of teachers forming Action Plans.

In order to experience a sense of belonging students must believe that they are capable of completing the tasks at hand, feel connected with teachers and peers, and know that they make some contribution to the group. Albert calls these the “Three Cs.” Each of these “Cs” can be enhanced by teachers. They can, for instance, enhance a student’s belief of being capable by “making mistakes okay,” enhance a feeling of being connected by “offering acceptance” and “showing appreciation,” and enhance a feeling of making a contribution by “working in teams” and designing opportunities for students to “interact with the class, school, and community.” Once students feel that they belong, they are less likely to misbehave.

When it comes to building a student’s self-esteem, the key word is encouragement! Of all the tools for building student self-esteem that we possess as teachers or parents, encouragement is the most powerful. Once again, the “Three Cs” come into play as pedagogical tools for teachers to use in encouraging students. Unlike the giving of rewards, where only a few are found deserving, encouragement is for everyone, all the time—students and teachers, alike.

Cooperative Discipline introduces three styles of classroom management—hands-off, hands-on, and hands-joined. Albert makes a strong case for the hands-joined style of management where students are respected, have a say in making decisions, and play a role in designing their own education. The end result, according to Albert, is students who behave more cooperatively.

As with all endeavors, the more effectively one plans the more one is likely to experience success. With Albert, this planning takes the form of a
Written School Action Plan. The plan consists of a number of steps including pinpointing the student’s behavior, identifying the student’s goal of misbehavior (i.e., attention, power, revenge, avoidance of failure), choosing an appropriate teacher response for the moment, selecting encouragement techniques to help build student self-esteem for the future, involving students and parents, and monitoring the plan’s progress.


**RICHARD CURWIN AND ALLEN MENDLER: DISCIPLINE WITH DIGNITY**

Dr. Allen N. Mendler is an educator, school psychologist, and nationally known seminar and workshop presenter on the subject of discipline and behavior management. Dr. Richard L. Curwin, too, is an educator, with teaching experience both in basic and higher education. Like Mendler, Curwin serves as a private consultant and seminar and workshop presenter. Together they have written a number of books, have authored individual as well as coauthored articles in professional journals, and have produced a series of staff development videotapes. They can be reached by mail at Discipline Associates, P.O. Box 20481, Rochester, NY 14602, and by phone at 800–772–5227. Their Web site is www.disciplineassociates.com.

**Discipline with Dignity**

Although the ideas and strategies outlined in the book, Discipline with Dignity (2000), can work with all students, Curwin and Mendler’s approach is especially useful for students who have lost all hope and who have given up on themselves. These students, usually only about 5 percent of the student body, end up consuming a significant amount of the teacher’s classroom management time and energy. Note that Fredric Jones (i.e., Tools for Teaching) identified approximately this same percentage of students whose chronic misbehavior makes life miserable for teachers.

Discipline with dignity helps educators develop a repertoire of preestablished consequences to apply when students ignore behaviors that they have agreed to in their social contracts. Punishment is not one of the consequences. Instead, measures designed to bolster student self-esteem and to hone social problem-solving skills and self-regulation are used. **Discipline with**
Dignity, a responsibility and empowerment-based versus obedience-based discipline model, creates an atmosphere of democracy, encouragement, hope, and warmth where clearly defined limits (with student input) and skills in resolving conflicts are taught and applied.

Specifically, the model contains three hierarchical dimensions including Prevention, Action, and Resolution. Briefly, Prevention describes what teachers can do to prevent discipline problems from happening in the first place. The old adage, “An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure,” was never more true. This dimension has seven stages including, among others, the all-important step of setting up a social contract with the class. A social contract is a mutually developed set of specific and clear rules and consequences that define acceptable and unacceptable behaviors in the classroom.

The Action dimension provides teachers with the knowledge and skills to stop misbehavior when it occurs. Sample skills include proximity control, tone of voice, and body language. Finally, the Resolution dimension equips teachers and students with the knowledge, skills, and confidence necessary to confront and negotiate with dignity resolutions to the behavior of continually misbehaving students.

Some guiding principles to applying discipline with dignity in the classroom include, among others, recognizing that:

- long-term behavior changes are more desirable than simply short-term fixes.
- teachers should stop doing ineffective things. Often this means stop using traditional carrot and stick, reward and punishment, techniques to which chronically misbehaving students have become immune.
- classroom rules must make sense to students in the here and now.
- teachers should model what they expect from students negating the usefulness and value of the oft-stated comment “Don’t do as I do, do as I say (command).”
- at all times, even when in the act of disciplining, students should be treated with dignity! Without being treated with dignity, students may begin to think that it is preferable to misbehave than to be seen as stupid. No one, including students, wants to be embarrassed or seen as stupid and incapable, especially in public. Discipline can, and should, and must, be administered with dignity.

The consistent application of discipline with dignity can and does lead to increased mutual respect between student and teachers where power struggles can become a thing of the past.

To learn more about Curwin and Mendler’s ideas, read Curwin, R., and Mendler, A. (2000). *Discipline with Dignity*, and Curwin, R. and Mendler,
FORREST GATHERCOAL: JUDICIOUS DISCIPLINE

Forrest Gathercoal is a professor in the School of Education at Oregon State University. He has taught law courses for educators for more than twenty years. He also has conducted workshops on civil rights and student discipline, and served as a consultant to colleges and school districts across the country. Early in his career he taught elementary and secondary music and was a guidance counselor, high school coach, and vice-principal.

Judicious Discipline: Its Theory

An uncomplicated, yet workable, rule has evolved from the classrooms of successful teachers throughout our country. Simply stated, “You may do what you want in this classroom until it interferes with the rights of others.” It is their way of acknowledging individual differences among their students while recognizing the need for an educational environment free from disruptive forces. Teachers taking this position and applying it in an evenhanded manner to student conduct are teaching and respecting their students’ constitutional rights. At the same time, they are creating a classroom environment in which students are able to learn about their responsibilities to the other members of the class.

Judicious Discipline, fashioned upon this principle, creates an educational and ethical perspective for school management based on the Bill of Rights. Because students have Constitutional rights, our schools and classrooms should be microcosms of the United States. But having rights does not mean students have a license to do as they please. By teaching students their citizenship rights, providing them an opportunity to experience individual liberties, and helping them to understand the needs and demands of their social responsibilities, we are empowering students to govern and think for themselves. Educators have always believed teaching citizenship is an important aspect of their educational mission. Judicious Discipline, however, takes that belief one step further to acknowledge and respect students as citizens.

Judicious Discipline has an educational aspect. One of our educational system’s more glaring contradictions is the autocratic public school system we use as a model for teaching students to be responsible citizens in a democratic society. If classroom management in our schools parallels the autocratic environment of most American homes, it follows that parents and educators...
together may be preparing citizens who are unable to understand or function well in a participatory society. *Judicious Discipline*, on the other hand, uses our nation’s justice model for an educational approach to student discipline and responsibility. As a result, students will not only be respected as citizens and learn to think for themselves within a democratic community, but they will have an opportunity to experience the joys and sorrows of being accountable for their own actions.

Often educators find themselves inventing an endless parade of rules hoping to create the illusion of being in control. But once a teacher’s line is crossed, the illusion of being in control begins to unravel. Until students are allowed to experience a proprietary interest in rules and decisions, student control and a good learning environment will always be at risk.

**Judicious Consequences**

*Judicious Discipline* has judicious consequences. There are two aspects to judicious consequences. The first is that the consequences should be commensurate with the rule violation. The second is that they be compatible with the needs of the student and the school community. Commensurate denotes that the consequence is consistent with and flows logically from the student’s misbehavior. Fairness is seen to exist. The compatible aspect begins with identifying issues central to the educational and self-esteem needs of each student as well as the mission and ethical practices of professional educators.

If students know that consequences for their misconduct will be judicious in nature, as opposed to punishing, then consequences become akin to curricular issues. Discipline becomes, as John Dewey would argue, an issue of pedagogy and curriculum instead of problems of control (Connell, 1994). When students believe they are in the capable hands of professional educators, judicious consequences will be perceived by students as ways to make amends and get back on track. As this plateau of mutual trust and professional responsibility is achieved, good educational and ethical practices become the model for student discipline.

Classroom discipline is not a process isolated from other school activities, rather it is an integral part of the tenor and tone of each school. The current educational reforms, reflecting as they do a greater emphasis on democratic practices, provide logical support for discipline strategies based upon equity and fairness. Judicious discipline, described by William Glasser as “An excellent approach to discipline, one that fits with my concepts,” offers educators a systematic framework that promotes and sustains democratic decision making while helping students learn the rights and responsibilities incumbent upon all citizens in our society.

**HAIM G. GINOTT: COMMUNICATION DISCIPLINE**

Dr. Haim G. Ginott (deceased) was an educator whose ideas have permeated the American scene—both in the home and in the school. Ginott was a professor of psychology at Adelphi University and at New York University Graduate School.

**Ginott and Other Rogerian-Oriented Authors**

Ginott’s ideas reflect, in fact may be the basis for, the work of today’s contemporary Rogerian-oriented discipline authors. For instance, his advice not to ask “why?” mirrors the advice given by William Glasser. His suggestion that we use alternatives to praise reflects Rudolf Dreikurs’ long-standing position on this topic. Ginott’s emphasis upon listening, what he calls using a “healing dialogue,” is similar to Thomas Gordon’s facilitating skill of active listening.

His suggestion for how adults should handle anger, too, reflects Gordon’s recommended confrontation skill of sending I-messages. Ginott’s suggestions that teachers send sane messages (those that concentrate on the facts of situation), avoid using sarcasm, and avoid labeling students, as well as his concern that students and teachers, alike, save face in any and all confrontations, are characteristic of Rogerian-oriented discipline authors.

Ginott, as a humanist, endorses the use of congruent communication, which, like Gordon’s communication skills (active listening and I-messages), helps students to build a more positive self-esteem through recognizing the feelings they have about themselves, about others, and about the home, school, and community in which they exist. Ginott’s communication between a teacher and child, particularly in a discipline situation, stresses the circumstances of the problem, never the child’s nature or personality.

The importance Ginott ascribes to the role of the teacher is highlighted dramatically in a sobering quote from his book, *Teacher and Child* (1971). It reads:

> I am the decisive element in the classroom. It is my personal approach that creates the climate. It is my daily mood that makes the weather. As a teacher, I
possess tremendous power to make a child’s life miserable or joyous. I can be a tool of torture or an instrument of inspiration. I can humiliate or humor, hurt or heal. In all of my situations it is my response that decides whether a crisis will be escalated or de-escalated, and a child humanized or dehumanized. (p. 13)

Ginott, like other Rogerian-oriented authors, not only champions the humanist’s position but also challenges those who hold opposing views. For instance, where James Dobson says that if a child appears to be asking for punishment, give it to him, Ginott tells adults to help the child handle his/her guilt and anger, not comply with his request for punishment. Ginott’s beliefs regarding how parents and teachers can effectively discipline children are timeless. His ideas, though appearing dated, seem to have no expiration date.


**HERB GROSSMAN: MULTICULTURAL DISCIPLINE**

Until his retirement, Dr. Grossman taught courses in classroom management in the education and special education departments at San Jose State University, San Jose, California. He also directed the bilingual/cross-cultural special education program at the same institution.

**Introduction**

The population of the United States is rapidly becoming less Euro-American. Currently, non-EuroAmericans are in the majority in the twenty-five largest school districts in the United States. The three fastest growing groups are Hispanics, African Americans, and Southeast Asians. As a result, fewer students will fit the stereotype of EuroAmerican middle-class students and fewer students will respond positively to and profit from classroom management techniques that have been designed with EuroAmerican middle-class students in mind.

**Culturally Inappropriate Classroom Management**

Many classroom management techniques that work with EuroAmerican middle-class students are less effective and often ineffective with students who have been brought up by adults who have used different management techniques with them. To avoid the problems created by using culturally
inappropriate management approaches, teachers require cultural sensitivity, cultural literacy and, in some cases, attitudinal/behavioral change.

To be culturally literate is to have a detailed knowledge of the cultural characteristics of specific ethnic and socioeconomic groups. Being sensitive to cultural differences in general is not sufficient. In order to adapt their management techniques to the specific cultural characteristics of their students, educators also need to have an in-depth knowledge of the specific cultures that are represented in their classes. This knowledge is not merely about holidays, food, dances, music, and so forth. It includes values, behavioral norms, acceptable and effective reinforcements, patterns of interpersonal relationships, and so on. The following are a few of the many characteristics that educators need to consider when choosing which management techniques to use with students from different ethnic or socioeconomic backgrounds.

- Whether they work and learn better individually or in groups
- Whether they think their individual desires and goals are most important or that they should usually submit to the will and welfare of the group
- Whether they function better under cooperative or competitive situations
- Whether they are indifferent or responsive to praise and criticism from others
- Whether they respond better to impersonal rewards like toys, candy, time-off, or personal rewards such as praise, smiles, and pats on the back
- Whether they prefer formal or informal relationships with adults

Cultural literacy can help educators avoid many types of classroom management problems. Uninformed teachers may misunderstand students’ behavior and try to solve problems that do not exist. For example, they may think that students brought up to not be assertive or to volunteer their opinions unless encouraged to do so by adults are insecure or lacking in self-confidence and try to remediate their “problems.”

They may also fail to notice problems that do exist. Teachers who are not tuned in to the nonverbal ways students from different cultures communicate may miss a request for help or a signal of distress from students who communicate their needs in subtle and indirect ways. And they may use culturally ineffective techniques to deal with problems. This can occur if they use individual rewards to motivate a student who identifies with the group and is uncomfortable with individualistic approaches. It can also happen when the use of public reprimands, writing student’s names on the board, and so on, backfire because they cause students greater loss of face than they are able to tolerate.

Teachers who do not agree that they need to be culturally literate when working with a group of ethnically and socioeconomically diverse students will have to change their attitudes about how to deal with the diversity among
their students. And those who agree that culturally appropriate management techniques are important, but are reluctant to use them because of the many community and administrative pressures not to do so, will have to find the courage and commitment to do what they know is best for a diverse student population.

**Disempowering Classroom Management**

Students who are empowered by their teachers are helped to believe they can achieve because students themselves have the power to shape their destinies and futures. Those who are disempowered come to believe they lack the ability or potential to accomplish their own goals or those that are shared by most members of their group.

To empower students, teachers should demonstrate their conviction that students can and will succeed. Teachers should avoid emphasizing teacher-management techniques over self-management techniques that can lead students to believe that they are unable to manage themselves. The elimination of teacher prejudices, including those based upon a student’s culture, is one of the most important steps educators can take to reduce disciplinary problems with minority students.


**MADELINE HUNTER: ENHANCING TEACHING (PREVENTATIVE DISCIPLINE)**

Dr. Madeline Hunter (deceased) was an educator whose ideas have permeated the American educational scene from preschool to university classrooms. She was the principal of the elementary lab school at the University of California at Los Angeles and, most recently, professor in administration and teacher education at the UCLA graduate school of education. She was widely sought as consultant and keynote speaker.

**A Hunter Lesson: Preventative Discipline**

Madeline Hunter’s ideas relate more to the elements of presenting an effective classroom lesson than they do to directly establishing and maintaining good classroom discipline. Yet, as most experienced teachers will tell you,
presenting an effective lesson goes a long way toward thwarting potential discipline problems.

In order to “do a Madeline Hunter lesson,” teachers have to include a number of specific steps that enable them to make deliberate and appropriate decisions based upon the best psychological research available. Thus, a teacher is cast in the role of a professional decision maker—one who makes decisions by turning to a recognized body of pedagogical knowledge. Included in a Hunter lesson are, among other steps,

- establishing an anticipatory set
- defending why the objective(s) is important
- teaching the lesson’s main concepts
- checking students’ understanding
- providing guided and independent practice

For successful teachers, a Hunter-type lesson offers little that is new or unique. These teachers have been doing these steps intuitively. But, intuition, alone, is insufficient as a widespread basis for professional decision makers. Instead, Hunter helps teachers see the psychological basis, the pedagogical logic, and the educational justification behind each of her recommended steps. Thus, teachers become and, more important, feel confident in what they are doing and ready and able to explain why they are doing what they are doing. Further, the steps in a Hunter-type lesson provide the basis for successful mentoring or coaching of new and/or less experienced teachers by administrators, supervisors, and more experienced colleagues.

The very structure recommended by Hunter that so many teachers have come to depend upon, on occasion, has come under challenge. Some educators see a Hunter-type approach as too rigid, too mechanical, and, often, too mandated. Hunter responds by defending what she calls a “professional researched-based” approach to teaching rather than the more common “trial and error” approach practiced by too many teachers. Further, she claims that there really is no such thing as a Hunter-type lesson, adding that even within the steps dictated there is a good bit of teacher flexibility.

Although Hunter’s recommendation that teachers apply sound psychological principles of learning when creating lessons helps, in itself, to prevent behavior problems, other Hunter ideas more directly address the subject of discipline. For instance, in an article titled “Do your words get them to think?” (1985), Hunter and coauthor Bailis identify a number of classroom situations where the way a teacher responds can contribute to student think stoppers or think starters.
Think stoppers are direct commands issued by the teacher. They place all of the responsibility upon the teacher’s shoulders for eliciting a specific (i.e., the teacher’s) response from the student. Think stoppers are a form of discipline where little or no potential for the development of student self-control exists. Usually it results in a teacher-student test of wills.

Think starters, on the other hand, “not only encourage a student to think but indicate that you expect him to think and make decisions” (Bailis & Hunter, p. 43). As an example, the authors offer the classroom situation where one student is making disruptive noises while another student is trying to speak. A think stopper teacher response might be “Be quiet!” A think starter teacher response might be “Peggy, find a place where you can do a good job of listening. Thanks.”


SPENCER KAGAN: WIN-WIN MANAGEMENT

Spencer Kagan, Ph.D., is a former clinical psychologist and professor of psychology and education, University of California, Riverside. His books, Cooperative Learning, Multiple Intelligences, and Win-Win Discipline are translated into many languages and are used worldwide in teacher education programs. His company publishes books and resources for teachers and provides workshops and in-service trainings for educators.

Win-Win management is designed to meet the needs of the students while meeting the needs of the teachers to create a stress-free, efficient, productive learning environments. Win-Win management prevents disruptive behaviors. Students who are getting their needs met on an ongoing basis like class more and are far less likely to be disruptive.

Let’s take a simple example. When students are bored or in a low-energy state, they need a high stimulation activity. When students are anxious or hyperactive, they need a low stimulation activity. By being sensitive to the energy level of students and responding appropriately, students win—they get their needs met, feel class is more responsive and enjoyable, and are closer to a state of relaxed alertness, optimal for learning. The teacher also wins. Students who might meet their needs for higher stimulation through disruptive behaviors (wandering around, passing notes) do not need to be disruptive to have their needs met. Students who might meet their needs for lower stimulation through disengaged behaviors (daydreaming, doodling) do
not need to disengage from the learning task if a low stimulation activity is provided. Thus Win-Win management is preventative discipline. Several specific dimensions of Win-Win management include:

- **Class Meetings.** Students need to feel effective—empowered. Allowing students to make decisions and to problem solve, helps students have that important need met. Of course, students adhere to policies and procedures they have created, so there are fewer disruptions and the teacher wins in the bargain.

- **Signals.** With Win-Win Management, signals are a two-way street. The teacher can signal students and students can signal the teacher. Teacher signals include the Quiet Signal as well as instructional signals such as Think Time. Efficient signals mean far less down time and fewer disruptions. When students are disengaged, they are most likely to become disruptive. But student signals such as “I Don’t Understand” and “Please Go Slower” increase the probability of students getting their needs met. They feel that the class is more responsive and, therefore, are less likely to become disruptive.

- **Student Roles.** Win-Win Management relies heavily on student self-management and students helping to manage each other. One primary tool toward this end is assignment of student roles. The Taskmaster keeps the team on task. The Cheerleader ensures group successes are celebrated. The Quiet Captain monitors and helps students adjust their noise level without the teacher having to be the policeman. Each role empowers students so they learn leadership skills and self-management skills, thus freeing the teacher to focus less on management and more on instruction.

- **Room Arrangement.** In the Win-Win classroom, furniture is arranged so the teacher can easily circulate, minimizing distance between the teacher and each student. Having greater proximity, the teacher can better monitor and adjust.

- **Procedures and Routines.** A procedure is how we perform a simple classroom management task such as taking role, collecting papers, or classroom dismissal. A routine is a set of procedures. For example, the morning routine might consist of how we enter class, greet students, take role, and begin bell work. Win-Win Management has a heavy emphasis on procedures and routines. Why? Procedures and routines are a win for the student as they communicate clear expectations. They are a win for the teacher as well. Students who have learned procedures and routines manage themselves. They do not have to be begged or disciplined.

- **Parents as Partners.** Win-Win Management involves parents. How parent involvement creates win-win solutions is perhaps best illustrated by an example.

Ms. Johnson, principal of an elementary school, wears her cell phone prominently in a holster as she walks the school. She has the daytime phone
number of the parent or guardian of every child programmed into her cell phone. As often as she can, when she “catches a child being good,” she dials the number and on the spot gives the parent the good news. She then hands the phone to the child to chat for a few minutes with the parent or guardian.

This is a win-win on a number of levels. Students feel support and appreciation from both the principal and their parents, and feel there is less distance between school and home. Literally, Ms. Johnson is bringing parents into the school setting on an ongoing, very positive way. It is a win for Ms. Johnson as well as she has far better behaved students. There was another win: Unexpectedly, parent attendance at open house jumped from 20 percent to 80 percent over a six-year period.

In a Win-Win classroom the teacher seeks and finds ways to make sure potentially disruptive students never need to become disruptive because their needs are met on an ongoing basis. The student who otherwise would become the class clown for attention does not need to do so because on an ongoing basis the student receives plenty of positive attention from the teacher and classmates. The student who otherwise would refuse to do her homework for fear of failure does not refuse because there has been plenty of guided practice. And, the student who would assert control in disruptive ways has no need to do so because class empowers the student to assume control of certain aspects of the work.

A Win-Win classroom is based on a very simple premise: When we treat our students the ways we would like to be treated, their needs are met and we create a more harmonious, efficient learning environment. We win and our students win.


LARRY KOENIG: SMART DISCIPLINE

Dr. Larry Koenig founded the Up with Youth Company in 1985, an organization devoted to enhancing the self-esteem in young people. He is recognized as an effective public speaker and humorist, and regularly delivers workshops throughout the country. Dr. Koenig has authored several books including Smart Discipline: A Workbook for Parents and Smart Discipline for the Classroom. PBS aired a two-part series on Smart Discipline in the fall of 1995. Dr. Koenig can be contacted at 800–255–3008 or at his Web site: www.smartdiscipline.com.
Smart Discipline for the Classroom

The purpose of the Smart Discipline system is to assist teachers in developing a personal plan of action to handle discipline problems in the classroom. Because of the excess of misbehaviors in today’s classrooms, not having an effective discipline plan will thwart an instructor’s goal of teaching. If you are a teacher, this needs no further explanation.

Back in the dark ages of the 1950s and 1960s, all a teacher needed to be effective was a good lesson plan. Things have changed. In the 1990s (and beyond), that’s not enough. Now, a plan for handling student behavior is just as necessary. And, it must, among other things, be one that:

- identifies disruptive behaviors and their causes,
- addresses drawbacks to using traditional approaches,
- provides prevention strategies,
- offers intervention strategies,
- permits customizing by individual teachers, and
- is quick and easy to use.

Smart Discipline encompasses these goals. Also, you will find Smart Discipline adaptable to the different needs and personalities of children. More importantly, the system provides for “Plan A” and “Plan B” strategies that are progressive and always provide a “next step.”

Plan A strategies take seconds to implement. They are quick and easy methods to both strengthen a teacher-student relationship and gain immediate cooperation.

Plan B strategies take more time to implement but are designed to turn around the attitudes and behaviors of specific children. Most frequently, they will be used when Plan A methods have not produced satisfactory results.

All of the strategies in Smart Discipline are presented in a logical progression. However, that does not mean that they have to be used that way—quite the opposite. Smart Discipline is designed with flexibility in mind. It is meant for you to pick and choose methods according to what “fits for you” in a given situation with a particular child.

JACOB S. KOUNIN: WITHITNESS (AND MORE) DISCIPLINE

Jacob S. Kounin, until his death in 1995, was professor emeritus at Wayne State University. While there, he served in the Department of Education: Theoretical and Behavioral Foundations/Instructional Programs. Dr. Kounin’s observations of classrooms resulted in his creation of a series of labels (i.e., withitness) to describe effective and ineffective teacher actions that related to classroom control. His work has repeatedly been cited in discipline-related publications.

Withitness and Overlapping

Who doesn’t want to be “with it”? What I am referring to here is not wearing trendy clothes or having fashionable hairstyles, reading the latest best sellers, or using up-to-date slang. Kounin (1977) defines withitness as the teacher’s demonstrating that he or she knows what is going on in the classroom. Nothing (or little) seems to get by a with-it teacher. With-it teachers seem to have eyes in the back of their head. No one can pull the wool over their eyes—don’t even bother trying. The student’s perception is that a with-it teacher will catch you and will deal with you!

With respect to classroom management, teachers with withitness demonstrate proper target identification and timing when supplying desists, procedures designed to stop behavior. Target identification refers to catching the correct culprit, disciplining the right misbehaving child. If more than one child is misbehaving or if onlookers and imitators have appeared, the withitness teacher singles out the central figure, the instigator. Identifying the wrong student and, even worse, punishing the wrong student seriously undermines one’s effectiveness and credibility as a disciplinarian. Teachers who are able to clearly identify appropriate offenders, while at the same time avoiding involving innocent bystanders, are preferred by students (Lewis & Lovegrove, 1984). Although mistaken identifications may be defended as one of those great lessons in life (the world is not perfect), few children appreciate this message. They see the situation, and you, as unaware and unfair.

With-it teachers also demonstrate proper timing. They execute their classroom management strategy before the deviant behavior spreads and increases in seriousness. A simple kitchen fire extinguisher can, if used early enough, stop a catastrophic fire. Yet, if one waits too long to intervene, that same simple fire extinguisher will be useless. It is no different in classroom management.

The ability to handle two or more situations at the same time constitutes what Kounin calls “overlapping.” Any seasoned teacher knows that this skill needs to be developed, and developed early, or events can get out of hand
leading to possible discipline problems. No teacher can afford the luxury of becoming immersed in just one issue, problem, or event at a time. Events don’t occur just one at a time, therefore, they can’t always be handled just one at a time.

**Movement Management**

Classrooms are filled with instructional and procedural activities that must be initiated, sustained, and terminated. These activities need to be managed. More effective teachers avoid movement mistakes including, what Kounin calls, “smoothness” and “momentum.” Smoothness, or lack of jerkiness, refers to the teacher’s ability to stay on track with a lesson and avoid tangents and digressions. Momentum refers to a teacher’s ability to initiate and sustain the activity flow in a classroom so as to maximize work involvement and to minimize deviant behaviors.

More effective teachers control the momentum or rate of flow of activities in the classroom. They avoid slowdowns such as overdwelling, in which a teacher continues to pay attention to a misbehavior even after it has ceased. Kounin calls this a teacher’s “nag quotient.” Another example of overdwelling is overelaborating on tasks and topics beyond that needed for student comprehension. Kounin calls this the teacher’s “yack quotient.” Another example of momentum is called fragmentation. Fragmentation occurs when a teacher asks individual students to complete tasks that more easily could be completed by the whole group.

**Maintaining Group Focus**

Maintaining a group’s focus involves “group alerting” and “accountability.” Group alerting refers to the degree to which a teacher can get nonreciting children’s attention and get them engaged in recitation. For instance, teachers could create a bit of suspense before calling on a specific student, ranging from the nature of the question itself to pausing before a student is randomly called on in order to “keep all students on their toes.”

Accountability refers to the teacher’s monitoring students’ task performance so as to communicate that he or she knows what students are doing and what they are accomplishing.

RAMON LEWIS: (AUSTRALIAN AUTHOR) STUDENT MISBEHAVIOUR, RESPONSIBILITY, AND DISCIPLINE

Ramon Lewis has specialized in the area of classroom discipline for over twenty years. He currently consults with schools to help teachers manage students in a way consistent with their own view of best practice, and to reduce the stress associated with “getting it wrong.”

The most important findings of my recent research concern the empirical relationship between student misbehaviour, responsibility, and classroom discipline. The results for the research are consistent for both primary and secondary levels of schooling in Australia and are also similar in China and Israel. More responsible classes are associated with teachers who are less abusive and punishment oriented, and who are seen as more likely to discuss misbehaviour with their students, involve students in decision making, hint when students misbehave, and recognize appropriate student behaviour.

Consequently it may be argued that the more frequent use of strategies such as discussion, recognition, hinting, and involvement results in less student misbehaviour and more responsibility. It may also be argued that teachers who use more punishment, more aggressive techniques such as yelling in anger, class detentions, and fewer inclusive techniques, promote more misbehaviour and less responsibility in their students.

Alternatively, it may not be the teachers’ behaviour that is influencing student responsibility, but vice versa. This could occur in two distinct ways. Firstly, teachers may be choosing discipline techniques that they believe are suitable for their clientele. That is, when their students have more self-discipline, teachers use more hinting, discussion, and involvement to provide them a voice, since they believe that voice can be trusted. They are also more likely to positively recognize their students’ behaviour because more responsible students do more praiseworthy things. Further there is little recourse to aggression as more responsible students do not confront teachers’ authority.

A second rationale may explain why teachers’ disciplinary strategies are influenced by the level of responsibility displayed by their students. When students act less responsibly in class it is possible that teachers may become frustrated. They may feel confronted by their inability to ensure that all students are respectful of rights. They may even become angry and hostile toward less responsible students. Angry or upset teachers may not be interested in being reasonable toward, who they believe are, unreasonable and disrespectful students. They therefore may find it unpleasant to positively recognize difficult students when they act appropriately. Rewarding “Neanderthals” for being normal may not come naturally. Similarly teachers may find it unpleasant and unproductive to spend time letting such students tell their side of
events, in a bid to try and get teachers to acknowledge that their behaviour is unfair and should change.

Regardless of which of the explanations applies to these findings, the research shows that teacher aggression and, to a lesser extent, punishment, are ineffective in fostering student responsibility, whereas hinting, discussions, recognition, and involvement may be helpful in this regard. That being the case it is problematic to note that teachers who are teaching less responsible students are not more likely to be utilizing productive techniques (such as hinting, discussing, recognizing, and involving). It is equally problematic to see an increased use of aggression and punishment, given that they are at best of limited usefulness, and at worst counterproductive.

My research has revealed three things about teacher-student relationships. Firstly it appears that teachers fail to provide sufficient recognition for appropriate behaviour, particularly to difficult students. Secondly, secondary teachers, in particular, should provide more of a voice for students, both individually and collectively, for example, in determining expectations for appropriate behaviour in class and, to a lesser extent, choice of sanctions. Finally, to act more in accord with perceptions of best practice, teachers should reduce their use of group punishments, sarcasm, and loss of temper when handling misbehaviour in classrooms.

Encouraging teachers to build rather than destroy goodwill with students who are more provocative is a challenging request. It will not be easy and can take many years of persistent effort accompanied by considerable support. No matter how it is achieved, there is a need for teachers to avoid becoming coercive in the face of increases in student misbehaviour, and instead, learn to respond calmly and assertively while rewarding good behaviour, discussing with students the impact their misbehaviour has on others, and involving them in some of the decision making surrounding rules and consequences. If teachers do not do this, it may mean less student time on task, less schoolwork learnt, and possibly more significantly, less responsible students.


**JANE NELSEN: POSITIVE DISCIPLINE (NOT THE SAME AS JONES’ POSITIVE DISCIPLINE MODEL)**

Jane Nelsen is a licensed marriage, family, and child counselor with a doctorate in educational psychology from the University of San Francisco. She
has authored and/or coauthored at least eleven books and has produced audio soundtracks and videotapes describing the ideas behind Positive Discipline. She regularly delivers workshops for parents and teachers. Dr. Nelson can be contacted at 800–879–0812. Her books and other materials can be obtained by contacting most local bookstores or by calling Empowering People (P.O. Box 1926, Orem, UT 84059) 800–456–7770.

**Positive Discipline**

For Nelsen it is important that parents and teachers understand why children do not behave the way they used to, and why both controlling and over-permissive discipline styles are ineffective. Her ideas might best be summarized by reviewing some of the guidelines for discipline presented in her book, *Positive Discipline*. First and foremost, she believes that misbehaving children are “discouraged children” who have mistaken ideas on how to achieve their primary goal—to belong. Their mistaken ideas lead them to misbehave. We cannot be effective in helping students to stop their misbehavior unless we address their mistaken beliefs.

If, as the reader, you have read the early chapter devoted to Rudolf Dreikurs and his Social Discipline model, you must recognize the fundamentals of Dreikurs’ ideas underlying what Nelsen has to say. Note Nelsen’s emphasis upon the root of misbehavior—children feeling “discouraged.” These are words right from Dreikurs. Where does that discouragement come from? Dreikurs says, and Nelson backs up, that discouragement comes from a child’s belief that he or she does not belong. Given that the need to belong is a basic human need, children have little choice but to engage in actions, even misbehaviors, that they believe will help them meet this unmet need.

One of Nelsen’s earliest chapters in her book is titled “Four Mistaken Goals of Behavior.” Like Dreikurs, Nelsen helps the reader to identify each mistaken goal, to resist reacting in a traditional (i.e., ineffective) manner, and to respond in a more appropriate (i.e., more effective) way.

Nelsen believes that punishment may “work” if all you, as a teacher, are interested in is stopping the misbehavior momentarily. She asks whether punishers are aware that the long-range results from punishment often are Resentment, Rebellion, Revenge, or Retreat. She asks the reader to get rid of the crazy idea that in order to make children do better, first you have to make them feel worse. Note that Dreikurs, too, would avoid the use of punishment.

If punishment is not the consequence of choice, what does Nelsen recommend? Knowing that her work flows from the fundamental beliefs of Rudolf Dreikurs and Alfred Adler helps the reader to answer this question. Jane Nelsen
would use logical consequences instead of punishment and would make sure that these consequences are Related, Respectful, and Reasonable. While we are using all of these R words, Nelsen suggests that we teach children that mistakes (i.e., misbehaviors) are wonderful opportunities to learn. How does she suggest we do this? She teaches the use of the Three R’s of Recovery after one has made a mistake. These include, Recognize your mistake with good feelings; Reconcile the fact that “I didn’t like the way I handled that”; and Resolve to focus upon solutions rather than blame or excuses.

Finally, the longest chapter in her book Positive Discipline is titled “Using Encouragement Effectively.” As the reader knows from his or her earlier study of Dreikurs, encouraging children (as opposed to praising them) is the most important skill parents and teachers can learn in helping children. Nelsen quotes Dreikurs as saying that “Children need encouragement, just as plants need water. They cannot survive without it” (Positive Discipline, 1987, p. 88). Elements of encouragement include, among others, winning (not demanding) cooperation, mutual respect (another R word), improvement (not perfection), redirecting misbehavior, and avoiding criticism (even “constructive” criticism).


**JOHN RIAK: CORPORAL PUNISHMENT OF SCHOOLCHILDREN**

Jordan Riak founded Parents and Teachers Against Violence in Education (PTAVE) in 1975 when he was teaching in Australia, and has been its executive director since its incorporation as a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit organization in 1983. He currently resides in California and manages PTAVE’s Web site, Project NoSpank, at www.nospank.net.

The disciplinary hitting of students in the United States typically involves battering the buttocks with a flat stick or board called a paddle. At the time of this writing, the practice, commonly known as paddling, is legal in twenty-one states. It should be understood that paddling is not the only method for inflicting pain. Forced exercise and denial of use of the bathroom, for instance, are commonly used as forms of corporal punishment. But paddling, because it is specifically prescribed and so blatant, serves to overshadow and thereby give cover to less obvious forms of abusive treatment.
Corporal punishment is deemed by its users and defenders as being in the children’s best interests and essential to the smooth functioning of the school. Were that true, schools that are the most punitive would be the highest-performing, children who are routinely punished would be the best behaved, and teachers’ colleges would teach paddling. In fact, school systems with the highest rates of corporal punishment are the worst-performing, children who are the most punished are the most troubled and difficult to manage, and there is not one accredited teachers’ college in the United States that instructs future educators in the proper method for hitting children.

While no one can deny that corporal punishment can effect prompt, temporary secession of unwanted behavior (so does a broken arm), children who are managed by force, tend to evolve into users of force as soon as their size and circumstances permit. When researcher John Guthrow (www.nospank.net/guthrow.htm) examined correlations between school corporal punishment and certain negative social outcomes, he found that states that have the highest rates of school paddling also have the lowest graduation rates, the highest rates of teen pregnancy, the highest incarceration rates, and the highest murder rates.

The use of corporal punishment in schools also has a dampening effect on the performance and morale of teachers who don’t subscribe to the practice. They have difficulty working alongside paddlers. Their survival in such an environment depends on their willingness to remain silent about what they see and hear. They know that paddlers feel threatened by their very presence. Some move on. Some are driven out. It’s not unusual for a paddling school to degenerate to a level where it is nothing more than a magnet and safe haven for unfit teachers. A teacher recounts this experience when he applied for a position in such a place: “The interview began with the director asking me how I felt about corporal punishment. I told him that I disapproved of it and that I couldn’t and wouldn’t do it. He replied, ‘Well, since that’s the way you feel, you’re of no use to us here.’ And the interview was over.”

School corporal punishment has disappeared nearly everywhere in the developed world. Not one country in Europe permits it. Nowhere is there any movement within governments or among educators to reverse this trend and return to the old ways. Only one country on record temporarily revoked its prohibition against hitting students: Germany during the Nazi period. Meanwhile, the United States remains stalled in this regard with between one-third and half a million school beatings per year. Criticism of the practice is countered at all levels with obfuscation and denial, with the responsible parties engaging in a well-practiced ritual of circular buck-passing.
The U.S. Department of Education says school corporal punishment is a matter for the states to decide.

In the states that permit corporal punishment, their departments of education say it’s a matter for local school districts to decide.

School districts where paddling is practiced say their policy reflects the will of the community expressed through their elected school boards.

Whenever a schoolchild is injured as a result of paddling, it is seen as a fluke, not a systemic failure. Typical injuries resulting from school corporal punishment can be viewed online at www.nospank.net/violatn.htm.

To learn more about John Riak’s ideas, turn to his Web site www.nospank.net.

WILLIAM A. ROGERS (AUSTRALIAN AUTHOR): DECISIVE DISCIPLINE

William A. Rogers, an Australian educator, lectures widely in Australia and in other countries on topics involving discipline, classroom management, and peer-support programs for teachers. He has written a number of articles and books and has produced a video package on classroom management. He can be contacted at P.O. Box 261, Yarraville, Victoria, 3013, Australia (Phone/Fax: 03–9314–0779).

Decisive Discipline

As the lesson begins, the teacher tells two boys to be quiet: “Stop (he emphasizes the verb) talking please!” One of the students has a last word. “We were only talking about the work—gees!” He folds his arms, pouts loudly, eyes rolling to the ceiling. With all eyes watching, the teacher leaves the blackboard and walks across the room to confront the student. “Look, I don’t care what you were talking about!” The student answers back, “What about Melissa and Denise? They were talking; you didn’t say nothing to them!” (louder pout, skewed eye contact). “I’m not talking to them, I’m talking to you!” The teacher is entering terminal-frustration mode. And so it goes; each transaction is a mini-battle for verbal and emotional supremacy.

Decisive teachers expect compliance; they don’t demand it. Decisive teachers recognize that they cannot actually make students do anything. Instead, their verbal language and body language convey an expectation that their reasonable requests will be followed. Their language is brief (thus avoiding
“over servicing” a student’s bid for attention or power), clear and directed (redirected, if necessary), rule-focused, calm and businesslike, and assertive when the situation demands it.

**Decisive Discipline Language**

Decisive discipline language embraces several factors.

*The Language Is Planned and Conscious.* One’s verbal repertoire is not left to chance alone. While we can’t plan for every discipline contingency, we can plan for the common ones—from talking out of turn and seat-wandering, to interpersonal put-downs, answering back, and arguing. We can even plan what to say when we have to employ the most intrusive measures—that is, ejecting a student from the room.

*The Emphasis of the Language Is Assertive.* The teacher’s language is not hostile, aggressive, or sarcastic, neither is it indecisive or debating. The teacher’s response is brief and clear. It does not attack the person; it addresses the inappropriate behaviour.

*The Language Moves from Least to Most Intrusive.* If teachers can keep the language transactions at the least intrusive level, they will keep the unnecessary “heat” down. Instead of snatching objects off a student’s desk, give a directional “choice.” For example, “Lisa, I want you to put the comic in your bag or on my desk—thanks.” (“Thanks” is said expectantly, not pleadingly or sarcastically.) Choice gives the ownership back to the student.

The level of teacher intrusiveness should correlate with the level of student disruption—low-, medium-, or high-level. It is not the severity of the consequences, but the certainty of the consequences that makes them work. The key is to avoid boxing yourself or the student into a no-win situation. The four, ever-increasing levels of decisive teacher actions are:

- **Step One.** Tactical ignoring of disruptive behaviour. It involves signaling that you are aware of the disruptive, often attention-seeking, behaviour but refuse to acknowledge it.

- **Step Two.** Directional language addresses the behaviour you want to see. “Dave, I want you to put the pen down, thanks, and face this way.” Saying “thanks,” or “ta,” helps mitigate those times when a simple direction to a student may be taken as something much more—a challenge, an ultimatum. “When/then” or “yes/when” is better than, “No you can’t because. . . .” “Hey, may I go to the toilet?” said at the start of a lesson may be quickly, even positively, countered with, “Yes, when I’ve finished this part of the lesson.”

- **Step Three.** The calm, yet firm, repeating of step two can be enhanced by dignifying what Rogers calls “secondary behaviour”—the behaviour that often
follows a teacher’s directive statement. When Melissa is directed to stop talking to a classmate, turn around, and face front, she responds by saying, “I was just showing him how to solve the assignment. Why are you picking on me?” This is the student’s effort, conscious or not, to divert the teacher’s attention away from the primary behaviour—talking while the teacher is presenting a lesson. Dignifying a secondary behaviour simply acknowledges that it may be true; it does not necessarily condone it. “That may be the case, Melissa, but I want you to stop talking, turn around, and pay attention to the lesson.” Dignifying her “reason” for talking helps defuse the situation and helps avoid an unwanted and unwarranted escalation of the problem. Who knows, she may well have been trying to help her classmate.

• **Step Four.** If redirection, rule restatement, and providing students with alternative choices do not work, the teacher imposes some form of time-out, ranging from in-class isolation to exiting the classroom. Time-out sends a clear message to the entire school community about nonnegotiable behaviour. Unless ineffectively administered, time-out is not punishment. The time-out space, although not solitary confinement, should be nonreinforcing. Otherwise, it becomes positive reinforcement, not time-out. Like all of Rogers’ steps, time-out should be administered with dignity and respect.

*The Tone of the Language Is Important.* Sixty percent of what we say is how we say it. Tone, then, also needs to be part of our conscious style. “Paula, what are you doing?” “Nothing.” “Actually, you’re out of your seat. What are you supposed to be doing?” “I wasn’t the only one out of my seat.” “Maybe you weren’t, but I’m speaking to you—what are you supposed to be doing?” “My work.” She sulks off back to her desk as the teacher leaves her in order to work with another group.

Read the above teacher language aloud in a sarcastic tone of voice; read it in a hostile, aggressive, and finger-pointing tone; try saying it in a pleading, be-nice-to-me-please tone. Our body language and voice-tone need to be congruent with what we say.

**Rogers: His Use of Other Discipline Models**

Rogers’ approach borrows from other discipline gurus’ models—especially Dreikurs and Glasser. He contrasts logical consequences and punishment just as Dreikurs does—favoring, of course, logical consequences. He offers attention seeking and a need to belong as motives for misbehaviour just as Dreikurs does. He expands upon Glasser’s (*The Quality School*, 2003) contrast of the characteristics between a boss and a leader—favoring the latter posture. He stresses the value of rules and avoids asking misbehaving students why
they have misbehaved as does Glasser in *Schools without Failure*. He maximizes student choice as does Glasser in *Choice Theory in the Classroom*.


**MICHAEL VALENTINE: A FAMILY-SYSTEMS APPROACH ADAPTED TO SCHOOLS**

Michael R. Valentine received his Ph.D. from the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA) in education with a specialization in clinical psychology and psychopathology. He has served in a variety of positions as a teacher, counselor, administrator, and school psychologist at the basic-education and higher-education levels. He is a tested and experienced workshop leader and author. He can be contacted at 23565 Via Paloma, Coto de Caza, CA 92679. Phone: 949–858–7803.

**Family-Systems Approach**

“My approach,” says Valentine, “relies on the strengths and capabilities of adults and children, rather than on their assumed weaknesses or disabilities. It is a simple truth that adults who believe in children, and who get involved and set in motion the external factors necessary to insure that the child will be successful, usually are successful in achieving that goal.” The three major underlying components of my model are:

**Component One: Analyzing Belief Systems**

Analysis of erroneous teacher belief systems is an important first step in this approach because people usually act congruently with their beliefs about inappropriate behavior. In looking at popular belief systems of educators about why children do what they do, the question becomes “Is the child seen as capable of doing what is wanted, or does the belief system imply that the child is incapable of controlling the specific behavior?” The ultimate way to determine if the child is capable is by observable evidence. Has the child ever done what is wanted? If so, then the child is capable, and all the previously entertained excuses need to be set aside for change to occur. Once this is clearly seen by teachers, the real issue is changed from “Can the child do or
control the behavior?” to “What needs to be done to get the child to do the desired behavior?”

Component Two: Analyzing Communication Patterns

The intent of this second component is to illustrate to teachers that adults who do not believe that a child is capable of performing the desired behavior usually use vague, indirect, and unclear communications and behavioral interventions that, unfortunately, say to the child, “Keep on doing the inappropriate behavior.” Again, it is the contention of this approach that if actual teacher-student communications were videotaped or recorded verbatim, it would be evident that in most incidents when children act inappropriately, adults do not give them clear, direct, specific, and concrete messages to stop the inappropriate behavior and start doing what they wish them to do.

Vague and Indirect Communication Patterns. Vague and indirect communication patterns are quite common. They include, among others:

- Ignoring inappropriate behavior. Teachers just hope and pray that the inappropriate behavior will go away.
- Actually encouraging inappropriate behavior. “That was real cute. Why don’t you show the other students how obnoxious you can be?” Don’t be surprised if the student does what he or she was told!
- Using behavioral contracts or threats. “If you don’t do these 10 problems now, you are choosing to stay after school.” The potential message for the child is: “It’s your choice, do X or Y, either one is okay with me.” Do you really mean this?
- Asking questions. “How many times do I have to tell you to stop that?” Do you really want an answer to this question?
- Asking for an effort to change. “Please try to get to class on time.” Is trying really good enough?
- Asking the child to think about the behavior. “Think twice before you do that again.”
- Issuing warnings. “Don’t you ever let me catch you doing that again.” Is the message “Don’t get caught?”
- Giving abstract meaningless directions. “Grow up.”

Even though at times vague communication patterns work with some children, they rarely work with hard-to-handle children.

Direct Messages. Clear, direct messages convey to the child in very specific terms what is to be done. For example, the statement, “John, sit in your seat
now, and stay there until I tell you to get up. While you are there, do these ten problems neatly and correctly. Have them finished in fifteen minutes to a C-level or better. Start immediately, do absolutely nothing else but these problems, and do not stop until you are finished," is a clearer, more direct message than the typical vague teacher message of “Get to work.”

Direct messages reflect an underlying adult belief system that (1) It is reasonable, from the adult’s personal value system, to tell the child and expect the child to do the particular behavior; (2) the adult sees the child as capable of doing what is asked; and (3) the child has to do what is requested—the child has no choice. This is not a hostile, authoritarian, or dogmatic position. Instead, this is a clear, objective statement of what is expected, couched in a context of love, caring, and positive expectations. It is amazing how teachers (and parents) can almost always get children to stop inappropriate behavior when they make up their minds, use clear messages, and mean it.

Component Three: Backup Techniques

Backup techniques by teachers should set the stage for the child to complete the required behavior with success. These techniques in essence say to the child, “When you don’t do the desired behavior on your own, you can count on teachers to give you guidance and structure to make sure you are successful.” The choice is “Would you like to be successful on your own?” or “Would you like us to help you be successful until you get the message that you can be successful on your own?” It is not, like most of the psychological and educational approaches of the day which in some form state, “Would you like to be successful (for instance, go to school) or fail (for instance, drop out of school)?”

Some children, especially those with long histories and habit patterns of being out of control, will test adults to see if they mean what is said. Even if teachers change their minds about the student’s capabilities and, consequently, now give clear messages to do a specific behavior, the student may not be convinced. When this occurs, the goal for adults is to back up what is wanted in a nonhostile, nonpunishing way and convince the child to do what is wanted.

In essence, there are no magical cures, no new techniques—just a systematic way of “believing” in people, education, and hard work.

HARRY K. WONG: THE FIRST DAYS OF SCHOOL

Harry K. Wong, Ed.D., is a practicing classroom teacher with almost four decades of experience. He is well published with books and journal articles, as well as video and audio tape series. He can be contacted at Harry K. Wong, 943 North Shoreline Boulevard, Mountain View, CA 94043. Phone: 650-965-7896. His Web site is www.HarryWong.com.

The First Days of School: How to Be an Effective Teacher

Dr. Wong and Rosemary Tripi Wong coauthored the successfully selling book, The First Days of School: How to Be an Effective Teacher (2004), which has been described as a user-friendly resource for teachers who realize just how important it is to get the year started right. Building upon the ideas generated in an earlier publication by Brooks (1985), titled “The first day of school,” Wong believes that students, especially adolescents, come to school with certain first-day questions. These include:

- Are they in the right room?
- Where are they supposed to sit?
- What are the rules of this teacher?
- What will they be doing in this course?
- How will they be evaluated?
- Is the teacher going to be interested in them as individuals?

Dr. Wong devotes several chapters in his book to, among other topics, communicating positive expectations and stressing the importance of teachers’ establishing effective classroom management procedures, not just rules! This contrast between procedures and rules is important to the Wongs because rules, often seen as a challenge by students, need to be enforced, often through the use of punishments—something the authors wish to avoid. Procedures, on the other hand, produce less student resistance, especially, as recommended by the Wongs, if the teacher teaches (and if necessary reteaches) the procedures at the very start of the year.

The importance of arranging and assigning student seating, when and how to take roll, regularly posting assignments, and maintaining an effective grade record book also are discussed. Much of what has been so well received in the Wongs’ book is presented and expanded in their eight-part video series called The Effective Teacher.
Finally, because the school year goes well beyond just the concerns of the first day, they include in their book a chapter on lesson mastery where one finds Bloom’s Taxonomy used as a basis for writing lesson by lesson objectives. To learn more about Harry K. Wong’s ideas, read Wong, H. K. and Wong, R. T. (2004). *The First Days of School: How to Be an Effective Teacher*. 
CHAPTER 11
Classroom Management-Related Articles: Some Surprises

OBJECTIVES

This chapter will help you, among other things, to:

- Explain how negative reinforcement can have a positive side.
- Define and suggest uses for the four teacher-supplied consequences presented in a consequence grid.
- Identify three situations where one may wish to be cautious in delivering praise.
- Identify alternative teacher behaviors that may be delivered in place of praise.
- Defend the importance of the self-fulfilling prophecy as a pedagogical, discipline prevention, tool.
- Understand the steps in the self-fulfilling prophecy process.
- Explain how power may be viewed by students as a goal of misbehavior.
- Identify three alternative teacher behaviors that may be delivered in a power struggle in place of fighting back or giving in.

INTRODUCTION

The first two classroom management-related articles that follow may take the reader by surprise. How can there be a negative side to praise? How can there be a positive side to negative reinforcement? The second two articles recognize that preventing discipline problems before they occur is preferable to correcting them after they take place. Hopefully these very readable and, perhaps controversial, articles will whet your appetite for further study!
The articles include:

- Article I, “The Positive Side of Negative Reinforcement”

Most educators do not understand the concept of negative reinforcement and thus use it at the wrong time for the wrong purpose and then complain that it didn’t work.

- Article II, “The Negative Side of Praise”

Praise may not be the teacher’s tool of choice once one examines the negative side effects that can occur. Perhaps encouragement should be used instead of praise.

- Article III, “Teachers as Pygmalsions: Good or Bad, What We Expect We Generally Get”

The self-fulfilling prophecy is presented as a pedagogical tool to benefit all, not just a select few, students.

- Article IV, “Defusing Power Struggles: Alternatives to ‘Fighting Back’ or ‘Giving In.’”

A proven Dreikurs-oriented set of techniques to successfully resolve power struggles.

ARTICLE I: THE POSITIVE SIDE OF NEGATIVE REINFORCEMENT

Introduction

Educators need more effective strategies of classroom management. One strategy that teachers and administrators overlook is the positive use of negative reinforcement. This sounds like a contradiction in terms, but it is not.

Two Major Problems

Educators face two major problems in taking any corrective action designed to improve classroom discipline. First, they must select a specific theory of classroom management. Second, they must understand the theory well enough to apply it effectively. Teachers can make decisions about the first problem fairly easily because relatively few tried and true theories of classroom management exist.

Of these limited theories of classroom management, researchers have written most about those with behavior modification-type components. As a
result, it is behavior modification that educators throughout the nation believe they understand well enough to apply as a corrective strategy. The theory seems as simple as “supply a carrot” for desired behavior and “apply a stick” for undesired behavior. Unfortunately, this theory, as well as many other behaviorist theories of classroom management, is deceptive in its apparent simplicity. The one portion of behavior modification educators least understand—and, as a result, least effectively use—is negative reinforcement. They overlook it as a positive strategy of classroom management.

**Negative Reinforcement Quiz**

To set the stage for a defense of this rather bold assertion about negative reinforcement, you should take the following quiz before reading further.

1. If you were doing a crossword puzzle on the subject of behavior modification and you were asked for a word that means the same thing as negative reinforcement, what word would you select?

2. Negative reinforcement usually results in students:
   a. Stopping (decreasing) a behavior the teacher wants stopped.
   b. Starting (increasing) a behavior the teacher wants started.

3. Do you believe students look forward to negative reinforcement?
   a. Yes. b. No
   Why?

4. Do you consciously use (or plan to use) positive reinforcement with students?
   a. Yes. b. No
   Why?

5. Do you consciously use (or plan to use) negative reinforcement with students?
   a. Yes. b. No
   Why?

**The Goals of Behavior Modification**

To understand negative reinforcement and appreciate its usefulness as a positive classroom management strategy, one must first understand behavior modification. Behavior modification is essentially a consideration of the consequences a teacher supplies in order to modify a student’s future behavior.

Specifically, what changes in student behavior might a teacher desire? A teacher wants to either maintain, or start (increase), or stop (decrease) student behavior. There are no other choices.
Available Consequences

Although there are numerous specific examples of the consequences of what a teacher does to modify behavior, all can be grouped into four categories. These categories are defined according to whether the teacher’s response involves supplying or removing a reward, or supplying or removing an aversive. These four choices of consequences are known, respectively, as positive reinforcement, time-out, punishment, and negative reinforcement.

Teacher Use of Consequences

Of the four responses available, most teachers are familiar with and seem to accept the use of positive reinforcement. Punishment, although used often, is many times done so without a thorough understanding of its side effects. Time-out, although frequently used, is incorrectly perceived as just another form of punishment. Negative reinforcement is the least understood and least accepted as a strategy, let alone a positive strategy, of classroom management.

How do students respond to these four consequences? Put yourself in the place of the student in the following examples and imagine the effect upon your behavior that the teacher-supplied consequences would have.

Would you be motivated to start or increase a given behavior if, as a consequence of your behavior, you received a reward? If you had turned in a term paper with an extensive bibliography and earned an “A,” would you not be more likely to continue including extensive bibliographies in future term papers? Sure you would! Supplying a reward (something desired by the student) as a consequence of the student’s demonstrating a desired behavior is called positive reinforcement. We all use it, it is used on us, and it works.

Suppose, instead, that you were engaged in a behavior where, as a result of that behavior, a reward was taken away. What effect would that have on you? Most people would either stop, or at least decrease, behaviors whose consequence is the loss of a reward. Take the student who clowns in class, and no one, including his or her peers, pays any attention. Following a predicted brief increase in his or her clowning intensity that still leads to no notice by his or her peers, the clowning reduces or stops. After all, why engage in a behavior that results only in the loss of a reward—that is, attention? Removing a reward as a consequence of undesired behavior is called time-out.

Now imagine the effect upon you when, as a result of engaging in a given behavior, the teacher supplies an aversive. Mager (1968) identifies pain, fear and anxiety, frustration, humiliation and embarrassment, boredom, and physical discomfort as typical aversives available to teachers. Supplying an aversive in sufficient quantity so that it hurts usually has the effect of stopping,
or at least reducing, the behavior—at least in the presence of the person supplying the aversive. This is the basis of punishment.

**Score: 2–1**

Thus far, we have discussed two responses, time-out and punishment, that have the effect of stopping or reducing a student’s behavior. It is presumed that only one response, positive reinforcement, has the effect of starting or increasing a student’s behavior. This seems a little lopsided. Teachers would be more successful in modifying student behavior if they had a second response available to start desired student behaviors. And they do! This second response is negative reinforcement—the elimination or removal of an aversive or noxious stimulus conditional upon doing something the teachers wants done. Negative reinforcement accomplishes the same outcome as positive reinforcement: it motivates a student to start or increase a behavior.

Figure 11.1 summarizes the four categories of responses available to teachers in behavior modification.

**Unjustified Concerns**

Even if negative reinforcement works, some educators may question whether the end justifies the means. Does not negative reinforcement somehow do some damage? After all, how can something described as negative be positive? I suspect we have the same inherent mistrust of negative reinforcement as we have of negative numbers (or anything associated with the word “negative”) in mathematics. The mistrust is unjustified. To address these concerns, let us answer the questions asked in the quiz earlier.

In question 1, most educators state that “punishment” is a synonym for negative reinforcement. Nothing could be more incorrect. The Consequence Grid clearly shows punishment to be the supplying of an aversive—fear, humiliation, and so on. Negative reinforcement is just the opposite. It is the removal of an aversive.

As surprising as it may seem, the answer to question 2 should be “b,” starting a behavior the teacher wants started. Note that this is exactly the outcome achieved with positive reinforcement.

Question 3 should be answered with a resounding “yes.” Who would not look forward to having an aversive removed? Take the child who wishes to get a drink of water (thirst is the aversive) and the teacher says, “Yes, as soon as you can sit quietly for five minutes, you may get a drink.” The teacher desires to have the child begin to sit quietly and uses as a consequence, the removal
of a student-perceived aversive, thirst. This is negative reinforcement. When the child demonstrates the desired behavior (sits quietly for five minutes), the teacher permits the student to remove the aversive by getting a drink.

Far more educators answer “yes” to question 4 than to question 5. This is unfortunate, as positive and negative reinforcement accomplish similar results. Negative reinforcement is just one more option available to educators who choose behavior modification as the basis for classroom management. To use it, though, it must be understood.
Examples of Negative Reinforcement

To gain practice with negative reinforcement, examine the following statements and attempt to identify (1) the specific behavior the teacher wants modified, and (2) what aversive stimulus will be removed if the student demonstrates the desired behavior:

- If you are able to complete your work on time for three days in a row, you will no longer have to stay inside for recess.
- If you score 80 percent or higher on the exam, you will not have to turn in a final paper.
- If you get all of your assignments in on time throughout the ten weeks, you will be able to drop your lowest grade.
- If you stay at the assigned task for the entire study period, there will be no need to phone your parents.

In each of the above examples, the student is saddled with an aversive stimulus (or the threat of it). The student’s way out is to change his or her behavior—do what is expected of him or her. If the student does, the aversive stimulus is lifted—for instance, the student no longer has to stay in for recess. There is no punishment, because no aversive stimulus is being supplied. There is no time-out, because no reward is being removed. And there is no positive reinforcement, because no reward is being supplied. What works here is negative reinforcement—removing an aversive stimulus following the demonstration of a desired behavior.

Quiz Results from Educators

This same quiz has been administered to more than a thousand elementary and secondary student teachers, teachers of all grade levels, administrators, and school guidance personnel. The results were disturbingly similar—few respondents understood the concept of negative reinforcement. Seventy percent thought punishment, or a word meaning the same thing as punishment, was a synonym for negative reinforcement. Sixty-six percent thought negative reinforcement stopped, not started, behavior. Ninety-nine percent would regularly consider using positive reinforcement in the future, yet only 38 percent said likewise for negative reinforcement.

Of those saying they would consider using negative reinforcement, the vast majority gave inappropriate reasons for why they would use it. They said something to the effect of, “Everyone needs a good kick in the pants once in a while”—once again, confusing punishment with negative reinforcement.
Summary

Without making a value judgment in favor of behavior modification over any of the other theories of classroom management, I hope that whatever discipline model you use, you use it effectively. If behavior modification is your choice, then you have an obligation to learn it well, and that includes not overlooking the positive effects of negative reinforcement as a classroom management strategy. See “Overcoming misunderstanding about the concept of negative reinforcement” by Tauber (1988) to learn more about negative reinforcement.

ARTICLE II: THE NEGATIVE SIDE OF PRAISE

Introduction

Effective classroom management involves getting students not only to stop some behaviors, but also to start other behaviors. From educational psychology and teaching methods courses to induction-year and in-service programs, the virtues of teacher-supplied praise are acclaimed as a tool for getting students to start or increase desired behaviors. Who could possibly challenge the value of praise for modifying student behavior?

According to Kohn (1991), though, “Many well-meaning teachers continue to assume that what works for training the family pet must be appropriate for shaping children’s actions” (p. 500). What follows may be highly disconcerting to educators enamored with offering positive reinforcement, especially praise.

Praise Defined

Brophy (1981) defines praise as “teachers’ positive responses to students’ good work or good conduct that go beyond mere affirmation or positive feedback” (p. 270). Acknowledging a student’s correct answer, without verbally and/or nonverbally embellishing the acknowledgment, would not, alone, qualify as praise.

The more students engage in acceptable behaviors (the goal of supplying praise), the less they are likely to engage in unacceptable behaviors—those for which they might then have to be disciplined. At first glance, using praise appears to be classroom management at its best—teachers motivating students to do what is correct, not motivating them simply to stop doing what is judged to be incorrect.
Praise: Its Origin

Praise finds its origin in operant learning theory where students’ future behaviors are thought to be governed by the consequences of their present behaviors. Concepts such as behavior modification, shaping, and contingency management prevail. Proponents believe that if pleasant consequences follow students’ behaviors, those behaviors are more likely to occur in the future. If unpleasant consequences follow the behaviors, those behaviors are less likely to occur in the future.

In order to modify student behavior, educators can supply a reward (something perceived as psychologically or physically pleasant) or remove a reward; they can supply an aversive stimulus (something perceived as psychologically or physically painful) or remove an aversive stimulus. Supplying a reward is called positive reinforcement; removing a reward is called time-out. Supplying an aversive stimulus is called punishment, and removing an aversive stimulus is called negative reinforcement. There are no other choices of consequences.

Where does praise fit? Educators commonly state that praise is an example of positive reinforcement. They are sometimes correct, but they may also be incorrect. The effect of educator-administered praise is influenced by a student’s perception of that “praise.” There are at least three situations where delivering praise is inappropriate. Administering praise at the wrong times and in the wrong situations may precipitate inappropriate student behavior—that which later may need to be disciplined.

Situation One: When Praise Is Perceived As a Personal Evaluation

Praise may be inappropriate when the student perceives it as a personal evaluation. First and foremost, praise is an evaluation, and most people do not like to be evaluated. Although praise suggests the person being evaluated has met the mark this time, will the person be worthy of praise in the future? What about all the times in the past when students did not receive praise? Does that suggest they were unpraiseworthy?

“Undoubtedly, the most threatening aspect of praise is the obligation it puts upon us to be praiseworthy people” (Farson, 1963, p. 63). Praise often establishes standards that we, then, are expected to live up to constantly. “Such messages give rise to intellectual evaluative threat, and impose a pressure for repeat performance” (Thompson, 1997, p. 57). Feedback in the form of “You’re an ‘A’ student” suggests that being praiseworthy is an enduring human quality that will forever persist. But is it? Consider the student who earns all “A’s” on a report card and then is singled out for praise by his or her
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teachers and parents. Woe be the “A” student whose grades then fall. This responsibility to remain forever praiseworthy is the source of great anxiety as students become frightened about the prospect of not being able to live up to expectations.

Although educators are cautioned to keep a professional distance between themselves and their students, too much distance can be harmful. Offering praise often increases that distance. Praise is normally delivered by someone of greater status to someone of lesser status. The master praises the apprentice; the apprentice does not praise the master. The person with the greater status remains in control of the relationship; the person with the lesser status continues to be controlled—and sooner or later realizes it.

For those who receive praise and perceive it as an attempt at manipulation, praise is something that has to be handled—even denied! It is just as difficult for some people to cope with positive criticism (praise) as it is to cope with negative criticism (punishment). Both are clearly evaluations; both demand a response. Often that response, especially when delivered in a public forum to adolescents, is defensive.

Listen to people’s responses when they receive praise. It makes no difference whether the praise is directed toward an outfit they are wearing, a term paper they have completed, a curriculum they have revised or, in my case, a deck I recently built. The defensive responses to praise are the same. Some examples of defensive statements include: “I really can’t take full credit for it,” “You’re just saying that, but thank you,” and “It’s not all that great, look at these mistakes.”

We also exhibit defensive physiological responses when receiving praise. Watch students who are being praised and who view that praise as a personal evaluation. They blush, their hands turn clammy, they avoid eye contact, and their pulse rate increases. All of these are signs that their bodies are attempting to cope with praise.

Is it any wonder that when students are asked which of two forms of praise about themselves they would most believe—praise given to their face or praise accidentally overheard—the majority answer the latter (Tauber, 1991). Overheard praise is judged as less manipulative and, thus, more sincere.

Why do people become so defensive when receiving praise? As children, when we accepted praise at face value, we repeatedly got burned. We soon learned that praise very often signaled that a criticism was about to follow as in, “Your paper was fine, but you . . . Keep up the great work.” This often delivered praise-criticism-praise message is called the sandwich effect.

Finally, we have learned that some of the praise we receive is simply offered to make others’ lives, not ours, more pleasant. Praising students for being quiet during study hall makes the teacher’s life easier. It may also gain the
teacher recognition for being an effective disciplinarian. When educators have an ulterior motive for supplying praise, children will surely pick up on it. Students quickly become suspicious of the motivation behind those who deliver praise, and thus the value of praise, even when it is unselfishly delivered, is also suspect.

**Situation Two: When the Student Does Not Feel Praiseworthy**

It is ironic that when one feels the least deserving of praise, those around him or her who care use that very occasion to deliver statements of praise. We all know the saying, “The road to hell is paved with good intentions.” Good intentions or not, praising someone who does not feel praiseworthy is generally an ineffective interpersonal communication behavior. Among those who hold negative opinions of themselves, receiving a compliment that they think is undeserved can lead to a distrust of the sender of the praise (Clarizio, 1980).

Take the child who is in tears about the fact that she did not get selected for the varsity diving squad. Well-intentioned teachers (and parents) are likely to deliver praise. They might say, “Well, I think you are one of the very best divers the school has!” At this point the child faces a dilemma. Someone is lying to her. Either the school’s selection committee is lying to her, or you, her trusted teacher, are lying to her. One is saying she is not among the best, while the other is saying she is among the very best. Whom should she believe?

People who receive praise in scenarios similar to the one above soon realize that the praise is being sent just to help make them “feel better.” The receivers of the praise recognize the “game” that is being played—they feel bad, someone praises them, they pretend that they feel better. The only thing is, they don’t really feel better. Further, their pretending to feel better only reinforces the praise deliverer to deliver more praise in the future in similar situations.

And, to make matters worse, what is the student in the above scenario to think when she recalls the lavish praise you offered regarding the short story she had written last week? Did you really think the story was praiseworthy or were you once again simply trying to make her feel better? How is the student to know when praise-givers are or are not telling the truth?

Messages of praise do not help students resolve their problems and, more important, do not help them handle the debilitating feelings surrounding their problems. In particular, without a resolution of possible debilitating feelings, students cannot get on with their school lives (e.g., listening to a lecture, completing an assignment, participating in a group exercise). Unsolved problems and lingering uncontrolled feelings increase the likelihood
that students will not be doing what they are supposed to be doing—hence, possible behavior problems.

**Situation Three: When the Student Does Feel Praiseworthy**

In this situation, the person receiving praise already feels deserving of praise. He or she feels especially good about something—doing particularly well on a school exam, completing a demanding and time-consuming school project, breaking a long-standing school record in sports. The specific examples, and age levels to which they apply, are endless.

One might ask, “Why not offer praise?” No harm is likely to occur by offering praise, given that praise would be consistent with how the child already feels about himself or herself, but a real opportunity is missed for helping the student attribute his or her success to his or her own doing. Teachers should capitalize upon every opportunity to help students see that their successes (and failures) primarily are attributable to causes under their control. Attribution theory defines four explanations students offer for their successes and failures—task difficulty, luck, effort, and ability. Task difficulty and luck are external attributions that, if believed, allow students to avoid responsibility for what happens to them. Although both effort and ability represent internal attribution, only effort is controllable by the student—hence its desirability as an attribution factor.

Students need help in seeing that it is their effort, an internal source of motivation, that most influences their successes and failures. They can choose to increase or decrease this attribution factor and, thus, exert a significant influence upon what happens in their academic, as well as personal, lives. They control their behavior, both good and bad. Glasser (1986) argues, “Our behavior always arises from within ourselves, never from an outside stimulus, that all we can do is act; as living creatures we never react” (p. 18).

Statements of praise do not reinforce the internal attribution of effort. Saying “I’m so proud of you,” reinforced by demonstrable nonverbal behaviors, may ignore the cause and effect relationship between a student’s effort (behavior) and success.

**Alternative to Praise: Situation One**

When there is danger that praise will be seen as a personal evaluation of worth, one needs to differentiate between praise and feedback. Providing students with corrective feedback or knowledge of results is a well-established learning principle. It should be used and used often. Students need to know if their behaviors, whether serving a volleyball or solving a division problem,
are correct or are at least moving them toward achieving mastery. Teachers are in a prime position to offer this feedback.

It is possible to tell a student that she is incorporating all of the proper steps in executing her volleyball serve, and that he has correctly solved the problem and apparently grasps the basic concept behind division, without offering praise.

Educators who rely upon praise soon realize that not everyone can be praiseworthy. The fact is praise loses its associated honor if too many people receive it. Consider offering encouragement instead of praise. Balson (1982) summarizes his views on encouragement by noting that it “recognizes effort and improvement, shows appreciation for contribution, . . . focuses on assets as strengths, and separates the deed from the doer” (p. 112). This advice is as important in classroom management as it is in learning.

What are you to do if you are just so proud of a child’s accomplishments that you are going to burst unless you praise him or her? Consider sending an appreciative I-message. According to Gordon, one of the most meaningful “gifts” we can give others is to share with them how they specifically bring us delight, pleasure, joy, warmth. An appreciative I-message conveys our positive feelings without the evaluation implied by praise.

I-messages have three parts: (a) what the child has done, (b) what tangible effect it has on you, and (c) your feelings regarding that tangible effect. One might say to students, “When I am late arriving to class because of a phone call from a parent and all of you are at your assigned tasks, this makes it easier for me to move on with the lesson, and I just want to say thanks.”

Appreciative I-messages take a bit more time both to compose and to deliver than do statements of praise. One of the reasons for this is that appreciative I-messages, unlike most statements of praise, are supported by observable evidence. This makes the message more believable and, thus, more influential.

Teachers may also send I-messages (nonappreciative) when a student’s behaviors are interfering with the teacher’s meeting his or her needs. An example of such a three-part I-message would be, “David, when you call out the answers to all of the questions I ask, I don’t know whether the rest of the students know the material. That makes me feel unsure.” This kind of message is more apt to get David to (a) voluntarily change his behavior, (b) allow both of you to save face, and (c) do the least damage to your ongoing relationship.

**Alternative to Praise: Situation Two**

Praise is delivered so often in this situation primarily because we don’t possess the requisite skill to listen, really listen, to people who are experiencing
strong feelings surrounding either academic or personal problems. After all, teachers are supposed to teach, and too often that means talk, not listen.

Educators must learn how to listen—actively listen. Only humanistic-oriented discipline models preach (and teach) this. Teachers can act as facilitators; they can use a Rogerian form of reflective counseling. They can, with training and practice, learn to listen for the feelings the student is sending and then feed them back to the student for affirmation or denial. This is exactly the kind of help professional counselors deliver. They listen. They leave the responsibility for change up to the client (student). The client comes away from such interactions better able to handle tomorrow’s problems. This is not so with praise. Praise ends a dialogue. What is left to say after someone has lavished praise upon you?

Educators should read Gordon’s (2003) Teacher Effectiveness Training, and begin to use his suggested skills of passive listening, noncommittal acknowledgments, door-openers, and, of course, active listening. Saying to our student, “It sounds as if you are really disappointed about not getting chosen for the diving team,” lets the student know that you are there, you are listening, you hear her hurt.

You can’t make her disappointment go away even though you may want to. You can, through active listening, keep the lines of communication open so that she has a better chance of coming to grips with this “tragedy” in her life. She knows that she can talk out her problems without fear that you will give her undeserved praise, will offer a solution (yours), will moralize (into every life a little rain must fall), or will offer any other of the twelve roadblocks to communication (Gordon, 2003).

**Alternative to Praise: Situation Three**

When someone is feeling especially praiseworthy, an educator should do one, or both, of two things. One, reply with a message that highlights the cause-and-effect relationship between the student’s attribution of effort discussed earlier. Two, actively listen just as you should do with people feeling undeserving of praise.

Think of a time when something happened that you just had to share with someone before you could get on with your life. Recently, a colleague came to show me a desk copy of a book he had been sent by a publisher. He was so proud that his name was cited four times in the index. I responded, “It sounds as if you feel pretty proud about having your work cited by other authors.” He replied, “Not so much proud, but satisfied.” One minute later he was on his way getting on with his life. He just had to tell someone and that someone had to “listen!”
A student is beaming from ear to ear after having raised her grade from a “C” to an “A” in your biology class. You might say, “It looks as if you feel that study group you formed has paid off. Earning an ‘A’ feels pretty good, huh?” Here, you not only attributed her success to her effort, you also actively listened to her by reflecting her feelings. Haim Ginott (1965), too, distinguishes between unhelpful praise and helpful praise. Most of his examples of helpful praise center around the child attributing his successes to his or her own actions.

Summary

The temptation to use praise should be resisted when that praise is either perceived by the student to be an evaluation, felt to be undeserved, or felt to be deserved. Rather than spontaneously punctuating each student’s actions with praise, teachers should become more informed, and thus more selective, in their use of praise (Wolfgang & Brudenell, 1982) and use the more effective alternatives to praise outlined above.

ARTICLE III: TEACHERS AS PYGMALIONS: GOOD OR BAD, WHAT WE EXPECT WE GENERALLY GET!

Introduction

Most teachers know a little bit about the Pygmalion Effect, or the idea that one person’s expectations can affect the behavior and achievement of another person. Everyone who has seen George Bernard Shaw’s play Pygmalion or viewed the movie My Fair Lady can remember the remarkable transformation in Eliza Doolittle that takes place as a result of Professor Higgins’ beliefs (i.e., expectations) about her. Yet few educators understand exactly how to use the Pygmalion Effect or self-fulfilling prophecy (SFP) as a purposeful pedagogical tool to convey positive expectations and, at the same time, avoid conveying negative expectations.

How many of you think that you are reasonably good judges of character? With years of teaching experience under your belt, are you more often than not able to size up students correctly? Sure, occasionally you are wrong, but most often you are correct. Right? Many teachers believe that they can tell ahead of time—sometimes at just a glance the first day of school—how certain students are likely, over time, to achieve and to behave.

Try the following exercise. Pretend that you are not reading an article designed to make you more sensitive to the power of teacher expectations.
Instead, jot down the first descriptive thoughts that come to your mind when you think about the following kinds of people. Be honest, now. Only you will see what you write.

Generally, what descriptors might you use to characterize:

- a teenager from a family that has strong and vocal Democratic Party (or Republican) ties.
- a significantly overweight teenage girl.
- a primary school student from an affluent family who is an only child.
- a middle school student whose two older siblings you had in class several years ago—each were often troublemakers.
- an Asian student who is the son of a respected university mathematics professor.
- a teenage boy who is thin, almost frail, and very short for his age.
- a primary child, with at least six known siblings, who lives with his divorced (and currently pregnant) mother who receives food stamps.

In spite of your best efforts to resist forming predictions regarding these students and their academic and/or behavioral future, did you catch yourself forming expectations—even fleetingly? If your answer is “yes,” then the self-fulfilling prophecy probably is set in motion. Keep in mind the adage, “First impressions (i.e., expectations) are ___ impressions.” Everyone knows that the missing word is “lasting.” As an additional exercise, try asking your colleagues what they might expect from the students described above. Don’t be surprised at their expectations-oriented answers.

The basis of the SFP is that once a student has been pegged ahead of time as, say, “troublemaker,” “nonscholar,” or “likely to be self-centered,” the chances are increased that our treatment of this student will, in effect, help our negative prophecies or expectations come true. Here the SFP would work to the detriment of the student. On the other hand, we could peg a student as “cooperative,” “a scholar,” or “likely to be a self-starter,” thus increasing the chances that our treatment of him or her will convey these expectations and, in turn, contribute to his or her living up to our original positive prophecy. In this case, the SFP would work to the benefit of the student. The fact is, teachers, more often than not, get from students what they expect from them!

**History of the Self-fulfilling Prophecy**

The term “self-fulfilling prophecy” was first coined by sociologist Robert K. Merton in a 1948 *Antioch Review* article titled “The Self-Fulfilling Prophecy.”
As part of his explanation of the SFP, Merton drew upon a fellow sociologist’s theorem: “If men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences” (Thomas, 1928, p. 257).

Robert Rosenthal did much to call attention to the SFP among educators in his classic book, *Pygmalion in the Classroom* (1968). In this book, he and his coauthor Lenore Jacobson describe an experiment in which elementary teachers’ expectations of students were manipulated. The two researchers, presumably using the results from a test with the impressive-sounding title *Harvard Test of Inflected Acquisition*, which had been administered school-wide, led the teachers in eighteen classrooms to believe that approximately 20 percent of their students were expected to “bloom” academically and intellectually during the school year. In reality, the test was a relatively new intelligence test titled the *Flanagan Test of General Ability*.

The test results, of course, were never actually the basis for identifying which students were designated to bloom. Instead, the designated student “bloomers” were randomly assigned so that the only differences between the bloomers and the rest of the student body were in the minds of the teachers. When retested later using the same test, the designated bloomers did, in fact, show intellectual gains.

At the end of the school year, when asked to describe the classroom behavior of their students, the children from whom intellectual growth was expected (i.e., designated “bloomers”) were described positively by their teachers as having a greater chance of being successful in life and of being happier, more curious, more interesting, more appealing, and better adjusted. On the other hand, when the nonbloomer-designated students bloomed, and some did, these same teachers described these students negatively—less likable, less likely to succeed in life, less happy.

It was almost as if the teachers were thinking, “How dare a student achieve if I did not expect him or her to!” The fact of the matter is that most people, including teachers, do not like to be wrong. When nonblooming-designated students actually achieved, teachers were forced to admit that they may have misjudged (i.e., formed the wrong expectations of) these students’ ability and behavior.

As a case in point, if you were a teacher and you had a student perform significantly better on a test than you would have predicted, would you look first at alternative reasons why this happened before admitting that you may have misjudged the child’s capabilities? Would you be tempted to go back and rescoring his or her exam believing that you must have made an error? Would you try to recall who was sitting next to this student when the test was administered and check this person’s exam for any all too obvious similarities in answers—i.e., the nonbloomer must have cheated?
If, as Wagar claims, “The ultimate function of a prophecy is not to tell the future, but to make it” (1963, p. 66), then each time teachers “size up” a student, they are, in effect, influencing this student’s future behavior and achievement. This is an awesome burden for educators to carry. The burden can be lessened if educators better understand the SFP and then remain diligent in trying to control it.

Mechanisms of the Self-Fulfilling Prophecy

First and foremost, the SFP is a process—a process that consists of a series of definite steps. Each of these steps can be impacted positively by informed educators. Whether educators are informed or not, the SFP will continue to operate. Surely it is better to have the SFP operate under our (the educator’s) control. The following five-step model (Good and Brophy, 1978) explains how the SFP works.

- **Step 1.** Teacher forms expectations.
- **Step 2.** Based upon these expectations, the teacher acts in a differential manner.
- **Step 3.** The teacher’s treatment tells each student (loud and clear) what behavior and what achievement the teacher expects.
- **Step 4.** If this treatment is consistent over time, and if the student does not actively resist, it will tend to shape the student’s behavior and achievement.
- **Step 5.** With time, the student’s behavior and achievement will conform more and more closely to that expected.

In four out of five steps, the teacher plays a pivotal role, that is, “the teacher forms expectations”; “the teacher acts in a differential manner.” Because Steps 3, 4, and 5 are a continuation of Steps 1 and 2, only Step 1 and Step 2 will be elaborated.

**Step 1. Teacher Forms Expectations**

Whether because, like other human beings, teachers do not like to face the future with any more unknowns in their life than they have to, or because they feel that their experience working with students enables them to “size up” each new year’s group of kids, teachers do form expectations—often during the very first day of school. If first impressions are lasting impressions, then some students are at a definite advantage while still others are at a significant disadvantage. How is this fair? How is this equitable?
The most surprising point about Step 1 in the SFP is not that teachers form expectations, but that teachers (and others) form expectations on various and sundry factors that ought to have little or nothing to do with a student’s future achievement and behavior. There is a significant body of SFP research that shows that teachers form expectations of students on such characteristics as body build, gender, race, ethnicity, given name and/or surname, attractiveness, dialect and/or primary language, and socioeconomic level.

Let’s examine, further, some of these highlighted student characteristics that can trigger a teacher’s expectations. The research is clear that when it comes to a person’s body build, mesomorphs (those with squared, rugged shoulders, small buttocks, and muscular bodies) are expected to be “better” than ectomorphs (thin, frail-looking bodies) and endomorphs (chubby, stout, fat bodies with a central concentration of mass). Among other expectations, mesomorphs are predicted to be better fathers, more likely to assume leadership positions, be more competent doctors, and most likely to put the needs of others before their own.

With respect to attractiveness, the adage “beauty is good” prevails whether in storybook heroes and heroines or in real life. All other things being equal, beautiful people are expected to be better employees—most likely to be hired, given a higher salary, and to advance more rapidly in an organization than their ugly-duckling counterparts. Beautiful people are perceived (expected) to make better parents, be better public servants, and to be more deserving of benefits bestowed upon them.

Finally, one’s name, often the first thing that we “know” about someone, can trigger expectations. For instance, my brother’s name is Randy. Does that generate any particular expectations in the reader’s mind? It certainly does in the United Kingdom. And, how seriously could you take a female CEO introduced as Candi or Precious. When minority students, who by far possess the most unusual names (at least in the eyes of white middle-class teachers), come to class, teachers cannot help but be influenced. The repercussions of a child’s being saddled with a “strange” name can last a lifetime. It has been said that parents take more time selecting a name for the family pet than they do for choosing names for their children.

**Step 2. Teachers’ Differential Treatment of Students**

Different expectations can lead to different treatments. How does one person convey his or her expectations to another person? Robert Rosenthal’s (1973) Four-Factor Theory identifies climate, feedback, input, and output as the factors teachers use to convey expectations.
Climate refers to the socioemotional mood or spirit, often communicated nonverbally (e.g., smiling and nodding more often, providing greater eye contact, leaning closer to the student), created by the person holding the expectation. Do you catch yourself creating a warmer, more supportive climate for students for whom you hold higher expectations? I do!

Feedback refers to providing both affective information (e.g., more praise and less criticism of high expectations students) and cognitive information (e.g., more, and more detailed, as well as higher quality feedback as to the correctness of higher expectation students’ responses). Do you provide more feedback on the papers of those students whom you believe will actually read and digest what you write—that is, the students for whom you hold higher expectations?

Input translates into the fact that teachers tend to teach more to students of whom they expect more—often in one-to-one situations. With students of whom you expect more, do you catch yourself suggesting and/or providing additional resources for them, believing that they will actually use these resources? At times, I do.

Output is where teachers encourage through their verbal and nonverbal behaviors, greater responsiveness from those students of whom they expect more—providing them with greater opportunities to seek clarification and/or to ask for further explanation.

These factors, each critical to conveying a teacher’s expectations, can be controlled if only teachers are more aware that these factors are operating in the first place. Even if a teacher does not feel in his or her heart that a particular student is capable of greater achievement or significantly improved behavior, that teacher can at least act as if he or she holds such heightened positive expectations. This act can be made more convincing by the teacher controlling the four factors of climate, feedback, input, and output. After a period of time, the teacher may well be surprised to find that the student, believing the teacher’s positive expectation messages, improves his/her achievement and behavior.

Communicating Expectations

Weinstein (1991) looks beyond patterns of differential teacher-student interactions to include the structure and organization of the classroom. She suggests that making changes in the instructional environment is another way of communicating positive expectations to students. Among Weinstein’s suggested structural changes are (pp. 337, 345):

- Curriculum—all students should receive higher-order and more meaningful tasks
• Grouping practices—should be heterogeneous and interest based
• Evaluation system—should reflect the view of multiple intelligences and learning styles
• Motivation—should use cooperative rather than competitive teaching strategies
• Teacher-student relations—should foster pastoral care

Summary

The three most important words in real estate are location, location, location. In education, the three most important words may well be expectations, expectations, expectations. Children have a natural desire to learn; all that is required is for those around them (parents, teachers, peers) to send them positive expectations messages. Teachers have a responsibility to understand and to better control the self-fulfilling prophecy as it operates in today’s classrooms. Like “Little Toot” in the children’s story The Little Engine That Could, who tries to make it up the steep mountain, a teacher’s repeated positive expectations messages to students can help children progress from “I think I can; I think I can,” to “I know I can!” As a result, students can become their own Pygmalions.

TURN TO THE ORIGINAL SOURCE

Much more information on the power of expectations to impact a student’s life can be found in the well-referenced book by Robert T. Tauber titled, Self-Fulfilling Prophecy: A Practical Guide to Its Use in Education (1997). It is available, just like the book you are reading, from Praeger (Greenwood Publishing Group). Phone, toll free: 800-225-5800.

Self-Fulfilling Prophecy “Selected Citations”

In order to show how the SFP is influenced by most basic human characteristics, I have listed selected citations that, from their titles alone, reinforce the power of expectations. You may wish to obtain these sources and read them in their entirety.

ARTICLE IV: DEFUSING POWER STRUGGLES: ALTERNATIVES TO “FIGHTING BACK” OR “GIVING IN”

Introduction

One of the most time-consuming and unrewarding duties of an educator is having to deal with discipline problems. Power struggles between teachers and students is an especially troublesome category of misbehavior. Teachers must learn how to effectively defuse power struggles.

Goals of Misbehavior

Dreikurs, Grunwald, and Pepper (1971) identify four goals of misbehavior: attention, power, revenge, and display of inadequacy. These goals form a hierarchy that reflects the degree of discouragement felt by the student. Attention, at the top of the hierarchy, represents mild discouragement. Display of inadequacy, at the bottom, represents intense discouragement. Students unsuccessful in gaining a sense of significance or a feeling of belonging at one end of the hierarchy—attention—may move down that hierarchy to the next and more serious goal of misbehavior—power. When educators recognize that a student’s misbehavior has a purpose and see the psychological motivation behind his or her actions, they can respond in a purposeful and helping manner. Teachers need to recognize the misbehavior for what it represents—the
student’s expression of discouragement, attempt to gain significance, or effort to belong.

**Power as a Goal of Misbehavior**

Glasser (1986) identifies the need to gain power as a basic human need. Power, in spite of the cultural taint which it carries, is in itself neither good nor bad (Glasser, 1986). But efforts to fulfill an unmet need for power can cause conflict between teachers and students. Power struggles are a type of student misbehavior that not only interferes with classroom learning but often escalates to the point where the administrator becomes involved.

Students seeking power believe they can be somebody only if they do what they want to do and/or refuse to do what they are instructed to do. Remember this is a youngster’s logic here, not an adult’s. If a teacher tries to teach a student a lesson by “pulling the child down off his or her high horse,” the teacher only increases the student’s underlying sense of inferiority. The student in a power struggle acts “big” to conceal how “small” he or she really feels. The student’s manifest behavior is a front to save face.

How do you know when you are having a power struggle with a student? You need to examine your own feelings toward the student’s behavior. In a power struggle, you most often feel angry. You feel provoked. You feel as if your authority has been threatened. You have a tendency to react by either fighting back or giving in. Let’s examine these two common, although ineffective, ways an educator reacts to a power struggle.

**Fighting Back**

If an educator fights back and is successful in subduing the student, what really has been accomplished? The child may defiantly comply, but the relationship between the student and teacher has been hurt. The educator’s actions impress upon the child the value of power, and as such the desire for more power is increased. When students lose to an educator in a power struggle, they learn that it is the powerful who win; if only they had more power, they reason, they too could win.

How do students typically deal with losing again and again? Consider rebellion, resentment, striking back (at the teacher or another student who is less powerful), blaming others, apple polishing, bossing others, fear of trying, and lying. In effect, the teacher’s efforts to win in the power struggle may backfire. Students who feel powerless view the classroom as a threatening and insecure place, thus further increasing their feelings of discouragement and thwarting their efforts to gain significance and to belong.
In reality, though, an adult simply cannot win in a power struggle with a student. Sounds strange? Adults must be guided by a sense of responsibility and moral obligation. The student sees no such boundaries, parameters, or rules. The student will use any means to the end of winning in the power struggle. He or she can be amazingly creative and inventive.

**Giving In**

What happens if the educator gives in during the power struggle? The student learns, through operant conditioning, that power really does work. Because the student has been rewarded by winning, we would expect the student to engage even more frequently in this same behavior.

What happens to the child when he or she wins all the time in these power struggles? The child learns to see life as get-get-get; he or she learns that his or her needs are more important than anyone else’s; he or she feels unloved (after all, how can adults show any real love to a child who constantly wins at their expense?); and he or she has difficulty developing peer relationships.

It appears, on the surface, that there are only two responses open to a teacher in a power struggle—fight back or give in. Both of these win-lose reactions have severe, undesirable side effects for the educator and the child. But is there any other alternative? There are, in fact, several.

**Successful Alternative: Withdraw from the Conflict**

One response is to withdraw from the conflict. Is this just another way of giving in? No! Often when a child finds himself or herself in a power struggle, he or she would like to get out of the predicament if only he or she knew how. Unfortunately, the student has already committed himself or herself. The student has challenged the teacher, perhaps refusing to do something that was asked of him or her. All the student’s classmates have seen the challenge made. The student would like to get out of the predicament and at the same time save face—if only he knew how.

Assume that you have a student named Juan who has been absent for several days and is frustrated and discouraged at being behind the other students. He misbehaves. He says, with the whole class looking on, “I’m not going to make up all that work; you can’t make me!” You feel your authority has been threatened. After all, what will all the other students think if you let Juan get away with this challenge? Note that after Juan has made the challenge, he too is thinking about what the rest of the class will think if he knuckles under and does the makeup work. The power struggle has begun.
Your first reaction might be, “I’ll show you. Just watch me make you do the school work.” Or you might think, “It just isn’t worth the hassle, I’ll give in and let him get out of doing the work.” Neither of these are appropriate reactions. Instead, try withdrawing from the conflict. Don’t take up the challenge.

Imagine how difficult it will be for the power struggle to go on, let alone escalate, if only one person is involved in the struggle. After all it “takes two to tango.” Suggest a time and place when just you and the student can talk over this problem. Meeting at another, more convenient time has the added advantage of allowing the problem to be aired in private and not in front of the class as an audience.

**Successful Alternative: Plan Ahead for Power Struggles**

A second response is to plan ahead in anticipation of power struggles. At the start of the year, explain to the students how you plan to handle power struggles when they come up. Explain that it is natural to have such struggles, but that it is important how they are resolved. Point out your logic for the need to save face (on the part of both parties), the need for tempers to calm down, and the need for the power struggles not to interfere with the scheduled learning activities.

Enlist students’ support for this plan. If we add to this planning ahead the assumption that students generally perceive school as a safe and caring place and that they generally have a good rapport with teachers, withdrawing from a conflict can be a sign of cool-headedness and strength, an attempt to see school, like society, as a place where problems should be faced up to and handled in a calm, effective manner.

Another dimension of planning ahead is making sure that the students understand the bases for your power in the classroom. Generally, students perceive that the teacher has the right to prescribe behavior; they respect the teacher’s social position or office. Students understand that the teachers have a contract to teach, that by law they must fulfill these duties. In the heat of a power struggle, where personalities are often at odds, it is helpful to refer to the school’s expectation that classes go on as planned and that interruptions be handled at other times. This becomes a reason for “talking about it later,” a temporary out for both the educator and the student.

**Successful Alternative: Acknowledge Student Power and Solicit Cooperation**

A third response to a power struggle is to help youngsters see how to use their power constructively. This is often done by first acknowledging the
actual power the child possesses, pausing to let the message sink in, and then enlisting his or her voluntary cooperation. This is an extremely powerful response. Like all attempts at discipline, it works best when students have a rapport with the teacher and generally see school as a good place.

For example, assume you are an English teacher responsible for the school newspaper. The paper is about to go to press but is missing several critical pictures that your one and only student photographer, Emily, has not developed. In your attempt to persuade her to get on with this developing task, a power struggle emerges. The student says, “Well, you know I’m the only one who knows how to develop those pictures, and if I don’t do them, there will not be any pictures for the newspaper.” You feel angry. You feel provoked. You feel your authority has been threatened. You have all the feelings associated with a power struggle. You are tempted to tell her off, even though you know what she has said is absolutely true.

You instead admit the obvious to Emily that she does, in fact, have the power to determine whether or not the paper will go to press complete with pictures. You then pause to let this acknowledgment of her power “sink in.” You then go on to enlist her help or cooperation. You might say, “You are correct, Emily. You are the only one who knows how to develop those pictures. Without your developing skills the newspaper will have to go to print without the pictures.” Pause for a moment or two. Continue by asking “Will you help us by developing the pictures?” If she agrees, then all you did to get her cooperation was to admit the obvious about her power. Your admitting that Emily has that power defuses it, permits her to no longer need to flaunt it, and sets the stage for her to not only become a hero by developing the pictures, but to develop them and save face at the same time.

If you choose to give in to your natural tendency to fight back, you may or may not get the pictures developed. If they are developed, with defiant compliance on the student’s part, chances are they will be of poor quality. When pictures are needed again, I would not count on Emily. The teacher-student relationship has been damaged. Your admitting the obvious, that Emily possessed power over the immediate situation, was not just a sign of significance for her. It was a sign that she has a legitimate place in the group she belongs.

Summary

Power struggles are inevitable. What is not inevitable are the ineffective ways educators typically respond to these struggles. Power struggles are also natural. Basic human needs must be fulfilled. The acquisition of power, especially for young people, is the most difficult (need) to fulfill. And yet for
most people, including students, there is no greater work incentive than to be able to see that your effort has a power payoff.

Only motivated students engage in power struggles. This is a healthy sign. Channel that need for power. Use the alternatives outlined above as more effective ways to respond to power struggles.
OBJECTIVES

This chapter will help you, among other things, to:

- Examine a sampling of specific suggestions that teachers can use to both establish and/or maintain effective classroom discipline.
- Explore which of the myriad of suggestions best support one’s chosen discipline model.

INTRODUCTION

Discipline problems do not just occur out of the blue; they are precipitated. Home and other out-of-school environments can exert a major influence upon children that, in turn, affects their readiness to learn when they come to school. As teachers, we can’t do much about these out-of-school factors. We can, though, address those in-school factors that influence a child’s willingness to learn. The “A” through “Z” suggestions presented in this chapter, when regularly and consciously applied, will improve classroom management.

Will you discover anything new? Shrigley (1985, p. 31) provides an answer when he states, “I concede that successful teachers have been using many of the coping skills casually; however, I challenge them to consciously sequence the coping skills into a systematic plan.” Such plans are needed even more today given the mentoring role experienced teachers are asked to play.
Successful teachers may respond to many of the following suggestions by saying, “We already do it.” While that may be true for them, most student teachers and new teachers can’t respond with such confidence.

Those who regard themselves as teachers, not disciplinarians, consider that in the real world of the classroom one cannot choose to be one and avoid being the other. Discipline is a prerequisite to successful teaching. Effective classroom management is only a means to an end—effective teaching and effective learning. Discipline is a necessary but not sufficient condition for effective teaching.

All of the suggestions in this chapter are things you can do on your own. None involve any major change in school or departmental policy. Are these suggestions simply “tricks of the trade”? Not really. Each suggestion has a grounding in theory. Take advantage of these suggestions. Use these suggestions. Get started now!

Teachers looking for a single theoretical thread to connect each of the alphabetized suggestions may be disappointed. Although some are neutral enough that they can be accepted by most folks, your acceptance or rejection of others probably will be based upon your philosophical position (i.e., Skinner versus Rogers) as presented in Chapter 3.

Although there may be no single, overall organizing scheme, many of the suggestions can logically be categorized. Some of these categories are outlined below. You are encouraged to create still other categories and to continue adding suggestions to your repertoire of classroom management strategies.

**Respect for Students**

- “C” for Individual or Private Correction
- “F” for Let Students Save Face
- “M” for Mr. or Miss
- “N” for Learn Their Names
- “N” for Personal Needs: Your and Theirs
- “T” to Say “Thank You”

**Preventing Discipline Problems**

- “B” for Blank Slate
- “C” for Catch Students Being Good
- “O” for Organized
"A" through "Z" Suggestions

- "O" for Overprepare
- "S" for Surprise Them, or "How Did You Know That?"

**Conveying a Professional Attitude**

- "C" for Calm and Businesslike
- "G" for Don’t Hold a Grudge
- "P" for Don’t Take It Personally
- "U" for Be Up
- "X" for Exemplify Desired Behavior; Don’t Be a Hypocrite

**Specific Classroom-Related Techniques**

- "A" for Act; Don’t Just React
- "A" for Assign Responsibility
- "B" for Back Away
- "E" for Enforce; Don’t Negotiate
- "E" for Eye Messages
- "I" for Identify Specific Misbehaviors
- "P" for Premack Principle (Grandma’s Rule)
- "P" for Punctuality
- "R" for Return Assignments and Tests Quickly
- "S" for Secure Their Attention—First!
- "V" for Visibility (and At Times Invisibility)
- "W" for Wait-Time
- "W" for “We,” Not “You”

**Keeping a Teacher’s Role in Perspective**

- "F" for Friendly versus Friends
- "J" for Judge and Jury
- "T" for Threats and Warnings

**Just in Case**

- "D" for Make a Deal with a Fellow Teacher
- "E" for Prepare an Emergency Plan
This ABC format may seem simplistic, but it was never intended to be anything more than a way to highlight a series of straightforward and practical classroom management strategies. These strategies are rearranged below in alphabetical order.

- “A” for Act; Don’t Just React
- “A” for Assign Responsibility
- “B” for Back Away
- “B” for Blank Slate
- “C” for Calm and Businesslike
- “C” for Catch Students Being Good
- “C” for Individual or Private Correction
- “D” for Make a Deal with a Fellow Teacher
- “E” for Prepare an Emergency Plan
- “E” for Enforce; Don’t Negotiate
- “E” for Eye Messages
- “F” for Let Students Save Face
- “F” for Friendly versus Friends
- “G” for Don’t Hold a Grudge
- “I” for Identify Specific Misbehaviors
- “J” for Judge and Jury
- “M” for Mr. or Miss
- “N” for Learn Their Names
- “N” for Personal Needs: Yours and Theirs
- “O” for Organized
- “O” for Overprepare
- “P” for Don’t Take It Personally
- “P” for Premack Principle (Grandma’s Rule)
- “P” for Punctuality
- “R” for Return Assignments and Tests Quickly
- “S” for Secure Their Attention—First!
- “S” for Surprise Them, or “How Did You Know That?”
- “T” for Say “Thank You”
- “T” for Threats and Warnings
- “U” for Be Up
- “V” for Visibility (and At Times Invisibility)
“A” through “Z” Suggestions

- “W” for Wait-Time
- “W” for “We,” Not “You”
- “X” for Exemplify Desired Behavior; Don’t Be a Hypocrite

“A” for Act; Don’t Just React

There is a big difference between acting and reacting. To act is to be in command; to react is to have the situation be in command. Teachers should do more acting, taking charge using the best knowledge base available, and less reacting, letting the circumstances dictate their behavior. Teachers who spend their time reacting are always followers—waiting until something happens before they take action. Teachers who spend their time acting are leaders—more often controlling what happens whether in classroom instruction or in classroom management.

Don’t be a “fire-putter-outer.” This is someone who looks at classroom management as a tool similar to a fire extinguisher. In this analogy, classroom management techniques are kept handy to douse the discipline fire should one occur. In reality, it is not a matter of whether discipline problems occur, but when discipline problems occur. Whereas most people hope they will never have to use the available fire extinguisher, hoping not to have to use classroom management strategies is an unrealistic expectation.

Teachers should spend time prior to the start of school planning their discipline strategies just as they spend time planning teaching strategies and ordering teaching materials. Discipline must be established, and discipline must be maintained throughout the school year. Skills are needed to make it happen.

The teaching profession is not too unlike the medical profession when we give lip service to preventative measures, yet still too often wait for symptoms to show before we take action. The “ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure” adage applies as much to education as it does to medicine. Making things happen by acting is much preferred to letting things happen by simply reacting. Effective teachers act; they don’t simply react!

“A” for Assign Responsibility

The more students are responsible for their own behaviors, the less they need teacher-supplied classroom management. Therefore, if for no reason than to reduce the time and energy devoted to classroom management, teachers should work to increase the pool of responsible students.
Too often teachers assign responsibility only to those students who have already shown they are responsible. What point is there to curing the already cured? How do students who are not responsible ever learn to become more responsible unless they practice being responsible? It reminds me of a childhood friend whose mother said he was allowed to go swimming with us only after he learned how to swim! He never did go swimming with us. To this day he cannot swim.

Learning to be more responsible is much like learning anything else. It involves a process of trial and error—one hopes more of the former than of the latter. Yet, teachers often treat the learning of responsibility as something completely different from other learning.

For instance, if a student was just starting to learn trigonometry, a teacher would require that the student practice solving trig problems (trial component). At the same time, the teacher would expect the student to make some mistakes, occasionally fail, and even periodically regress (error component). But “some mistakes” and “occasionally fail” would not be enough evidence to assume that the student is incapable of doing trigonometry. So too, when students occasionally fall short of being as responsible as we might have hoped, it would be equally unfair to assume they are incapable of being responsible.

Assigning responsibility can take many forms. A teacher could assign less responsible students the in-class tasks of distributing materials, helping to collect assignments, and so on. Later, the teacher could use out-of-class, yet well-defined and controlled activities such as having a student take attendance forms to the office. Another example might be a teacher’s assigning an older student the responsibility of working with a younger student—perhaps teaching her a specific academic skill or showing him how to use a piece of playground equipment.

The general rule would be that the assigned tasks would start off small and build in importance and trust as the student showed he or she was capable of handling responsibility. Just as it is true that “nothing breeds success like success,” “nothing breeds responsibility like responsibility.” Although increasing student responsibility is itself a desirable goal, remember its implication in the area of classroom and school discipline. More responsible students require less external (teacher-supplied) discipline.

“B” for Back Away

When you call upon a student to answer a question or when you acknowledge a student who has asked a question, the natural tendency is to move close to him. When you do this, what happens? The closer you move in his direction, the quieter his answer or question will be. After all, why should he
speak loudly when you are, or soon will be, right next to him? What ends up happening is that the two of you carry on a dialogue and the rest of the class feels left out.

What else happens as you approach the student who is speaking? Your line of sight and your eye contact with the rest of the class is lost. When your eye contact is lost, your nonverbal communication with the class is lost too.

If other students cannot hear what that one student is saying, if they lose eye contact with you, and if, as a result, they no longer feel involved in the discussion, their attention will turn elsewhere. Often this “elsewhere” results in the need for the teacher to take disciplinary measures. It doesn’t have to happen.

Keep your students involved in what is happening in class discussions. When calling upon a student to answer, **back away** from him. This forces him to increase the volume of his voice so that you can hear him from across the room. If you can hear him, so can all of the other students!

Moving away from the student who is answering leaves you with a clear line of sight across the entire class. You can see the student who is answering. But you can see the faces of many of the other students—perhaps one or more of whom have approving or disapproving looks on their faces and can then be asked to comment. The student with the confused look can be straightened out. The students over in the corner just beginning a little neighborly conversation can be thwarted. The discussion continues; all are involved.

As effective as the concept of backing away is, occasionally do the exact opposite. Move very close to the person who is answering—eye to eye. Put the student on the spot. Invade his personal space—but not for too long—just long enough so that students do not know what to expect. In football it is like having a strong running game, but every once in a while going to the air with a pass. The other side never knows what play might come next. The quarterback who varies his game plan is usually more effective in the long run—so, too, with teachers.

Do move about the classroom. Look at your notes ahead of time and judge which portions of the lecture you can deliver while away from the desk or podium. Consider using an overhead projector that has a brief outline of your notes on it. This frees you to move about the room and more closely monitor student behavior. Let a student seated by the overhead uncover sections, so you don’t have to run to the front of the room. A flip chart with the same brief outline works as well to free you from teaching solely in the front of the room.

Your movement about the classroom takes advantage of another well-known classroom management tool—proximity control. The closer you are to students the more likely they are to remain at task and, consequently, the less likely they are to misbehave.
“B” for Blank Slate

Although you may not always have time to count to ten prior to responding to a discipline incident, you do need to realize and accept that you are not a “tabula rosa” or blank slate when you discipline. You come into each discipline situation, including the event, itself, and the student, with both historical and psychological baggage. As Metzger asks, “Does race or gender influence my response? Does this interaction remind me of another one? What from my background is being triggered?” (2002, p. 81).

Do you expect resistance from the student? Do you expect that he or she will react just like his or her older brother did in a similar situation last year? Are you feeling poorly? Have you just stayed up most of last night tending a sick family member? Are you worried about the outcome of teacher-school board negotiations regarding the possibility of a strike?

The bottom line is that every one of these questions—and the answers that you provide—are likely to influence how you will interact with this student, this time, in this situation! As much as you might try, you are not the same person all the time. Life events and circumstance guarantee it. Keep this in mind.

“C” for Calm and Businesslike

When disciplining a student, do so calmly. I cannot stress this point strongly enough! Save your emotional energy for more appropriate times—animated lectures, spirited class discussions. Be businesslike, polite but firm, as you go about disciplining a student. Even a misbehaving child is entitled to respect. A police officer who pulls you over for speeding has every right to implement the state’s discipline plan and write you a ticket. He or she has no right to belittle you, to rant and rave at you.

When a student misbehaves, get on with the act of implementing your discipline plan. Skip the screaming, finger shaking, penetrating looks, and sarcastic comments. Implementing your discipline plan in a calm manner keeps the misbehaving student’s attention on the relationship between his or her behavior and the logical consequences that flow from that behavior. The ongoing relationship the two of you have is far less likely to be weakened. Remember that although the discipline episode will pass, you and the student must work together for the rest of the year.

I know of no author writing on the subject of discipline who would condone any other teacher posture than remaining calm and businesslike when disciplining a student. If you let students set you off or make you lose your temper, then you are no longer in control! Whether it is a 105-pound
female or a 210–pound male, the thought of the only adult in the classroom being out of control is very scary. You are the teacher; you are supposed to be in control. To effectively control others, you must first control yourself!

One other important reason for remaining calm and businesslike when you discipline students is that your behavior will be a model for them. Discipline yourself in manners, voice, disposition, honesty, punctuality, consistency, and fairness (Stefanich & Bell, 1985, p. 20). Students will learn not only from the specific discipline you dispense, but also from how you dispense it. When you lose control, your unintended lesson of “flying off the handle” could well be remembered longer than the intended discipline lesson.

Be conscious of how you act when you discipline students. Others surely are—I guarantee it! Work at being able to discipline a student with as little disturbance to the normal classroom operation as possible. Teacher calmness has another thing going for it: students prefer it. Students judge as one characteristic of their “best” teachers the fact that such teachers remain calm when “telling off” miscreants (Lewis & Lovegrove, 1984). Everything is to be gained by disciplining in a calm and businesslike manner; nothing is to be gained by doing otherwise.

“C” for Catch Students Being Good

Try to catch students being good, not just being bad. Given that students’ behavior in the future is, to a great degree, governed by the consequences of their present behavior, it makes just as much sense to reward good behavior as it does to punish bad behavior. In fact, it makes more sense.

Make sure students know they have been caught! Try sending an appreciative I-message to those students whom you catch being good. You might say, “Class, when all of you are sitting at your seat so quietly doing your work, it makes it possible for me to help other students who need assistance, and I really appreciate it.” Or you could say, “Class, when you put your materials away after our art time, it saves me a lot of time and effort, and I really want to thank you.” Finally, you could say, “When all of you continue doing your seat-work when I am called out in the hall to talk to the principal, it helps convey to the principal that I am doing a good job as a teacher. That makes me feel proud. Thanks!”

In each of these examples, I assume that you actually feel the way you say you feel. Why not simply acknowledge these feelings and supporting facts? Catch the students being good and let them know that you have caught them.

Sometimes catching students being good, as an effort to enhance students’ acceptable behaviors, can also be used to lessen unacceptable behaviors. This is done by trying to catch students engaging in behavior that is incompatible
with the behavior the teacher is trying to stop. For instance, the behavior of a student’s sitting in his seat doing his work is incompatible with the behavior of that same student’s being out of his seat wandering about the classroom. A student cannot do both at the same time—the two behaviors are incompatible. If the teacher’s goal is to reduce the student’s out-of-seat behavior, a traditional response might be to punish the student for being out of his seat. A more effective way to accomplish this same goal is for the teacher to catch the student in his seat and provide a desired consequence.

The more the students are “caught” being good, the more reason they have to continue being good. The more the students are “caught” being good, the less reason they have to misbehave.

“C” for Individual or Private Correction

Correction is an integral part of classroom discipline. How one corrects students can make the difference between achieving effective and ineffective results. More effective results are achieved when teachers individually and privately correct students.

According to Lasley (1981, p. 9), “Individualized corrections are directed only at those students who exhibit misbehavior. Direct, individual commands are difficult for students to ignore.” Saying “David, put your library book away and start your math exercises on page ten,” or issuing the command, “Becky, stop passing notes, and get your assignments ready to take home,” makes it clear to whom the teacher is talking and what the teacher expects David and Becky to do. Generalized comments—for example, “Everyone get busy”—might enable David to keep reading his library book and Becky to continue passing notes while at the same time assuming that they are in fact “busy.”

Private correction is generally unobtrusive to classroom processes and audible to almost no one other than the misbehaving student, or at least to only a small group of nearby pupils. Only the teacher and the misbehaving student are involved. Because no one else is involved, neither the teacher nor the student is under quite so much pressure to take a stand and save face by not backing down (Lasley, 1981). Private correction follows the adage, “Praise in public [except perhaps some secondary students], punish in private.”

Shrigley (1985, pp. 26–27) presents four intervention skills, a form of “teacher telegraphy,” designed to privately inform disruptive students that their behavior is unacceptable. These skills, in hierarchical order, are planned ignoring, the use of signals, proximity control, and touch control (actually touching a student—shoulder or upper arm). Teachers may choose to use planned ignoring, if only briefly, for slight infraction. Inaudible facial expressions and gestures such as putting your index finger up to your lips serve to put
the misbehaving student on notice. Proximity control, or standing near the misbehaving student, is the next step. Finally, subtle and unobtrusive touch control (with appropriate age and gender consideration) leaves little doubt in the student’s mind that you disapprove of his or her behavior.

If you are going to correct student misbehavior, do it effectively. Provide individual and private correction.

“D” for Make a Deal with a Fellow Teacher

To effectively use operant conditioning principles, one must be aware of the four available teacher-supplied consequences. These include positive reinforcement, negative reinforcement, time-out, and punishment. As time-out, consider striking a deal with a fellow teacher, preferably one who is teaching students of a different grade level than yours, so that he or she will take your “problem child” and you will take his or hers. In an elementary school, your sixth-grade problem, John, could be sent temporarily to Miss Homes’ second-grade classroom. Miss Homes is primed to occasionally expect a sixth-grade “guest.” She knows that he has been sent to her as part of a time-out arrangement. She knows that he has work to do and is to get on with it. No fuss, no bother.

This is a less drastic and less punitive, as well as more pedagogically sound, classroom management technique than putting John out in the hall or sending him to the office. The technique removes John from an environment in which, at least for the present, he is having trouble coping. Going to Miss Homes’ room temporarily removes John from his friends, his peers, his audience. In turn, Miss Homes may occasionally send one of her second graders to your sixth-grade classroom.

Note that the purpose of striking a deal with a fellow teacher is not to embarrass or punish the child—that is a whole separate operant learning consequence called punishment. The purpose is simply to place the child in a different environment where he can once again get back at task. There should be no particular fanfare and no fuss made when the student is moved from one room to another. It should not be tongue lashing, or calling the sixth grader a “little second grader.” Time-out as a classroom management technique is not punishment. Do not, by your inappropriate execution of a time-out arrangement, accidentally turn time-out into punishment!

How long is his temporary stay in Miss Homes’ room? That depends. It could be your decision when you think he is ready to return and join his fellow sixth graders. It could be his decision, if you so agree, to return when he thinks he is capable of returning.
“E” for Prepare an Emergency Plan

Prepare a plan to handle those school or classroom emergencies (health, discipline) that may occur in a teacher’s life. It should go without saying that the time to form an emergency plan is not during an actual emergency. The plan should be worked out ahead of time.

For instance, a teacher may need to take a child who has suddenly become ill to the nurse. What is the teacher to do with the rest of the class? Simply telling them to keep on with their work may not be the best answer. A teacher could work out ahead of time a code that when quickly delivered to a fellow teacher would tell that teacher to “please keep an eye on my unsupervised class while I attend to an emergency.” No long explanation would be required—the code word would simply and quickly execute the emergency plan.

Have you ever been in a hospital when a “code blue” message came over the public address system? Everyone who needs to know knows where to go and what to do. Everyone else goes on about his or her regular business less disturbed, if not undisturbed, by the announcement. This emergency plan strategy for a hospital helps the staff to more efficiently, effectively, and smoothly do their job. It is no different for schools.

One could envision still other situations where assistance might be needed in the classroom to handle an overly rebellious student or to take an urgent phone call down in the office. Once again, in an emergency, time is of the essence. A quickly and clearly executed emergency plan worked out ahead of time can save the day.

“E” for Enforce; Don’t Negotiate

I never have been certain whether stores displaying the sign YOU BREAK IT, YOU BOUGHT IT! would or could enforce what the sign says. The fact is I never want to put myself in a position to find out.

Just imagine how ineffective such a statement would be if, when something was broken by a careless customer, no action was taken by the store manager. The threat or, more accurately, the logical consequence of having to pay for something that you have broken would be a hollow warning at best. Once the word got around, future customers would feel less inclined to heed the sign’s warning since the manager did not enforce store policy.

Anyone and everyone who writes on classroom management will tell you that teachers must enforce their discipline policy and must do so consistently. The more consistent the enforcement, the more the students will realize that it is the policy that triggers a teacher’s disciplinary response, not the teacher. Discipline is seen as less personal, less arbitrary. Students learn that it is
useless to argue, useless to try to negotiate a reduced “sentence.” Arguing and negotiating have a chance of working only on people, not on a discipline policy. And it is policy, assuming it is a fair policy, that is at stake here.

Don’t give in to students who try to argue or negotiate a reduction in their punishment. Don’t give in even one time. A basic understanding of operant conditioning principles, variable schedules of reinforcement in particular, tells us that even occasionally giving in strongly encourages students’ future attempts to argue or negotiate themselves out of receiving their punishment. Las Vegas casinos help create compulsive gamblers by giving in every once in a while and letting the customer win.

So do not listen to students’ arguments and negotiating attempts. To listen is to give some possible hope. Why lead students on with false hope? Further, don’t let a student’s good behavior influence your responsibility for disciplining bad behavior. Some teachers let students off the hook for misbehavior that occurred during the morning because the students behaved themselves all afternoon. All this does is to encourage children to misbehave in the earlier hours of the day.

Stand by your discipline policy. Burns (1985, p. 3) recommends that teachers make sure students “know there is a certainty that violations will be caught and dealt with.” When students misbehave, they must pay the piper. Get rid of your sense of fair play that makes you want to orally warn a student several times before you enforce the discipline policy (Morgan, 1984).

Once the punishment is administered, the slate is clean. If you have a discipline policy, enforce it. If you don’t have a discipline policy, get one and enforce it.

**“E” for Eye Messages**

This suggestion deals with teachers using nonverbal, in most cases less disrupting, methods of classroom management. A person’s eyes can be very communicative. A glance across the classroom at a misbehaving child, followed by momentary eye contact, can stop the misbehavior in its tracks—all without any disturbance to the rest of the class. Eye messages are equally capable of sending messages of approval, acceptance, and empathy.

Wolfgang and Glickman (1980, p. 21) offer “silently looking on” as one of seven typical techniques teachers use in dealing with misbehavior. Silently looking on is their equivalent to sending eye messages. In practice, teachers might (1) simply look over at the offender as if to say, “I see what you’re doing, but I know that you can take care of yourself”; (2) observe the behavior and collect information on the entire situation before acting; or (3) gaze directly at the student with a penetrating frown.
Silently looking on is just as appropriate a tool for teachers who believe in intervention as it is for teachers who practice nonintervention. It all depends upon how one goes about sending eye messages.

Although some teachers send eye messages better than others do, it is a skill that can be practiced and perfected. You might invite a fellow teacher to observe your class and report upon how effectively you use eye messages. Do you favor one side of the room or direct your attention to just the front or back? Do you stare more or less directly ahead, perhaps over the heads of your students? Although this may be a successful, anxiety-reducing suggestion offered in the past by speech teachers, it is not a successful technique for showing who is in charge.

When eye messages are combined with other nonverbal gestures such as an index finger raised to the lips signaling “quiet,” an open hand moving up and down signaling “settle down,” or a raised eyebrow signaling “disapproval,” they can be very effective in maintaining classroom discipline.

The use of eye messages (contact) can also increase the effectiveness of delivered consequences. Mendler and Curwin (1983, p. 143) suggest that when you repeat a rule or deliver a consequence to a student, “look directly into the eyes of the student and capture his eyes with yours. After you have finished delivering your message, maintain eye contact for a second or two and continue to maintain it as you slowly move away.”

Eye messages, with or without words, can be very powerful. Practice sending them. Get good at it! Having said this, I should add that one must also be conscious of the cultural diversity that exists in many of today’s classrooms. Certain Eastern cultures, such as Laotian, Korean, and Chinese, view direct eye contact as an expression of disrespect to adults. Be sensitive to such cultural diversity.

“F” for Let Students Save Face

There is an old saying, in fact, a strong recommendation that teachers should “praise” in public and “scold” in private. Although humanists might argue that one should not praise at all, only encourage, the emphasis of this suggestion is allowing students to save face when being scolded.

When a student’s behavior needs correcting, correct it—but why not do so and let the student save that all-important thing called “face?” The reality is that you will need to continue working with this child for the rest of the school year. If you embarrass—intentionally or unintentionally—the student in front of his or her peers it could permanently damage the relationship between the two of you.
Metzger (2002) suggests that, with a little prior planning, teachers can communicate with students, identify the problem, and correct the problem with a minimum of intervention and, thus, a maximum of face saving. She suggests presenting quickly delivered generic phrases, perhaps while bending over close to a student’s ear, such as, “Here’s the deal: I’ll pretend I didn’t see that, and you never do it again,” “Consider yourself scolded,” or “Can you resolve the problem or do you need me to intervene?” Put your creativity cap on and think of some more phrases.

“F” for Friendly versus Friends

There is a difference between being friendly and being friends. I recommend that you be friendly with your students but not be friends with them. Keep a “professional distance” between you (the teacher) and them (the students). This is especially important for new teachers—those without a reputation already established. Students do not have a crystal ball; they have only your behaviors from which to infer your motives. Don’t provide them with behaviors from which they might infer the wrong motives.

Students already have friends. In most cases, they do not need you as still one more friend—at least not in the same sense that they view their other friends. Their friends, usually their peers, are very special to them and serve a unique support function in their lives now and in the future. Parents (guardians), too, are unique and serve a special support role. Teachers have a role to play in a student’s life, and it is one that is different from the student’s peers or parents. Blurring this distinction can cause problems for teachers when they are called upon to establish and maintain classroom discipline.

Teachers must keep in mind the primary reason for which they have been hired—to keep the learning act afloat. This is what teachers, as professionals, should do best. Otherwise, why hire them? Part of the job of teaching is establishing and maintaining classroom management. This can be made more difficult if students perceive you as their friend, for, in most instances, friends do not have to manage others. Friends do not have to tell other friends to sit down and get to work. Friends do not normally assign other friends homework. Friends do not normally formally evaluate other friends’ work.

Student teachers, and sometimes even new teachers, are tempted to be the students’ friend. The student teacher might see the students as a welcome refuge in a world dominated by university supervisors and cooperating teachers who in the end must submit a letter grade evaluating his or her performance. Avoid the temptation to become the students’ friend.

Dress professionally. Act professionally. Have in mind your objectives for the day and how you plan to accomplish them. Do not permit students to call
you by your first name. You may wish to return the courtesy by calling them by “Mr.” or “Miss.” Do not go to student parties. Do not drive students to or from school. Be mindful of telling or listening to student jokes—especially if they are off-color or of an ethnic or racial nature. Too often, jokes stress little else. Do not continue to engage in conversations that appear to treat you as one of them and other teachers as belonging to some other group. That is not how it is. Don’t mislead students into thinking otherwise.

Students should be mindful that things they tell their friends might stop right there; things they tell you may, in fact, be passed along. Teachers, unlike friends, often have a responsibility under the law to forward certain kinds of information (child abuse, drugs) to the proper authorities. If students think of you as their friend and they tell you things they think will be held in confidence, your “betrayal” (in their minds) will seriously undermine the teacher-student relationship necessary for effective learning to occur.

When given an assignment to read the suggestions in this chapter and to identify two that they would like to work on, my sophomore-level students, who are just about to start their semester-long field experience in a local school, repeatedly single out this suggestion. Many students recall how previous teaching and counseling experiences, at church or at camp, have led to disaster when they became so much of a friend that their ability to lead was compromised.

Be friendly! But do not try to be a student’s friend.

“G” for Don’t Hold a Grudge

If a student misbehaves, deal with that misbehavior in a calm, confident, and fair manner. Discipline the child according to the offense committed. Supply your logical consequences. That should be—that must be—the end of it, however. The slate should be wiped clean. “The more your past mistakes are held against you, the harder it is to summon up the energy to do well now” (Glasser, 1986, pp. 35–36). Whether referring to one’s previous academic failures or to one’s previous behavior patterns, the past is the past. Now is now.

We all hear of the trouble people experience when they have served a jail sentence and paid their debt to society. No one ever lets them forget the fact that they have misbehaved. Unlike ex-prisoners, students can’t so readily move to a different city or state, change their name, and start again. You can’t do a whole lot about society’s reactions to ex-prisoners, but you can do much about how you treat a student offender once he has paid his “debt to society.”

Bartosh and Barilla (1985) make the same point but use slightly different language. They tell educators to avoid the once-a-thief-always-a-thief syndrome. Avoid holding a grudge!
“I” for Identify Specific Misbehaviors

Before any classroom management strategy can be successful in changing a student’s behavior, that behavior must first be identified. This is the only way it can work. Specific behaviors must be targeted, for it is only specific behaviors, not general characteristics, that one can hope to change.

Saying that a student is “uncooperative,” “a troublemaker,” “undependable,” or “immature” doesn’t tell you a thing. These terms mean different things to different people. A child’s refusing to follow directions could be seen by one teacher as “uncooperative” and by another teacher as “independent.” What matters here is not which teacher is correct, but what specific behaviors of the student led both teachers to their general conclusion. It is only these specific behaviors that may be increased, maintained at the present level, or decreased. This is really your goal. Therefore, make specific observable behaviors your focus.

If Johnny is labeled a troublemaker as a result of regularly striking fellow students when out on the playground for recess, then the targeted behavior in need of correction is his striking fellow students, not the summary label of being a troublemaker. Ask yourself, “What is the student doing that leads you, and perhaps others, to label him as a troublemaker?” In this case, it is hitting other students. Once you are successful in getting him to stop striking fellow students (targeted behavior), then the label of troublemaker will no longer apply. No matter what classroom management techniques you decide to use, they must be directed at increasing, maintaining at the present level, or decreasing specific behaviors.

One other thing that happens when you label students is that the labels never seem to go away—even when the behaviors that caused the labeling have ceased. Once called a troublemaker, will Johnny forever be saddled with that label even when your classroom management strategies are successful in getting him to stop striking fellow students? Unfortunately, the answer is often yes. Avoid dealing in vague labels when describing misbehaving students. It does absolutely no good whatsoever! Instead, clearly identify the specific misbehavior, and then set about using appropriate management strategies to change that behavior. Period. Do it; it works.

“J” for Judge and Jury

What students look for in a classroom is justice, equity, and fairness. When they perceive that justice does not exist, one can expect them to act—maybe even act out. They expect no less than we as citizens demand—even in a less than ideal world. In the world outside of the classroom, we have a court
system with, among other designated personnel, a judge and a jury. Except in rare cases, the two roles are separated to better serve justice.

What about the situation in a classroom? Teachers commonly find themselves in the role of both judge and jury when it comes to classroom management. In fact, teachers not only may be the judge and jury, but often they are also the accuser. How would you feel going before a judge who is also both your accuser and your jury? If it appears to be a little bit rigged, it is. This stacking of the deck does not go unnoticed by students.

Take, for instance, the student who is accused of something by his or her teacher. How prepared is the teacher, now playing the role of judge, to ensure procedural fairness? Although one would expect the teacher, now playing the role of prosecuting attorney, to do so with spirit and determination, who will act as the student’s defense attorney? The teacher? I hope not. The student? As the saying goes, “A person who acts as his own attorney has a fool for a client.” Finally, how able is the teacher, now asked to play a role of jury, to render a fair and impartial decision?

Although I do not expect that all classroom discipline problems are destined to turn into Perry Mason courtroom episodes, the point is that teachers are asked to assume several roles related to ensuring that justice is served. Further, the courts of our nation have traditionally had a hands-off attitude toward a school’s disposition of run-of-the-mill discipline problems. This means that educators have a good deal more leeway in their decision making when it comes to what to discipline and how to discipline.

I would ask teachers to be aware of what to discipline and to keep the power that goes with this responsibility in check. Be the judge, be the jury, but govern your actions by sound judgment.

“M” for Mr. or Miss

Do children act any differently when they are dressed in their Sunday-go-to-meeting clothes than when they are in their jeans? Often, the answer is yes. Wearing good clothes signals a special event that warrants special behavior. An expectation is established that is, more often than not, lived up to.

Addressing students by “Mr.” or “Miss” can form similar expectations that can also be lived up to by one’s behaviors. When students are addressed as Mr. or Miss, a feeling of being more “grown up” is generated. What child does not want to be perceived as grown up? But being treated as a grown-up doesn’t come free. Students can understand that. It carries with it responsibilities that did not need to be shouldered when one was addressed simply as “Johnny,” “Wendy,” or “Bobby.” The title Mr. or Miss conveys a trust on the part of a teacher that one is deserving of that salutation. Once again, more often than
not, students will make an attempt to live up to that trust. They will act more
grown up; they will misbehave less often.

Chances are other teachers have not addressed students as Mr. or Miss. You,
then, are doing something different, something special. This action will not
go unnoticed by the children. Students like to “get even,” “set the scorecard
straight,” “put things back in balance.” How can they do this? Most likely,
they will reciprocate the respect you have shown them.

There is one caution to keep in mind when using this suggestion. Be careful
of the tone of your voice. In the past, some teachers reserve calling students
Mr. or Miss for those times when they wanted to use the title as a put-down.
For example, “Well, Miss Butler, let’s hear what you might have to say on the
subject!” If you call students by Mr. or Miss, do so only out of respect. After
all, that is how you would prefer they use your title.

“N” for Learn Their Names

Learn the student’s names as quickly as possible. This is a must! Many
classroom management techniques, as well as teaching techniques, are en-
hanced by knowing a student’s name. It allows you to direct your comments
to specific students regardless of whether or not you have eye contact with
them. We all know the ease with which a misbehaving student (possibly sit-
ting in the back of the room whispering to a neighbor) can be brought back
into the mainstream of a class discussion simply by directing a question in his
direction. Because he is apparently paying no attention to the class discussion,
you will obviously need to address him by name.

Do not take more than two days to learn students’ names. You simply
cannot afford to have many incidents occur where you have to say, “Hey
you, quiet down,” or “Hey, what’s-your-name, what do you think the author
meant by . . . ?” The kind of “testing” answer you may very well receive, and
one you don’t want, is one such as “Who, me?” or “Are you talking to me?”
This possibly challenging situation—sounding as if it is straight from a Robert
DiNero movie (Taxi Driver, 1976)—is easily avoided by calling a student by
name. Then there is no question who your comment was directed toward.
How you handle yourself in the first few days, and how much or how little
students find they can get away with, are crucial to establishing discipline for
the rest of the year.

Consider having students place 4” X 6” name card “tents” on their desks.
Or have students complete some sort of background information form or
nongraded pretest that keeps them occupied while you move up and down
the rows learning their names. Little is more impressive to students than when,
at the end of a period, you ask them to look up at you while you identify
each of them by name. Seating charts can be a big help. Practice associating
student’s features with their names. Who has a Scottish name and has red
hair? Does Linda over there look a lot like someone you know named Linda?
However you learn their names, do it as soon as possible. The students will be
in awe. They will wonder, if you know this much about them already, what
else do you know about them? It keeps them guessing.

Consider the story of the college student taking a final exam in a room
with three hundred other students. The professor saw the student cheating.
When the student went to turn in his exam, the professor said, “I can’t accept
that exam, you cheated.” The student looked at the pile of over two hundred
exams that had already been submitted, and asked the professor, “Do you
know my name?” The professor said “No,” and the student quickly slid his
exam into the pile of already submitted tests and quickly exited stage left.
What could the professor do? Nothing.

“N” for Personal Needs: Yours and Theirs

When you prepare for that Saturday garage sale by pricing all of those
“treasures,” it is important to consider what’s the least money you will accept—
your bottom line. You can really be taken advantage of, and more importantly,
feel taken advantage of, if you don’t think about the least amount you will be
satisfied with until it is too late. It is no different in education.

Teachers should decide ahead of time what are their minimum needs—
those student behaviors that must be present before they can get on with
effective teaching. These needs should be kept to a minimum, clearly com-
municated to students, defended as with a cause-and-effect argument, and
consistently enforced. Whether you consider yourself to be assertive or not, it
is important to identify your minimum prerequisite needs.

Do you have a need for students to arrive at class on time, to have pencils
ready and books open when the bell rings, to complete assigned homework,
to raise their hands before speaking, to keep books properly covered, to . . . ?
What student behaviors are really, really important to you? Think about the
answer to this question now.

Don’t assume students know what is important to you, what bugs you.
Your minimum prerequisite needs may be similar to or different from those
of other teachers. It makes no difference. Determine, convey, defend, and
enforce your minimum needs.

Listen to your kids. Listen to them as they express their needs. When pos-
sible, respond. Like you, children cannot meet their own deficiency needs—
safety, love and belonging, and esteem. They need help—often your help.
You too need help. Often, given the nature of your job, that help can come
from students. Students and teachers are in a position to help each other meet respective needs.

Keep in mind that listening to students does not mean that you agree with what they say. Listening should be just that—listening. Often a student’s (and teacher’s) needs can be met, or at least brought under control, simply by having someone listen to them. Try it; it works!

“O” for Organized

One of the most common characteristics of a successful teacher is that of being organized. Teachers must organize people, materials, time, activities, and lessons. Organizing any one of these things could be a full-time job. Trying to organize all of them at once, especially when there is an interaction among them, takes superhuman effort. Yet, most successful teachers make it look easy.

Feedback from more than a thousand of my sophomore educational psychology students who took part in a semester-long field experience in local schools offers firsthand acknowledgment of the necessity for requisite organizational skills. These preservice teachers never ceased to be amazed at how things went like clockwork in their cooperating teachers’ classrooms. Students were where they were supposed to be, and they were on time; materials were available and distributed with little or no fuss; time was allocated effectively; activities were precisely coordinated; and lessons for individuals, as well as groups, were designed and delivered. Added to this were all the unexpected events that had to be handled without disturbing the established organization.

I was in a classroom recently where the children were celebrating a Scandinavian holiday. Tradition has it that the oldest “daughter” (oldest female in class) and the youngest “son” (youngest male in class) serve the food and drink to the “family” (classmates). Drink had to be poured and passed out. Food had to be placed on trays and distributed. Two cups of drink spilled and had to be wiped up. Three girls working on a computer in the back of the room asked for assistance. The principal made an announcement over the public address system. And, finally, I was there for a short visit with the teacher. The teacher needed overlapping skills!

The more organization a teacher has, the fewer discipline problems that teacher will have. Even if you are not an organized person by nature, work at giving every outward appearance that you are organized. Take the time to plan what is going to happen in your classroom with people, material, time, activities, and lessons. Play a “what if” game with yourself. Ask yourself, “What if I have this group doing such and such, what is likely to happen with the rest of the children?” “What if we are able to get the Thanksgiving
turkeys only partially cut out and glued before we run out of time?” “What if I prepared individual student folders to make it easier for students to locate their work?” Explore the pros and cons of the answers to these questions.

Appear organized. Be organized. Plan, plan, plan. Accept the reality of overlapping events; they will not go away. Learn how to handle them.

“O” for Overprepare

When do students misbehave? Often, says Tenoschok (1985, p. 30), “it is when students are bored or do not have a specific task to perform.” You can make students have something constructive to do by overpreparing for your lessons. As a rule, it is far better to have more planned to do than you are able to do. To underprepare would be just asking for problems to occur.

Beginning teachers are often asked to overprepare their teaching assignments, at least until they have taught a lesson several times so that they can better predict just how much can and should be taught in a given period of time. Even now, after twenty years’ teaching experience, I occasionally get caught at the end of a period.

Overpreparing not only applies to the quantity of material you plan to deliver but also the minimum and maximum limits of what you can effectively do with the material. Say that you glance at the clock and there are ten more minutes left in the class period. You now have several options. Can the discussion of the present material last for ten minutes? Should you ask for one or two more open-ended questions to extend the discussion? Can you wrap up the present material in a minute or so and effectively use the remaining eight minutes to get started on new material? Should you plan to complete the present discussion a minute or two before the end of the period and then provide two minutes of low-volume talk time as a reward for their eager participation?

I don’t know which of these paths you would follow. By overpreparing and thinking of alternative ways you can present, shorten, or extend presentations, you will more effectively use instructional time. You will keep students on task. Fewer discipline problems are likely to occur.

There is a positive correlation between overpreparing and presenter confidence—and it shows. Teachers who know what they want to get done and who have designed relevant and interesting instructional strategies step into the classroom ready to move forward with recognizable goals in mind. They exude confidence. Confident teachers have fewer discipline problems.

Overpreparing does not equate with knowing all there is to know about any given subject. No one can be that prepared. It is okay not to have all the answers.
“P” for Don’t Take It Personally

As hard as it might sound, don’t take student misbehaviors personally. Except for the most extreme set of circumstances, students do not plot just to make your life more miserable. Therefore, deal with the specific misbehavior problem, the specific rule that has been broken, the specific discipline problem. Deal with it impartially.

It is all right for a teacher to behave in a manner showing concern, care, and respect. It is not all right, nor is it helpful in establishing and maintaining classroom discipline, to act in a disrespectful or vengeful manner.

Students who are discouraged, who feel they don’t belong, who have their own personal, or family, problems may very well engage in behaviors that are deemed unacceptable. In plain terms, they may misbehave. Certainly do not overlook the misbehavior. It must be dealt with. At the same time, though, don’t take it personally.

“P” for Premack Principle (Grandma’s Rule)

“Hey, Dad, just let me watch this television program, and then I will do my homework.” “Right after I go play some tennis, I will complete that report.” “Sure, I’ll get the garage cleaned up, right after I get back from an afternoon at the beach.” Promises, promises, promises—often unkept!

What do these at-home examples have to do with being a teacher? Well, they are presented as a frame of reference. If you can identify with these examples and realize how often we end up not doing the homework, completing the report, or cleaning the garage, then you can begin to understand why such statements lead to problems. Doing what you want to do first and promising to do what you would rather not do after doesn’t often work. Any grandma knows this when she states the proposition, “First eat all of your dinner, and then you may have ice cream.” No amount of grandchild urging will persuade her otherwise.

The Premack Principle states that one should use high-frequency behaviors as a reward for low-frequency behaviors. High-frequency behaviors are those things the person really wants to do—watch television, play tennis, go to the beach. Low-frequency behaviors are those things the person really does not want to do—do homework, complete reports, clean the garage.

No matter how good children’s intentions are to live up to their word, allowing people (even yourself) to engage in the more desired high-frequency behaviors first, with the promise that they will then engage in less desired low-frequency behaviors, rarely works well. As the teacher or parent, you end
up having to remind, nag, and generally pester the child into living up to his or her end of the bargain. This strains the relationship.

Make access to the more desired high-frequency behaviors contingent upon the completion of the less desired low-frequency behaviors. This way works. Tell students who would rather chat with their neighbor, “If you correctly complete the ten assigned math problems, then you will be able to chat with your neighbor for five minutes.” Tell students who would rather just sit and draw pictures, “If you correctly complete the remaining three pages of your skill pack, you may have five uninterrupted minutes to draw your pictures.” Tell students who just love to daydream, “If you correctly identify 90 percent of the capital cities in your map exercise, you may have ten minutes to just sit there and daydream.”

Connecting the low-frequency behaviors to the high-frequency behaviors increases the odds that students will do the math, their skill pack, and their map. Try rewording the statements by allowing the high-frequency behaviors first. The odds that students will fail to complete the low-frequency behaviors will be significantly reduced!

Note that in each of the three correctly worded statements I specifically defined what was expected of them when engaging in the low-frequency behaviors. In each case, the low-frequency behaviors must be done correctly—no rushing through in a slipshod manner. Further, exactly how much of each low-frequency behavior to be done has been defined: ten math problems, three pages of skill pack, 90 percent identification of capital cities. This is crucial. Do not simply say, “If you work on your mathematics problems for a while, then you may talk with your neighbor.”

How long is for a while—ten problems, one week, a full semester? Who knows? How long will I be able to talk with my neighbor? Fifteen seconds, one class period? Put yourself in the place of a child who is asked to do a chore. The parent says, “Work on these leaves for a while, and I’ll let you play on the computer.” You would like more specific definitions of what “work on” and “for a while” mean. You would also want to know how much time you will get to “play on the computer.” Real discipline problems can occur if the two of you have different definitions for these terms. Don’t let this happen.

How do you know what are high-frequency behaviors for each of your students? You could simply ask them ahead of time to identify their expressed interests. Another way to identify these behaviors is to schedule some “free time” in the students’ day, sit back, and observe their manifested interests—what they decide to do during this free time. Record your observations for future use in forming Premack Principle contingency statements.

The Premack Principle works. It works best when the low-frequency behaviors and the high-frequency behaviors are clearly specified.
“P” for Punctuality

“Neither rain nor snow nor last-minute copier needs nor unfinished cups of coffee shall keep me from my appointed duties.” This slightly altered letter-carrier oath applies just as well to teachers. You expect your students to be dependable, accountable, where they are supposed to be when they are supposed to be there. Can you expect anything less of yourself? RHIP (rank has its privileges), as a reason (excuse) for not being on time, ought to be used sparingly. Don’t be a hypocrite. If you demand behaviors of others, be willing to model them yourself. It is a poor leader who does not hold himself up to the same standards as those he leads.

Enough preaching. The fact is that when students are left unsupervised, you are just asking for trouble. It is during this time that students are more prone to act out, act up, act differently than when they are at task under the supervision of an appropriate adult. For every discipline problem that does not occur because you are where you are supposed to be when you are supposed to be there, that is one less time you will have to use classroom management strategies.

Is this to say that students are incapable of self-supervision? Of course not. In fact, more and more self-supervision (self-discipline) is just what we would hope would emerge over a student’s years in school. The difference, though, is that self-supervision is something that should be planned. For instance, students could be told ahead of time that you will be late for a class and asked to get on with their assigned tasks. Here it may be fair to hold them accountable.

This is very different from simply not showing up on time and expecting students to go on as if you were there. The popular television public service spot that says “It’s ten o’clock. Do you know where your children are?” speaks to teachers as well. It is the start of second period. Do you know where your students are and what they are doing? If you are where you are supposed to be—on time—you can answer, “Yes!”

This reminds me of a story. A new teacher showed up late to her third-floor classroom only to see a student sitting on the window ledge with his legs dangling outside! The teacher screamed at him, “Get back in here immediately!” She followed with a discourse on how he could have been killed had he fallen to the cement pavement below. Later, in the teacher’s room she confessed to a fellow teacher that what really worried her was how she would explain to the principal and the child’s parents just how the student had had the time and opportunity to be out on the ledge in the first place. What possible excuse could she have, had an accident happened, for not being at her assigned post. None!
Be where you are supposed to be, and be there on time. Don’t be caught in a position of having to defend undefendable behaviors. Besides, the more you are where you are supposed to be, the more constructive learning should take place. That’s the bottom line.

“R” for Return Assignments and Tests Quickly

What does this have to do with classroom management? Educational psychologists suggest that learners will not continue to learn unless they receive “knowledge of results,” or more appropriate, “knowledge of correct results.” If learners are not continuing to learn because of a lack of prompt corrective feedback from you, what are they doing? They may be inclined to misbehave. Let them know how they are doing; let them know right away. Create the conditions that enhance student’s continued learning. Give them prompt feedback.

Learners want to know how they are doing. Presumably, the many assignments and tests required of students are designed to provide just this information—to us and to them. We want students to be prepared, to be ready, to complete this work. We are prone to “get on their case” if they are late in submitting required work. Are students not entitled to be equally disturbed when we delay returning their work? How will they show this discontent? How would you show it? Misbehaving seems a likely student response.

If we don’t act in a fashion that tells students that we think our assignments and tests are important, how can we expect students to take them seriously? Returning student work as quickly as possible and doing as accurate a job scoring it as you can sends students the right message: this work is important. Failing to return the work on time or within a reasonable time sends an entirely different message: this work really wasn’t that important anyhow. Students start to think that if the work they submitted is not seen as being that important to the teacher, then future work is not that important either. This attitude could lead to disinterested students—the basis for misbehavior.

Don’t let this happen. Go out of your way to return student work quickly. Through your behavior, model the same importance your words convey.

“S” for Secure Their Attention—First!

Before you start, get everyone’s attention. Common sense? Apparently not for everyone. McDaniel (1986, p. 63) points out that “beginning teachers often make the mistake of trying to teach over the chatter of inattentive students.” He states further that some teachers “assume that, if they begin the
lesson (and there are many beginning points within each lesson), students will notice and quiet down.” How long should you wait until students notice? Two minutes? Five minutes? What if some students never notice? Eventually you will need to secure their attention if any effective teaching is going to take place. Because you are going to demand their attention at some point, why not make that point before starting to teach?

If a student does not hear what you have said, sure enough he will talk across the aisle or across the room trying to get the information he missed. You will see this as misbehavior, and we are off and running with a discipline problem that did not need to exist in the first place. What may happen instead is that the student will interrupt the class to ask for the missing information. You will get upset that he did not pay attention in the first place, maybe tell him so verbally or nonverbally, and once again we are off and running with a possible discipline problem that did not need to exist.

Practice different strategies for securing students’ attention. Some are rather straightforward. You could simply tell them, “Okay, let’s begin. Put everything but your math book away. It is time to start the math lesson for today.” Other common ways of securing students’ attention might be simply to stand in front of the class and say nothing. Silence is often the loudest message. You could play a chord or two on the piano, blink the lights, ring a bell, cough, or tap the pointer on the board. When using any of the nonverbal methods for securing attention, be sure to first teach them what those messages mean. Lights being turned off could mean a power failure; a cough could mean a lingering cold; a tap of a pointer stick could be a nervous habit.

Parr and Peterson (1985, p. 40) offer an interesting variation for getting students to focus upon the lesson at hand. They suggest you embed an assumption or presupposition in what you say to them. For example, “While you quiet down and get settled in your seat, open your text to page 50” or “I don’t know which part of this chapter will interest you the most, but . . .” The first statement assumes they will “quiet down and get settled.” The second statement presupposes something “will” interest them in the chapter. Secure their attention before proceeding with your lesson.

“S” for Surprise Them, or “How Did You Know That?”

Go out of your way to learn things about your students—their work in other classes, efforts and accomplishments in sports, part-time job experiences, home life, youth organizations, and so on. Actually, this is not difficult or time consuming to do. Just keep your eyes and ears open.

This is not an exercise in gossip gathering. It is an exercise in collecting information on students and their lives that you can surprise them with
when they least expect it. At the beginning of class you say, “Mary, how is the slinging of hamburgers going at McDonald’s?” or “Larry, that was an interesting collage you did in art class” or “Juan, what’s this I hear about you earning another merit badge in Scouts?” Don’t dwell on any one item. That’s not the point. Don’t give them time to think about why you know what you know. Just drop the surprise information and go on with your scheduled lesson.

The effects of your delivering this nice information are several. It certainly conveys to your students that you are tuned into their lives beyond simply how they are doing in your class. It shows that you recognize other accomplishments of theirs, whether it is winning an award, scoring a touchdown, or simply being persistent enough to show up night after night slinging hamburgers at a local fast-food joint. This effort on your part cannot help but strengthen the relationship between you and your students.

But surprising students with information you have about their lives does something else. It keeps students on their toes a little more. It keeps them wondering how you seem to know so much about them. They start to think that if you know this nice information about them, perhaps you are also in a position to know when they might try to get away with something—by misbehaving. The effect of delivering this information is that students begin to think that you have eyes and ears everywhere.

A local principal readily admits to dropping this nice information on his students as well as on his teachers. While they like to receive evidence that the principal is tuned in to what they are doing, at the same time they too are sure he has eyes and ears everywhere. He doesn’t; they just think so. But their perception that he does is enough. The result is that students (and, at times, teachers) exhibit more self-discipline—the very best classroom management technique.

Take the time to establish the “eyes and ears everywhere” image. After it is established, it takes only an occasional demonstration to maintain that image. Do it; it works!

“T” for Say “Thank You”

When students do something for you, say “Thank you” and mean it. If they have been cooperative, if they have done anything at all that has made your job even a little bit easier and more pleasant, show your appreciation. Thank them. Try saying “Thank you” when students turn in homework, head their paper correctly, carry something for you, pick something up off the floor, help another student, hold open a door for you, quietly take their place in line, or get quickly into their reading groups.
Why do they deserve your thanks for doing no more than what they should be doing anyhow? Well, for one thing, it is the polite thing to say. For another thing, “Thank you” is said, especially to students and children, far too infrequently. Because no damage can be done by saying it, why not err on the side of saying it too often rather than not enough.

If you want to catch students really off guard (in a positive sense), say “Thank you” (implying, “Thank you for all the time and effort you put into this exam”) as they individually hand in tests or quizzes. If you think about it, most students taking the test have sat through your lectures, completed your assignments, read the chapters you have assigned, studied for your test, and now have just devoted an hour or so of their lives to taking your test. A “Thank you” is in order. Without students, there would be no need for teachers. Besides, the “Thank you” helps temper what may have otherwise been a pretty anxiety-ridden experience.

When possible, identify the specific behavior for which you are thanking them. This results in a cause-and-effect relationship between a deed and a “Thank you.” At other times, such as when they have labored over your test, just a simple “Thank you” without further explanation is sufficient.

Saying “Thank you” lets them know you know they are there, they are being noticed, they are being appreciated. It shows them that they are pleasant. After all, we are all too ready to point out to them when they make our life unpleasant, aren’t we? Saying “Thank you” also models for students the appropriate way to respond when others make your life just a little bit easier. Who knows, students may end up saying “Thank you” to you as well as to classmates. It really could happen. Make a habit of saying “Thank you.”

“T” for Threats and Warnings

Don’t threaten to take action. Take action. If you have a discipline plan, then the plan dictates that either action is warranted or it is not warranted. There can be no other choice! Your discipline plan, the agreed-upon rules, should be clear enough to all concerned so that teachers and students alike understand what triggers the plan and what does not.

Threats can undermine an otherwise successful discipline plan. They make discipline personal when it need not be—should not be. Even worse, some teachers use their threats as their discipline plan—forming it “on the run.” Students are forced to interpret or extrapolate from threats just what the teacher’s discipline plan is. Woe to the student who does not figure out the plan in time!

What usually happens when teachers threaten is that students try to figure out just how far they can go before the teacher will actually carry out the
threat. “When teachers finally decide to impose consequences, hostility and ill feelings are likely to result for everyone” (Charles, 1985, p. 136). A discipline plan based or formed on a series of teacher threats is often heavily influenced by a teacher’s feelings. If a teacher feels great one day, students can get away with more. If a teacher feels lousy another day, students can get away with less. Too much precious student time and energy are wasted playing this decoding game.

Another trouble with threats is that, after a while, they are ineffective unless they are carried out. How many teachers have you heard threaten to throw kids out of class, suspend them, or expel them? Obviously, far more teachers are going to carry out their threats of throwing a student out of class than expelling him or her. Which threats are the students to believe? What happens to classroom discipline when threats are made and found to be unenforceable? Teachers should never paint themselves into a corner by promising (threatening) what they can’t deliver!

Nothing is to be gained by threats. Avoid them. When tempted to threaten a student, refer to your thought-out discipline plan. Let your plan dictate your actions. Don’t let your threats dictate your actions.

Is there any place in a teacher’s discipline plan for issuing warnings? Charles (1985, p. 137) feels that a warning should be given only once, if at all. Even that warning might take form of the teacher’s saying, “The next time you do such and such, I must enforce the consequence (penalty) you seem to be choosing.”

“U” for Be Up

Wouldn’t it be wonderful if the advice, “Don’t worry, be happy,” displayed on millions of smiley-face T-shirts, could be followed? But reality often dictates otherwise. Nevertheless, when you enter school, try your best to leave your worries outside. They can be retrieved after school when you leave. No one will take them.

Carrying personal problems into the classroom can interfere with your teaching and with students’ learning. Problems unrelated to health, such as insurance bills that are due, a fight with your spouse, or a recent fender-bender, can put a real damper on your day. I understand that. But you need to deal with these problems on your own time, not the students’ time.

If a student says, “Good morning, Mrs. Goodenow. How are you?” you don’t have to lie and say, “I’m doing great.” Besides, the emphasis you would place on these words and your accompanying body language would probably send a mixed message. You could just say, “Not bad, how about you?” Often a “How are you?” whether initiated by you, a student, or a fellow teacher, is just
a polite way of acknowledging one another. While on the run, most people do not want to listen to your problems anyhow. On the other hand, during a planning period where you and a valued friend or colleague have some private time, you might bend his or her ear for a while. Once the bell rings, put the problem away and get on with devoting your full attention to being a teacher.

There are problems of a health nature that are sometimes difficult to conceal. These cannot be placed on the school’s doorstep. If a sprained back suffered in a fall on the ice the night before is impeding your movement about the room, the problem probably ought to be shared with students, using as few details as possible, to let them know what to expect that day. For instance, “Because of a fall I had on the ice, I will like you to help me by coming up, one at a time, to my desk when you need assistance.”

In general, “being up” can be contagious spreading throughout the school. What a wonderful epidemic it would be!

“V” for Visibility (and At Times Invisibility)

The bell has rung, and students are changing class. Where are you? The students are called for an assembly. Where are you? Numerous extracurricular events are taking place. Where are you? My suggestion is that you make yourself visible. Let students note your presence.

When classes are changing, consider standing near the doorway so that you can monitor both your classroom and the hallway outside of your room. Present the appearance that you are ready to deal with disciplinary infractions when you see them—in or out of your room. Keep in mind that, legally, any and all students in the school are partially your responsibility. Your responsibility for discipline is schoolwide; it does not end with the last person on your homeroom or class roster.

Will the end result of being visible be more discipline work for you? No! In fact, the more visible you as well as fellow teachers are, the less often students will misbehave. Misbehaving students are opportunistic. Don’t give them quite so many opportunities. Drivers speed less often when the police are visible. Siblings tend to battle less when parents are visible. Students misbehave less when teachers are visible.

Now, what about being invisible? I recommend that you purchase a pair of softsoled shoes that will enable you to move about the classroom, study hall, assembly, lunchroom, or building while making a minimum of noise. Unlike police who turn on their sirens blocks away for all to hear, teachers should be able to move about without their noisy shoes providing advance notice. In addition to the fact that the noise may be annoying to students who are trying to work, it is clear giveaway to students who are not working.
Vary your path and time schedule so that you are not so predictable. “Good” students perceive that you are available, and “not-so-good” students think you are everywhere (Graff, 1981, p. 3)!

Be visible—at the right times. Be invisible—at the right times.

**“W” for Wait-Time**

An analysis of teachers’ questioning behavior shows that it is not at all uncommon for teachers to wait no more than one second before repeating a question, rephrasing it, or calling upon someone else (Rowe, 1978, p. 207). Further, according to Rowe (p. 207), “Once a student has responded, the teacher typically waits less than one second... before commenting on the answer or asking another question.”

The net result of this pattern of behavior often is a flurry of questions and answers that leaves, at best, both the teacher and the student exhausted and, at worst, does little “to stimulate a student’s thought or quality of explanation” (Rowe, p. 207). When, according to Rowe, teachers extended their wait-time to three seconds or more, several things happened. The length of student responses increased; the number of unsolicited but appropriate responses increased; failures to respond decreased; incidences of speculative thinking increased, contributions by slow learners increased; and, related to the focus of this book, the number of disciplinary moves the teachers had to make dropped dramatically!

The anticipated increase in discipline problems due to the teacher’s not keeping “the action going” simply did not materialize. Students did not use this three-second wait-time to act up; they used it to think. Tobin and Capie (1982) support this conclusion showing a significant positive correlation between wait-time and achievement. The message here is that a better way to maintain classroom discipline (as well as to increase learning) is to keep the students busy thinking, not necessarily answering rapid-paced questions so common in many of today’s classrooms.

Perhaps, according to Stahl (1994), the term “think time” would be a more accurate label than “wait-time” because, among other things, it names the primary academic purpose of this period of silence—to allow both the teacher and students to complete on-task thinking.

**“W” for “We,” Not “You”**

We are all in this together with a shared responsibility for the success or the failure of today’s class, of this semester, of the school year. A behavioral problem is not just a student’s problem, nor is it just a teacher’s problem. It is a
problem for both. To increase our chances of success and reduce our chances of failure, cooperation is the name of the game. Preach this message, practice this message. The more the idea of shared responsibility and mutual cooperation is accepted, the less likely it is that there will be behavioral problems.

Consider the hidden message delivered in the following statements—both designed to set the morning’s activities. Statement one: “This morning we are going to complete our science write-up during the first half of our morning, and then we will use the remaining time to discuss the selection of books you and I think we should request the library to order.” Statement two: “This morning you are going to complete your science write-up during the first half of the (your) period, and then you can use the remaining time to discuss the selection of books (you think) the library should order.”

The first statement contains a lot of mutual ownership—our write-up, our morning, our discussion, our request. It conveys a message that the teacher will be working just as hard as the students. In fact, this is what will normally occur. The students set about doing the write-up while the teacher circulates among them answering some questions and asking still others, making comments, offering words of encouragement, posing what-if situations, and more. Such assignments are no free ride for a teacher. The “we” in the message suggests that the teacher is asking no more of his or her students than he or she is willing to do. Both are working. It is clear that the teacher and students are in this together.

In the second statement there is little, if any, mutual ownership. It appears that only the students have work to do; only they will work to complete the assignments. The teacher’s role seems to be one of simply telling students what they will do (with statements such as “You are going to . . .”). I wonder what the teacher will be doing? “You do this” and “you do that” statements from teachers are often accompanied by finger pointing. Have you ever tried to point your finger at someone and say “we”? It is like trying to shake your head back and forth and say “yes” at the same time.

What is done in a classroom usually involves both the teacher and the student. Together they can make quite a team. They can complete assignments, make plans, and solve problems. Where it applies, use “we” rather than “you” when talking with students.

“X” for Exemplify Desired Behavior; Don’t Be a Hypocrite

Most of us have been in the position of hearing someone in authority say, “Don’t do as I do, do as I say.” Try to remember how you felt when he or she made that statement. Think of how you felt when the person used that authority to enforce his or her demand. You probably felt some resentment.
You probably thought to yourself, “Where do you get off telling me to do such and such? You tell me to do it, but don’t do it yourself—you hypocrite.” The bottom line is for educators to practice what they preach.

Although there are legitimate times when, as an adult and as a teacher, you will have the right to do things your students are not permitted to do, such instances should be kept to a minimum. RHIP, though steeped in fraternity, military, and societal tradition, can cause discipline problems if abused. When you do things that students are not permitted to do, especially if you flaunt it, it offends their sense of fairness. Children see fairness in simple black-and-white terms. Although maturity helps clarify their view of fairness, until then, what is good for the goose is seen as good for the gander as far as they are concerned.

I understand that you have worked long and hard to become a good teacher—a respected professional in the community. Shouldn’t certain privileges accompany the title? Haven’t you earned the right to do all the things you saw many of your teachers doing when you were a student? Although the answer may be yes, it would be best to control the temptation to do so from a classroom management viewpoint.

Try to put yourself back into the position of a student. Look at your behavior through your students’ eyes. What do you suppose they are thinking when, during your thirty-minute, duty-free lunch period, you cut into the lunch line? Are you really any more hungry than the students? Even if you are, does that give you the right to cut in? If you constantly interrupt students when they are speaking and yet criticize them when they do so, where is the fairness? When you tell them that you just bought a radar detector, is it fair in the same breath to chastise them for cheating on a test or for plagiarizing a term paper? After all, what is the radar detector used for other than to cheat on the speed limit—the law? Your actions do speak louder than your words.

Keep in mind that students learn a lot more from observing models or exemplars (teachers) than may be readily evident in their observed performance. The learning has taken place even if students are reluctant to repeat the observed behavior. Study after study has shown that when enticed (perhaps by peers or by other circumstances) to demonstrate an earlier observed behavior, most students are capable of repeating that behavior. Watch what you are doing; others are. Don’t let your words and actions make you a hypocrite. Exemplify desired behaviors.

You should be prepared to explain each suggestion and then be able to provide an original example of the suggestion as it might apply to your classroom. Further, you should be able to defend whether or not each suggestion “should” be used in your classroom.
CHAPTER 13
Acting and Discipline

OBJECTIVES

This chapter will help you, among other things, to:

- Examine a sampling of acting/performances skills that teachers can use to establish and/or maintain effective classroom discipline.
- Recognize how acting/performance skills contribute to effective, engaging, and enthusiastic teaching, which, in turn, help prevent discipline problems.

INTRODUCTION

How do acting skills and classroom management fit together? With teaching being such a demanding profession, and discipline being part of that demand, it is comforting to know that effective use of acting skills can benefit both instruction and classroom management. In this chapter several specific applications of how acting/performance skills can contribute to more effective classroom discipline are offered.

Acting skills can be used to engage students, and engaged students are far less likely to misbehave. Reread the previous sentence—it is that important! Prevention is the best form of discipline. Acting skills also can be used to handle discipline problems when and if they occur. Trust me on this one; they work and they work well!
PUTTING ON AN ACT

One of the joys of teaching children is watching them do what they naturally do. Parents know this, too. Sometimes what they do is seen by teachers as hindering their teaching. Students can be so exuberant that they seem annoying and frustrating, moving teachers to question “Why am I here?” But, what students do also can be seen as cute, funny, and, at times, downright hysterical. Their hormones are running their lives. They are forming, breaking, and reforming alliances. They are trying to “save face,” and when academic challenges are overwhelming, they are thinking up and trying to effectively deliver excuses when they find themselves caught with their “hand in the cookie jar.” And, because they are still inexperienced at being especially clever, their efforts are often transparent to teachers.

For instance, in a preschool class observed by the author, a four-year-old boy punched the little girl sitting next to him during their drawing time. It was only a four-year-old punch, so no real harm was done. But, the teacher, wanting to keep order, spoke sternly to him saying, “Little boys don’t punch little girls.” With a completely dumbfounded and confused look, the boy responded, “But I just did.” On one level, his comment is a funny revelation of his naïve sense that what the teacher said had to be wrong because his own actions had contradicted her words. Tempting as it is to smile at this confusion in a youngster still learning word usage, smiling would have, unfortunately, suggested a tolerance for “talking back” that could have damaged classroom decorum in the long run.

Teachers should respond to discipline infractions by acting as if they have “seen it all.” This is relatively easy for seasoned teachers because they have, in fact, “seen it all”—or at least most of it. For new teachers, the task might be a bit more difficult. At any rate, sometimes teachers need to act in a stern manner, act in a disapproving manner, act in a disappointed manner, and, for some, even act in a mean manner when inside themselves they are resisting all temptation to break out in raucous laughter. Experienced teachers know that giving in to this temptation actually may reinforce the undesired student behavior. So, as effective disciplinarians, teachers hold in their laughter, control their temptation to smile, and resist sending even the hint of a message that says, “I really thought what you did was cute.” To do this, they need to act.

In Jones’ *Tools for Teaching* (2007) discipline model, teachers are encouraged to practice their *act*—practice their act of looking bored when confronting a misbehaving student. Teachers are taught to avoid even having the corners of their mouths curl up at the last moment signaling that, in reality, “I found what you were doing funny.” When some students’ behaviors are just so cute that it is almost impossible to resist smiling at them when they misbehave,
Jones instructs teachers to look not directly in the students’ eyes but at a point on the forehead just above the students’ eyes. In this way, the actor—the teacher, can stay in character.

This advice is not all that different from that given to actors who when delivering their lines in a comedy situation must resist the temptation to laugh. Harvey Korman and Tim Conway had such trouble keeping a straight face when working with one another on the *Carol Burnett Show* that their hysterical outtakes have recently been made into a television special. Take after take was required to complete the scene. Teachers do not have time for take after take.

**ANIMATION IN VOICE**

Animation in voice includes, among other characteristics, pitch, volume, and rate. When it comes to classroom management, if calmness signals strength (and it does!), then a teacher’s high pitch, combined with loud volume (i.e., screaming), and rapid rate becomes a scream and signals weakness. While more purposefully varied use of pitch, rate, and volume conveys teacher enthusiasm, its misuse can convey a teacher out of control, a teacher “losing it,” or a teacher who has let students get under “his or her skin.”

A higher than necessary volume in voice when disciplining a student ignores the sound pedagogical truism, “praise in public, chastise in private.” A teacher’s voice being too loud also is likely to result in distracting an entire class away from its productive work to become, instead, a “peanut gallery” of observers watching the teacher’s discipline efforts. On the other hand, a quieter volume (along with a conversational rate and pitch), combined with proximity control, is likely to keep discipline efforts focused on the one misbehaving student—where it should be.

Another successful classroom management tool, especially one that can be used to get the attention of students whose attention might be wandering, is to lower one’s volume. This should be a purposeful acción on the part of a teacher. It is amazing how a reduction in a speaker’s volume can cause listeners, including children, to lean forward and listen more carefully.

Sometimes order and discipline are enhanced by using no voice at all. Because, as the saying suggests, “It takes two to tango.” If only one person is talking (i.e., the student), there can be no “tangoing”! Refusing to verbally “tango” with a student often can diffuse a discipline problem. Jones’ discipline model has teachers doing 80 percent of their disciplining with their mouths closed! With a bit of tongue-in-cheek, for some teachers used to talking, talking, talking, this might take some serious self control—some serious acting.
Another example of not using one’s voice to establish classroom management is the use of signals that convey a preexplained message. One faculty member (in fact it is me!) purchased a musical triangle and uses it to convey, among other things, that it is time to get ready for lunch, time to return to your seat following group work, or time to move on to the next portion of the exam. How much more pleasant it is for students to hear a chime from a musical triangle than to hear a teacher’s voice trying to scream above the din of the classroom. Many teachers use the blinking of classroom lights as a less intrusive signal for indicating a change in activity or a request to quiet down. In the theatre, the audience is called back to the performance by dimmed lights or chimes and not by someone screaming, “Let’s get back to our seats!”

**ANIMATION IN BODY**

Another acting-related skill that is effective in establishing and maintaining classroom management is animation in body, actually, lack of animation in body. Jones (once again), in his books *Positive Classroom Discipline* (1987) and *Tools for Teaching* (2007), stresses the value of remaining totally inanimate. He recommends that teachers practice, and then deliver, their best “boy am I absolutely bored” look in response to students who are misbehaving. It takes the wind right out of their sails.

He recommends that teachers think of their dirty laundry or some boring chore, make slow (but deliberate) turns in the direction of the perpetrator, take two deep breaths before saying anything (thus not appearing startled), and hang their hands and arms limp at their sides (not crossed in front of their chests or provocatively set on their hips). The nonverbal message to the student is clear, “Your antics are unimpressive. Ho, hum. Are you through yet?” All of this should be a teacher act!

Jones (2007) describes a hierarchical series of limit-setting teacher behaviors for students who range from what he calls “penny-ante gamblers” to “high-rollers.” All involve little or no animation on the part of the teacher. A minimum of talking, too, is suggested. Jones’ limit-setting behaviors, in order of seriousness, all involve teachers swinging into inaction!

Whether lecturing or moving about the room helping students, when a teacher spots a misbehaving student, immediate action (or inaction) is warranted. Jones (2007) suggests using, among other tactics, The Look, Moving In, and Palms and Prompt. You can review these tactics, in some detail, in Chapter 6, Jones’ Tools for Teaching Discipline model.

Although some of these behaviors may seem, at first, to be unnatural, the more a teacher practices these actions (e.g., looking bored, turning in a regal
fashion) the more genuine they will appear to students. After all, isn’t this exactly what an actor or actress must do when asked to play a challenging role—practice until his or her actions become believable to an audience?

The teacher’s calm and businesslike manner (at least it should appear that way on the outside) denies students the attention they are craving through such misbehavior (Dinkmeyer, McKay, and Dinkmeyer, Jr., 1980). Calmness displays confidence; willingness to take the time to deal with the problem reveals commitment; proximity reinforces intensity. These three ingredients, heightened through successful acting, almost guarantee results.

The power of using nonverbal messages needs to be stressed. These behaviors can be a nonoffensive (safe) means of reminding others who it is that possesses greater power and higher status. Nonverbal behaviors “associated with dominance include eye contact (even staring), relaxed but not slumped posture, expressive and expansive gestures, touch initiation (use common sense!), classic clothing and personal artifacts, expansive use of space, and poised, straightforward posture” (Andersen, 1986, 48). More experienced teachers use these dominance-expressive behaviors; less experienced teachers tend to behave in nonverbally submissive ways. These two sets of behaviors convey two distinct images. It takes just a moment or so for students to note the difference.

While the emphasis in the above paragraph is on stopping inappropriate behavior, nonverbal behaviors can also be used to start or encourage appropriate behavior. Smiling, eye contact, nodding, and supportive gesturing—at the right moment—are among the nonverbal responses teachers can offer that are likely to heighten desired student interaction. These behaviors signal that the teacher is interested in what the student is saying. Stimulating student interaction can be further encouraged by another example of teacher inaction—using a pause. Ten to fifteen seconds of a well-placed pause can do wonders to stimulate participation.

CLASSROOM SPACE

I had a high school English teacher named Brother Shad, at least that is what everyone called him. He was very old and never got up from his desk. Students thought, due to his movement limitations about the room that they, especially those in the back of the room, would be able to get away with murder. Wrong! Brother Shad had lined the sides and back of his room with photographs of past classes, allowing students’ movements and antics to be clearly reflected in the mirror-like glass covering the photographs. He could see all. He, like any good actor or teacher, had planned his use of space carefully! He had done his work “behind the scenes.”
A recognized ingredient of successful classroom management is possessing “withitness,” as Kounin (1970) calls it. Being “withit” means knowing what is going on at all times, knowing who is doing what, when, and where. Effective use of classroom space, one of the acting/teaching skills, can help teachers be “withit.”

Proxemics, a topic relevant to Classroom Space, has its discipline equivalent—proximity control. It is easy to understand that students are less likely to misbehave when a teacher is standing close to them. It should be of no surprise to anyone that mischief-makers try to keep as much distance as possible between themselves and their teachers. Effective use of classroom space can thwart such students.

A teacher’s presence can be made known to students who are seated farthest away, even when it is inconvenient, or even impossible, to be physically next to them. This can be done by carrying on some sort of running “joke” or good-hearted bantering with students seated in the back rows. Best done before class or just as class starts, such behaviors demonstrate that the teacher is tuned in (“withit”) to the far reaches of the classroom. In a raised lecture hall, the professor might ask, “Just checking, is the oxygen too thin that high up?” While announcing the assignment for tomorrow, the teacher might stop part way through and, as if on a sound stage, ask for sound check: “Am I coming through loud and clear back there?”

Creative use of classroom space in the form of rearranging student desks to reduce the distance between a teacher and students or create more accessible paths or aisles can all contribute to more effective classroom management.

**HUMOR**

“Engaged students will engage in fewer discipline problems.” Who says so? Pedagogical research says so! As a former high school physics teacher, I believe that the famous physics principle “two things cannot occupy the same place at the same time” applies here. Students cannot (or at least they would have a very hard time) be attentive and interested in a lesson and, at the same time, engage in disruptive behavior. I am not saying that it is impossible; I am just saying that one (interest and attention) tends to displace the other (disruptive behavior). To that end, classroom management is enhanced by teachers making regular and effective use of the various acting skills (including humor) in order to keep students engaged. On an even more practical note, consider the title of Lundberg and Thurston’s (2002), *If They’re Laughing, They Just Might be Listening.* Getting students to listen, alone, supports the use of teacher humor. Listening students typically are not misbehaving.
When humor is used as a supplement to, and not a substitute for, teaching, its most positive benefits to classroom management come forth. Effective use of humor reinforces the teacher’s superior position in the classroom. Psychologists recognize that it is “the superior that most often uses humor in communication with the inferior” (Vizmuller, 1980, 266). In this context, the words “superior” and “inferior” are not derogatory terms; they simply specify status or position.

A recognition by the students of a teacher’s higher status enables that teacher to use French and Raven’s (1960) legitimate power (authority granted someone due to their position) more effectively. Students, too, recognize the confidence that accompanies teachers’ successful use of humor. The belief is that only confident in-control teachers would risk using humor. Effective use of humor also enhances the teachers’ use of French and Raven’s (1960) expert power (authority granted someone due to their knowledge or skill level) more effectively. The perception is that only competent people are brave enough to use humor.

In addition to these general principles of humor, there are endless examples of specific applications of humor that can affect classroom discipline. A subject-matter-related riddle, funny story, or pun seems to have the power to capture a learner’s attention regardless of age, gender, grade level, or subject. By being attentive, by being engaged, the student is behaving.

For instance, a riddle can initiate some healthy competition to be the first (individual or group) to figure it out. Directed competition is healthy; it is productive. It can channel, in a constructive way, students’ need to compete. The funny story or pun can create a shared experience. People sharing a common experience are more likely to feel part of a group and, as a result, less likely to do something to damage it, that is, misbehave.

Almost all research on classroom management recommends that rules be established. Further, it is unreasonable to expect students to follow the rules if they do not know the rules. Normally, presenting the classroom rules should occur at the beginning of the school year. Yet, imagine the possible demoralizing effect on students when their first introduction to a new teacher and subject matter is “Here are the rules that you are expected to follow!”

More creative teachers can use humor to introduce both “teacher pet peeves” and “classroom rules.” A teacher could introduce his or her “10 Top Peeves” in the same way that Dave Letterman announces his “10 Top Reasons for . . .” One could insert a few humorous peeves in the list such as “My number 8 pet peeve is when a student parks his Ferrari in my parking spot.” Note that this would be even funnier if the teacher had a classroom full of fourth graders. A teacher might want to ask students to create a list of their “10 Top Peeves,” too.
Classroom rules, themselves, can be introduced with a bit of humor. For instance, “Students will raise their hand and be acknowledged before speaking or they will receive three swats with a wet noodle.” Or. “Students should walk to and from lunch,” could have an ending such as “or they will have to . . . . . . . .” (Add your own funny ending!). The result of these introductions to “peeves” and “rules” will be laughter. Gee, what a great first experience to have in school!

**HUMOR WITH A “DOWNUNDER” SLANT**

Humor can be an excellent tool for diffusing tense situations. This works best at the onset of a possible discipline problem. This is why teachers need to be ever-alert in order to handle “little fires” before they have a chance to grow into “raging infernos.”

A suggestion of how humor could be used to diffuse a problem comes from Bill Rogers, a discipline guru from downunder in Australia. Say you are teaching and students are working at a task in their seats or at their lab tables. Out of the blue, Ian shouts, “Oh, sh–!” Obviously something happened that upset Ian. There are many ways a teacher could respond. Some ways are likely to result in the problem escalating, while other ways are likely to diffuse the problem.

Assuming that the teacher knows Ian and knows that this unacceptable word just “slipped out,” Rogers suggests responding by saying and by hamming it up with exaggerated body motions “Where? Where? Oh my! Where?” while, at the same time, looking around the floor area and lifting one’s feet as if to avoid stepping in it. This might be followed by the teacher acting as if he or she just realized that there really was no “doo-doo” on the floor. The teacher then might say, “Thank goodness there is no smelly mess on the floor to clean up; it was just Ian upset enough to spout forth scatological expletives.” At this point everyone is attentive. At this point the teacher has a “teaching moment” on the word *scatological* as well as how to handle the temptation to utter an unacceptable expletive. The teacher might end by saying “Thank you Ian. We have all learned a new vocabulary word. In the future if you are really upset and feel the need to blurt out something, try “Oh scatology!”

Personally, a favorite thing of this author is to blurt out in times of frustration is “Oh, ka gee gee beads!” “Ka gee gee beads” is a term that the author created many years ago, delivered in the context of telling his son, daughter, and (occasionally students), you are full of “Ka gee gee beads!” No one, including the author, ever knew exactly what “Ka gee gee beads” were, but everyone did seem to know what was meant when a “Ka gee gee beads”
message was sent. Readers are welcome to use this relatively meaningless expletive.

**SUSPENSE AND SURPRISE**

Suspense and surprise are acting skills that can contribute directly to improved classroom management. Go out of your way to learn good things about your students: their work in other classes, family, part-time jobs, efforts and accomplishments in sports, participation in extracurricular activities, for instance. Actually, this is not very difficult, and even less time-consuming to do. Just keep your eyes and ears open. Try talking with fellow faculty; try reading the school newspaper.

Armed with a knowledge of these “good” things, set about to surprise students by “dropping” the news when they least expect it. At the beginning of your class, you could say, “Joe, looks like you really had quite a soccer game on Saturday,” “Wendy, that was a creative way in which you helped organize the food drive for the homeless shelter,” or “Bill, how does it feel to be the only one to get a perfect paper in Mr. Sands’ class?” Don’t dwell on any one item. That’s not the point. Don’t give students the time to think how you know what you know. Just “drop” the bit of surprise information, and go on with the scheduled lesson.

The effect of delivering this unexpected (surprising) information is twofold. First, it conveys to your students that you are tuned into their lives beyond merely what they are doing in your class. This helps teachers develop what French and Raven (1960) call referent power—a sense of common purpose, one person identifying with another. Two, it keeps students “on their toes” as they wonder how you seem to know so much about them. They start to think that if you know this information, maybe you are also in a position to know when they might be trying to get away with something. You come off as being someone who must have eyes and ears everywhere.

“**THANKS, I’D APPRECIATE THAT**”

One special classroom discipline technique involves the teacher *acting* as if she believes her request will be honored. It goes something like this. A journalism teacher wants Lisa to help return all of the newspapers and magazines strewn about the room to their rightful place on the shelves. Or, an elementary teacher wants David to empty the overflowing pencil sharpener. How does the teacher get the students to carry out her requests? She simply
acts as if the students will do what she has asked them to do. Her actions include both words and body language.

She would say “Lisa, would you help me by returning the newspapers and magazines to their rightful place on the shelves?” The teacher would then immediately say, “Thanks, I’d appreciate that. It would be a big help.” She continues her act by turning and walking away showing she trusts that Lisa will respond positively. For the other child, the teacher would say, “David, would you empty the overflowing pencil sharpener? That would save me a lot of time.” Once again, she would follow her request by saying, “Thanks, I’d appreciate it,” and then she would turn and walk away. It is hard for students to resist doing what they have been asked to do, especially when the teacher has already thanked them for doing it!

**MUSIC TO SOOTHE THE SAVAGE BREAST**

Sometimes music—certainly a performing art—should be in the forefront as in a musical, rock band, or military marching band. Sometimes, however, music works best in the background; it’s there, but not the major focus. In this situation we often find music playing softly in the background. We hear it (or, most of the time, don’t really hear it consciously) in a department store, in a grocery store, or in a mall. It is there for a purpose. “Music has charms to soothe the savage breast, to soften rocks, or bend a knotted oak.” (W. Congreve, *The Mourning Bride*, Act 1, Scene 1) in all of us. Surely if it can “bend a knotted oak” it can impact children. Music has a calming effect. It can lower our stress and anxiety levels.

Schools can use music to accomplish the same goal with both students and teachers. Soothing (but not downright capable of putting people to sleep) background music can be played in the cafeteria, in the library, and in the hallways while changing classes. It also can be played in classrooms during seat work, lab exercises, transitions between activities, and as signals for starting and ending tasks. If music can help calm harried shoppers in a mall during a holiday, it has a real good chance of calming students and, hence, improving classroom management.

Consider compiling your own CD of songs—perhaps with input from students. After all, both you and the students will be doing the listening. With today’s inexpensive technology, this task has never been easier. Although it may date the author, some personal favorites include *Be True to Your School* (The Beach Boys), *We Are Family* (Sister Sledge), *Yakety Yak* (The Coasters), *Don’t Worry Be Happy* (Bobby McFerrin), and *To Sir with Love* (Lulu). Other
types of music can work just as well. Consider playing some classical music selections, songs from *Mister Rogers’ Neighborhood* (i.e., *Won’t You be My Neighbor? You Are Special, I’m Proud of You*) and—well the list is endless.

**SUMMARY**

The common ingredient in all acting skills that can contribute to classroom management is their impact upon perceived teacher enthusiasm that, in turn, secures students’ attention and holds their interest. A paper bag (*use of props*)—containing something—that the teacher has placed in a prominent location and the *suspense* it elicits can grab students’ attention that might otherwise be directed elsewhere. Finding the mathematics teacher dressed in a short-order cook’s outfit (*role-playing*) as Jamie Escalante did in *Stand and Deliver*, would hold most students’ interest that might otherwise have been misdirected.

A teacher’s *animation in voice* (i.e., even just a whisper) can have significant attention-getting power, possibly diverting students’ temptation to chit-chat with a neighbor and thus cause a disturbance. Moving the front of the room to the back, through the simple operation of writing on the “back” (now front) chalkboard makes surprising use of *classroom space*. Students hiding in the back are now right there in the front. Displaying an editorial cartoon (i.e., *humor*) that relates to the day’s lecture, can silently engage an entire class that just moments before had its attention diverted a million other directions. And so go the many examples that can be offered.

Teachers who incorporate acting skills into their teaching will be better able to secure students’ attention and maintain their interest. Plain and simple—attentive, interested, and engaged students are less likely to misbehave.

**TURN TO THE ORIGINAL SOURCE**

SEARCH FOR MORE ON CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT AND ACTING

An Educational Resources Information Center (http://www.eric.ed.gov) search of the term “classroom management” and at least one other acting lessons term reveals a number of citations. All of them, because they are announced in ERIC, have applications to education settings.

An ERIC search of the term “classroom management” with a variety of acting lessons terms reveals the following number of citations: “classroom management” plus “role-playing” 4730, plus “humor” 356, plus “props” 1350, plus “suspense and surprise” 19, plus “suspense (alone) 493, plus “surprise” (alone) 3370, plus “teacher voice” (animation in voice) 245, plus “teacher movement” (animation in body) 104, plus “space utilization” 123, plus “proxemics” 211, and plus “teacher enthusiasm” 84.
CHAPTER 14

Bullying

OBJECTIVES

This chapter will help you, among other things, to:

- Appreciate the gravity and extent of bullying in schools.
- Learn the definition of bullying.
- Examine how targets of and bystanders of bullying can effectively respond.
- Understand the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program.
- Examine the growing impact of cyber-bullying.
- Understand the move from muscle/brawn to mind/brain power.

INTRODUCTION

The topic of bullying is so important that I have asked three experts in the field to contribute. The contributors include, Dr. JoLynn Carney, Dr. Charisse Nixon, and Dr. Marlene Snyder. Their contributions are identified and presented in this chapter.

TRAGIC BULLYING STORIES

There once was a boy from Western Pennsylvania; we will call him “Boy X,” whose parents moved around more than the typical family did. The latest family move took him to 700 Archer Street in Port Vue where he attended Archer Street Elementary School. He was the new kid on the block. On the good side of this story the school he attended provided a choice of white milk,
chocolate milk, or orange drink for its mid-morning break—wow! On the bad side there was the school bully named Eugene McGinney, who for a time focused his bullying on “boy X.” How do I know all this? I was that boy! At that time I suppose such bullying would have been written off as some sort of expected initiation to the neighborhood. Expected or not, it hurt.

Having delivered my personal sad story regarding bullying, it pales in comparison to the tragic bullying stories happening all too often across the nation. For instance, here are the final diary pages of thirteen-year-old Vijay, a bullied student. He was found hanging from the banister rail at his home.

I shall remember forever and will never forget.

Monday: my money was taken.
Tuesday: names called.
Wednesday: my uniform torn.
Thursday: my body pouring with blood.
Friday: it’s ended.
Saturday: freedom. (Bullycide: Death at Playtime, Marr & Field, 2001)

Some bullied students just sit there and take it—day after day. Still other bullied students like fourteen-year-old Laura can take it no more! She committed suicide by taking an overdose of painkillers. Her suicide note said “Don’t worry about me, I have gone up above where I really want to be, no bullies, no school, just happiness” (Bullied girl planned own funeral, 2004). Another teenager, Kelly, was overweight and after several years of being taunted (“Hey fatty!” “Smelly Kelly!”), like Laura, she overdosed on painkillers (Taunted London Teen, 1997). More recently, several teenage bullies stand accused of text-bullying Alex, a twelve-year-old, to the extent that he committed suicide (It wasn’t just us…, 2006).

Still other bullied students decide they have had enough and they fight back—in fact they explode! On more than one occasion (i.e., Columbine, CO, 1999; Edinboro, PA, 1998—just ten miles from my home at the time) bullied students have fought back by taking guns into schools and killing or wounding students, teachers, administrators, and themselves. Bullying has just escalated to violence—the focus of the next chapter. No one wants this to happen.

WHAT IS BULLYING?

Bullying is one of those things that you know it when it happens to you—you “feel” it. It clearly feels different from truly playful, give-and-take
roughhousing and teasing. Because teachers can’t know for sure exactly how students are feeling, they must rely upon “symptoms.” Programs such as the Olweus Prevention Program discussed below help teachers recognize these symptoms. Without a good understanding of bullying symptoms, educators cannot accurately diagnose, and, thus, cannot take appropriate corrective measures.

Definition:

Bullying includes a wide variety of behaviors, but all involve a person or a group repeatedly trying to harm someone who is weaker or more vulnerable. It can involve direct attacks (such as, hitting, threatening or intimidating, maliciously teasing and taunting, name-calling, making sexual remarks, and stealing or damaging belongings) or more subtle, indirect attacks (such as spreading rumors or encouraging others to reject or exclude someone). (Facts for Teens: Bullying, 2002)

Bullying is a form of aggressive behavior that is intentional and involves an imbalance of power or strength. One person is being “picked on” by another person. The victim either can’t, or feels like he or she can’t, fight back. It is not a conflict, per say, because conflicts suggest at least some degree of equality. In the ring, heavyweights fight heavyweights, and on the field, pros play pros and college teams play college teams. Bullying, plain and simple, is so one-sided that it is a form of victimization.

WHO DOES THE BULLYING?

Boys typically engage in direct bullying methods while girls often engage in more subtle indirect strategies such as spreading rumors and enforcing social isolation. But overall, “bullying is as much a ‘girl thing’ as it is a ‘boy thing’” (Stutzky, G., 2005). Other sources disagree. The National Youth Violence Prevention Resource Center reports that teenage boys are much more likely to bully others and to be targets of bullies—being made fun of or hit and pushed, while girls more often resort to spreading rumors, making sexual comments, and excluding the target from social groups (Facts for Teens: Bullying, 2002).

HOW MUCH BULLYING OCCURS?

Today it is safe to say that even if schools are not receiving complaints, bullying is probably still occurring. Although some bullying occurs outside
of school or on the way to and from school, most bullying occurs on school grounds in classrooms, in hallways, and on the playgrounds (Starr, 2000; AAUW, 2001). It clearly is a school-based problem. It clearly demands a school-based solution.

Odd as it may sound, in some instances, the very schools that implement bullying prevention programs find that reported bullying instances actually increase! What happens is that successful bullying prevention programs help bring to the surface bullying problems that were there all along. Bullied students and bystanders of bullying have been provided with an avenue to take action and they do so—at a minimum reporting it!

Different studies report different degrees of school bullying—but they have one thing in common. There is way too much bullying! Schools must address bullying because it is “one of the most underrated and enduring problems in schools today” (Clifford, 2001). “About 25 percent of U.S. students are the victims of bullies and about 20 percent are engaged in bullying behavior” (Starr, 2000). And, according to the National Association of School Psychologists (Why should you take . . . , 2003), 160,000 students stay home from school because they are afraid being bullied. Eight percent of students miss one day of class per month because of their fear of being bullied (Communities can stop bullying, 2007). Other sources report that a child is bullied every seven minutes on the playground and every twenty-five minutes in the classroom. Most of the time there is no one there to intervene.

One way to get a better handle on the amount of bullying that occurs in schools is to get students, themselves, to report bullying instances. For this to happen, students will need help in recognizing the difference between dreaded childhood “tattling,” “ratting,” or “snitching,” and responsible adulthood reporting.

THE OLWEUS BULLYING PREVENTION PROGRAM

Dr. Marlene Snyder; Institute on Family and Neighborhood Life; Clemson University. She can be reached at nobully@clemson.edu.

What is the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program?

The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program is a research-based, schoolwide program designed to reduce and prevent bully/victim problems at elementary, middle, and junior high schools levels. Designed by Professor Dan Olweus at the University of Bergen in Norway, the program has been successfully
implemented in a number of countries, including Norway, the United States, Canada, Germany, and the United Kingdom.

It is important to note that the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program is not a curriculum. Rather, it is a schoolwide, systems change program. Briefly, the program elements and action needed to implement the program in each element are as follows:

Schoolwide Elements

- Form a Bullying Prevention Coordinating Committee (BPCC) to spearhead the initiative in the school. The composition of the committee generally should consist of: a school administrator, an onsite committee coordinator, a teacher representative from each grade, a guidance counselor, a school-based mental health professional, a parent, and a member of the nonteaching staff.

- Administer the anonymous Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire (BVQ) to assess the extent of the bullying problem in the school. The survey will reveal the most common locations for bullying behaviors in a school. Unfortunately, many students report that bullying is taking place right in the classroom. This finding indicates that many teachers either don’t recognize bullying behaviors and their detrimental impact on those involved, or lack the skills to effectively eliminate bullying behavior.

- Schedule a two-day training for all members of the BPCC and provide the committee members time to meet each month for approximately sixty minutes. This group becomes the core group that will work to sustain the program year after year.

- Schedule a one-half to one-day training for all school personnel after the BPCC training and prior to the launch of the program. This includes administrators, educators, counselors, support staff, bus drivers, playground supervisors, lunch room supervisors, custodians, and other professionals working on school grounds.

- Develop district policies and adopt school rules against bullying behavior. Basic rules are provided in the Olweus program. Consistent schoolwide consequences for bullying behaviors as well as strategies to support students who are bullied are determined before the program is launched.

- Increase adult supervision in “hot spots” for bullying (determined from BVQ analysis).

- Hold staff discussion groups at least once a month.

- Actively engage parents and community members in bullying prevention program efforts.

- Hold schoolwide events that officially launch the school’s bullying prevention program each year.
Classroom Elements

- Post and discuss school rules.
- Use consistent positive and negative consequences.
- Hold regular class discussions. Instead of one-hour lessons typical of a “curriculum,” the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program asks for schools to designate twenty minutes once a week for classroom meetings during which students discuss bullying, peer relations, appropriate bystander behavior, and how they can improve their school’s environment.
- Incorporate bullying themes across the curriculum.
- Hold class-level parent meeting (whenever possible).

Individual Interventions

- Intervene on-the-spot when bullying occurs.
- Hold follow-up discussions with children who are bullied.
- Hold follow-up discussions with children who bully.
- Document and share information with staff for increased vigilance and observation.
- Involve parents of children who are involved.

Community Efforts

- Look for ways to engage the community in your school's bullying prevention efforts.
- Examine strategies for spreading antibullying messages beyond the school's doors.

Does the Program Work?

The program has been found to be very effective. As a result of the program, participating schools have seen substantial reductions in the frequency with which students report being bullied and bullying others, significant reductions in students’ reports of general antisocial behavior, such as vandalism, fighting, theft, and truancy, and noticeable improvements in the “social climate” of the class.

For specific information about program materials, program research, and training requirements, see the Olweus Web site at www.clemson.edu/olweus.
BULLYING AND RELATIONAL AGGRESSION

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What is Relational Aggression?

At its very core, bullying is about how we treat one another. Said another way, bullying is about respect, or the lack thereof. For example, would we tolerate students calling us names . . . or spreading rumors about us? Of course not! However, our culture has a different code of conduct for how our children treat each other. For example, we hear about one girl repeatedly excluded at the lunch table by another more “powerful” girl. We watch this girl struggle as she comes back into the classroom after lunch with rejection stamped across her face and shame covering her eyes. Yet, according to recent work, most educators are reluctant to become involved at this point. “Let them work it out.” “At least it didn’t happen in the classroom.” “That’s just what girls do.” These responses are, unfortunately, very familiar to most of us as we begin to consider the serious work of creating safer, social climates for our children.

The behaviors described above demonstrate a type of aggression that is subtle, manipulative, and cunningly clever. Relational aggression (RA) is a form of aggression where an individuals use relationships to hurt others (Crick & Grotpeter, 1995). Typically, RA is more overt and direct with younger children (e.g., “You can’t be my friend anymore unless . . .”) and becomes more covert and indirect with older children (e.g., spreading malicious rumors without ever getting caught). As children grow in social cognition, they become better able to read others’ intentions and manipulate relationships for their own benefit.

Given these developmental advances in children’s social understanding, it is not surprising that RA actually increases during adolescence, while at the same time, becomes less recognizable by adults. As discussed earlier, the cycle of bullying will continue as long as it goes unrecognized. Subsequently, an important part of the prevention and intervention of bullying rests on educators’ (as well as students’) ability to identify the signs and symptoms related to RA. However, unlike physical aggression, the signs and symptoms accompanying RA are often invisible. See www.opheliaproject.org for more information on relational aggression and mentoring.

What Is the Cost of Relational Aggression?

Like physical and verbal aggression, RA also carries serious, negative consequences. Studies show students involved with repeated episodes of RA are
more likely to demonstrate internalizing (e.g., depression and loneliness) and externalizing (e.g., peer rejection) adjustment difficulties (see Crick et al., 1999 for a review). Recent research has linked RA to adolescents’ increased substance abuse, suicidal ideation, and disordered eating patterns.

**How Do you Address Relational Aggression?**

Our research findings suggest that we start by addressing belief systems about RA (Werner & Nixon, 2005). For example, those students who are more likely to approve of and tolerate gossip, exclusion, and alliance building are more likely to be involved with RA. We need to help students understand that it is never okay to spread rumors, even if he or she recently excluded you from the “cool club.” The more we allow our students to rationalize or minimize RA (e.g., “it’s no big deal”), the more we contribute to fueling this cycle of aggression.

See Dellasega and Nixon’s *Girl Wars, 12 Strategies that will end female bullying* (2003) and Davis’ *Schools where everyone belongs, practical strategies for reducing bullying* (2005) for more useful information.

**DEALING WITH BULLYING IN THE CLASSROOM**

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It took professionals many decades to realize that, although bullying may be a common part of growing up, it can also be very harmful. Studies of youth suicides and school shootings in the mid-1990s taught us just how far children can go to escape the problem by self-harm or by seeking deadly revenge on those who would bully them physically, socially, and verbally. The presence of materials in education catalogs on dealing with these issues grew from virtually zero prior to 1990 to a tremendous variety today, but they all communicate some important concepts that teachers can do to help prevent or intervene in bullying in their classrooms.

Bullying can only continue if it goes unrecognized. Teachers need to be aware of the three basic components or factors of bullying. First someone needs to be harmed because this identifies the difference between bullying and teasing or play. The second important factor is that one person has an unfair advantage over the other person. It can be a physical, social, verbal, or emotional advantage that allows one person to dominate the other. The third key factor in bullying is that it is repeated. The more bullying occurs, the more harmful it is. Studies (Carney & Hazler, 2001) have found that
Bullying

educators tend to more often miss the social and emotional bullying as well as the unfair advantage and repeat factors. This results in much bullying going unnoticed. Recommended bully Intervention and Prevention procedures for teachers follow.

**Intervention Keys:**

- *Take action when abuse occurs*—It is better to make the mistake of reacting to something that might not be bullying than to not react when bullying does occur.
- *Follow formal policy*—Actions designed to intervene need to be consistent. Formal school and/or classroom policies need to be established, followed, and not altered for some students (i.e., popular or high achieving students).
- *Remain calm*—Overreaction raises the emotional stakes for everyone.

**Prevention Keys:**

- *Introduce the issues with emphasis*—Treat the subject of bullying with the importance it deserves. If you are not going to emphasize it with high importance, than don’t introduce it as it will only confirm to everyone that the teacher doesn’t take bullying seriously.
- *Hold regular discussions*—No matter what social education your school might offer or you provide in class, there needs to be regular discussions where students can talk openly about bullying issues. Discussions on a regular basis help them confirm the reality of the issues they face daily.
- *Emphasize understanding of all sides*—This is not an issue of the worst children versus the best children. All children are likely to find themselves in a powerful position over others and abuse that power at some time. Discussions need to show and stress caring, concern, and understanding for all peers.
- *Encourage cooperative group work*—The more and better relationships people have, the less likely they are to be bullied over time. Utilize group work projects that integrate students. Look for types of activities that emphasize the different skills and knowledge of all students so that everyone gets a chance to shine and be seen as valuable to others.
- *Relate bullying and socially responsible behaviors to literary characters and historical people being studied*—History and literature have a wealth of characters who abuse others and those who work to stop the abuse. Students will relate to these historical people and issues so that the studies become more meaningful and lessons learned can be used in their day-to-day lives.
- *Develop a classroom action plan*—Involve all the students in creating a classroom action plan designed to make the room a safe environment where everyone’s rights are respected. It is important for all the students to be involved in
developing and executing the plan. Involving all students allows everyone to feel personally invested in the plan.

Several recommended resources, with details in the reference section, are Carney, J. V. (2006); Carney, J. V., and Hazler, R. J. (2001); and Carney, J. V., Hazler, R. J., and Higgins, J. (2002).

**BULLIED AND Bystanders: Take Action**

What are friends for? One thing they are for is to “be there” when you need them. Nowhere is this more true than in bullying situations. Friends need to speak up when they see friends being bullied. This takes both know-how and courage. Both the target of bullying and bystanders can take action.

In the book, *Say Something* (2004), Peggy Moss offer suggestions for would-be bystanders. These suggestions/skills can and should be taught to students—all students. Some of these suggestions include:

- Tell the bully to “stop.”
- Encourage other bystanders to be supportive.
- Avoid actions (i.e., laughter, joining in) that might support the bully.
- Walk away from the bullying situation. Walking away denies the bully the audience he or she feeds upon. No audience, no production. No audience, the production folds!
- Invite the bulled student to walk, sit, work, or socialize with them.
- Encourage the bullied child to talk to an adult—especially an adult designated in the bullying program (i.e., principal, guidance counselor, dean).
- Follow-up with the bullied friend (or acquaintance) at a later date.

Moss, as well as others, also offers suggestions for the targets of bullying. Some of these suggestions flow from ideas already discussed in earlier chapters of this book. Bullied students can:

- Walk away from the bullying situation. Remember, “it takes two to tango!” Don’t tango. While walking away, try to imagine how silly the bully must appear just standing there trying to bully no one. Besides, walking away takes far more courage than standing up to a more powerful adversary.
- Agree with the bully and/or redirect the bully’s efforts. “You are right, my nose is large, but you should see my uncle Mike’s nose. Wow! His is really huge.”
• Ignore hurtful, negative, comments from bullies. Consider the source!
• Avoid situations where bullying is more likely to occur—lonely hallways or corridors void of witnesses. Should you have to avoid such locations? Of course not! But, prudence must prevail.
• Use humor to diffuse the situation. Review the Humor portion of the Acting and Discipline chapter (Chapter 13) in this book.
• Exude confidence—stand erect, take two deep breaths, maintain eye contact, speak slowly and at a normal volume. Review Fredric Jones’ discipline model (Chapter 6) for additional information on the effective use of body language to communicate.
• Learn and use I-messages such as those taught in Thomas Gordon’s Effectiveness Training model (Chapter 9). These messages have the best chance at defusing a bullying situation without either party having to lose face.
• Talk to a trusted adult—especially an adult designated in your school’s bullying program.
• Talk with a parent or parents—being bullied is a family matter. If they don’t know what is happening they are in a poor position to help.
• Express feelings in a diary or journal.
• Turn to others who have had similar experiences. They can act as sort of a support group for consolation, understanding, and, even, for possible solutions.
• Take part in your school’s antibullying program. If the school does not have one, work to get one started.
• Never blame yourself for a bully’s actions.
• Do not resort to violence!
• Stay safe.

Whether a target of bullying or a bystander of bullying, what you don’t do is keep silent—silence is acceptance (Takemoto, 2002).

CYBER BULLYING

Riddle: How can a bully follow you home when a bully does not actually follow you home?
Answer: The bully uses electronic messages to bully you.

Although a bullied student might just have a chance to physically run away from a more powerful bully and escape to the safety of his or her home, there is no way to outrun the speed of light—at least the speed at which a bullying electronic message can travel. In some cases, a bully’s message can get to a child’s home before he or she does.
Electronic bullying, or cyber bullying as it is called, is defined as the use of electronic devices such as e-mail, text messages, cell phones, pagers, and Web sites, to send or post cruel or harmful messages or images about an individual or a group (Corbett, 2006). A beep-beep from a child’s computer and an accompanying message on the computer screen saying “you’ve got mail!” takes on a brand new meaning—fear! The potential exists for non-stop, twenty-four hours a day, bullying to take place.

Out of 1000 kids surveyed nationwide in 2006, one in three teens and one in six preteens report being victims of this superhighway form of bullying (Ten steps for families . . . , 2006). A smaller, but still alarming number, have been threatened electronically with physical harm. The Internet and other electronics messaging media are the new school playground, and there are no off hours (Hilligan, 2004).

Not only do cyber bullies send their messages directly from their own computers, they steal and/or change a target bully’s password and then either lock that student out of his or her own account or send fraudulent communications posing as that student (Wiseman, 2007). You can only imagine the number of problems that emerge from these cruel actions that, then, spill over into discipline problems.

FROM MUSCLE TO MIND, BRAWN TO BRAINS—THE EVOLUTION OF POWER

For bullies their motivation is often power—wielding it most often over someone who is clearly less powerful. As William Glasser points out in Chapter 8, power is a basic human need. People, including children are driven to meet these basic human needs over and over again throughout their lives. Russell, in his book Power: A New Social Analysis (2004) argued that the fundamental concept in social science (including child-rearing and teaching) is power. Unfortunately some children turn to bullying in order to get their power needs met.

Teachers can help redirect students’ need for power to more socially acceptable ways of acquiring and expressing it by pointing out, and continually reinforcing, the evolution of power from muscle and brawn power to mind and brain power. While we can’t control IF power is going to be sought by children, we can influence what FORM that power is likely to take (Toffler, 1990).

WHO WATCHES THE WATCHERS?

Teachers are sometimes bullies, too. Metzger (2002, p.78) admits that “desperate, I used the curriculum, grades, and my own education to coerce
Bullying

(bully?) students.” The founder of the Olweus Bully Prevention Program, Dan Olweus, defines teacher bullying as their using “degrading comments openly about a student or students” (Stop bullying now, 2006). When the entire class gets bullied, the students may at least not take it “personally.” When the bullying is directed, repeatedly, toward a single student, two things happen. One, the target of the bullying is likely to believe something is wrong with him or her. Two, because teachers teach by example—if the teacher bullies a specific student then that student is more likely to be the target of bullying by fellow class members. It is interesting to note that with the proliferation of camera cell phones more and more teacher bullying is being documented by students.

CONCLUSION

The time has long since passed when bullying should have been stopped in schools. The damage that it does to the target of the bullying, to the bully, and to the bystanders is clear. Unchecked, the possibility that bullying could escalate into violence tragically has been shown over and over again. Yet, research clearly reveals programs that have been successful in reducing, if not stopping, bullying. Teachers, as well as teachers-in-training, need to take part in these bullying prevention programs. Only then, can we expect results.

SELECTED BULLYING RESOURCES

[Note, typing the word “bullying” into www.eric.ed.gov generates 285 citations!]

- Bullying: What we know
- http://wch.uhs.wisc.edu/docs/PDF-Pubs/bullying-fact-sheet-WCH.pdf
- Bullying prevention bibliography
- http://www.stopbullyingnow.com/bibliography.htm
- Hostile hallways: Bullying, teasing, and sexual harassment in school (AAUW)
- National bullying awareness campaign
- Olweus bully prevention program
- http://www.clemson.edu/olweus
- PeaceBuilders
• www.peacebuilders.com
• Sticks and stones and *names* can hurt you: De-myth-tifying the classroom bully!
• http://www.education-world.com/a_issues/issues102.shtml
• The Ophelia Project®
• www.opheliaproject.org
• Why you should take bullying seriously
CHAPTER 15

Violence in Today’s Schools

Coauthored with Dr. James J. Tracy, Ed.D., School Superintendent

OBJECTIVES

This chapter will help you, among other things, to:

- Acknowledge the problem of school violence.
- Review recommendations of nationwide administrators.
- Examine what educators can do to address school violence.
- List early warning signs that may indicate students will do violence to themselves or others.
- Understand the need for training in dealing with a potentially violent student.
- Consider which of the six Tried-and-True discipline models would have the best chances of reducing violence in schools.

THE INCREASING PROBLEM OF SCHOOL VIOLENCE

Although most schools are still considered safe places where children can learn, there is a growing concern about the increasing violence reported in our schools. The recent shootings in Jonesboro, Arkansas; Edinboro, Pennsylvania; West Paducah, Kentucky; and Littleton, Colorado, have alarmed teachers, administrators, students, and the public in general. A single chapter, of course, is not enough to address school violence adequately, but taken in context with the rest of this text, it can be a good start.
ADMINISTRATORS HAVE A SAY

A random sampling of school administrators from across the country were contacted and asked to complete the sentence, “In order to reduce the likelihood of violence in schools, they should . . . .” These educators are out there on the front line, with enormous day-to-day discipline responsibilities that are compounded exponentially when school violence happens. As you read their responses that follow, look for commonalities in their answers. Look for ideas and suggestions that you might be able to use in your school and classroom.

✓ Joe Vergona, Principal (retired), Union City Elementary School, Union City, PA.

In order to reduce the likelihood of violence in schools, they should continue with their efforts to increase security, while making a greater effort to help all students feel welcome, successful, and a contributing member of the school.

✓ Robert Malito, Superintendent, Parkway School district, Chesterfield, MO.

In order to reduce the likelihood of violence in schools, safety and security must be a continuous procedure that is reviewed yearly and must remain a top priority in all our schools.

✓ Mark Roherty, High School Principal, Homestead High School, Mequon, WI.

In order to reduce the likelihood of violence in schools, they should ensure, first of all, that the school’s code of conduct and rules is clearly communicated and understood and, secondly, provide a humanistic support mechanism within the school so that all students feel valued and respected.

✓ Argyl J. Brewton, Assistant Principal, Woodruff Elementary School, Woodruff, SC.

In order to reduce the likelihood of violence in schools, they should educate the faculty and staff members regarding signs of depression in children and adolescents using guidance counselor and mental health professionals as educational resources, and implement security procedures to ensure the physical facility is safe from possible violent offenders including placing security cameras around the perimeter of the building and providing security checkpoints inside and outside of the building.
✓ John Phillips, Superintendent, Muscogee County Schools, Columbus, GA.

In order to reduce the likelihood of violence in schools, they should fervently and continuously enable students to report immediately any suspicious activity, either observed or rumored, to any responsible party.

✓ Robert D. Smith, Superintendent, Milford School District, Milford, DE.

In order to reduce the likelihood of violence in schools, they should work diligently to insure that all students are successful academically, are involved in school-related activities, and are made to feel cared about and a part of this entity we call school.

✓ Mathew Gehrman, Principal, Dobson High School, Mesa, AZ.

In order to reduce the likelihood of violence in schools, they should help students find their place, their voice, by helping them feel like they are a meaningful part of the school.

✓ Keith Colbert, Principal, Lovejoy Middle School, Lovejoy, GA.

In order to reduce the likelihood of violence in schools, school officials should create policies that ensure that schools are warm and welcoming places and they should work collaboratively with the community to address the issues that are making the schools unwelcoming.

✓ Mark Conti, Principal, California High School, San Ramon, CA.

In order to reduce the likelihood of violence in schools, they should implement conflict management programs.

✓ Shirley A. Golofski, Superintendent, McKeesport Area School District McKeesport, PA.

In order to reduce the likelihood of violence in schools they should transform schools into small, focused learning communities to promote an atmosphere in which individual needs can be met to promote academic excellence.

What did you glean from these administrator responses? I read the need for creating a caring, concerned, school environment where communication is maximized, students experience academic success, and individual needs are helped to be met. Schools also need to be proactive in reading the “signs” that violence might occur. And, finally, schools must take measures to implement security procedures to ensure the physical facility is safe.
WHAT CAN TEACHERS DO TO ADDRESS VIOLENCE?

Classroom management skills are a key to violence prevention. Most discipline problems usually begin as relatively minor disruptions in the classroom (Hernandez & Gay, 1996). To prevent these minor disruptions from escalating, classroom teachers must develop and implement effective classroom management strategies. Involving students in the development of classroom rules is one strategy that helps students become part of the classroom community by encouraging citizenship and responsibility (Hill, 1996). These rules need to be clear and have consequences for infractions.

Classroom teachers should model nonviolent discipline techniques. You cannot prevent violence by using violence (Scherer, 1998). The teacher should not be someone to be feared but should be someone who is there to help. In fact, the research shows that a positive relationship with an adult (teacher) who is available to provide support when needed is one of the most critical factors in preventing student violence. Teachers should help students feel safe and comfortable when expressing their feelings, and teachers need to treat all students with respect.

Teachers need to create a positive classroom climate with an emphasis on learning skills and knowledge, student involvement, attendance, trust, and mutual respect. There also must be consistency in the treatment of students and clear expectations for all students (Lederhouse, 1998; Scherer, 1998). Many times ineffective teaching can lead to behavior problems. The effective teacher has clear objectives for the lesson, actively involves the students, and maintains the interest of the students throughout the lesson.

Educators need to be able to meet together and discuss the subject of classroom management, in general, and violence prevention, in particular. Teachers need to feel supported by the administration and feel that they can seek help from fellow professionals.

Developing a cooperative community within the class is another of the ways to help prevent violence. A teacher can foster this environment by using cooperative teaching methods that enhance students’ abilities to work with other students. A teacher can also promote a cooperative environment at the school level by participating in building-level teams. A school that has developed a cooperative environment may have several building teams. For an example, one elementary school has a building steering committee that deals with the running of the school, a support team that deals with helping the teacher with at-risk students, a crisis management team, and a building-level team that helps the student who is having emotional or acting out problems.
RECOGNIZING WARNING SIGNS

There are early warning signs that may be indicators that a student could do violence to him/herself or to others. It is important to remember not to jump to conclusions; early warning signs are only indicators. Training teachers to recognize early warning signals for possible violence in a student is an essential piece of a good violence prevention program. Research (Dwyer, Osher, & Warger, 1998; Safer Schools, 1998) shows an individual will usually exhibit multiple warning signs such as:

- social withdrawal (depression, a lack of self-confidence)
- excessive feelings of isolation (appears friendless, a loner)
- excessive feelings of rejection; being picked on
- low school interest; poor academic performance (grades falling off)
- expression of violence in writings and drawings
- uncontrolled anger (shortened temper, sudden outbursts of anger)
- intimidating and bullying behaviors
- history of discipline problems (persistent refusal to follow rules, disregard for rules)
- drug and alcohol use
- gang affiliation
- inappropriate access to or possession of firearms
- serious threats of violence to others or to self
- change in friends
- cruelty to animals
- sudden change in dress

TEACHER TRAINING: A NECESSITY!

Teachers should insist that they receive training in violence prevention, early warning signs, and crisis management. Preservice, as well as in-service, teachers report that they have little to no training in these areas. If a teacher has been trained to recognize the early warning signs, many potentially violent situations can be averted.

At a minimum, teachers must be trained in the application of safe and effective techniques to manage a potentially combative student. If the situation causes a teacher to decide to use force to control a student, this training will
provide the teacher with nonviolent methods to manage the student while using reasonable force. Without training, the teacher might use an improper level of force, thus opening the possibility of criminal or civil liability (Frisby & Beckham, 1993).

Teachers need to be cautious when reading about holds and moves to handle violent students. If a teacher were to read these types of materials, often accompanied by diagrams, and then attempt to use them in a violent situation without training or practice, either the teacher or the student might be seriously hurt. To illustrate the importance of training to learn these skills, the National Crisis Prevention Institute has placed the following disclaimer on each page of its workbook where a hold or move diagram is located.

Caution: These techniques should only be learned and practiced under the supervision of a qualified Crisis Prevention Instructor. Attempting to learn the techniques from the diagrams may result in injury.

SELECTING A SUPPORTIVE DISCIPLINE MODEL

After reading this chapter you should consider which of the six Tried-and-True discipline models would have the best chances of reducing violence in schools. Would a behaviorist, Skinner-oriented model that depends heavily upon coercive and reward power work best to reduce the likelihood of school violence? Or, would a humanistic, Rogerian-oriented model that depends more heavily on creating a facilitating and supportive environment—one that seeks win-win problem resolutions—work best?

School violence does not simply happen—events lead up to it. Many of those “events,” from experiencing school success to experiencing failure, from feeling part of the community to feeling ostracized from the group, from allowing bullying to taking a stand against it, and from feeling listened to versus feeling ignored are, at least partially, under the control of educators. How we discipline students, reflected in the discipline model we choose, also is one of those “events” in the lives of students that can influence school violence.

CONCLUSION

The grim conclusion is that it is not if a school will experience violence, but when it will experience violence and will it be ready. Almost every piece of literature dealing with violence prevention in schools seems to say the same thing: teachers need to be provided with information, information, and more information; training, training, and more training!
SELECTED SCHOOL VIOLENCE RESOURCES

The reader may use ERIC (described in Appendix II) to locate still more information on the breadth of school violence, how to prevent it, and how to handle it if and when it occurs. In the meantime, several of the Internet resources listed below can be of help.

- Information and research available from the Center for the Prevention of School Violence.
  http://www.ncsu.edu/cpsv/CtrPreSchVio.html
- National Crime Prevention Council document titled Safer Schools that provides strategies for educators to help prevent school violence.
  http://www.weprevent.org
- National youth violence prevention center
  http://www.Safeyouth.org
- Tips for the teacher on managing student disruptions and creating a peaceful classroom.
  http://education.indiana.edu/cas/tt/v2i3/v2i3toc.html
- A U.S. Department of Education guide to safe schools including early warning signs, intervention, and prevention of school violence.
  http://www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS/OSEP/earlywrn.html
### APPENDIX I

**PROs and CONs of “Tried and True” Discipline Models**

Listed below are PROs and CONs generated by teachers, as well as by teachers-in-training. They may be of help to you in choosing your discipline model.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>James Dobson: A Place for Punishment Model</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>PROs</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discipline with love, with best interest of child at heart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immediate “debriefing” after punishment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easy to implement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fighting the societal breakdown that is eroding the Christian family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children respect those who discipline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus on the Family — Great organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncomplicated – “easy” to do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gives consequences to child’s actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Message sent clearly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Familiar to parents due to upbringing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Works as a last resort</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supported by some of the Old Testament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No room for doubt</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## Lee & Marlene Canter: Assertive Discipline Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROs</th>
<th>CONs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fair and consistent</td>
<td>Decreases intrinsic motivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can be easily implemented</td>
<td>Students are not empowered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus on positive behavior (reinforcement)</td>
<td>Ignores reasons for student misbehavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immediate results</td>
<td>Teacher’s way or the highway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sequential</td>
<td>Broken record – does not listen to students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uses praise</td>
<td>A lot of control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calm form of discipline</td>
<td>Students have little responsibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can be tailored to fit needs</td>
<td>Tons of bookkeeping – a nightmare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rules known and enforced</td>
<td>Praise is the focus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher becomes assertive</td>
<td>Teacher is more the boss than the leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training is available</td>
<td>Students don’t help design classroom rules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear expectations</td>
<td>Ineffective without proper training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catches kids being good</td>
<td>Sets up competition between/among students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excellent books available explaining the model</td>
<td>Can be humiliating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration with colleagues and parents</td>
<td>If the plan fails, it is the teacher’s fault</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher’s needs are met first</td>
<td>Controlling style of discipline</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Fredric Jones: Tools for Teaching Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROs</th>
<th>CONs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Calm and level-headed</td>
<td>Teacher makes the rules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of body language – nonverbal cues</td>
<td>Intimidation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discipline comes before instruction</td>
<td>Palms is intimidating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Systematic, easy to learn; training available</td>
<td>Takes a lot of time at the beginning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contains back-up responses</td>
<td>Omission training singles out a student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sets clear limits</td>
<td>Teachers used to giving their own “look,” not the Jones “look”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing nothing, but doing nothing well</td>
<td>Listening skills are absent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of incentives (i.e., PATs)</td>
<td>Resorts back to behaviorist tactics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaches rules/procedures – no misunderstanding</td>
<td>Discipline comes before instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Works to make students more independent with</td>
<td>Practice, practice, practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No public humiliation</td>
<td>Sometimes hard to remain “straight faced”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giving students the “look”</td>
<td>Possibly seen as robotic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doesn’t immediately jump to “full throttle”</td>
<td>Be prepared to be challenged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well-thought-out model</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Least behaviorist of the behaviorist models</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Rudolf Dreikurs: Social Discipline Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROs</th>
<th>CONs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Uses encouragement instead of praise</td>
<td>Hard for adults to relinquish/share power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A democratic way of rearing/teaching children</td>
<td>Inconsistent with the ways of society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No bookkeeping</td>
<td>Requires knowledge and training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children are social beings; human beings are social beings</td>
<td>Misdiagnosed goals may waste time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looks to the reasons behind the misbehavior</td>
<td>Training time required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognizes the child’s goal of misbehavior</td>
<td>Discourages the use of praise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focused on the whole child, not just changing his or her behavior</td>
<td>Hard to withdraw from a conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mutual respect – shared power</td>
<td>Withdrawn students may be attention seeking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empowers the student</td>
<td>No other major CONs mentioned although the first two above—adults sharing power and model is inconsistent with ways of society—are repeatedly mentioned!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training options readily available (i.e., Linda Albert and Jane Nelson)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No punishment</td>
<td>No other major CONs mentioned although the first two above—adults sharing power and model is inconsistent with ways of society—are repeatedly mentioned!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logical and natural consequences stressed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaches how to handle power struggles</td>
<td>No other major CONs mentioned although the first two above—adults sharing power and model is inconsistent with ways of society—are repeatedly mentioned!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Makes relationships a priority</td>
<td>No other major CONs mentioned although the first two above—adults sharing power and model is inconsistent with ways of society—are repeatedly mentioned!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## William Glasser: Reality Therapy & Choice Theory Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROs</th>
<th>CONs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>No punishment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No failure – it is not permitted</td>
<td>Failure not permitted — what!?!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaches self-control</td>
<td>Initially time-consuming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students see school as a good place</td>
<td>Difficult for some teachers to give up control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared responsibility</td>
<td>Challenging to get student to form a value judgment and then come up with a plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step by step instructions (Reality Therapy)</td>
<td>Cannot always ignore the past</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognizes that children have needs</td>
<td>Possible student abuse of responsibilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students contribute to rule making/changing</td>
<td>Difficult getting other educators “on board”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not really a “discipline” model</td>
<td>No “traditional discipline” from the teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lead management, rather than boss management</td>
<td>Students might not be responsible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focuses the future – what can be done</td>
<td>Time constraints</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does not dwell on the past</td>
<td>Time out, a comfortable place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavior is an individual choice</td>
<td>Boss managing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students are empowered</td>
<td>School has to be perceived as a good place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher does less work as a problem solver</td>
<td>Model needs to be used in its entirety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fun, choice, power, freedom</td>
<td>Curriculum, not the child, needs to be changed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus on doing quality work</td>
<td>Foreign for “traditional” teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Every student can succeed “joy” in education</td>
<td>No “why” questions to be asked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Never no, say there are other ways”</td>
<td>Teachers are more personal with students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No punishment, Never give up, No excuses</td>
<td>Effective instruction needed to be Quality School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotes democracy</td>
<td>No other major CONs mentioned although the first two above—adults sharing power and model is inconsistent with ways of society—are repeatedly mentioned!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Thomas Gordon: Teacher Effectiveness Training Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROs</th>
<th>CONs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nonconfrontational</td>
<td>Possible time it could take to implement the model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Way to communicate, not just a discipline model</td>
<td>How can both sides win without compromise?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meets the needs of all parties (win-win)</td>
<td>Difficult for some teachers to give up control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small amount of process to master</td>
<td>Need to re-teach yourself in order to avoid sending roadblocks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keeps communication open</td>
<td>Tough not to send roadblocks to communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only four skills to master</td>
<td>Hard to do what we are not accustomed to doing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher influence</td>
<td>Students may feel disappointed if you don’t provide them with solutions to their problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ultimate humanistic “discipline” model</td>
<td>Seems too “feeling-oriented”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problems solved using win-win stay solved</td>
<td>Not how we are used to responding to students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allows child to own his or her own problem</td>
<td>Tempting to interject one of the roadblocks when using active listening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No compromise</td>
<td>Requires retraining</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides an understanding of acceptable and unacceptable</td>
<td>Teachers using the model might conflict with school policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stimulates great dialogue</td>
<td>Can sound phony and mechanical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No moralizing</td>
<td>What if the model does not work?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple solutions are acceptable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX II

Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)
http://www.eric.ed.gov
Toll-free 800-LET-ERIC (800-538-3742)

A PROFESSIONAL

One definition of a professional is that it is someone who regularly turns to a recognized body of knowledge in order to make decisions. Since the mid-1960s, one recognized body of knowledge for busy practitioners has been ERIC (Educational Resources Information Center). Make use of this incredible resource for teachers and professors.

INTRODUCTION

Have you had the opportunity personally to hear the lecture on “Disciplinary Techniques Reported by Parents of Gifted Children” recently delivered at the Western Psychological Association Conference in San Jose, California? Couldn’t get the time off? No money in the travel budget? Sorry about that. Did you read the 2007 article “School Discipline in Moral Disarray” in the Journal of Moral Education, which highlights that most school disciplinary policies are ineffective instruments for delivering moral messages? No? That journal isn’t in your school’s professional library? Have you or your colleagues reviewed Reyes’ (2006) text, Discipline, Achievement, and Race: Is Zero Tolerance the Answer? No? Would you like to review it? Should you review it? All three of these resources, and tens of thousands more, can be a real help in establishing and maintaining classroom discipline.

The reality is that most faculty, busy with teaching responsibilities and on limited travel budgets, do not have the time or resources to attend as many professional meetings as they would like. Further, even the best of reports,
conference proceedings, and curriculum guides generally have a rather limited
distribution—often only to participants. Busy educators have limited time to
skim the literature, even the limited publications available to them, looking
for just the right article to help them. Yet, for classroom teachers, information
gained through such sources could serve as the basis for establishing,
maintaining, and improving their classroom management.

**DISCIPLINE TOPICS OF INTEREST TO TEACHERS**

What kinds of topics related to classroom management might teachers
have a need to know more about? Just for starters, how about delinquency,
suspensions, due process, child abuse, academic versus nonacademic penalties
for misconduct, legal issues, gifted children, handicapped children, school size
and school disorder, discipline in foreign countries, beginning teachers’ guides
to discipline, managing classroom conflict, assessment of classroom problems,
influence of families, change strategies, assertiveness training, behavior modi-
fication, first-year-teacher survival, punishment, medicine and discipline, discipli-
nary hearings, knowledge of legally sanctioned discipline procedures, and
gender and corporal punishment? Wow! The topics are almost endless, each
demanding quality information before precious time, effort, and resources are
committed.

Wouldn’t it be great if it were possible to quickly and easily access, at no cost
or at minimal cost, conference proceedings, curriculum or instructor guides,
opinion papers, bibliographies, descriptive or research reports, program eval-
uations, journal articles, speeches, and tests/questionnaires in education? You
might be thinking that while you are wishing, you may as well wish for a
brand new lab, more motivated students, and a forty-five-foot sailing yacht!
Send in the bottle with the genie!

All of these sources of information are in fact currently available through
a system called ERIC—“the most widely used educational database in the
world” (Smith, 1990, p. 79). It is even better than a bottle with a genie in it.
A genie grants only three wishes; ERIC is able to grant an unlimited number
of requests for information. ERIC’s database, the world’s largest, contains
countless journal articles and documents. Yet, for some reason ERIC has too
often been kept a secret from practitioners.

**ERIC DESCRIPTION**

The Education Resources Information Center (ERIC), sponsored by
the Institute of Education Sciences of the U.S. Department of Education,
produces the world’s premier database of journal and nonjournal education literature. Practitioners should note that the “R” in ERIC stands for Resources—something that all educators can make use of.

The ERIC online system provides the public with a centralized Web site for searching the ERIC bibliographic database (1996–present) of more than 1.2 million citations to a broad collection of education-related resources, from government reports to journal articles. More than 100,000 full-text items (i.e., conference proceedings, reports, curriculum guides) are available through ERIC at no charge. And, more than 650 journals currently are indexed in ERIC with 500 of these indexed comprehensively—every article in each issue is indexed! It is an amazing resource.

ERIC’s mission is to provide a comprehensive, easy-to-use, searchable, Internet-based bibliographic and full-text database of education research and information. A fundamental goal for ERIC’s future is to increase the availability and quality of research and information for educators, researchers, and the general public. ERIC is “one of the most important, if not the most important resource that has helped educators to bridge the gap between practice and theory” (Barron 1990, 47). Barron’s claim is as true today as it was then.

CONTENTS EXPERTS—SCREENING ERIC MATERIAL

ERIC Content Experts advise on aspects of acquiring subject-specific, education-related resources for inclusion in the ERIC database. Using the database standards and criteria developed with the guidance of an ERIC Steering Committee, they recommend journals to be included in ERIC, as well as sources and types of nonjournal materials. The day-to-day work of building and managing the ERIC collection is handled by curators with expertise in the following topics:

- Adult, Career, and Vocational Education
- Assessment and Evaluation
- Community Colleges
- Counseling and Student Services
- Disabilities and Gifted Education
- Education Management
- Elementary and Early Childhood Education
- Higher Education
- Information and Technology
CONDUCTING AN ERIC SEARCH

Conducting an ERIC search has never been easier. Simply go to a computer and type in www.eric.ed.gov. Up will come a screen that prompts you to choose whether you want your search to locate specific words in the document’s title or body. You will then be prompted to enter a descriptor. Enter the descriptor(s) of your choice. If you want to enter several descriptors, do so. Remember, though, that if you enter separate descriptors (i.e., discipline English classrooms) your search will locate all documents that contain these separate words. The number of documents located could be overwhelming. Sometimes you may wish to limit your search by grouping two or more descriptors. That is done by placing the descriptors in quotations marks (i.e., “discipline in English classrooms”). In this way, only documents that include the exact four words, together, will be found.

Using the correct descriptor(s) increases the chances that you will be successful in locating relevant materials. But, occasionally, what you might call something is not the descriptor ERIC uses to describe that same something. Therefore, ERIC has built a thesaurus into its system. Use it. You may also phone, toll-free, ERIC directly at 800-538-3742.

TWO VERSIONS OF ERIC CITATIONS

ERIC searches typically locate documents that fall into one of two categories. Documents are either journal articles, with an EJ six-digit ERIC number, or a form of “fugitive” or “grey” literature, with an ED six-digit ERIC number. An example of both types of document citations follows. Each entry includes the document’s title, author(s), publication date, publication type, and both key descriptors and an abstract. This information can be very helpful in deciding whether or not to secure and read the complete document.
ERIC TITLE: Beliefs and Bullying: Factors Associated with Peer Victimization among Youth
ERIC #: ED 493749
Author: Webb, Patrick
Publication Date: 2006-10-00
Publication Type: Information Analyses; Reports-Evaluative
Descriptors:
Bullying; Peer Relationships; Youth; Gender Differences; Social Influences; Individual Characteristics; Ethnicity; Intervention
Abstract:
The purpose of this article is to identify and discuss various aspects associated with peer victimization (bullying) among youth. In particular, this analysis will investigate several critical factors (e.g. causes, consequences, etc.) related to peer victimization from relevant empirical studies. Intervention measures are suggested.

ERIC TITLE: Reducing Discipline Referrals in Middle School
ERIC #: EJ 693964
Author: Hirst, Ronald K.
Publication Date: 2005-01-00
Journal Name: Principal
Journal Citation: v84, n3, p51 January-February
Descriptors:
Middle Schools; Developmental Stages; Coping; Adolescent Development
Abstract:
You see them every day in middle schools: students who seem to spend more time in the office than they do in class. In Florida, middle school students are more likely than elementary or high school students to be suspended, according to the Florida Department of Education (2001). While many adolescents go through their middle school years relatively unscathed by the stress of this developmental stage, many others fail to achieve the intellectual capacities and coping skills they will need to meet the demands of adult life (Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development 1989). Students who fail to develop these skills usually manifest emotional stress and express it by creating classroom disruptions that often lead to them being sent to an administrator, and the incidents documented as referrals.

The information that you gather from ERIC can be personally persuasive, helping you—as a professional—to decide what to do in the classroom.
ERIC can also equip you with the knowledge necessary to persuade others—colleagues, administrators, and parents. It is a win-win tool. Use it. The ERIC Web site, www.eric.ed.gov, is a U. S. government site and is in the public domain. Some of that Web site wording has been included in this Appendix.

WARNING! PREPARE A “SHOPPING LIST”

Most people know what happens when they are hungry and go shopping for groceries without a list. They come home with a lot more than they went for. The same is true when an information-hungry person uses ERIC’s RIE or CIJE. As you scan an ERIC Subject Index, you end up spotting interesting and useful resources outside your primary area of investigation. If you want to avoid this situation, prepare an investigation “shopping list” beforehand. Then again, have some fun! Why not let your imagination and your newfound information retrieval system run wild?

PUBLISH, WHO ME?

Who are these people who publish in ERIC, especially in RIE? Who designs the curriculum guides, tests, and follow-up questionnaires listed in RIE? Who conducts and then writes up the successful projects that are reported? Moreover, who describes the workings of the general advisory committees? People just like you publish in ERIC. In most schools, exciting things are happening that really ought to be shared. ERIC’s RIE is just the vehicle for that sharing. The simple guidelines for doing this are described on ERIC’s Web site. Follow the directions for Individual Contributors. Good luck! I will look for your name and your innovative program or ideas “in print.”
APPENDIX III
List of School Shootings, 1987 through 2007 (United States Only!)

- April 16, 2007, Blacksburg, VA
  A senior, Seung-Hui Cho, massacres thirty-two students and faculty, and then kills himself, at the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.
- January 19, 2007, Framingham, MA
  John Odgren, sixteen, stands accused of stabbing a fifteen-year-old classmate, James Alenson, to death in the hallway of his high school in an affluent suburb of Boston.
- January 3, 2007, Tacoma, WA
  Douglas Chanthabouly, eighteen, shot fellow student Samnang Kok, seventeen, in the hallway of Henry Foss High School.
- October 3, 2006, Nickel Mines, PA
  Thirty-two-year-old Carl Charles Roberts IV entered the one-room West Nickel Mines Amish School and shot ten schoolgirls, ranging in age from six to thirteen years, and then himself. Five of the girls and Roberts died.
- September 29, 2006, Cazenovia, WI
  A fifteen-year-old student shot and killed Weston School principal John Klang.
- September 26, 2006, Bailey, CO
  Adult male held six students hostage at Platte Canyon High School and then shot and killed Emily Keyes, sixteen, and himself.
- August 24, 2006, Essex, VT
  Christopher Williams, twenty-seven, looking for his ex-girlfriend at Essex Elementary School, shot two teachers, killing one and wounding another. Before going to the school, he had killed the ex-girlfriend’s mother.
- November 8, 2005, Jacksboro, TN
  One fifteen-year-old shot and killed an assistant principal at Campbell County High School and seriously wounded two other administrators.
• March 21, 2005, Red Lake, MN
  Jeff Weise, sixteen, killed grandfather and companion, then arrived at school where he killed a teacher, a security guard, five students, and finally himself, leaving a total of ten dead.
• March 2, 2005, Cumberland City, TN
  A fourteen-year-old boy is charged with shooting a school bus driver to death. Apparently she had reported the student earlier for using smokeless tobacco on the bus.
• February 2, 2004, Washington, DC
  Following a confrontation with another student in the cafeteria, a seventeen-year-old high school student was shot to death.
• September 24, 2003, Cold Spring, MN
  Two students are killed at Rocori High School by John Jason McLaughlin, fifteen.
• April 24, 2003, Red Lion, PA
  James Sheets, fourteen, killed principal Eugene Segro of Red Lion Area Junior High School before killing himself.
• April 14, 2003, New Orleans, LA
  One fifteen-year-old killed and three students wounded at John McDonogh High School by gunfire from four teenagers (none were students at the school). The motive was gang-related.
• January 15, 2002, New York, NY
  A teenager wounded two students at Martin Luther King Jr. High School.
• November 12, 2001, Caro, MI
  Chris Buschbacher, seventeen, took two hostages at the Caro Learning Center before killing himself.
• March 30, 2001, Gary, IN
  One student killed by Donald R. Burt, Jr., a seventeen-year-old student who had been expelled from Lew Wallace High School.
• March 22, 2001, Granite Hills, CA
  One teacher and three students wounded by Jason Hoffman, eighteen, at Granite Hills High School. A policeman shot and wounded Hoffman.
• March 7, 2001, Williamsport, PA
  Elizabeth Catherine Bush, fourteen, wounded student Kimberly Marchese in the cafeteria of Bishop Neumann High School; she was depressed and frequently teased.
• March 5, 2001, Santee, CA
  Two killed and thirteen wounded by Charles Andrew Williams, fifteen, firing from a bathroom at Santana High School.
• January 17, 2001, Baltimore, MD
  One student shot and killed in front of Lake Clifton Eastern High School.
Appendix III

- September 26, 2000, New Orleans, LA
  Two students wounded with the same gun during a fight at Woodson Middle School.
- May 26, 2000, Lake Worth, FL
  One teacher, Barry Grunow, shot and killed at Lake Worth Middle School by Nate Brazill, thirteen, with .25-caliber semiautomatic pistol on the last day of classes.
- March 10, 2000, Savannah, GA
  Two students killed by Darrell Ingram, nineteen, while leaving a dance sponsored by Beach High School.
- February 29, 2000, Mount Morris Township, MI
  Six-year-old Kayla Rolland shot dead at Buell Elementary School near Flint, Mich. The assailant was identified as a six-year-old boy with a .32-caliber handgun.
- December 6, 1999, Fort Gibson, OK
  Four students wounded as Seth Trickey, thirteen, opened fire with a 9mm semiautomatic handgun at Fort Gibson Middle School.
- November 19, 1999, Deming, NM
  Four students wounded as Seth Trickey, thirteen, opened fire with a 9mm semiautomatic handgun at Fort Gibson Middle School.
- May 20, 1999, Conyers, GA
  Six students injured at Heritage High School by Thomas Solomon, fifteen, who was reportedly depressed after breaking up with his girlfriend.
- April 20, 1999, Littleton, CO
  Fourteen students (including killers) and one teacher killed, twenty-three others wounded at Columbine High School in the nation’s deadliest high school shooting. Eric Harris, eighteen, and Dylan Klebold, seventeen, had plotted for a year to kill at least 500 and blow up their school. At the end of their hour-long rampage, they turned their guns on themselves.
- June 15, 1998, Richmond, VA
  One teacher and one guidance counselor wounded by a fourteen-year-old boy in the school hallway.
- May 21, 1998, Springfield, OR
  Two students killed, twenty-two others wounded in the cafeteria at Thurston High School by fifteen-year-old Kip Kinkel. Kinkel had been arrested and released a day earlier for bringing a gun to school. His parents were later found dead at home.
- May 19, 1998, Fayetteville, TN
  One student killed in the parking lot at Lincoln County High School three days before he was to graduate. The victim was dating the ex-girlfriend of his killer, eighteen-year-old honor student Jacob Davis.
• April 24, 1998, Edinboro, PA
  One teacher, John Gillette, killed, two students wounded at a dance at James W. Parker Middle School. Andrew Wurst, fourteen, was charged.
• March 24, 1998, Jonesboro, AK
  Four students and one teacher killed, ten others wounded outside as Westside Middle School emptied during a false fire alarm. Mitchell Johnson, thirteen, and Andrew Golden, eleven, shot at their classmates and teachers from the woods.
• December 15, 1997, Stamps, AK
  Two students wounded. Colt Todd, fourteen, was hiding in the woods when he shot the students as they stood in the parking lot.
• December 1, 1997, West Paducah, KY
  Three students killed, five wounded by Michael Carneal, fourteen, as they participated in a prayer circle at Heath High School.
• October 1, 1997, Pearl, MS
  Two students killed and seven wounded by Luke Woodham, sixteen, who was also accused of killing his mother. He and his friends were said to be outcasts who worshiped Satan.
• February 19, 1997, Bethel, AL
  Principal and one student killed, two others wounded by Evan Ramsey, sixteen.
• February 2, 1996, Atlanta, GE
  David Dubose, Jr., age sixteen, killed a teacher in a school highway.
• February 2, 1996, Moses Lake, WA
  Two students and one teacher killed, one other wounded when fourteen-year-old Barry Loukaitis opened fire on his algebra class.
• November 15, 1995, TN
  Jamie Rouse, age seventeen, shot two teachers in the head, one fatally. He then took aim at the football coach, but a female student walked into his path and was killed.
• March 2, 1987, MO
  Nathan Ferris, age twelve, an honor student, got tired of being teased and brought a gun to school and killed a fellow student. He then turned the gun on himself.

The sobering fact is that this list is not exhaustive and does not include all of the young people who have committed suicide with a handgun or rifle in a school setting.
## APPENDIX IV

### Bullying Behaviors Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MILD</th>
<th>MODERATE</th>
<th>SEVERE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>PHYSICAL AGGRESSION</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pushing</td>
<td>Kicking</td>
<td>Physical violence against family or friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shoving</td>
<td>Hitting</td>
<td>Threatening with a weapon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spitting</td>
<td></td>
<td>Inflicting bodily harm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Defacing property</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stealing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Physical acts that are demeaning and humiliating, but not bodily harmful</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Locking in a closed or confined space</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SOCIAL ALIENATION</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gossiping</td>
<td>Setting up to look foolish</td>
<td>Maliciously excluding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Embarrassing</td>
<td></td>
<td>Manipulating social order to achieve rejection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Excluding from group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social rejection</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Threatening with total isolation by peer group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ethnic slurs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Setting up to take the blame</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Publicly humiliating (e.g., revealing) personal information</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Excluding from group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social rejection</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>VERBAL AGGRESSION</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mocking</td>
<td>Teasing about clothing or possessions</td>
<td>Verbal threats of violence or of inflicting bodily harm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name calling</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dirty looks</td>
<td>Teasing about appearance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Intimidating telephone calls</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Verbal threats of aggression against property or possessions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>INTIMIDATION</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threatening to reveal personal information</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graffiti</td>
<td>Defacing property (e.g., lunch, clothing)</td>
<td>Threats of using coercion against family or friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publicly challenging to do something</td>
<td>Taking possessions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Playing a dirty trick</td>
<td>Coercion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Extortion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sexual or racial taunting</td>
<td>Coercion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Butty-Proofing Your Child, 2000*

Garrity, C., Baris, M., & Porter, W.

With permission
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