Classroom Management & Culture

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Chapter Six
Valuing Hard Work, Team Effort, and Academic Achievement

Please visit the Resource Exchange on TFANet to access the **Classroom Management & Culture Toolkit,** *which contains sample tools we've collected over time that are referenced throughout this text. You can also access many other tools on the Resource Exchange—from a wide range of grade levels and subject areas—which have been developed and shared by our corps members and alumni.*

Classroom Management & Culture
Introduction: Creating a Culture of Achievement

Many think of "classroom management" as the process of creating an environment where students raise their hands before contributing to a class discussion, where students don't whisper to their neighbors, pass notes, or read comic books, and where students use only respectful language towards their classmates and teacher – in sum, where students are well-behaved. While these characteristics certainly are true of a well-managed classroom, in this text, we are aiming for classroom environments that are all this and more.

In order to effect the dramatic academic gains necessary to level the playing field for the students in our classrooms, we must build a classroom *culture of achievement* – a culture in which students are inspired to work hard to attain success, a culture in which students are motivated to learn, a culture in which students collaborate with their peers to bring the whole class to higher levels of achievement. Ultimately, creating this powerful classroom culture will make it easier to ensure that your students meet your ambitious goals for behavior and for academic performance.

Before discussing *how* to create a culture of achievement in your classroom, we would like to give you a few examples of what a culture of achievement looks like in action. Consider the reflections of the following corps members and alumni who have also fostered a commitment to success in their classrooms:

> One day I started the classroom meeting with an announcement, "I have exciting news. In two weeks, we're going on a field trip to the New Orleans Zoo. We'll be leaving first thing in the morning and returning right before the buses arrive in the afternoon." I expected spontaneous shouts of joy. Instead, I faced five rows of dismayed faces. Frowning, the students looked at each other without speaking. I figured we were experiencing some sort of communication gap, so I looked to Natasha to act as a liaison. "Natasha," I asked, "what's wrong?" She replied earnestly and solemnly, "Ms. Cotner, if the field trip lasts all day, we're going to miss all our learning time." I quickly assured Natasha and the rest of the class that they needn't worry – the trip was most certainly going to be educational. However, Jeremiah was still unconvinced. After a few moments of serious thought, he added, "Well, can we at least bring flashcards on the bus?" The students did bring flashcards on the bus. In fact, a couple of them were so serious about maximizing their learning time that they brought mini-white boards, upon which they wrote persuasive paragraphs about why we should stay later than planned at the zoo.
> **Sara Cotner, South Louisiana '00**

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I was guardedly optimistic that my seventh graders would find merit in earning the title of "English Expert," which meant that they took a quiz demonstrating mastery on all of the objectives from the previous six-week unit. Success started slowly, and only two students got every answer correct on the first try. But each week brought another chance to take a mastery quiz (different questions, same unit objectives for six weeks), and incrementally, more and more students ended up getting their names on the roll of English Experts. Many would stop occasionally to check the bulletin board, almost as if they feared their name would suddenly disappear. Some even brought in friends from my other classes to show them the board and share their achievement. Those who were not yet Experts begged me to grade their quizzes before leaving the classroom that day. While the system took some planning and upkeep to implement because I was constantly signing their progress charts and writing new questions, it was worth it. Demanding 100 percent mastery communicated the value of persistence and the primacy of our academic skills. Best of all, with all of the different ways to earn status at school, I was thrilled that it was cool to be an Expert.
Andrew Mandel, Rio Grande Valley '00

I give weekly quizzes that are aligned with the standards. If a student gets lower than an 80%, they are required to come to a GOAL Session (Great Opportunity to Achieve Learning) either during lunch or after school and then retake the quiz. Some students who have passed the quiz already come to the GOAL sessions in order to help their peers. They want the opportunity to highlight all of the objectives. It is pretty powerful. Students correct each other's mistakes gently and encourage their peers to stay positive when frustration arises. Once *everyone* in the class masters the quiz, the students place their quizzes in their standards folders and highlight the standards that the quiz covers. It is an amazing incentive to be able to cross off a standard and visually detect the progress that is being made in class. And, putting the folders together as a class is a great way to improve and enhance classroom culture.
Kristin Bourguet, South Louisiana '99

These stories might seem unbelievable to someone with low expectations for student behavior and academic achievement. And yet, we have seen time and time again that dedicated and purposeful teachers can create classrooms where students of all ages buy into the idea that academic success is worth the effort.

Of course, none of these classroom environments were created accidentally. On the contrary, all of these teachers purposefully and relentlessly worked to create this climate of achievement. This text is designed to show you how they did it. A culture of achievement is built on six principles, all of which work together to create a classroom where students feel responsible for and motivated to work towards their own and their classmates' academic success. We will address these six principles in the six chapters of this text:

Chapter One: **Maintain high expectations for student behavior and for one's own ability to assert authority in the classroom.** Having high expectations for student behavior is fundamental to creating a positive, productive learning environment, as the self-fulfilling prophecy of high expectations holds true for behavior as well as academic achievement. Similarly, effective teachers hold high expectations for themselves – particularly in their own ability to assert their authority. They realize that they are responsible for, and in charge of, what happens in their classroom.

Chapter Two: **Establish rules and consequences.** Teachers who create a culture of achievement in their classrooms establish clear rules and consequences. Rules, and your explanation of them, delineate clear expectations for student behavior. Consequences outline what would happen if a student chose to break a rule. When students make the appropriate behavioral choices and follow the rules, effective teachers reinforce good behavior with intangible, and sometimes tangible, rewards.

Chapter Three: **Establish classroom routines and procedures.** Classroom routines and procedures have a two-fold purpose. First, they help ensure a predictable, safe, classroom environment by teaching students specific behaviors for specific circumstances. In that sense, routines and procedures build off the foundation created by rules. Routines also maximize overall classroom efficiency by allowing you to spend more time on instruction and less time on administrative tasks, transitions, and other areas of classroom inefficiencies. Transforming your classroom into a model of efficiency and structure allows you to not only promote appropriate behavior but also to meet your very ambitious academic goals in the limited amount of time available.

Chapter Four: **Respond to misbehavior.** In a culture of achievement, students realize that the ultimate consequence of misbehavior is interrupted learning opportunities for themselves and others. While working toward that reality, effective teachers respond to misbehavior that does occur by implementing consequences consistently and respectfully, by providing students with some control over the outcome, and by giving students an opportunity to achieve a fresh start.

Chapter Five: **Create a classroom community.** Successful teachers develop a sense of team and unity that compels students to meet high expectations for achievement and provides students with a psychologically safe environment in which to do so. Building a strong sense of community involves establishing a respectful tone as the authority figure in the classroom, inspiring students to "bond" with their peers, building an environment in which diverse students feel valued, and helping students resolve conflict when it does arise.

Chapter Six: **Value academic achievement, hard work, and team effort.** Finally, teachers who create a culture of achievement in their classroom value and celebrate achievement, effort, and collaboration regularly and relentlessly. Over and over, we have seen that successful teachers think critically about what they will value and celebrate with their students and then set up structures that force those values to permeate their classroom.

Classroom management is more than student behavior. While rules, consequences, and classroom routines are key parts of creating a true culture of achievement, we are all aspiring to create a classroom that goes far beyond good behavior in an efficient classroom. We must strive to create classrooms with a powerful, achievement-oriented culture where students are motivated to work hard, where students want to learn, and where students collaborate with their classmates to reach their collective goals for achievement.

Holding High Expectations for Behavior
Chapter One
I.   Holding High Expectations for Student Behavior
II. Holding High Expectations for Yourself: Asserting Your Authority

Introduction

Close your eyes and picture yourself in front of your classroom during your first few weeks of teaching. What do you see? There is a continuum of possibilities, ranging from classrooms with a culture of achievement where students are sitting with hands folded in their laps on the community carpet, eagerly responding to questions and clapping when their peers give correct responses, to classrooms where the teacher stands helplessly at the front of the room, begging "settle down…stop…please" over the raucous conversations and antics of dozens of students.

As this text will illustrate, you can create a positive, achievement-oriented classroom environment. In the coming chapters, we will explore specific ways to build systems that enable and encourage your students to work hard toward academic goals. You will learn how to establish, teach, and implement rules and consequences and how to foster a constructive, learning-focused atmosphere that respects all students, motivates them to academic achievement and celebrates their accomplishments.

In this chapter, you will learn two of the most important principles you will need to internalize in order to build a culture of achievement in your classroom. We will first discuss the importance of holding high and explicit expectations for student behavior. Then, we will show you the importance of holding high expectations for your own ability to assert your authority when establishing and reinforcing appropriate student behavior. Before you develop rules or consequences, before you set up efficient procedures, before you teach your students how to interact with kindness, you must exhibit a deep belief in your students and a strong confidence in your authority to make this all happen.

Being both affirming and firm in the classroom often eludes beginner teachers, either because they abdicate their responsibility to establish and reinforce clear expectations out of diffidence or a hope to win students over by befriending them; or because their need for authority becomes an end in itself, and they fail to build a culture where students are excited about academic success in the ways you saw in the introduction to this text. As soon as you understand the importance of both high expectations and asserting your authority, you will be on your way to creating a classroom focused on learning. By the end of this chapter, you will realize that your students can indeed behave – and that you hold the key to help them do so.

I. Holding High Expectations for Student Behavior

Often when teachers think of high expectations for students, they think primarily in terms of having high expectations for academic potential and achievement. Most likely, you can list examples of having high expectations for student achievement: expecting that students will read, write, and solve problems at or above grade level; envisioning students scoring in the top percentiles on standardized tests; believing that students could receive local, state, or even national recognition for their work. Of course, none of these results come without an incredible amount of hard work from teachers and students in any community. But high expectations must exist for them to happen.

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You must have high expectations for student behavior as well. You must determine that your class of rambunctious second graders can line up and walk silently through the hallway without touching each other; that your after-lunch class of 35 garrulous eighth graders can complete their "Do Now" (a beginning of class warm-up activity) quietly and then smoothly transition into effective cooperative groups; that your sixth period World History class will praise and respectfully critique their classmates' end-of-unit presentations. These types of classroom environments take shape through an incredible amount of hard work rooted in high expectations for behavior. What is the death knell of a classroom vision in which students are well-behaved, feel safe taking risks in front of their peers, and work collaboratively to attain success? Low behavioral expectations.

Low behavioral expectations manifest themselves either when teachers neglect to establish clear rules and procedures or, more common among first-year teachers, when they fail to respond when they see misbehavior. Teachers who do not believe their students *can* behave do not feel comfortable asking them to do so, generally resulting in a downward spiral in which students reinforce teachers' low expectations. Let's step back to examine misperceptions that might catalyze negative behavioral expectations. Understanding these misperceptions will help you be more aware of any damaging views you might bring into the classroom.

Lee and Marlene Canter, coauthors of *Assertive Discipline*[1], suggest four misperceptions that stand in the way of high behavioral expectations:

Myth: Students' Emotional Problems Make Good Behavior Impossible
Reality: All children can behave, but some students may need someone to teach them how. Some teachers believe that students who frequently explode in anger, students who cry regularly, or students who seem unusually aloof and distant will only be able meet behavioral expectations in the classroom if they receive the help of a psychologist or other professional. It's not uncommon to hear teachers claim, "Michael has serious emotional problems and simply cannot control his outbursts. How can I expect him to behave in the classroom? What he needs is professional help." Later in this chapter you'll read about a student who had Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD), aggressive tendencies, and an anger disorder who proved this myth wrong.

Myth: Inadequate Parenting Undermines a Teacher's Ability to Maintain a Controlled Classroom
Reality: Teachers can create a classroom that leaves behind the stresses that may exist outside its walls. Sadly, more and more children today are growing up in homes torn apart by alcohol, drug abuse, neglect, abandonment, or even physical, emotional, or sexual abuse. Many teachers assume this turmoil at home prevents students from meeting behavioral guidelines at school. Teachers declare, "You know who her mother is. Growing up in that home, it's no wonder Chris has problems. Why do you even expect her to behave?" On the contrary, despite a turbulent home environment – whether real or perceived – students can rise to your high behavioral expectations.

Myth: Students Who Live in a Poverty-Stricken Environment Are Unable to Behave Appropriately
Reality: Students in any environment generally rise to the expectations set for them. Some teachers are convinced that given the problems faced by students growing up in low-income communities, those students simply cannot be expected to meet the same behavioral guidelines as students growing up in high-income communities. These teachers often maintain, "Look at what she sees just out her front door…of course she gets into trouble all of the time," or "Children from that neighborhood have no

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[1] Canter, Lee and Marlene Canter. *Assertive Discipline: Positive Behavior Management for Today's Classroom*. Santa Monica, CA: Canter & Associates, Inc., 1992.

respect for adults, never mind teachers – what makes you think they will listen to *you*?" or "I can just tell that none of my students have desks at home or a quiet place to study." Such overgeneralizations severely limit a teacher's expectations and highlight the importance of remembering that every child's situation is unique. As explained in the *Teaching As Leadership* text, students growing up in areas ravaged by poverty *can* exhibit excellent behavior and collaborate to create a community of trust and caring.

Myth: Students with Special Needs Cannot Behave in a General Education Classroom

Reality: Some students may need extra support in order to learn how to behave properly. As more and more students who receive special education services are included in general education classrooms, it has become increasingly common to hear of teachers who believe they cannot handle students with special needs in a regular classroom setting. General education teachers often insist, "I'm not trained to handle her behavior and other disabilities. She needs to be in a special classroom with a teacher who knows how to deal with this type of child." While students with behavior-related disabilities sometimes do need additional behavioral support, that does not preclude them from being able to meet high expectations for behavior. You'll read more about supporting students with behavior-related disabilities in chapter four.

Clearly, and as we'll discuss later in the chapter, low expectations are sometimes built on teachers' perceptions of their *own* inability to handle a challenging situation. Other times they're actually based – at some level – on compassion and sympathy for students. It is easy to understand and explain these factors, but it is equally important to resolve not to let them get in the way of high expectations.

The key to success, as Lee and Marlene Canter write, is that "you must believe that if students don't behave, it's because they've chosen not to, or don't know how."[2] To illustrate this point, the Canters point out that in almost any classroom, even one in which students are often disruptive, "[w]hen a stranger enters a classroom, students don't know what to expect, and disruptions normally stop. Not knowing who the stranger is, or how he or she might respond to disruptive behavior, students choose to behave." As the Canters argue, "If students choose to behave in one situation, surely they can be influenced to behave in other situations."[3]

Consider the reflections of Molly Eigen (Rio Grande Valley '99), who taught a 9th-12th grade Math Resource class:

> I was told, "Forget about it, he CAN'T behave. He has ADD, an anger disorder and aggressive tendencies." At first, I had to agree. Luis was loud and explosive. He refused to do his work and often harassed me and other students. But, one day in a meeting with the principal and his mother, we called Luis in to talk about his behavior. I watched as he was polite, responsive, and extremely respectful to everyone in the room. I realized that Luis had just figured out that he didn't have to behave at school, which teachers had been consistently reinforcing for years by allowing him to misbehave. I now knew that Luis

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[2] Ibid 21.
[3] Ibid 21.

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> could behave if he wanted to, so I had to make him want to behave. I did several things. First, I made it easier for him to behave: I gave him more frequent attention and assistance, I sat him near me, I allowed him to have breaks, and I constantly gave him very clear directions and parameters of what was appropriate behavior for each activity we did. Then, I made it worthwhile for him to behave: I created an individual reward system and gave him frequent praise for good behavior. And finally, I made it unpleasant for him not to behave: I worked closely with his mother and coach to create a consequence system that included being grounded at home, taking away his video games and not letting him go to football practice. After a year of consistently keeping up with these systems, Luis had exceptionally good behavior and with that I saw his learning skyrocket. Now he could pay attention, focus and follow through on assignments. He was in class instead of suspended, and he was a happier student.

The teacher's job, then, is to provide a structure that encourages students who *can* behave to do so. As Molly noted in her story, Luis was choosing not to behave, so she developed strategies to encourage him to make better choices. But she also realized that Luis needed clearer instruction about what was expected of him, and she ended up coaching him through the process of taking responsibility for his attitude and his learning. While not all students will require such specific attention, teachers are always well served by thinking through the many ways in which they can help students rise to the classroom's expectations. It is a matter of figuring out what factors you can influence to spur excellent behavior, which – as in Luis's situation – can then lead to much stronger academic success.

Earlier, we alluded to the fact that low expectations for student behavior are sometimes built on teachers' perceptions of *their own inability* to handle a challenging situation. Indeed, a teacher who claims, "This class is just too rowdy for me to control," or "I can't handle this student's emotional outbursts," are, deep down, doubting their own ability to provide a structured environment.

The Canters assert, "The major roadblock to successful classroom management is a teacher's own negative expectations about her ability to deal with disruptive student behavior."[4] Just as teachers need to have high expectations for their students' potential to behave appropriately, teachers need to have high expectations for their own ability to assertively establish and reinforce concrete expectations for student behavior. In the next section, we will help you ensure appropriately high expectations for yourself and give you specific strategies for asserting your authority in an effective manner.

II. Holding High Expectations for Yourself: Asserting Your Authority

If you are like most new teachers, you probably have some anxiety about what it will be like to be the leader of a classroom. Will students really see you as "in charge"? What if they don't? How do you ensure that they will? How will you most effectively use that authority to reinforce your high expectations for student behavior, and to create a community of academic achievement in your classroom? Understandably, many new teachers are just as concerned about whether they will present themselves effectively and whether students will respond to them appropriately as they are about how to deliver instruction.

Over our 20 years of preparing corps members for their classrooms, we have learned that new teachers need to put considerable energy into ensuring they have high expectations for themselves and into thinking about how they will assert their authority in a firm, but positive way in their classrooms.

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[4] Ibid 17.

Teachers who accept and effectively use the authority that comes with their position as the instructional leader of the classroom are those who are able to most influence student achievement.

In considering your own approach to asserting your authority in the classroom, there are two basic premises to keep in mind. First, as the teacher, you are in fact in charge of and responsible for what happens in the classroom. You must recognize this and be mentally prepared to accept responsibility for everything that happens in your classroom. Second, there are more and less effective ways a teacher might exercise his or her authority. We will address each of these points in turn.

(1) You are in charge of and responsible for what happens in your classroom. Your authority as the instructional leader of a classroom is not something you must seek out. Rather, it is something that is a fundamental component of a teacher's role. Like it or not (and most teachers would probably say they have felt both emotions), you are the authority in your classroom, and you have to think strategically about how you use that authority. Without a doubt, you have the unquestionable right and responsibility to administer consequences and positive reinforcement that will encourage helpful behaviors and stop harmful ones.

When beginning teachers struggle with classroom management, it is often because they ignore unacceptable behavior, worrying that they'll upset or annoy students by enforcing rules. Or they'll ignore certain students, deciding to concentrate their efforts on the half of the class that "wants to learn." It is your job to set and enforce rules so that *all* of your students can concentrate on academic achievement. Even in classrooms run in a more "democratic" manner, where students help to formulate the rules, the teacher still assumes ultimate responsibility for the conduct of his or her students.

(2) The most effective teachers assert their authority with students in a firm and positive manner. Good teachers are neither meek nor hostile; they are neither a student's best friend nor the class's tyrant. Instead, effective teachers are those who maintain their students' dignity by asserting their authority evenly, calmly, and predictably.

By "asserting authority," we do not mean yelling at your students. You can be both respectful and assertive. Asserting your authority means standing firm on your expectations. It means approaching every interaction with every student in a well-considered, pre-determined way, so that you can calmly and efficiently handle any situation that arises. As the Canters explain, the key to effective assertion of authority is to clearly and confidently make your expectations for student behavior known and to consistently follow through with your stated consequences. The Canters call this highly effective approach "assertive responsiveness":

> When a teacher responds assertively, he tells students exactly what behavior is acceptable and what is unacceptable, what will happen when the student chooses to behave and what will happen when the student chooses not to behave. No questions. No room for confusion.[5]

Of all the teachers I work with, the ones who are most successful are those who do not engage in battles with students, those who refuse to direct anger towards students, those who are consistent with behavioral expectations but execute their systems without humiliating children, yelling, or taking away a small person's power. It absolutely takes consistency and fairness, but I have seen students become empowered and focused on learning because their teacher has given them nothing to fight about.

Elizabeth Marcell, Rio Grande Valley '99
Doctoral Candidate, Harvard University

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[5] Ibid 27.

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It may help to see the utility of this approach by considering its alternatives.   At one end of the spectrum are new teachers who – often due to well-intentioned kindness – are inconsistent and permissive when it comes to their rules and consequences. These teachers often find themselves thinking, "Well, Juan is whispering to his neighbor, but in general is doing such a better job today than he was yesterday…I won't say anything and hope he stops quickly," or "I shouldn't tell her to stop chewing gum because then she'll be in a bad mood." The Canters call these types of reactions to misbehavior "nonassertive responses." These practices undermine a teacher's authority by giving students no means of predicting the results of their choices to behave or misbehave, a key component of their sense of safety.

At the other end of the spectrum are teachers who mistake their role as instructional leaders as a call for harshness and hostility. These teachers believe that the way to maintain authority is through students' fear of the teacher's reprisal. The Canters call these types of responses "hostile responses." These teachers hear themselves saying, "Juan, stop talking *now*. Evidently you're just not capable of keeping your mouth shut," or "Spit your gum out. You now get to write 'I will never chew gum in class again' 500 times." In the center of the spectrum are the teachers who realize their need to assert their authority in a fair, balanced and consistent manner.

Consider the following table of examples, adapted from *Assertive Discipline*:

Situation	Nonassertive Response	Assertive Response	Hostile Response
A student is disengaged from a lecture.	The teacher ignores it, thinking, "I'm just glad he's not disrupting anything."	**Without stopping the lecture, the teacher walks back and stands near the student. The student reengages.**	The teacher stops the lesson and says, "Hey, I'm not standing up here to hear myself talk. Wake up and pay attention. If you like staring out the window so much, I'll have you stay in after class and you can stare out the window all you want."
A student with a history of misbehavior is on-task, working well.	The teacher appreciates the fact in his mind, but doesn't communicate that to the student in any way.	**The teacher makes eye contact and nods in approval to the student. Later, as the class is leaving the teacher says, "You did a wonderful job working on that assignment today."**	The teacher says, "It's about time you finally started working like a ninth-grader."
Students are running in the classroom when you are trying to line up for lunch.	"Boys, how many times do I have to ask you to walk in the classroom? Now I'm tired of having to repeat myself. Next time, please try to act like third-graders, okay?"	**The teacher calmly yet firmly states, "Kevin, Jerry, Jon, the rule is no running in the classroom. You know the consequence for that behavior is to be last in line. Now I want the three of you to stand at the end of the line—quietly and quickly. Thank you.**	Clearly exasperated, the teacher says in a strident tone, "I've had it with you boys. I'll see all of you after school."

These examples paint a good picture of how effective teachers assert their authority in a given situation. You should not lose sight, however, of the fact that your authority is manifested in more than just your words. We'll discuss more of this in chapter five when we highlight the importance of maintaining a respectful tone, but recognize that facial expressions, body language and overall behavior also contribute to your students' perception of you as the authority figure. Thus, a key component of effectively asserting your authority is attending to how you *behave* as much as what you *say*. The following chart outlines the verbal and non-verbal characteristics of the nonassertive, assertive, and hostile teachers exemplified in the previous table:

Nonassertive Teacher	Assertive Teacher	Hostile Teacher
• Uses an indecisive tone; requests often sound more like a question and leave room for student refusal. • Implements consequences and rewards inconsistently. • Cannot model behavior, since student expectations for behavior are unclear. Body language may convey timidity and lack of confidence.	• **Uses a firm, positive, respectful tone.** • **Applies consequences as outlined and delivers praise as expected.** • **Models how students are expected to behave (for example, during "silent time" the teacher is silent as well).**	• Uses a harsh, disrespectful tone; shouts at students. • Administers consequences that are several degrees harsher than what is necessary, and positive reinforcement is given rarely and/or sarcastically. • Flaunts the fact that they are "above the rules." Teacher brazenly chews gum, drinks soda, or engages in other activities from which students are prohibited. Body language may also be intimidating, cold or aloof.

Some teachers misinterpret "asserting authority" to mean that they must become someone other than themselves. In fact, teachers often find that using a voice or personality that doesn't come naturally to them backfires, as students realize that the teacher is faking. This insincerity may be perceived as a lack of confidence. The best thing you can do is think critically about your own personal strengths and how they mesh with your plan for asserting your authority. Certainly, all of us make adjustments to our natural persona when we are in front of a class teaching. However, your teaching will be most effective if you assert authority in a way that is compatible with your style and personality.

Be honest about your style, your weaknesses, and your strengths. Use what you know about yourself to develop your management style and don't try to force yourself to be something you are not. Students will be the first to let you know that you are not being yourself.

Caroline Murray, Los Angeles '91
Asst. Director,
Montclair State University

To "assert authority" does not mean to "have a booming voice and lots of charisma." We have witnessed many quiet-voiced, small-statured, unassuming new teachers take command of their classrooms, and we have seen socially aggressive, loud new teachers struggle to assert their authority. No one personality-type has a monopoly on asserting authority. The most important step in asserting your authority is not to change your personality, but rather to *decide* to assert your authority – to resolve to hold high expectations for yourself as the classroom leader. You must decide that you are in charge.

Of course, all teachers find their authority challenged at one point or another. Sometimes a student may explicitly challenge your authority to make or enforce a rule. Sometimes, that challenge comes from within as you struggle to fulfill your pledge to assert your authority through respectful and consistent application of rules and consequences. For example, the first time you find yourself verbally admonishing a

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contagiously smiling six-year old, your take-charge attitude might waver. Alternatively, the first time one of your adolescent students verbally assaults another student in your class, your commitment to be positive and respectful with your students at all times might seem naïve. Yet your ability to assert authority in a firm and positive manner is critical in situations such as these.

"Asserting authority" effectively is a matter of consistency and confidence. It means maintaining your students' dignity, *not by relieving* them of consequences for their actions, but instead *by enforcing expectations through even and calm delivery of consequences*. It means enforcing expectations in a way that is consistent with your own personality and yet maintains your role as the leader of your classroom. While doing so is easier said than done, half the battle for most new teachers is simply recognizing that they need to be aware of how and when they are asserting their authority, especially in the foundational first days and weeks of school.

Building a Culture of Achievement
The Firm and Positive Approach

Theresa Noble (Miami '03) discovered that, if she wanted to create an environment where her students were respectful toward one another and excited to be in school, she would need to act the same way. She wrote this reflection five months into her first year of teaching:

My classroom culture has improved enormously. That is not to say that it is perfect now by any means. In fact, I think it has improved so much because it was so bad at first! In the beginning, I was so intent on being a serious, respected teacher that had control of her class that I forgot to be myself and relax sometimes. I became someone I never wanted to be in the classroom: I was snappy, rude, loud and intimidating. I realized this needed to change when I was sitting next to a retired teacher on my flight back to Miami from Christmas break with my family. I was tired and not looking forward to going back. The woman could sense this and she said, "First of all, you need to relax and stop expecting perfection. I was still learning my 35th year of teaching. The key to managing for me was to treat every child as if they were the most important person in the class. Find what works for you and don't pay attention to the teachers who think you should be yelling more." I started back with a calm, focused attitude and tried being polite for a change. It worked! My kids have responded so much more positively to a kind, respectful but firm teacher than they did when I was trying to be intimidating.

Conclusion and Key Concepts

- The self-fulfilling prophecy of high expectations holds true for behavior as well as academic achievement. In the same way that we hold high expectations for student achievement, we must hold **high expectations for student behavior.** Expecting your students to behave a certain way – and making those expectations clear to them – goes a long way toward shaping their behavior.

- We must hold our high expectations for behavior in spite of **common misperceptions about the inevitability of behavior problems.** There are a whole host of factors that, unless we are diligent, lead us toward misperceptions about our students – that they can't behave, or that their lives are so difficult we should not expect too much of them. In the overwhelming majority of instances, students' emotional problems, inadequate parenting, poverty, and special needs simply *do not* make good, productive behavior out of reach. Of course, having high expectations for student behavior does not, in any way, mean that a teacher loses sight of the realities of the students' lives.

- You will need to think carefully about how you will **assert your authority** in a firm and positive way in your new classroom. You are responsible for, and in charge of, what happens in your classroom. You can most effectively assert that authority by interacting with students in a predictable, fair, and balanced manner.

We thank Mark Pett, Delta '94, for allowing us to include some of his cartoons. See more of Mark's work at http://www.markpett.com.

Creating and Implementing Effective Rules and Consequences

Chapter Two

I. Determining Rules
II. Determining Consequences
III. Teaching Expectations
IV. Reinforcing Good Behavior

Introduction

Classrooms are unpredictable places. On the first day of school, students do not know when they can go the bathroom, if they will be punished for leaving their seats, or how the person at the front of the room will treat them all year. At any moment, the fire alarm could ring, the intercom could blare with announcements, someone could start a fight, the overhead lamp could blow, a child could have a seizure, an administrator could ask you to step out into the hall during your lesson. These – and a host of other distractions and dangers – create a lot of potential areas for confusion and rather unsafe feelings for children.

Of course, older children have had to process more cumulative expectations than kindergartners who are entirely new to the culture of school, but the fundamental issue remains: if there is a doubt about expectations for behavior in the classroom, students may develop their own patterns for behaving. As a wise teacher once said, if you don't have a plan for your students, they will have a plan for you.

Determining rules and consequences, teaching them to students and outlining the benefits of working within them, is a critical up-front investment of a new teacher's time and energy. These pieces of your classroom management plan help promote appropriate student behavior, prevent student misbehavior and create a sense of order and predictability in your classroom. Rules, and your explanation of them, tell students how you expect them to behave. Consequences outline what would happen if students chose to break the rules. Strategies for reinforcing good behavior, both intangible and tangible, bolster a student's desire to make the right behavioral choices and follow your rules.

This chapter will address the components of proactive behavior management. First, we will discuss the characteristics of effective rules and consequences. We will also explore factors to keep in mind when determining the rules and consequences for your particular classroom. Then, we will examine how to best teach those rules and consequences to your students. Finally, we will consider the importance of reinforcing good behavior through intangible, and sometimes tangible, rewards.

These three steps, together with the implementation of classroom "procedures" discussed in chapter three (for example, the specific process you teach your students for how to enter the classroom or how to move from one station to the next) are prerequisites to creating a predictable, secure classroom that meets students' basic needs for safety and routine and gets you one step closer to creating a culture of achievement. Always remember that good behavior is a means to an end, not an end itself. Your expectations for student behavior must support your broader vision for student achievement, your ultimate "end." To see how some teachers present their rules, consequences, and procedures to students as means to a culture of achievement, look at "Class Expectations" in the **Classroom Management & Culture Toolkit** (pp. 1-5); this Toolkit can be found online at the Resource Exchange on TFANet. �

Effective Rules and Consequences

I. Determining Rules

Establishing explicit behavioral expectations entails outlining rules and consequences so that students understand exactly what behaviors are allowed and what behaviors are prohibited. This first step toward helping your students meet their behavioral potential is worth a considerable investment of energy early on; setting rules and consequences minimizes the need for other types of more corrective discipline (i.e., actually implementing the consequences).

Determining Appropriate Rules
Rules are general standards of conduct and should apply to student behavior in *all* classroom situations, regardless of the activity. In that way, rules are distinct from procedures, which outline specific behaviors during a particular type of activity. Consider the reflection of a former '00 corps member from the Rio Grande Valley:

> My worst rule was a requirement that students always raise their hands before speaking. I quickly realized it wasn't important or appropriate for students to always raise their hands, for example during cooperative groups or whole-class brainstorm discussions. Students were unclear about what I expected, and this lack of consistency undermined my whole system. I took it off the list of rules for non-negotiable behavior, and instead created a set of procedures to teach students what I expected during different, specific activities.

When crafting classroom rules, keep in mind three general guidelines:
- Phrase your rules in the form of a positive statement.
- State your rules clearly.
- Minimize your list of rules (most teachers have 3-5 rules).

The following table gives examples of rules that do and do not meet these guidelines:

Characteristics	Rationale	Examples to Follow	Examples to Avoid
1. Rules should be in the form of a positive statement. Avoid rules framed as negative statements.	Positive rules explain what students should be doing. Negatively stated rules simply tell students what to avoid and challenge students to find inappropriate behaviors that fall outside the scope of the rule.	*Respect your classmates in your words and actions.* *Listen when someone else is talking.* *Class time is for class activities.*	*No disrespectful comments.* *No talking out of turn.* *No toys or games in class.*
2. Rules need to be stated clearly. (Avoid rules that are vague unless you intend to discuss the rule *extensively* with students).	Students should be able to understand the behavioral expectation.	*Come to class prepared with all required materials.* *Follow the teacher's directions.*	*Every student will demonstrate habits of a responsible learner.* *Always use appropriate conduct.*

Rules, Consequences, and Procedures
Because rules and consequences need to be established before procedures, and procedures are often built from and aligned with the classroom rules, we chose to address rules and consequences before procedures in this text. As mentioned in the introduction, procedures are another essential element of any classroom management plan. The next chapter will take an in-depth look at how to establish and teach procedures.

3. Rules should be few.	Each rule appears more important when there are fewer of them. Fewer rules are also easier for students to remember and for teachers to enforce. Finally, having just a few rules avoids the sense that you are trying to control a student's every movement.	Rules such as *Class time is for class activities* or *Follow the teacher's directions* address many behaviors in one rule.	*No gum, food, or drink in class. Bring your homework, book, notebook, and pen to class everyday. Be on time. No profanity. No leaving the room without permission.*

There is a certain tension between keeping your list of rules short and making sure those few rules are clear to students. In order to establish a manageable list of rules, teachers often have to make each rule broad enough to cover more than one specific behavioral expectation, yet often those broad rules are no longer explicit. We'll talk about this more in the section below on teaching rules, but all rules – especially those that are broad – should be discussed extensively with students. Students need to know exactly what "Class time is for class activities" does and does not mean.

Other Considerations When Determining Rules
When considering what rules to establish, you must determine the kind of environment you would like to maintain. As the leader of your classroom, what kind of classroom atmosphere will you use your authority to establish? You should also consider the age and maturity of your students in order to be realistic and fair in your expectations. For example, it is particularly important for young students that rules are short and easy to remember. Also, do not expect very young children (ages 2-7) to find it easy to see the world from someone else's perspective, since they are likely to be very egocentric at this point in their cognitive development. For example, with very young students, *Keep your hands to yourself* is easier to understand and follow than *Respect others.* The *Learning Theory* text discusses how the developmental levels of your students may impact your classroom management strategies.

Effective Rules and Consequences

II. Determining Consequences

While consequences are often framed as something used only after a rule has failed, they are more accurately viewed as part of the structure that makes rules work. A student needs to know, *up front*, what would happen if she were to break a rule. She can then choose to follow the rule or break the rule and incur the negative consequence. Helping students realize this cause and effect relationship, and that they have the power to choose the resulting "effect," is one of the many ways teachers can empower their students and help them develop self-discipline. Self-discipline "involves the capacities to regulate oneself, to anticipate consequences, and to give up an immediate gratification to receive a long term goal"[6] and is one of the most important behavioral skills we can teach our students.

> **Consequences: Positive, Negative, or Both?**
> Some classroom management experts limit their definition of consequences to the negative results of a student not meeting behavioral expectations. Others assert that consequences can be either positive or negative; they teach students that any action, whether it is following a rule or breaking a rule, will have a consequence. With this definition, following a rule has a positive consequence (praise, self-respect, tangible rewards) while breaking a rule has a negative consequence (warning, time after class, notification of parents). In this text, for clarity, consequences are defined as the negative result of not meeting behavioral expectations. Positive reinforcement is discussed at length in this chapter's section on reinforcing expectations.

Cecily Feltham (Los Angeles '99) wants her third graders to develop self-discipline and begins to discuss the concept of "cause and effect" with her students on the first day of school. She asks the students, "What happens when you drop a bowling ball on your foot? Talk in pairs for ten seconds, and then I may ask you to explain your partner's answer." Students are quick to point out that dropping a bowling ball on your foot has the negative effects of inflicting pain and perhaps breaking toes. In the ensuing discussion, Cecily leads her young students to understand that not paying attention, not thinking actively, and not putting energy into their work has negative effects as well – namely that one doesn't get smarter, people don't respect you more, and you don't gain more social and economic capital. On the other hand, if students do meet behavioral expectations and work hard by exercising self-discipline, those benefits (i.e., "effects") probably will be realized.

> *I really have tried to empower my students to see their behavior as their choices. In this way, they view themselves as responsible for their own decisions. It becomes much less of me punishing and more of me reminding students of what kind of person they've already said they're trying to be.*
>
> **Annie Lewis O'Donnell, Baltimore '01**
> **Vice President, Program Design**
> **Teach For America**

Making sure you and your students clearly understand what actions and statements are appropriate and inappropriate in your classroom, and that everyone knows what you will do immediately if a student does or says something unacceptable, is the first step towards helping your students make the right behavioral choices. If a student chooses to follow the rules, then that student avoids the consequences and receives the benefits that come from meeting your behavioral expectations. If a student chooses to break a rule, then that student chooses the consequence. And you can tell them this, in a conversational, matter-of-fact tone. We'll discuss the actual implementation of consequences in Chapter Four: Responding to Misbehavior.

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[6] Gimbert, Belinda. *The Responsive Classroom: A Practical Approach for Teaching Children to Care*. http://teachers.net/gazette/OCT02/gimbert.html, accessed 7/1/2010.

Characteristics of Effective Consequences

In establishing consequences, you will want to take into account what characteristics make some consequences more effective than others. First, the degree of consequences should increase gradually, so as to give students adequate warning before imposing a more severe penalty. Effective consequences flow logically and naturally from the student's behavior. Finally, effective consequences keep the student's dignity intact.

The following table highlights the characteristics of effective consequences.

Characteristics	Rationale	Examples to Follow	Examples to Avoid
Consequences should be **gradual**, progressing from less severe to more severe as misbehavior is repeated.*	This sends the message that students have the potential to behave and simply need to understand and choose to follow the expectation. When they repeat the misbehavior, they choose the more severe consequences.	1. Warning 2. Short detention after class or school 3. Written plan for improvement 4. Guardian contact 5. Severe clause: Sent to principal	1. Warning 2. Sent to office or 1. Phone call home 2. Parent conference 3. In school detention
Consequences should be **natural and/or logical.**	Natural consequences follow from the event or situation, as students are allowed to experience the outcome of their poor choices or behavior, highlighting the rationale of the rule. Logical consequences are structured learning opportunities arranged to teach appropriate behavior.	If a student runs to be the first in line, he receives a warning and is asked to walk instead at the end of the line. (natural) When a student misbehaves during rehearsal for a play, she receives a warning and is told that if the poor behavior continues, she will have to sit out of the rehearsal until the next day. (logical)	When a student is disrespectful to a group member during group work, they are allowed to remain in the group but are held in from recess. (neither logical nor natural)
Consequences should maintain the **dignity** of the student.	Consequences should be consistent from student to student, and delivery of consequences should always address the particular behavior in question, not the student and his or her behavioral history.	If three students interrupt the teacher during a class period, they all receive a warning.	If three students interrupt the teacher during a class period, the first gets ignored, the second gets a harsh warning, and the third student, who has a history of not raising his hand, gets detention after school because the teacher is so "fed up" by that time.

* In the case of severe behavior that stops the entire class from functioning (e.g., fighting between students) students forfeit the right to move through the hierarchy of consequences. Such behavior calls for immediate removal from the classroom. However, save administrative intervention for extremely serious offenses such as fighting. Involving administration takes the situation out of your control and students may no longer see you as the ultimate authority.

Effective Rules and Consequences

So, what consequences do teachers actually find effective? Obviously, there are a variety of consequences that successful teachers employ to maintain their clear behavioral expectations. Remember to exercise consequences that are congruent with your own style, as you need to be able to implement them with confidence and comfort if and when a student chooses to misbehave. For example, if you do not want students to equate punishment with writing, you may not want to have students write "I will behave" 100 times. Of course, consequences also need to be hooked to your rules so that they flow logically and naturally from the student's misbehavior. The following table sets out a few appropriate consequences teachers might use.

Potential Consequences

Consequence	Description
Call or write home	You might have a student fill out a form that encourages him to reflect on his behavior. A family member should be required to read over and sign the reflection form before the student returns it to you the next day. If you have access to a phone and a free period you might have the student call home with you during a break in the day. Or, you could call a family member in the evening or send a note home with the student. When communicating with the family member about the misbehavior, always begin with a sincere positive comment about the student, explain the specific misbehavior that occurred that day, and state your confidence that the student will make positive choices in the future.
Send student to another room	Many teachers have arrangements with a nearby colleague where they can bring a student to the other teacher's classroom to work independently on an assignment. This strategy serves to provide the student with a chance to calm down and regroup. Be sure to avoid communicating an attitude of "good riddance" and do not use this strategy regularly. Leaving your room with no further consequence might be exactly what your student wants.
Revoke privileges	At the elementary level, chronic misbehavior results in a loss of recess time, classroom jobs, computer privileges, or other pre-determined "valuable" activities. At the secondary level, where you have most students for only one period each day, revoking privileges is a less common consequence. However, some secondary corps members report success with revoking the privilege of hallway time between classes. Asking a student to remain in your classroom for 3 of the 5 minutes between periods (obviously, you can't make them late to their next class), while their friends are able to chat and laugh in the hallway, can be a strong deterrent to misbehavior.
Move student to another seat	When a student is distracting – or seems distracted by – a nearby student, you should move him or her to another seat. Doing this in the middle of class is often quite effective with younger students (K-6). This immediate seat move can also be effective with older students. Some teachers suggest going a step further and creating a new, well-considered seating chart to implement the very next day if you discover there are several pairs or groups of students that need to be separated.
Time-out chair	Most appropriate in younger grades, the time-out chair is a physical space where students can go to cool off and think about their behavior. You might also have a student write a note of apology or a reflection on how to make better choices in the future. A sample reflection journal is in the **Classroom Management & Culture Toolkit** (p. 6); this Toolkit can be found online at the Resource Exchange on TFANet. ✂
Conference with the coach	Secondary teachers should make an effort to develop strong relationships with the athletic staff of their school. Coaches often have great influence on students, especially if children are jeopardizing their athletic eligibility by potentially failing your class. Having a conference with the coach is a consequence that applies to individual students and probably wouldn't be part of your overall consequence system.

Detention	Though you should check with your administration on the exact policies involved, you may have the authority to assign lunch or after-school detention to disobedient students. During detention, a student might have to clean all the desks in your classroom after defacing his, or complete a form that explains what he did wrong, why he made a poor choice, and what he plans to do when faced with a similar choice in the future.
"Hands & Words Are Not for Hurting"	If students use their hands to hurt others, you might consider requiring them to use their hands to *help* others instead. The Hands & Words Are Not for Hurting Project is a non-profit organization that has developed a program of non-violence and conflict resolution.[7] To read how you might introduce this program to your students, see "Hands & Words Are Not for Hurting" in the **Classroom Management & Culture Toolkit** (p. 7) found online on the Resource Exchange on TFANet. ✘
"On the Porch"	When students misbehave at the KIPP academies, they are relegated to "the porch," which comes from the expression, "If you can't run with the big dogs, stay on the porch." When a student is on the porch, she is not allowed to sit or eat with the rest of her class and she must write a letter of apology explaining what she did and why she is sorry. (The Knowledge is Power Program was started by Teach For America alumni and KIPP schools are widely regarded for the powerful cultures they have built.)

Systems for Tracking Consequences

It is important for the teacher and the student to know, throughout the day or class period, exactly where the student is on the hierarchy of consequences. Students are more motivated to behave when they know what is expected of them and when they can track their progress towards the ultimate goal of exemplary behavior. Below are some example systems for tracking student behavior.

Traffic Lights

A popular system at the early elementary level, the green, yellow, and red regions of a traffic light represent different levels of behavior. Student names are put on a clothespin and the teacher moves the pins up and down depending on student behavior (green = excellent behavior, yellow = warning, and red = consequence, such as time out or missed recess. Some teachers add another color, such as blue, which indicates that a phone call will be made to parents.) After students have completed the consequence, the teacher should move the student's clothespin back to yellow, and then to green with continued appropriate behavior. Students should be granted a fresh start each new day by beginning again on green.

Documenting Consequences

One cardinal rule for yourself regarding student consequences: document, document, document. Many teachers keep folders for each child, with contact information, diagnostic results, examples of student work, a record of contact with parents and any documentation of student misbehavior, with dates. You will need these citations for parent conferences, for proof during a disciplinary hearing, and for your own reflection on your interaction with students. It may be wise to have your students sign a form every time they stay after class or reach a certain level of the consequences ladder, adding a sense of official weight to their poor choices. You can always refer back to your records – and point back to the appropriate entry – if a student says this is her first offense.

The principles of this consequence system can be applied in many different ways. For example, if you do a new thematic unit every 6 or 9 weeks, you might substitute a space ship for the traffic light during a unit on outer space or a sunflower during a unit on plants. When you begin the new unit, you have a great opportunity to review your rules and consequences when presenting the new system (which is the same except now students should be aiming to keep their clothespin at the top of the space ship or on the head of the flower).

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[7] http://www.handsproject.org, accessed 7/1/2010.

Effective Rules and Consequences

Card Charts

Many teachers, especially those who teach elementary students and have the same group of students all day, set up a class "card chart." In this system, each student has a library card pocket with his or her name on it and five cards of different colors. Rachel Schankula (Delta '99) had her fifth graders begin the day on black, representing excellent behavior.

> If a student chose to break a class rule, she was directed to move the black card to the back of the pocket and ensure that the yellow card, which represented a formal warning, was in the front. If the student chose to break a rule again, they put the red card in the front. This meant that the student had to sit by herself in the cafeteria OR write a behavior essay AND that I would call her parents that night regarding the observed behavior. If the student chose to break a rule yet again, she reached the blue card, which resulted in a 15-minute after-school detention on Friday afternoon (I would send a notice home to parents to let them know that we would need to make arrangements for their child to stay for detention). In extreme situations, a student reached her white card, which meant that the student had to leave the classroom immediately and go to the principal's office. I kept a record of where students' cards were at the end of the day in an Excel file. I referred back to this file when determining conduct grades and when having parent/student conferences. Every Monday morning, each student would start over again on the black card. (Examples of behavior essays are in the **Classroom Management & Culture Toolkit** (p. 8) found online at the Resource Exchange on TFANet. ✂

Check Sheets

At the secondary level (because traffic lights are too childish and a card chart for each section of students might take up too much space) some teachers post a piece of paper that represents each class of students. When a student first breaks a rule, the teacher gives a verbal warning and puts the student's initials on his or her class's sheet. For any rules broken by the student after the warning, the teacher puts a check by the initials (one check = stay after class, two checks = fill out a behavior reflection form after school, three checks = parents contacted). These sheets are taken down every Friday and put into a binder for future reference, and new, blank sheets go up for Monday morning.

A variation on this system is to have a region of your chalkboard where you note students' initials and checks. However, you may not want to take up space on your board for that, and chalk can be accidentally erased.

Clipboards

While the check sheet system allows students (and their peers) to see the consequence level for any misbehaving student on the wall, some secondary teachers set up a more private system in which students sign a class clipboard and write a quick explanation of what they did wrong each time they break a rule. For example, after a verbal warning for the first offense, Melissa is required to stay after class for a quick conference with the teacher. There, she signs her name and explains her poor behavioral choice on the appropriate clipboard. The next time Melissa breaks a rule, she must stay after school for a longer conference and again sign the clipboard. At the third offense, Melissa's parents are called; at the fourth, her parents are cordially invited to come to school and sit in the classroom with her. A student must also sign the clipboard when late to class or if he doesn't bring in his homework (if he later brings in the assignment the teacher highlights the student's name on the clipboard signifying she received it).

Corps members who use this system find that having students sign their name formalizes their poor choice and serves as a record for parent conferences. The clipboard-based system of Timothy Hearn, a teacher at Frederick Douglass Academy in Harlem, was described in the January 2004 issue of *Teacher Magazine*. He tracks his students' behavior and participation in class using a chart and symbols he created. Samples of Mr. Hearn's "Weekly Behavior Record Sheet" and his corresponding key are included in the **Classroom Management & Culture Toolkit** (pp. 9-10) found online at the Resource Exchange on TFANet. ✂

Aligning Your Expectations with Those of the School

As you develop and set your behavioral expectations, you should take into account the broader school context. The culture of your school, for better or for worse, has a significant impact on the way discipline and routine practices will play out within your classroom and the school at large. If your school has a strong, positive culture of behavior, you should align your classroom expectations and rules with those used by your colleagues to every extent possible so that your classroom environment is consistent with the school environment in which your students are used to operating. In some cases, especially at the middle school level, you may be on a team of teachers who work with the same group of students. This is a wonderful opportunity to collaboratively create a rules and consequences system that every student will be expected to follow in every classroom.

Some corps members are in schools with school-wide point systems for misbehavior (students get five points for chewing gum, ten points for horseplay in the hallways, 25 points for defying a teacher, etc.). When a student reaches a certain level of points, there are set consequences administered by the principal or behavior management officer. Teachers in schools with these types of structures need to determine how to integrate their own classroom discipline system with the school's system. Often, a combination of the two systems is best, as one corps member reports:

> I found that a balance between using my own series of consequences and giving students school points at the last stage of the consequence hierarchy (or when there was an egregious offense) was most effective. Students saw me as the authority figure and the behavior management officer appreciated the fact that I handled my own discipline problems and only involved him in the most extreme situations.

In some cases, you may feel personally uncomfortable with certain behavioral policies of your school or believe a more effective approach exists. When a policy does not conflict with your personal values, but you feel it will be ineffective in your classroom, carefully consider the possible ramifications of circumventing or objecting to the policy. In some cases, the ramifications may outweigh the benefits. In other cases, it may be appropriate to ask your principal or other supervisor whether you can depart from the policies to accommodate the particular needs of your class or an individual student in your class.

More difficult are situations in which you believe that a school policy conflicts with your own personal values or sense of what is an appropriate punishment for children. When faced with this challenge, you should follow your personal comfort level after weighing the options, keeping in mind that any departure

I had a clipboard with a behavior tracking sheet for each day of the week for each class. For each student, I would circle "W" for a warning, "2" for the second time I had to speak to him or her about something, "3" if he or she earned a detention. If the student got to three, the student had to take home a slip with checked boxes explaining why the student had earned the detention and get it signed by a parent. The next day, students would start over. This chart allowed me to see at a glance how each student behaved for the week, and it gave me evidence when I called parents. And the best thing was that rather than getting involved in arguments, I could calmly mark my chart and move on with class.

Diana Adamson, New Jersey '02
Activities and Service Learning Coordinator,
The American School in London

Effective Rules and Consequences

from the standard procedure could be perceived as disrespectful to the school or community. When determining what you are personally comfortable with, it is often helpful to try to understand the policy from the school or community's point of view before making a judgment. This may in fact alter your own beliefs of what is appropriate. Also, keep in mind that it may be difficult to teach your students and uphold a behavioral system that is unfamiliar to them. Ultimately, you must determine how to effectively balance the culture in which you are operating with your own personal philosophy. Often a compromise is possible, in which you begin with the expected approach and gradually modify the system to fit your personal style.

A Brief Note on Corporal Punishment

Perhaps the most marked example of the kind of dilemma described above is corporal punishment, which could include spanking or striking a child with a paddle, having a student stand for extended periods of time, or requiring a student to hold a book in each hand with arms extended to the side. Many schools in which corps members teach include corporal punishment as one of the consequences of misbehavior. (Note: corporal punishment policies must comply with strict legal regulations, including the prior consent of parents or guardians and the presence of a witness.) Every teacher in such a school must make a personal decision as to whether to implement this consequence, and that decision should reflect both the teacher's own value system and a clear understanding of community expectations.

III. Teaching Expectations

Determining appropriate rules and consequences is only the first step in helping your students meet your high behavioral expectations. Now, you must *teach* those expectations – as you would any academic objective – and reinforce them over time.

Teaching Rules and Consequences

Some teachers establish their rules and consequences before students arrive and without student input, while others develop them collaboratively with students. Student participation in setting the expectations can increase their investment in them. However, since new teachers must focus on establishing their authority in the classroom, new teachers often find it most effective to develop the rules and consequences themselves in order to communicate to their students firm guidelines for behavior from the beginning. Otherwise, students may perceive that the new teacher in front of them wants to be their friend – or does not know how to take leadership of the classroom. It would be a precarious start to the year to say, "so, guys, what should the rules be?" and get "no homework!" as an answer.

Teachers who are successful in their attempts to involve students in the rule-making process not only have already established their authority, but have also come into that conversation with a clear idea of how they will ensure the effective creation of rules. Dawn Gunderson (Baltimore '01) starts her year by asking her high school students to explain the differences between a productive and unproductive classroom, using her students' answers as a way of framing the rules she has already drafted. She also shares her expectations for herself – such as returning papers on time, working her hardest for the class's benefit and coming to class prepared – to show that she holds herself to high standards as well.

> *Assume nothing – if you simply talk about your rules, there is no reason to conclude that your students will follow suit. When you teach, model, and continuously practice classroom rules, you give your students real examples of what you expect of them.*
>
> **Seth Cohen, Rio Grande Valley '00 Staff Attorney, New York Lawyers for the Public Interest**

Irrespective of the approach you choose, once you have generated a short list of clear, positive rules and gradual, logical, meaningful consequences that fit the criteria detailed in the first two sections of this

chapter, you will need to explicitly teach them. Some teachers assume that rules and consequences are discussed once, put on poster board, and left alone. On the contrary, you must *teach* these expectations as you would any other academic objective. This does not mean simply reading them from a handout, but rather providing rationales, soliciting input, having students identify examples and non-examples, and using other instructional methods to convey and practice this new information. You should teach expectations for behavior immediately at the beginning of the year and review them throughout the year. You'll want to be sure to do the following when teaching expectations:

Discuss and solicit from students the need for the rules. You should use two related strategies on this front. First, discuss the rationale for rules with your students, both at the beginning of the year and periodically throughout the year. Educational researcher Robert Marzano recommends beginning this process by exploring real-life situations that require rules:

> For example, most students have a sense that there are certain expectations for behavior during dinner when guests are at the house that are different from the rules and procedures that apply when only family members are having dinner together. Similarly, most students are aware of the fact that there are rules and procedures governing behavior in church that do not apply to the behavior in one's own living room. A discussion regarding the importance of rules and procedures in situations outside of school provides a nice set-up for the discussion of classroom rules and procedures.[8]

If students recognize the rationale and positive side of rules, they are more likely to become invested in them. Then, be sure they understand the direct correlation between each of your rules with their ambitious learning goals. For example, you might explain to students that your rule about "listening when someone else is talking" is designed to let all students learn as much as possible from one another so that together the class can reach its goals.

Identify specific expectations relevant to each rule. Provide examples of what following each rule looks like (and doesn't look like) in action. This is especially true if your rules encompass several behaviors, such as *Respect your classmates* or *Class time is for class activities.* Many corps members state that they take time with their students at the beginning of the year to brainstorm what rules such as these mean in practice. While you should have several manifestations of the rule *Respect your classmates* in mind prior to this group discussion, you will probably be surprised at how right on and insightful students can be. (It's true – they know what it means to respect their classmates. They just need you to enforce it.) Once students have thoroughly explored the specific expectations of each rule, you might type up a "class contract" that lists each rule and the explicit behaviors that fall under each rule. Then, give students their own copies and ask them to sign them. Keep these for future reference or have students keep them in a binder that remains in class.

Explain and demonstrate the consequences of breaking the rules. Students need to actually see what will happen if they break a rule. Many corps members role play with "disruptive" students. They ask for volunteers to read short scripts in which students break a rule and the teacher administers the consequence. Not only do students enjoy this modeling, they also get to *see* exactly what will happen if a student chooses to break a rule.

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[8] Marzano, Robert. *Classroom Instruction that Works*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD, 2001.

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Invest your students in meeting your behavioral goals. Tell your students the benefits of following the rules. Just as you do with academic goals, you will need to motivate your students to meet your behavioral goals for the class. Perhaps you decide to graph the numbers of "morning meetings" where everyone remembers to raise their hand before sharing, with the goal of working together to have 10 straight days with no student interruptions. Perhaps you decide to keep track of the number of days that your students all come to class fully prepared, with their book, notebook, homework, and something to write with. We'll talk about general principles to keep in mind when reinforcing positive behavior in the next section.

> *Classroom rules and procedures are taught, at first, like a military drill. They are timed and a little bit silly, but after solving a few math problems with the class on how far behind we could fall if we took too much time completing simple tasks, they get the idea. For example, if it takes the class three and a half minutes to find their reading journals and a pencil instead of one minute, by the end of the year, we will have lost a day and a half looking for pencils.*
>
> **Jennifer Cecil, South Louisiana '03**
> **Graduate Student, University of Michigan**

Check for understanding. As you will become accustomed to doing in every lesson, you should follow up with your students to be sure that they have internalized the rules. Many teachers test students on the rules of the classroom with a cause-effect quiz. Some have students draw cartoons of appropriate and inappropriate student behavior, akin to the "Goofus and Gallant" duo. But do not assume that because you read the list of rules and discussed them that students have internalized them.

The **Classroom Management & Culture Toolkit** contains lesson plans for the first week of school (pp. 11-15) and a sample timeline for teaching rules and procedures (p. 16), which maps out how you might teach and review a classroom management plan throughout the year; this Toolkit can be found online at the Resource Exchange on TFANet. ⚒

IV. Reinforcing Good Behavior

Just as with academic learning, behavioral learning is predicated on feedback; following instructions properly should be reinforced through frequent affirmation. Students need to know when they are demonstrating the desired expectations, especially when the expectations are new (generally early in the year) or when the circumstances under which the students demonstrated them are particularly challenging.

When reflecting on your approach to positive reinforcement, you'll need to consider when and how frequently to give positive reinforcement, regardless of whether that reinforcement comes in the form of tangible or intangible rewards. On the one hand, positive reinforcement can be a way of ensuring that students don't misbehave in order to gain attention. School can be a dreary place when teachers are only stressing negative behaviors. On the other hand, you don't want to get into a habit of praising or rewarding students constantly for meeting a low bar. This can inadvertently send the signal that you have low expectations for their behavior and can also make students dependent on your positive reaction to meet even the most basic of expectations. Alfie Kohn, author of *Punished by*

> *The highest expectation that we can hold for our students is for them to behave in appropriate ways because they see the importance of it and because they want to. They have to be intrinsically motivated to behave and learn. If a child sits quietly in class because he is either afraid of what will happen to him if he talks or because he will get to choose out of the prize box if he doesn't, we are lowering our expectations for student behavior and reducing students to subjects to be trained.*
>
> **Pablo Depaz, Los Angeles '00**
> **Ethnic Studies Teacher,**
> **Animo Green Dot Charter High Schools**

Rewards,[9] asserts that, "Rather than bolstering a child's self-esteem, praise may increase kids' dependence on us. The more we say, 'I like the way you….' or 'Good _____ing,' the more kids come to rely on *our* evaluations, *our* decisions about what's good and bad, rather than learning to form their own judgments." Kohn holds that a "simple, evaluation-free statement ('You put your shoes on by yourself' or even just 'You did it') tells your child that you noticed. It also lets her take pride in what she did…If a child does something caring or generous, you might gently draw his attention to the effect of his action *on the other person*: 'Look at Abigail's face! She seems pretty happy now that you gave her some of your snack.' This is completely different from praise, where the emphasis is on how *you* feel about her sharing."[10]

Experts such as Jere Brophy offer a few additional recommendations when it comes to giving praise.[11]

- **Be specific.** One of the most effective ways to get students to follow directions is simply to narrate that someone else has already done what you've asked. "Richard is sitting in his seat quietly, ready to go outside for recess."

- **Highlight improvement.** In order to foster the idea that students can *learn* to behave, point out when students are making strides in this direction—and how they did so. "Class, I am proud of you for remembering to walk quietly in the halls this time. I think Natasha's suggestion about putting our fingers on our lips really helped us remember."

- **Indicate how following expectations yields benefits.** "Our homework assignment is challenging tonight. But because everyone is in their learning position and ready to participate in the lesson, I know you will be able to learn a lot and then do a great job with that homework."

Each time we changed seating charts we'd have a new theme for our groups - continents, animals, literature characters or things that related to our current study. Teams would research information about their group name, present to the class, and create signs to proudly hang above their desks. I used the groups to reinforce praise - "The Africa group is working so effectively, The Salamanders got their books out nicely, etc…" As I observed this good behavior I used tick marks to tally points on the board. Teams that had the most points received non-material perks throughout the day - like getting dismissed first or being first in the lunch line.

Marion Hodges Biglan, South Louisiana '93
Managing Director, Regional Operations Business Partner
Teach For America

Keeping in mind that you don't want to praise students for simple tasks or make them dependent on your positive reinforcement, remember that students should reap the benefits of meeting your high behavioral standards. After all, students choose to follow the rules not only to avoid negative consequences but also to receive positive outcomes. Those positive outcomes are not only – in fact they should rarely be – shiny pencils, candy bars, or pizza parties. With such tangible prizes, students engage in learning activities in order to receive rewards that are artificially linked to behavior. As we mentioned when discussing self-discipline, you must help students realize that the greatest benefits of following the rules include recognition, self-respect, peer-respect, a classroom where they and their classmates can make academic gains, and increased life options. Your ultimate goal should be to foster intrinsic motivation, whereby students are motivated to behave and to learn because of the positive results that stem naturally from that choice. For example, a student truly invested in his own academic success will likely abide by the rule "Come to Class

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[9] Kohn, Alfie. *Punished by Rewards.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1993.
[10] Kohn, Alfie. "Five Reasons to Stop Saying 'Good Job!'" http://www.alfiekohn.org/parenting/gj.htm, accessed 7/1/2010.
[11] Brophy, Jere. "Teacher praise: a functional analysis." *Review of Educational Research*, 51(1), 5-32.

Effective Rules and Consequences

Prepared," because he is intrinsically motivated to succeed, and he knows he cannot succeed without the materials that are necessary to learn.

However, there are strong arguments for extrinsic motivators in some contexts. Learning is too critical to wait for a student to develop the maturity or self-discipline necessary to work entirely from intrinsic motivation. Moreover, students motivated extrinsically often begin to recognize the intrinsic value of their work and behavior. Many teachers feel that extrinsic motivators – especially in the form of intangible "perks" – remain preferable to using only negative consequences to keep students in line. If you do decide to use tangible rewards in your classroom, know that a variable schedule of providing the reward works better than a fixed schedule; that is, if you were to provide a reward every third time a student completed a task, the reward would soon lose its value. As any slot machine player could tell you, when the reward is less certain, persistence in the task improves.

> **Let's Not Make a Deal**
> If you decide to give tangible rewards in your classroom, psychologists encourage teachers to remember Premack's principle. Rather than allowing students to dictate the conditions under which they will be willing to behave ("Let me sit here now and I promise I'll be good"), tell students that they can enjoy rewards after they fulfill your expectations ("You may move back to your seat when I've seen you behave the way I know you can"). You may recognize this as your grandmother's rule: no <insert delectable treat> until you finish your <insert loathsome vegetable>.

Relatedly, a McREL study has indicated that rewarding students for simply performing a task may eventually decrease motivation (e.g. if the class earns "team points" when everyone is on time). However, when the teacher provides rewards for the successful attainment of a certain performance standard (e.g., making improvement on a set of math problems), students' intrinsic motivation may increase.[12]

As you think about the kind of positive reinforcement you will use in your classroom, beware of subconscious bias, which may subtly reinforce limited roles for gender groups. Studies by Sadker and Sadker show that boys receive praise for content and innovation (e.g. "Your ideas show a lot of imagination") while girls are recognized for neatness and following directions (e.g. "You have such nice handwriting"). Monitor your own patterns of interaction with students by audio- or videotaping your interactions with your students.   You may even find that the tone of your voice or the phraseology changes depending on who the student is. You may find yourself offering an enthusiastic "good job, buddy" to male students who answer questions correctly – and a curt "that's right" to female students in a similar situation.

Now that you have explored the importance of positive reinforcement, and the arguments for and against reinforcing student behavior with extrinsic rewards, you will need to develop your own approach to positive reinforcement. Your system can be informal or formal (where specific positive responses stem from following rules, just as consequences stem from breaking rules), and can be based on the performance of the whole class, small groups, or individuals. Specific strategies for motivating students to meet your behavioral and academic goals will be discussed in Chapter Six: Valuing Hard Work, Team Effort, and Academic Success.

First, though, we must discuss the other piece of creating a classroom environment that supports students in meeting your high expectations for behavior: the creation and implementation of classroom procedures and routines. That is the subject of the next chapter.

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[12] Marzano, Robert. *Classroom Instruction that Works*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD, 2001, 56-57.

Conclusion and Key Concepts

- You set high expectations for your students' behavior by developing **appropriate rules and consequences.** Rules should be few and should be clearly and positively stated. Logical and graduated consequences should be explicitly tied to each rule so there is no doubt about the response if a student chooses to break a rule.

- You **must teach your rules and consequences** like any other curriculum content.

- **Positive reinforcement,** especially in the form of intangible rewards, is critical to managing your classroom. Guard against praising and rewarding students for meeting too low a bar for behavior and utilizing only extrinsic, materialistic rewards.

Maximizing the Efficiency and Structure of Your Classroom
Chapter Three
I.   The Need for Procedures and Routines
II. Common Procedures and Routines
III. Teaching and Reinforcing Procedures

Introduction

Twenty-eight fourth graders run toward you from the playground and fall into a double line along your class's special crack in the concrete. You greet the group warmly and turn to walk back to your classroom. You progress up two flights of stairs and by four other classrooms and not a sound is heard behind you except the squeak of shoes on the floor. You pause beside the doorway and say good morning to each student by name as they enter the classroom. Speaking only in hushed tones, they quickly hang their coats and backpacks on their labeled pegs, put their homework in the homework tray, pick up their 3-ring binders from the shelf, sit down at their desks, and begin to respond to the questions you have written on the "Do Now" section of your board. You start your timer for six minutes. Since all notebooks except Aimee's have been retrieved from the shelf, you mark her absent and clip the attendance form to the door for your "attendance monitor" to bring to the office on his way to lunch. You circulate around the room, checking in with students, making sure Chris understands the directions and Traci stays focused. The timer goes off. Hands shoot up in the air; students are eager to share their answers. The day has begun.

Some would compare the beginning of this day to the working of a well-oiled machine. This teacher has established and enforced a morning routine that allows him to make contact with each of his students, to get students working immediately on an academic task, and to efficiently deal with administrative responsibilities. The students clearly know what is expected of them at various points in the 15-minute window described above – everything from what to do when their teacher appears on the playground, to how to walk through the hallway, to how to enter the classroom, to how to share their responses to the warm-up activity. Not only is this first 15 minutes efficient, it also presents a secure and predictable structure for students.

This chapter builds off of the components of classroom management covered in chapter two. Classroom procedures and routines combine with rules and consequences to create a structured and efficient classroom environment that helps students to feel safe and secure and provides the teacher more time for instruction.

I. The Need for Procedures and Routines

Procedures and routines create a classroom environment where everyone understands which student behaviors are appropriate and what teacher responses are expected in every situation. Students crave that structure and predictability. Consider this excerpt from an essay entitled "My Favorite Teacher," written by one corps member's student:

> Every day, Ms. Bothner says hello to each one of us at the door when we walk in. Every day, the Focus is written on the board and we work on it while Ms. Bothner walks around and stamps our assignment book if we completed our homework. If students talk during the Focus time, she gives them a warning or a check, just like she told us she would at

the beginning of the year. Everyone knows what to do in Ms. Bothner's class, and if we do it wrong, she helps us do it right.

Along with classroom rules, procedures help ensure excellent behavior by teaching students specific behaviors for specific circumstances. But rules and procedures are different. Classroom management experts Lee and Marlene Canter explain why:

> Your classroom discipline plan spells out the general rules of your classroom – rules that are in effect at all times. The most important of these rules is, "Follow directions." This rule is included to ensure that students promptly follow any direction you might give during the day. To comply with this rule and meet your expectations, students must understand what each and every specific direction you give means. You can't assume when you enter into a new activity anytime during the year that your students will know how to behave the way you want them to. You would never make this assumption about math competency or reading skills. Why assume that your behavioral expectations are as obvious? After all, every teacher has different ways of moving into groups, collecting work, distributing assignments, etc. Your students need to follow *your* expectations, not another teacher's expectations.[13]

Imagine asking a class full of 33 seventh graders to "pass in their papers." Sounds simple enough. Yet inevitably a small group of students might playfully wave their papers by a neighbor's ear. Some might take the opportunity to jump up and walk over to your desk, while others would want to hand you the paper directly because that is what their teacher did last year. Chaos. However, developing and practicing a specific procedure for passing in papers (left across the rows and up the first aisle, for example) will create an orderly response to that request, avoid conflicts between students, and shorten the overall time it takes for this managerial task.

Indeed, procedures serve to help your classroom run smoothly, thereby maximizing instructional time. The amount of time students are actually engaged in learning activities in many classrooms is shockingly low. In one particular study, only 40 percent of the school day was allocated to learning activities.[14] Even in the best of scenarios, your time with your students is frustratingly limited. Given your ambitious goals, you can't afford to waste *any* time, let alone 60 percent of your time, in your classroom.

Teachers have to view the world in the same way as a business consultant, surveying the space, structures, and systems for opportunities to get more learning for your (and your students') investment of time and energy. You *need* students to stop their center work and give you their full attention in the time it takes to count down from five to one; you *must* be able to transition from math to language arts without wasting seven minutes every day; you *have* to create the expectation that students will silently complete their "Do Now" while you take attendance and address other beginning-of-class administrative details. As you set ambitious academic goals for your students, and you realize how much they have to learn, you – and your students – will become very protective of your precious instructional time.

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[13] Canter, Lee and Marlene Canter. *Assertive Discipline: Positive Behavior Management for Today's Classroom*. Santa Monica, CA: Canter & Associates, Inc., 1992, p. 122.

[14] Cangelosi, James S. *Classroom Management Strategies: Gaining and Maintaining Students' Cooperation*. White Plains, NY: Longman, 1993, p. 11.

II. Common Procedures and Routines

Every school and classroom has unique procedural needs, and there are multiple procedures that can work in each environment. When determining your procedures, you should keep two things in mind. First, you should develop procedures that allow students to know what they should be doing and how they should do it for every situation in your classroom in which a specific process is necessary. Second, you should develop procedures for classroom activities that can be particularly inefficient – such as taking attendance, distributing materials, or transitioning from one activity to another. The following list outlines several common times during the school day when a procedure would make the task more structured and more efficient.

Taking Attendance
- Calling roll verbally is perhaps the least efficient way to check attendance, as it wastes instructional time and distracts students.
- Instead, handle attendance while students are involved in an instructional task (writing in a journal, silently reading, etc.). Many teachers open each day or class period with a quick assignment, often called a "Do Now," "Focus," or "Warm-up" that students can do independently while the teacher records attendance.
- Some teachers use a seating chart and put it inside a plastic page protector. They quickly scan for empty seats and mark the chart with an overhead transparency pen. Later, they transfer the information to their attendance book and wipe off the chart for the next day.
- If your students keep an in-class 3-ring binder, have them put their names on the spine. As they enter the class and take their binder from the shelf, you will quickly see who is absent, as binders of absent students will be left on the shelf.

Getting the Attention of the Class
- You should establish certain cues so you can quickly gain the attention of the entire class and signal what needs to happen next.
- Possible cues include clapping in a special rhythm and having students mimic the rhythm, holding two fingers in the air, counting down from 5 to 1, saying "1-2-3 All Eyes on Me" to which students respond "1-2 All Eyes on You," shaking your special tambourine, turning music off, or giving simple directions such as "notebooks should now be closed" or "cluster into your groups of five."

Managing Classroom Space

Before considering specific procedures and routines that you might use to create an efficient and well-structured classroom, it is important to make sure your physical space – the classroom itself – is organized to maximize safety, comfort, and efficiency. The organization of the physical learning environment greatly affects student achievement. If a student can't see, or is cramped, it will be difficult to concentrate and learn. Room arrangement can facilitate orderly movement and minimize distractions, so you'll want to pay attention, for example, to the way students are grouped for learning; the orientation of their desks with regard to other desks, the teacher, and the chalkboard; the displays on bulletin boards; and the design and placement of learning centers.

Bear in mind the following four tips for organizing your physical space:
- Keep high-traffic areas free from congestion. This includes group work areas, space around the pencil sharpener and trash can, doorways, certain shelves, students' desks and your desk.
- Be sure that you can easily see all students and they can see you. Sit down at every desk before the first day of school.
- Make sure that frequently used materials and supplies are readily accessible. This will minimize set-up and clean-up time for activities.
- Be sure that students can see instructional presentations and displays.

The **Classroom Management & Culture Toolkit** found online at the Resource Exchange on TFANet has further information (pp. 17-19: "Managing Classroom Space). ✄

Maximizing Efficiency and Structure

- If the class is engaged in an individual or group activity, an auditory signal is usually most effective. Examples include ringing a bell or counting down from 5 to 1.
- Note: turning lights on and off rapidly could be dangerous for students who are sensitive to flashing lights, and perhaps even seizure-prone.

Distribution of Materials
- Have materials prepared before students even enter the room. For example, if multiple materials are needed for a group activity, create a bin for each group before school. When the group activity begins, you or the "Materials Master" for each group gives the group the bin with all the necessary materials.
- Keep needed materials, such as the pencil sharpener, scrap paper, paper towel, etc., in standard places so students know where to find them.

> *Do not underestimate the power of counting down from 10 to 0. In my first year, I watched in awe as a veteran English teacher regained complete control of her noisy, rambunctious 8th graders just by counting backwards from 10. Her students silenced one another, dropped their activity, and froze momentarily before rushing back to their chairs ready to work. I asked her what happened to the class if they didn't get under control by zero - she said she had never gotten to zero. Even as a fledgling teacher I found similar magic with this procedure in my own classroom. Now, I count backwards from 10 anytime I need my class to get focused, wrap up an activity, clean up for dismissal, or retrieve materials for the day's lesson. I never get down to zero either.*
>
> **Caroline John, D.C. '03**
> **Founding Principal,**
> **Excel Academy Public Charter School**

Giving Instructions
- If your students can read, put written instructions on the board. That way, while students are getting started on the assignment, you can walk around and individually address those who are off-task.
- Use audio-visual aids prepared before class, such as overheads, rather than writing things on the board while students wait. In addition to saving time, overheads do not require that you turn away from the class, assisting with classroom management.
- Do not depend solely on oral instruction to the entire group. Have instructions already written on the board or on the assignment so students can progress at their own pace.
- Remember the importance of checking for understanding, as discussed in the *Instructional Planning & Delivery* text. Asking a student to explain the procedure again to the class before you start will help you identify any potential misunderstandings (which later become inefficiencies).

Getting Started
- In order to encourage students to be ready quickly, consider creating a simple challenge – "Let's see if we can put away our bags and be seated with our math books open faster than we did yesterday. Let's try to break our 30-second mark!"
- Depending on the resources available, you might need to plan rotational activities. Some students can be working at their desks while other groups use lab equipment. Students should never wait around while others use special materials.

Transitions Between Activities
- Accommodate students completing work at differing times. For example, avoid scheduling a large group discussion after a written assignment.

- Before beginning an independent activity, review with your students what they can do when they are done. Many teachers have an "If You Finish Early…" poster in their classroom that has a number of activities students can do independently if they complete the assignment before others are ready to move on to the next stage of the lesson (1. Read your independent reading book, 2. Study your vocabulary words, 3. Write Ms. Park a letter that explains one thing you really like about the class and one thing you would like to improve, 4. Draw a picture/comic strip that represents something you've learned in the past week, 5. Begin working on your homework if you understand the assignment). Having copies of kid-friendly magazines or puzzles on hand is also a smart idea.

- You'll also want to develop transition activities for regular transition times such as entering the classroom. For example, in an elementary class, you might have your students walk into the classroom quietly every day after lunch and automatically begin silent reading. Or, in a secondary class, you might begin with a "warm-up" or "Do Now" that you have written on the board and that will serve as a review activity or an introduction to the day's activity. For other effective transition techniques, see the **Classroom Management & Culture Toolkit** (pp. 20-21); this Toolkit can be found online at the Resource Exchange on TFANet. ✜

Unplanned Interruptions
- Teach students a procedure for handling interruptions (e.g., you are suddenly called down to the office and an aide will be covering your classroom), such as teaching students to work on a particular independent reading assignment whenever the activity at hand is interrupted.
- Practice how students will react to a PA announcement or a visitor at your door who needs to speak to you for 20 seconds.
- To prepare for the day when you have a practice fire drill and don't have enough time to begin the first stage of the lab activity, or the day when the principal calls half of your students to the gym for class pictures, keep a drawer of short activities (sometimes called "sponge activities") that fill small instructional opportunities and serve as quick ways to reinforce or review material. For sample "Sponge Activities," see the **Classroom Management & Culture** (pp. 22-23). ✜

Student Needs (Bathroom, Water, Tissue, etc.)
- You may have decided that you won't allow students to leave your class to go to the bathroom except in an extreme emergency (this is particularly reasonable at the secondary level, where students can use the time between classes to go to the bathroom or get a drink). But, to save the ensuing distraction and time it takes to ascertain whether that one-foot hop really constitutes an emergency, several corps members report success with giving each student one emergency bathroom pass for each semester. Students are responsible for keeping the pass. In the case of an emergency, students raise their hand with the pass in hand, the teacher nods, signs it while continuing to teach, and the student leaves the room. When the student returns to class she gives the pass to the teacher.
- Design a signal for students to give you when they need to get up and get a tissue. (It's often helpful to have tissues in a set place in the classroom; consider asking parents to donate one box at the beginning of the year). If a student raises her hand and taps the end of her nose, you can nod your permission without stopping what you're saying to the rest of the class.

Maximizing Efficiency and Structure

Absent Students
- Absent students need to know what they missed while gone from your class. It is not the best use of your time, especially if you have 150 secondary students, to meet with each one individually to explain what they need to make up.
- Elementary teachers might create a mailbox or folder for each student where they place handouts for absent students.
- Dave McCall (D.C. '99), a high school chemistry teacher, shares the following:

    My favorite efficiency system is The Notebook. I hole punch all of my handouts and have my students keep an individual notebook for my class where they archive all worksheets, homework, notes and warm-ups. I keep my own copy of The Notebook on my desk, which saves time when students are absent. Since I keep a copy of all handouts, test review hints, visual aides and detailed homework directions in The Notebook, students who are absent can go to this central place to find out what they missed, rather than all of them coming to ask me. I also number my homework assignments, so if a student is missing an assignment, I can say, "you are missing assignment number 6," instead of saying, "you are missing the assignment where we had to graph the results of our most recent lab."

New Students
- When a new student shows up unannounced, you'll want to help them acclimate to your classroom as quickly as possible. But, you won't have even 15 minutes to spend with them right when they arrive – you need to keep the rest of the class running. Some teachers create ten "New Student Kits" before the school year begins. Then, when a new student joins the class, the teacher welcomes them warmly and asks them to review and fill out the materials in the kit. This gives the new student something to do until the teacher can carve out time to meet with the student individually.
- The New Student Kit might contain a letter of welcome, a letter for the student to take home to her family, a student interest survey, a student information sheet, the rules and procedures of the classroom, and any other essential reading or forms that other students received at the beginning of the year.
- Many teachers also assign a "buddy" who is responsible for familiarizing the student with the procedures of the classroom and introducing her to her classmates.

Misc. Administrative Requirements
- Have a folder or in-box for paperwork that must be completed to ensure you are meeting your professional responsibilities.
- "Hire" your students and put them in charge of things like counting the number of students who are having the school lunch that day, helping to make bulletin boards, washing the boards and overheads, or passing out student journals at the beginning of class. Stephanie Crement (Bay Area '99) hired a messenger, a materials manager, classroom librarians, a phone manager and a greeter, who welcomes guests at the door. Emily Goldwasser (Baltimore '97) had her students apply for their jobs, which included positions on a classroom decorating committee. Both Stephanie and Emily, now Program Directors in Philadelphia, taught middle school, debunking the myth that classroom jobs are baby stuff.
- Sample forms for setting up classroom jobs are included in the **Classroom Management & Culture Toolkit** (pp. 24-27), found online at the Resource Exchange on TFANet. ⚒
- If you make extra copies of every handout (perhaps 5% extra) you will greatly simplify your life later, as you'll have them on hand for a student who misplaces the original, for catching up new students, or for students who want to redo the assignment because they've made mistakes.
- Keep everything in its own place everyday, such as a specific spot on your desk for your roll book and another one for your overhead pens and homework stamp.

For an even more extensive list of times during a typical school day when procedures and routines would improve your class's efficiency and discipline, see the **Classroom Management & Culture Toolkit** (pp. 28-29: "Considerations for Classroom Procedures"); this Toolkit can be found online at the Resource Exchange on TFANet. ✂

In determining your procedures, you will have to weigh a number of variables that sometimes conflict. For example, you will need to decide what you will do if a student comes to class without a pen or pencil. Even if one of your rules is, *Come to class prepared*, and you give him a warning for not bringing a pencil, you still need to decide whether or not you will lend him a pencil for the class period. If you do lend him a pencil, that would require you having extra pencils on hand and determining a way to ensure he returns the pencil at the end of class. Furthermore, you would need to decide whether having extra pencils on hand would discourage the student's personal responsibility and essentially enable him to break the rule again in the future. The flip side, of course, is that without a pencil the student may not be able to do his work and is more likely to disrupt other students; so, the benefits to lending him a pencil may outweigh the costs. Even seemingly simple procedures can raise a myriad of practical and philosophical considerations. (Incidentally, some teachers solve the pencil problem by requiring collateral before a child can borrow one, or providing a pencil but deducting the class' effort points for failing to be prepared. Watch as the same children who said they didn't have pens to lend Lenny suddenly brandish their ballpoints for his use.)

Minimizing Inefficiencies in the Classroom

You'll want to challenge yourself to constantly identify ways in which you might be able to better use your time. For example, you might question whether it should really take twenty minutes to walk your class to the bathroom, or ten minutes to pass out last week's graded tests. Over the course of a year, the five minutes a day that students use returning supplies to the cabinet, or the five minutes eight times per day that students are taking to transition from one subject to another, add up to considerable amounts of time. Shaving off a few minutes here and there can literally provide you an additional week of instructional time over the course of the year. Your emphasis on efficient use of time will also reinforce with your students the idea that learning is important. For additional questions to help you reflect on ways to maximize the structure and efficiency of your classroom, see "Identifying Classroom Inefficiencies" in the **Classroom Management & Culture Toolkit** (pp. 30-31). ✂

Research Secrets: Stay Alert and Involve Every Student

In the 1970s, researcher Jacob Kounin studied a series of classrooms, some with major student misbehavior problems and others without. His findings about the higher-order skills cultivated by successful teachers continue to be affirmed by scholars of education to this day:

- **"Withitness."** One distinguishing characteristic of excellent classroom managers is their ability to know what all students are doing at all times. They are always monitoring the class, keeping eye contact with students. Even when helping an individual student, they've positioned themselves to see the rest of the class and immediately address students who are causing a disruption.

- **Overlapping.** Teachers who can "overlap" are managing several tasks at once, nodding to give one student permission to use the bathroom while giving instructions to a group of students in a literature circle while simultaneously readying the room for the next classroom activity.

- **Group focus.** A key to effective management is getting every student involved in your lesson, rather than focusing on just a few students. In *Instructional Planning & Delivery*, you will read about ways to design group practice of academic skills, rather than "ping-pong" questioning that involves one student at a time.

- **Movement management.** Skillful pacing and transitions also make a huge difference in management effectiveness. Effective teachers make sure that both classroom activities occur at a brisk pace, with little opportunity for students to goof off, and clear instructions are delivered when everyone is listening, so students are never confused about what is expected of them.

Maximizing Efficiency and Structure

III. Teaching and Reinforcing Procedures

Procedures must be taught, modeled, and reviewed with students, just as rules must be. You might simulate the end-of-class bell over and over, practicing the desired behavior of staying in one's seat and walking calmly to the door when dismissed. You might practice lining up for lunch or going to a special assembly over and over again until students fall into a double line and hold their hands clasped in front of them without prompting.

In contrast to rules, every procedure need not be taught on the first day of school. Procedures are best taught when the need to use them arises for the first time. However, most teachers find that they teach a significant bulk of their procedures in the first two weeks of school, as many are required for a smoothly functioning classroom. Great teachers will tell you that although this may at times seem counterintuitive, investing considerable time up-front teaching and practicing the routines and procedures of your classroom will pay huge dividends in saved time later. Here are some tips for teaching and reinforcing your procedures:

> *When they say it takes time to save time, it is TRUE! I spent the first week making sure my students knew exactly what to expect. I gave them extremely clear expectations, explained them, quizzed them, and held them and their parents responsible for knowing and following the expectations of the Stellar Scholar's classroom. Each student has a list of expectations and procedures at the front of their class binder. It's signed by the scholar, the scholar's parent, and by me.*
>
> **Helen Cosner, RGV '04**
> **Educational Counselor, Otterbein University**

Explain the need for procedures to students. Just as you need to explain the rationale for rules, students need to be invested in the rationale for procedures. "Because so much learning has to happen this year, I don't want us to waste time on classroom activities that don't help you to read on a higher level or allow you to solve more challenging math problems. Imagine if we wasted 15 minutes every morning just getting ready for the day..."

When introducing a new procedure to the class, demonstrate the correct process. Start by demonstrating the process yourself, step by step. Narrate what you are doing. Then ask 2-3 volunteers who think they understand the procedure to model the process for the rest of the class. Ask the audience to comment on what students did well and what part of the procedure they should repeat. Ask other volunteers to demonstrate the process, this time giving them specific scripts to follow, some perfect, some slightly off, and some terribly wrong. Again, have the audience point out what was done correctly and what was done incorrectly. Of course, then you need to give each student the opportunity to practice and demonstrate understanding of the procedure, both individually and then as a whole group.

Allow each student to practice and demonstrate understanding of the process. Practice process. Practice process. Practice process. Younger children need to practice lining up. If your students can line up quickly and smoothly, it will save you hours of instruction time over the course of the year (please touch your right shoulder and make sure it lines up with the person in front of you...how will we hold our hands as we walk through the hallways? That's right, clasped in front of us. Excellent. Let's walk down to Ms. Powell's room and then come back.)

With older children, you may be well served by practicing how students will pass up their tests (to the side and up the last row), or what students should do if they were absent the day before (ask their note-taking buddy if any notes were taken, look in their class's tray for any handouts with their name on them, and check the homework binder). Kelly Harris-Perin (Delta '98) has the following advice on the value of practicing procedures:

For the first two weeks of the year, I kept wondering if all of the time we spent practicing classroom procedures was worth it. We passed out our folders, got into groups, and got ready to leave class dozens of times. But by the time we were done, every student knew what to do when she stepped in the door, when to sharpen pencils, and when it was okay to whisper to a neighbor. Having really clear rules and procedures was LIBERATING—it freed me from being the policewoman and let me focus on using every minute to teach. It was so easy: everyone came in, got their folders, took homework out and placed it on the corner of the desk, and began the Warm-Up for the day. Meanwhile, the Attendance Taker figured out who was present and the Dress-Code Checker made sure all shirts were tucked in. And I got to walk around, check homework, greet each student personally, and start off every period calm and focused after the first five minutes. Worth it? Definitely.

Provide feedback. What happens if, after teaching a procedure, your students don't execute the procedure properly? If you expect your students to line up silently with their hands clasped in front of them, and Brittney and Sheldon are wiggling around and swinging their arms like windmills, you should ask the class to look at the line, determine what is wrong, and ask Brittney and Sheldon to return to their seats and join the line properly. If you have taught your students to pass in their papers in a certain way and they do so incorrectly, do you give them all a five-minute detention after school? No. You simply remind them of the correct process for handing in papers and you ask them to do it again. The "consequence" for not following a procedure properly is to repeat the procedure. However, sometimes your students will violate a rule while a procedure is happening.

For example, your procedure for entering class is to walk in silently, remove one's notebook from the shelf, sit down immediately, and begin the Do Now. If two students jostle and loudly insult one another while getting their notebooks from the shelf, they are not carrying out the procedure properly, but more importantly, they are also violating the rule *Respect your classmates*. The proper response is to give students the consequence you would administer for breaking that rule at any other time *and* to ask them to repeat their entrance into the class correctly. Remember that rules are always in effect, and breaking them at any time earns the student the appropriate consequence.

Maximizing Efficiency and Structure

Re-teach procedures regularly. This is especially true after long holidays or if the procedure hasn't been used in a while. Remind students of the need for procedures, demonstrate the procedure your self, ask for a small group of volunteers to model the process, critique their performance, and *then* ask the entire class to complete the procedure properly.

Teachers who effectively establish procedures in their classroom create an environment that almost "runs itself," with appropriate student behavior and learning continuing even if they are out sick or attending a professional development workshop. For an example of how you might help a substitute lead the classroom in your absence, see the **Classroom Management & Culture Toolkit** (pp. 32-33: "Substitute Letter"); this Toolkit can be found online at the Resource Exchange on TFANet. ✂

Building a Culture of Achievement
You've Got To Spend Time To Save Time

Three months into teaching, Liz Chase (New York City '00) was just about ready to give up. When she asked her fourth graders to take out their math books, they would...only to slam them on the floor. Students got into fights. It was when she saw a first grade teacher stop and wait for her students in the stairwell to follow instructions (right hand on the railing; left hand at your side, not swinging) that Liz realized something important:

I thought I had taught procedures and routines to my students, when in reality I had primarily expected my students to know what to do without explicit explanation and consistent reinforcement from me. When they entered the classroom sort of *quiet, instead of silent, I allowed them to proceed. I tended to think there was something wrong with the procedure itself, not my teaching or reinforcement of it. Lacking confidence, I kept experimenting with and changing my classroom routines, but I grew more and more frustrated when I just couldn't find the ones that worked magically for my students. (Now, I realize there is no magic procedure—it is just what you insist on.)*

That Monday, we went up and down the stairs until my students got it right. I had them come in and out of the classroom until they went in perfectly silently. We packed up and left the classroom repeatedly until they did it in the efficient and quiet way I asked them to. Each time they didn't do it right, I would tell them in a calm and matter of fact tone of voice, "That wasn't right. I know you can do it correctly. We need to do it again."

Liz learned that, in order to maximize the time her students were focused on academic achievement, she needed to spend the time teaching her procedures:

I had wanted to give my kids a lot of freedom and choice, and yet my first three months proved that in order to get to a place where students can have a choice, they first have to have structure. The key to shifting my classroom management in the middle of my first year (as opposed to waiting to start over in the second year) was my determination to create that structure. I did not give up and was determined to make that year work.

Conclusion and Key Concepts

- Procedures and routines **maximize the efficiency** of your classroom; they also reinforce your high behavioral expectations and **help ensure a predictable and safe classroom environment** by teaching students specific behaviors for specific circumstances.

- You should develop these procedures and routines with the aim of **maximizing your instructional time and minimizing students' off-task time.**

- Procedures and routines must be **taught, modeled, and reinforced**, just like rules, consequences, and any other curriculum content.

Responding to Misbehavior
Chapter Four

I.   Reflecting on the Causes of Misbehavior
II. Responding to Minor Interruptions
III. Implementing Consequences Effectively
IV. Major Incidents

Introduction

The previous chapters of this text have addressed various foundational components of a classroom culture of achievement. Establishing rules, consequences, and routines encourages and supports the excellent behavior necessary to effect significant academic gains with your students.

This chapter will discuss the components of your classroom management that are of a more corrective nature – those methods by which you will assert your authority and apply consequences when a student does not meet your high expectations for behavior. Sometimes, due to a variety of factors ranging from the teacher's lesson pacing to how a classmate goaded them in the hallway, a student will choose to break a rule and receive the consequence. Other times, the student won't act out in frustration or pain but will still disrupt their own or the class's learning – for example by rhythmically tapping her pencil and humming during silent independent work, or by passing a note to her friend two rows over. In both cases, you must respond to these disruptions in order to maintain the classroom community and culture that you have worked relentlessly to build. Ultimately, you want your students to see misbehavior as a disruption to their learning. Students in Maurice Rabb's (Los Angeles '99) class responded with, "Does that help us learn to read and write?" when a classmate misbehaved.

We will first take a careful look at factors that cause misbehavior. If a teacher understands the roots of student interruptions and poor behavioral choices, that teacher is more likely to respond calmly and not take the misbehavior personally. That teacher also has the emotional distance to help students understand how their behavior affects their learning and the learning of their classmates and to reflect on what steps they could take to prevent student misbehavior in the future. With that foundation, we will discuss how to respond to student behavior that may not break a rule but still interrupts the learning environment of your classroom, along with best practices for implementing consequences when a student does choose to break a rule. Finally, we will discuss particularly challenging situations that you should think through carefully before the school year begins.

I. Reflecting on the Causes of Misbehavior

In every case, your search for the impetus for misbehavior should start by examining your own decisions and actions. Quite frequently, teachers discover that the plans they've created, the rules they've crafted (or failed to craft) or the comments they make to students may be the very things working against them.

Responding to Misbehavior

Lesson planning. While this is by no means always the case, incidents of disruptive or off-task behavior are often tied to a weakness in our own planning and design of the lesson itself. Students *will* become disengaged – and then off task - if they are sitting at their desks simply watching Anthony complete the math problem on the board during the guided practice stage of your lesson. Students who finish an independent activity and don't have anything else to work on *will* find "other things" to occupy their attention. When you plan, you should ask yourself not just, "What will I be doing every minute of the class?" but more importantly, "What will *my students* be doing every minute of the day?" In this sense, the interconnectedness of the *Instructional Planning & Delivery* text with the *Classroom Management & Culture* text cannot be overstated.

> *My number one classroom management strategy was solid and tight lesson planning. I found that students who are engaged in a lesson and have specific goals they are working toward have a lot less time to be distracted and get off-task.*
>
> **Lee McGoldrick, Los Angeles '93**
> **Vice President, Growth Strategy and Development**
> **Teach For America**

As you master the art and science of lesson planning, you improve your ability to design lessons that decrease the risk of off-task behavior that often leads to disruptive behavior. For example, perhaps you want your students to practice multiplying fractions. Your first thought is to have two or three students at a time come to the chalkboard to practice those problems. Your second thought is, "Well, that's not a bad idea, but what are the thirty other students going to be doing at that time?" Not only would having only three students at a time engaged at the board be an inefficient means of instructing thirty-plus students, but having thirty disengaged students is clearly an incubator for disruptive behavior. To head off this problem, you change your plan. You go to a home-and-garden store and purchase a large sheet of dry erase board, which can be easily cut to create miniature whiteboards for each child. You hand out dry-erase markers and paper towels, and each student completes the problem in big numbers. All the students then hold up their boards for you to see when your timer dings. With that adjustment to your lesson plan, you have greatly increased the effectiveness and efficiency of your lesson and greatly decreased the likelihood of disruptive behavior.

Student boredom. Boredom can arise for a number of reasons – and can result in a student going to sleep or being disruptive. First, the student could be under-challenged academically. Do not discount the notion that your biggest "troublemakers" may actually know (or at least *think* they know) the material before you teach it. Second, students might not be engaged with the lesson, because they are not invested in the academic goals, because the lesson is beyond their academic abilities, or because the pacing of the lesson is too slow. The chapter on Differentiation in the *Instructional Planning & Delivery* text will give you specific strategies for challenging all levels of learners. Also, strive to engage all students at all points in the lesson (perhaps by sprinkling students' names throughout the introduction of new material and guided practice, and by making sure all students are involved in all aspects of the lesson cycle). Of course, lesson planning alone *does not* guarantee that a lesson will pass without disruption. However, a poorly planned lesson *does* virtually guarantee off-task or disruptive behavior.

After examining whether student misbehavior could stem from your own instructional delivery, examine other potential contributors to off-task and disruptive behavior. The following are some other common teacher-created "causes" of misbehavior in classrooms:[15]

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[15] This section is adapted from Curwin, Richard and Allen Mendler. *Discipline with Dignity.* Alexandria, VA: ASCD, 1988.

Unclear limits. You may be shocked to hear that D'Andre, your third-period angel, shouts out answers constantly in another teacher's room (a teacher, who, incidentally, does not think it is important to expect students to raise their hands to speak during a class discussion). When you see your fourth-period class sitting like adults when they are with Ms. Clay during the school assembly, you may realize you need to establish and reinforce clearer expectations for when they come to you during fifth period. Students cannot violate rules that have not been established, and they will "code-switch" from classroom to classroom depending on the limits that have – or have not – been established for them. You must inform students of your standards of acceptable behavior upfront; remember that establishing rules and procedures is a form of *preventive* discipline.

Students should also learn that real limits to behavior exist by seeing consequences applied each and every time a rule is broken. Avoid ignoring infractions by some students but then punishing others when they break the very same rule. Catch and deliver consequences for the first offense, immediately, to prevent more serious offenses from taking place.

A sense of powerlessness. Students may act out as a way to demonstrate their sense of frustration and powerlessness if they believe that your rules are arbitrary and unfair. Therefore, be sure that classroom rules and procedures are necessary, and that the rationale behind each rule is explained to the students both up front and as the consequences for misbehavior are implemented. A procedure that requires fifth graders to move through the classroom like first year naval academy students (you know, turning at sharp right angles) or a rule such as "complete all assignments in blue ink or receive a zero" will only serve to frustrate students and instigate misbehavior. An anecdote in the book *Starting Small: Teaching Tolerance in Preschool and the Early Grades*, asserts that:

> ...blind obedience is not the goal. "Last week, a child came up to me and said, 'If this is a free world, why do we have rules?' I thought it was a very good question. I asked him to tell me a rule that he didn't understand, and he said, 'Running. I don't know why we can't run.' I said, 'You can run – outside,' and he said, 'But not in school.' So we acted out what would happen in certain situations if you ran instead of walked. And then it made sense."[16]

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[16] Teaching Tolerance. *Starting Small: Teaching Tolerance in Preschool and the Early Grades*. Southern Poverty Law Center, 1997, p. 66.

Responding to Misbehavior

Attacks on dignity.   It may be difficult for you to detect this problem on your own, but your tone and choice of words may unintentionally hurt students. You must never compromise the dignity of a student, even when he or she is misbehaving. Address student behaviors ("Rosalyn, you need to face forward in your chair and focus on your reading"), not the students themselves ("Rosalyn, don't be such a pest. Can't you see you're annoying Joe and everyone else around you when you turn around in your seat?"). By dwelling on negative characteristics, you are not only suggesting that there is something inherently wrong with the student, but you are also inviting a power struggle ("Joe doesn't think I'm annoying him") or retribution (more on this in the upcoming *Power and Revenge-Seeking* sections).

You might also unintentionally attack the dignity of your students by belittling the personal forces outside of class that may contribute to their behavior. If a student has fallen asleep during your lesson, making a comment such as "this isn't kindergarten nap time" as you shake the student awake is an unnecessary gibe. A student's sleepiness, which may be the result of a host of real-world circumstances, merits your attention and assistance, but not your ridicule.

Upholding student dignity applies to academic work as well. When you grade papers, do you simply put the grade on the top and hand it back to the class? Imagine being the student who consistently receives tests back with failing grades written in big red letters. If the teacher simply moved on to the next chapter in the textbook, without encouraging or working with you one-on-one, you'd begin to feel that you were unable to be successful, particularly if the knowledge in the class is cumulative.   You might shut down or explode in frustration (more on this in the upcoming *Avoidance of Failure* section).   It is critical that teachers create classrooms in which *all* students can succeed, in which all students can define themselves as people with positive contributions to make, as we will discuss in chapters five and six of this text.

It will be important to reflect regularly on your students' behavior and the root causes of that behavior. This reflection not only helps prevent you from taking the misbehavior personally, becoming emotionally affected yourself and responding recklessly, but it also sheds light on steps you should take to adjust your approach to prevent misbehavior in the future.

To that end, educator Linda Albert has developed a classroom management philosophy called *Cooperative Discipline* to help teachers differentiate their response to student misbehavior, depending on the source of the problem.   In her book, Albert outlines four causes of misbehavior:

- Attention-seeking
- Power-seeking
- Revenge-seeking
- Avoidance of failure

> *I feel the most useful component in creating a respectful tone in my classroom is to never humiliate a student – no matter what he/she just did or said. They need time to step back, cool off, and analyze their actions. I have a desk set off to the side, out of the view of most students, for a kid to go and calm down. When I find a break in my instruction, I go speak with the student quietly and privately about what happened. Rather than putting students in a confrontational situation, I give them the power to comment on how they acted first.*
>
> **Jennifer Cecil, South Louisiana '03**
> **Graduate Student, University of Michigan**

> *The hardest thing in dealing with student misbehavior is realizing that it's rarely directed toward you as an individual. Rather, it is usually a reaction to frustration of some kind. Catalog the disruption and reflect at a later time. You'll find that you are better able to diagnose what the root cause of the misbehavior is – is it a classroom issue, something the student is bringing from home, or a combination?*
>
> **Richard Reddick, Houston '95**
> **Assistant Professor and M.Ed. Coordinator, The University of Texas at Austin**

When addressing misbehavior, Albert says the first step is to determine the cause motivating a student in a particular situation. To do this, she suggests that teachers first gauge their own emotional responses to the incident, arguing that a teacher's response can often signal the cause of the student's misbehavior. We know if Joan is seeking our attention, for example, if we give attention to her. We would not ordinarily walk over to Ralph, who is working quietly, if Joan is whistling. Similarly, if we get furious with Peter and want to punish him severely, it's probably because he has demonstrated vengeful behavior and we have found ourselves wishing to retaliate back. By gauging how *we* feel about what the student has done, Albert indicates that we can determine why the student might have done it.

Once a teacher has pinpointed the goal of the misbehavior, he or she can use strategies over time to help students find positive outlets for the needs they had been trying to fulfill through distracting or destructive means. The chart below outlines a description of each of these misbehaviors in action, a way for teachers to use their own responses to identify the cause, and some ways to address the needs that lie underneath the situation.

Attention-Seeking

What this looks like. Constantly waving their hands to participate, whining for help, or entertaining the class.	
A teacher's typical reaction. Mild. We feel irritated and annoyed. Typically, we acquiesce and give them the attention they want (even if it's negative attention), and they stop—for a while.	*Strategies to address the need.* • Catch them being good, giving attention for positive reasons ("Thanks for cleaning up, Puck, because that really saves me time.") • Teach them to ask for attention ("Benvolio, let's come up with a special signal that you can use to show me you would like my attention.") • Set up times to give students your attention ("Helena, I'd love to hear more about your weekend during a lunch date tomorrow.")
The student's legitimate need. Students need to feel valued and affirmed. In younger grades, students may crave an adult's attention, whereas an older student's target audience may be peers.	

Power-Seeking

What this looks like. Students who verbalize or suggest with body language, "I won't do what you say! You can't make me!"	
A teacher's typical reaction. Hot. We feel angry, frustrated and fearful of losing control. Our natural inclination may be to fight with the student (and, in so doing, engage in an unproductive struggle for power ourselves), or give up.	*Strategies to address the need.* • Allow voice and choice ("Propose some alternatives to the assignment after class, Beatrice, and we can talk through them.") • Delegate responsibility ("Iago, will you help operate the audiovisual equipment for the class today?") • Acknowledge legitimate power ("You're right, Cordelia. I can't force you to do anything you don't want to. But you will have to accept the consequences of your decision.")
The student's legitimate need. Students need to feel in control, autonomous and free to be individuals.	

Responding to Misbehavior

Revenge-Seeking

What this looks like. Attacking you or others verbally or physically, or vandalizing school property.	
A teacher's typical reaction. Boiling. We feel hurt, disappointment or even dislike toward the child. Our gut response may lead us to lash back at them or punish them harshly, thereby exerting revenge on them ourselves!	*Strategies to address the need.* • Build caring relationships ("Claudio, what's really upsetting you?") • Teach appropriate expression of feelings through the use of puppet shows or drawings, as well as I-statements, community meetings and problem-solving protocols ("In today's journal assignment, we're going to spend a few minutes writing about a time when we were really angry at someone.") • Discuss misbehavior later ("Hamlet, we'll talk about this after class so we don't waste everyone's learning time"). • Allow students to save face by ignoring a rebellious mutter like "I'm leaving when the bell rings" rather than replying, "Oh no, you're not!" • Take charge of our own negative emotions ("Class, I wanted to apologize for raising my voice yesterday. That is no way to resolve a problem.")
The student's legitimate need. Children need an outlet for feelings of hurt, and they may want to protect themselves from future pain.	

Avoidance of Failure

What this looks like. Procrastinating or not finishing work. Regularly asking to visit the nurse or bathroom.	
A teacher's typical reaction. We feel professional concern, despair and self-doubt about our abilities to reach the student. Our natural response may be to feel like a failure ourselves, giving up or referring the child to a counselor who we hope will "fix" the problem.	*Strategies to address the need.* • Encourage an "I can" ethic ("Gertrude, look at your portfolio and see the progress you've made in punctuation with your careful practice!") • Foster friendships and build confidence ("Oberon, will you please quietly explain the Do Now procedure to Titania while the rest of us begin?") • Lower the stress level ("We're going to practice our presentations with a partner before doing it in front of the class.")
The student's legitimate need. They don't think they can live up to your expectations. They don't want to be seen as unsuccessful.	

Many of the strategies that Albert recommends can fall under what she calls the A's: attention, affirmation and affection. She points out that it is often difficult to give the A's to students who are the most challenging in the class, because they may not seem to "deserve" them or even want them. Albert argues that the A's are human needs that students who are misbehaving may especially crave.

Sometimes, misbehavior occurs when a student has an emotional disability and requires more support in learning to control her behavior and develop self-discipline. The next section will discuss how to respond to students who need additional behavior support.

Differentiated Behavior Management
Some students, particularly some students with behavior-related disabilities, will need more formalized support in learning to manage their behavior. Individual behavior contracts allow you to construct a specific set of expectations, consequences, and rewards for students with whom the regular classroom system is not working. A sample behavior contract is in the **Classroom Management & Culture Toolkit** (p. 34), found online at the Resource Exchange on TFANet. ✖ Consider the reflection of Sara Cotner (South Louisiana '00):

> One of my third grade students had bi-polar disorder and was notorious for destructive
> and disrespectful behavior the year before she entered my class. Her behavior was so

severe, in fact, that she had to be institutionalized for several weeks at a time. I introduced an individualized behavior modification plan. It was a simple table with our daily schedule, and she earned stars in the boxes for good behavior. If she misbehaved, I would record the behavior exactly, and her grandmother signed the sheet each night. The student would receive a certificate for earning a certain number of stars in a day. When she collected enough certificates, she could trade them in for time on the computer. After three weeks of this individualized system, she no longer needed it. She responded very favorably to the class-wide positive reinforcement system.

In some cases, you will need to access additional help from one or more of your fellow teachers or administrators. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) mandates that for any student who needs extra behavioral support, the IEP team (those who help create and monitor a student's Individualized Education Plan) must conduct a Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) as well. An FBA involves a school-based team implementing a behavior intervention plan that includes positive behavioral interventions and supports for a student with behavior disabilities.

The underlying assumption of the FBA is that every behavior is serving a function, whether it's to get attention, escape tasks, obtain objects, alleviate boredom, or any number of purposes. A comprehensive assessment of a student's behavior and the social, emotional, cognitive, and environmental factors associated with the behavior should reveal the behavior's function. While the FBA process can be done in a variety of ways, the following example presents a simplified version of the four steps usually involved in the process:

1. **Clearly define the problem behaviors(s):** Jason gets out of his desk and walks around the room. While walking around the room, he often taps on other students' desks.
2. **Identify events, times, settings, and situations that predict when the behaviors *will* and *will not* occur:** Jason does this in social studies, language arts, and science. He does not do this in math, art, or health.
3. **Gather data on possible causes of misbehavior (What is the student "getting" out of misbehaving? What the function of the misbehavior?):** After several observations and interviews with Jason, his teachers, and his parents, it seems that the function of the misbehavior is task avoidance. He seems to exhibit the behavior most frequently when asked to do something that involves writing.
4. **Develop and test a hypothesis:** The hypothesis is that Jason has difficulty with writing and misbehaves as a way to avoid it. To test the hypothesis, his teachers planned activities that did not involve writing and observed and charted Jason's behavior for a couple days. He did not get out of his seat and walk around the room. To be sure their hypothesis was correct, they then incorporated writing back into their plans and observed that the misbehavior started again.

One outcome of an FBA is an understanding of why a student misbehaves, but the more important outcome should be a behavior intervention plan developed specifically for the student; one that is based on the results of the FBA. In Jason's case, a plan was developed that included individualizing his writing assignments, teaching him how to ask for help when he needed it, allowing him to use a computer for longer writing assignments, giving him the opportunity to take breaks during writing assignments, and a contract that included rewards for staying in his seat and consequences for getting out of his seat. Function-based behavior support allows teachers to individualize, or differentiate, based on a particular student's needs. The behavior intervention plan should include positive strategies and, in many cases, skill-building interventions. Sometimes students do not have the appropriate *skills* to exhibit appropriate behavior in some contexts, so these skills must be *taught*.

Responding to Misbehavior

The plan may also involve changes in the student's routine; when a student's problem behavior is predictable, changes in the student's routine can make it less likely that the problem behavior will occur. For example, Moninda blurts out a lot during class, especially in her afternoon classes. Since she takes medication for ADHD, her teachers meet with her parents to find out if there have been changes in her medical treatment. Her parents inform you that she no longer takes her medication because it was making her tired. As a solution, her parents may want to take her back to her physician, but they may not. The solution may be as simple as a schedule change where Moninda takes her academic subjects in the morning and PE, art, and life skills in the afternoon. Once the plan is in place, it is very important for the team to monitor, evaluate, and adjust as necessary. A sample "Functional Behavior Assessment" can be found in the **Classroom Management & Culture Toolkit** (pp. 35-36), available online at the Resource Exchange on TFANet. ✖

Outside Factors That Can Produce Student Misbehavior
In many cases, you will be able to affect the causes of misbehavior through adjusting your lessons, consistently and respectfully upholding reasonable limits, helping students express their feelings appropriately, or supporting improved behavior in a more formalized way. However, there are some rare situations or phenomena that are simply beyond your immediate control, or perhaps even your immediate understanding.

You may be teaching students for whom violence has been a tragic and deeply affecting part of their lives. Childhood trauma includes experiences that go beyond normal life stressors; these experiences can be physical, sexual, or emotional abuse; neglect; parental alcohol or drug abuse; death in the family; witnessing violence; frequent changes in primary caregivers; and physical injury. As a classroom teacher, it is important to be aware of what behavior problems could be manifestations of trauma:

- **Hurting others without seeming to care** can be a sign of overwhelming pain and suffering on the part of the misbehaving student. Children and youth who have suffered serious pain can shut down their feelings and lose touch with their sense of empathy.
- **Aggressiveness beyond what is typical** in the students you teach is highly correlated with being victimized by abuse or witnessing the abuse of another family member.
- **Deliberately annoying others** can be a sign of a student's sense of helplessness, also common when a student is accustomed to being abused or neglected.
- **Hypervigilance,** or a tendency to always be on the lookout for potential dangers, can also be a sign of exposure to an unexpected traumatic event.
- **Jumpiness or hyperactivity** can be a sign of trauma, as well as a sign of a disorder such as Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD).
- Finally, **unusual spaciness** can be a sign both of a physical disorder, as well as a detached state resulting from being overwhelmed by a traumatic experience.

However, it is important not to assume that an unusually spacey student has experienced a traumatic incident – they might be distracted by the upcoming school dance. An aggressive child simply might require help channeling her energy and strength, and a child who exhibits annoying behavior might need more positive reinforcement for good behavior. We do not give these examples to minimize your vigilance, but only to remind you to analyze student's behaviors critically. And, although many students bring symptoms of the stress of their world to the classroom, this does not mean that these students cannot achieve academically or behave appropriately in your classroom.

There are many things you can do to have a profound, positive impact on a child who is a victim of trauma without devoting your full attention to that student or assuming the role of a therapist. Traumatized children, perhaps more than other students, benefit from structure, routines, positive empowerment, and positive attention – all practices you should be implementing as an effective classroom teacher

regardless of who fills your class. You have the opportunity and responsibility to provide all of your students with an environment that is safe, and in which they can experience success.

That said, some students would benefit from attention and intervention beyond the scope of what you can provide as a classroom teacher, and childhood trauma is one cause of student misbehavior that requires extra attention. If you have attempted to handle a particular student's misbehavior with consistency, persistence, reflection and revised strategies, and the behavior persists, perhaps something else in the life of that student must be addressed. Set up a meeting with the student and the school counselor. If journal entries, bruises, welts, cuts, or statements made by the child lead you to suspect that he or she has been a victim of trauma, or is currently being victimized, it may be your *legal obligation* to seek outside intervention, perhaps with the help of the school counselor, nurse, or principal. Available resources will depend upon your school and community and will likely not be as readily available as you would hope. However, they exist. As a classroom teacher who sees your students regularly, you may be the school representative best positioned to observe the signs of distress, and you can do a great service to students by helping them access the support and services they need.

Ideally, examining the array of "causes" for student misbehavior will allow you to react to inappropriate behavior without a strong emotional response from yourself. As the next two sections demonstrate, teachers must maintain a calm, firm, respectful demeanor when responding to both minor and more serious student interruptions.

II. Responding to Minor Interruptions

A student rhythmically taps her pencil during silent independent work. Another child is trying to take notes on your lecture while simultaneously finishing his homework for another class. A third is mouthing something to a friend across the room while you are trying to give directions. When students do not meet your behavioral expectations, and yet are not exactly breaking the rules, those students still need to know that their behavior compromises learning for themselves or for others in the class. To prevent that interruption from escalating into behavior that does break a rule, you must address the interruption immediately. When doing so, you should utilize the following guidelines:

- Minimize your verbal response
- Do not interrupt the lesson flow
- Invest very little emotion

Let's look at specific examples of addressing a minor interruption to see how those guidelines apply to the host of methods you could employ.

> It is sixth period on Tuesday. The lesson objective is to identify the components of poetry. Victor has just arrived from Physical Education where they played basketball for the whole period. Victor loves basketball, and he is hyped up from the minute he walks in the door. When you open the lesson with a poetry reading, Victor is rhythmically drumming his hands on the desk and looking around the classroom in a distracted manner.

Several of my more dominant students did not respond well to directly, publicly reminding them to follow the rules. To protect their pride and keep attention focused on my instruction, rather than the behavior, I began finding ways to whisper them reminders, at a natural pause in my instruction. This approach conveys a tone of respect, especially to the "leader" personalities.

Lisa Barrett, Bay Area '02
Partner, The New Teacher Project

Responding to Misbehavior

Method	Explanation of Method	The Method in Action
Physical Proximity	Be mobile. Movement communicates that you are focused on all parts of the room, and it can get a single student's attention without interrupting the entire class. When a student is creating a minor interruption, immediately move closer to his or her seat.	You move closer to Victor's seat so he knows that you heard his drumming and are aware of his distraction. While moving closer to Victor, you continue reading the poem and maintain the flow of the lesson. You remain by his desk for a short period of time before moving on.
Sudden Silence	When a student is disruptive while you are speaking, stop and wait for the disruption to cease.	Mid-stanza, you sharply pause your reading. After a few seconds Victor stops his drumming and you continue the poem.
Physical Cues	Simple physical cues can communicate better than words without disturbing the lesson flow.	Without a significant pause in your reading, you look up, make eye contact with Victor and make a "calm down" gesture with your hand.
Post-It Notes	Some teachers carry a clipboard with pre-written Post-It notes that say "please focus on what we are doing now" or "please throw out your gum." If a student needs a reminder about their behavior, they choose the appropriate note and place it on the student's desk.	As you continue reading the poem, you walk by Victor and place the note that says, "please focus on what we are doing now" on his desk.
Individual Signals	Some students need an individual reminder when they are interrupting. Taking them aside and agreeing upon a method can be very effective.	While reading, you hold up one finger and make eye contact with Victor. Because you both agreed upon this signal in advance when Victor was disruptive in the past, Victor knows that he is creating a distraction and that one finger means he needs to stop what he is doing.
Touch	A quick touch on a shoulder or a student's desk is often effective at curbing minor disruptions. Before touching your students, identify with whom this would work well and who would respond negatively.	You approach Victor's seat while continuing to read the poem. As you pass him you tap him on the shoulder.
The "Teacher Look" (a.k.a. the "We Are Not Amused Look")	This is a more direct approach to address minor interruptions. When a student interrupts instruction, you lock eyes and communicate your displeasure with your facial expression. "The Look" doesn't have to be angry, just serious, perhaps even just raised eyebrows. Be sure to acknowledge the student when they comply.	You look up from the poem and give Victor a direct look that clearly communicates your intentions. You maintain eye contact for a few seconds, smile and nod your head in thanks when Victor gestures his understanding. You then return to reading the poem.
Quickly State Student's Name	Stating a student's name is effective if you feel that you need to immediately catch that student's attention (but don't overuse this technique - students quickly become immune to hearing their name called). This method is potentially more disruptive to the rest of the class than most other interventions mentioned.	When Victor starts drumming on the desk, you immediately say "Victor" and make eye contact with him.
Ignoring	There are specific situations when you may believe that a student is acting out to get attention. You may choose to ignore this behavior if it is not creating a classroom disruption. This should be done carefully, because students may assume that you are not aware or do not care about the behavior. You would later raise the issue with the student in private.	

These methods are effective only when applied to minor interruptions. Behaviors like unwittingly tapping a pencil, humming during silent work, or snapping gum by accident are not malicious infractions or insubordination, and using the aforementioned techniques to alert students to their behavior can remind them of your expectations.

If you use these same methods in response to a more serious interruption (e.g., derogatory comments, aggressive actions, etc.), your students may lose respect for you – perhaps feeling that you aren't willing to be tough in order to ensure your students meet high expectations. Also keep in mind that using the same method repeatedly can minimize its effectiveness. If minor interruptions begin to dominate your lessons, take that as a signal that you need to re-develop or re-teach classroom rules and procedures. Remember, too, about the causes of misbehavior we discussed earlier. If Victor consistently drums his pencil on the desk, he may not be doing it unwittingly but rather as a tactic to get attention. While you would use the above strategies to deal with Victor's behavior in the moment, you would also take long-term proactive steps, like those suggested by Linda Albert in *Cooperative Discipline,* to help him channel his need for attention through more appropriate means.

III. Implementing Consequences Effectively

Wouldn't it be nice if simply telling students your consequences and showing them the benefits of following your rules were enough to deter each student from ever breaking them? As we discussed in the opening section of this chapter, there are several reasons why students sometimes still break rules despite all our efforts to prevent misbehavior. And, a positive, achievement-oriented classroom culture does not spring forth by virtue of the teacher simply presenting the rules on the first day of classes, but develops over the long-haul, in part by faithfully and effectively implementing consequences for those rules. Here, we will discuss how to effectively implement a consequence when misbehavior does occur, as hesitation to do so is one of the fastest ways to undermine your own authority in the classroom. There are three keys to successfully implementing consequences:

- Provide students with control over the outcome
- Implement consequences consistently
- Implement consequences respectfully

These three principles, in the long-term, forge the most direct path to creating a classroom culture that incessantly drives academic achievement. Let's consider each in more detail.

Provide Students with Control over the Outcome
It is important to communicate to your students that they are in charge of the outcome of their behavior. They can choose to follow the rules (thereby receiving at least intangible benefits) or to break the rules and incur the consequences. Many corps members have utilized the following concrete strategies to reinforce this to students:

- Signs in your classroom, such as one above your consequences chart that reads, "If you CHOOSE to break a rule…" or "Look here to see how we have CHOSEN to behave"
- Language that repeatedly conveys the choice at hand, such as:
    - "I was so impressed by your choice to peacefully resolve that conflict with Tatiana. That was extremely mature of you."
    - "Chris, since you chose to get up and walk around the room without asking for permission, please go and flip your card to yellow."

Responding to Misbehavior

o "Jessica, I already gave you a warning for turning around and talking to Juan during the warm-up. Since you chose to continue that behavior, you will now be required to remain in the room during hallway time. I'm putting your initials on the board as a reminder."

Another way to ensure students feel a sense of control and hope is to give them a "clean slate" after the consequence is over. Some corps members, especially at the elementary level, start their series of consequences over each day or halfway through the day (for example, putting each student back to "green" on the traffic light after they have served the consequence for moving to red). Secondary corps members, who usually see their students for an hour each day, allow students to return to the bottom rung of the consequences ladder for a fresh start every Monday.

I learned very quickly that if I was not consistent in reinforcing rules and consequences, the students would sense a weakness and would exploit it. I always attempt to make sure that whether it is the most difficult child or the most angelic, the consequence remained the same. It protects you and your authority in the long run.

Elisha Rothschild, North Carolina '01
Youth Director
Beth Israel Congregation

Implement Consequences Consistently

Very often, when a group of students does not meet behavior expectations, it is because the teacher has failed to consistently enforce them. A common example revolves around expectations for raising your hand to speak during a class discussion. If a teacher sometimes responds to students who call out, despite an explicit rule about hand-raising, most students will begin to ignore the rule, and may be genuinely surprised or frustrated when the teacher later disciplines them for calling out. Vigilant consistency will pay off in the long run; when consequences appear random, students begin to feel powerless and doubt that they can influence their own outcomes.

A huge turning point in my teaching was that epiphany I had in my first year of teaching when I realized that I could have a much more powerful effect on my students' behavioral choices when I spoke to them in a neutral tone, instead of in a condemning fashion when they in fact made poor choices. Speaking to my students this way helped them to realize that when they didn't meet a classroom expectation, it wasn't simply about "breaking a rule": it was about making a choice that either hurt themselves or others in the classroom. It took the focus off of me as a teacher, and on them as a student, and what they could do to make better choices in the future.

Charlotte Phillips, Houston '01
Director, Alumni Affairs
Teach For America

Once a child has developed a pattern of misbehavior, you may find yourself watching that student particularly carefully, looking for him or her to act up. You may even be tempted to send him or her out of your classroom the very first chance you get, rather than following your ladder of consequences, to get the child out of your hair. Check yourself on these impulses. What message are you sending a child when you consistently throw her out of your room? Once you start eyeing certain students with suspicion even before they've done anything wrong that day, you've exploded the power of high expectations. Kids can smell mistrust a mile away and may even play the role you've cast for them. For children who are weighing whether to follow the rules, it may not be worth trying to behave if your teacher simply expects you to be bad.

Implement Consequences Respectfully

While it is important to assert your authority consistently when students misbehave, it is equally important to address misbehavior in a way that allows students to maintain their dignity. First, you must be aware of your tone. Everything should be said in a firm and calm, rather than hostile and confrontational, tone. Another tip is to keep your language as descriptive as possible and to minimize the degree to which you make judgmental statements. Descriptive language verbally *portrays* a situation, behavior, achievement, or feeling. For example, you turn to Linda, who has just interrupted Faye while she is speaking, and say "I cannot concentrate on what Faye is saying while you are talking. We will discuss this further in our after-class conference."

Judgmental language, which is often full of negative emotion, verbally *labels* behavior, achievement, or a person. Notice the difference: You turn to Linda, who has just interrupted Faye while she was speaking, and snarl, "Don't be so rude! We'll be discussing your poor manners after class."

Descriptive language focuses everyone on the learning task and specific situation, and avoids labeling particular students as "smart," "slow," "well-behaved," or "problem students." In other words, you address the behavior, not the student. In situations in which a student misbehaves, descriptive language allows you to assert your authority while maintaining a positive relationship with the misbehaving student.

Let's see how the three keys to successful implementation of consequences play out in the following scenarios:

Student Behavior	Your Response
During silent independent work, Nicole turns around and says something to Kia. Kia simply shakes her head and continues to work. You catch Nicole's eye and write her initials on the board, signifying a warning. Ten minutes later, Nicole is turned around in her seat again, talking audibly to Kia.	"Nicole, because you chose to turn around and talk to Kia after my warning, you have chosen to stay after class for three minutes once everyone else leaves to explain what is preventing you from focusing."
Later, Kia turns to her left and says something to Miwa.	You write Kia's initials on the board.
You notice Chris stealthily eating chips during your explanation of how to solve a second order equation.	Once students are working independently on solving the equations you have written on the board, you walk over to Chris and quietly say, "Chris, because you chose to eat those chips in class you'll need to stay after school so we can strategize about how to keep you from getting hungry during class."
You are walking the class down the hallway to the library. You turn around and watch as Jenny lags behind the line, stopping to wave at friends in Mr. Farr's class and do a little dance in front of Ms. Baker's class.	"Jenny, please get back in line and plan to speak with me when we arrive at the library." Once there, you speak to her individually. "Because you chose to play in the hallway on the way to the library instead of walking quietly in the line, you have chosen to write a letter of apology to the teachers whose classes you have disrupted with your antics. I expect you to deliver a letter to Mr. Farr and Ms. Baker by 3:30 today. While in the library, I know you will make better behavioral choices."
During a whole group discussion, James answers a question. After James gives his response, Curtis mutters, "What a fag." The other students near Curtis laugh.	"I am shocked that you would use such a hurtful word and that others would laugh. Hurtful words, and laughing about their use, damage our goal of making this classroom a space where everyone feels welcome. The word Curtis used, "fag," is a hurtful word that refers to gay people. We need to stop what we're doing. I'd like each of you to write a page in your journal that explains a time someone used a word that hurt you. Then we will read some out loud..."

Some students complain and say, "I didn't say any bad words." You respond, "that's excellent. This assignment should be very easy for you – you already know how hurtful language can be." |
| During small group reading time, Dexter throws his book on the floor and exclaims, "This book is so DUMB! Why do I have to read it?" | You move Dexter's clothespin to the yellow light and say, "Dexter, it sounds like you need a cooling off period. We don't treat school materials like that. Please pick up your book and put it on the table, and then move to the timeout chair and fill out a behavior reflection form. I'll be over in a moment to discuss your frustration with you." |

Responding to Misbehavior

These scenarios demonstrate consistent and respectful administration of consequences. If you find that Nicole is constantly turning around and talking to Kia, you will want to work with her to get at the root of the problem – and to involve her in that process. When she stays after class, you might have a conversation like the following:

Teacher: Nicole, I've noticed that in the past few weeks you've had a particularly hard time staying quiet when you are supposed to be doing independent work. Today you repeatedly turned to talk to Kia. Last week I remember you talking to Stanley. I'd like to understand why this is happening.

Student: Well, I guess I just like to talk. My grandmother always tells me I talk too much. And today I had something I needed to tell Kia.

Teacher: I see. Was it something that you could have told her during hallway time?

Student: Yeah, I guess.

Teacher: Ok, so how can we help you stay focused during the class period?

Student: I don't know. (teacher waits) I guess...well, with Kia right behind me it's really tempting to talk to her. Maybe if I sat farther away from her, and couldn't even see her, it would be easier for me.

Teacher: So looking at the seats in the classroom, there are empty ones here and here. This one would put you far away from Kia. You can move to this seat as of tomorrow.

In the situation with Dexter above, you should seek to understand Dexter's frustration with the book. Again, rather than just being punitive, you want to have a solution-oriented approach to student misbehavior. "Empathetic listening" requires teachers to avoid taking student complaints personally (as we are often tempted to do) and instead focus on "hearing the intent and emotions behind what another says and reflecting them back by paraphrasing."[17] That conference might go as follows:

Teacher: You said the book was really dumb and seemed pretty frustrated that you had to read it. (*teacher paraphrases the student's statement*)

Student: Yeah. I hate it.

Teacher: You sound like you're not enjoying the book at all, Dexter. (*again, paraphrasing*)

Student: I'm not. I can't keep track of what is happening in it. And I have to stop every two sentences to look up all these stupid words. I hate it!

Teacher: It's difficult to understand, and that bothers you. (*paraphrasing once again*)

Student: Yeah, and I'd rather read a book about aliens anyway. That's what I want to do my book report on.

Teacher: Well, there are a few other books in our class library that are about aliens. Let's see if we can find one that won't have as many frustrating vocabulary words.

Remember, the ultimate purpose of your rules and consequences is to help your students meet your high expectations for behavior, which in turn will allow you to meet your goals for academic achievement. If you find that you are implementing consequences more than you are reinforcing excellent behavior, you may need to reflect on whether your consequences are purely punitive and not solution oriented. For "Questions to Consider When Consequences Don't Work," see the **Classroom Management & Culture Toolkit** (p. 37), found online at the Resource Exchange on TFANet. �֎

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[17] Woolfolk, Anita. *Educational Psychology*. New York, NY: Allyn & Bacon, 2001, 466.

IV. Major Incidents

Situations that jeopardize student safety, such as students physically fighting, a student having a medical emergency, a student being overtly physically threatened, or an honest-to-goodness fire may (but probably will not) arise in your classroom or school. As much as anyone can, you should prepare for these major incidents. In order to respond calmly and effectively to serious situations, we suggest taking the following steps:

1. Find out your school policy for various emergencies. Most likely, your school has a handbook that describes at least a basic procedure for a teacher's response in the case of a fire, intruder, fight, or other emergency. Pay particular attention to the steps for notifying the school administration in the case of an emergency in your classroom (many classrooms have an "emergency button" that connects you to the main office via the PA).

2. You should also seek the advice of veteran teachers regarding the best course of action in the case of a major incident. They might be able to share stories or events that have occurred and ways in which they responded.

3. If possible, you should review students' medical records to see if any have specific health issues, such as serious allergies to chocolate, bee stings or a history of seizures. If medical records are not available to teachers, consider asking parents to contact you regarding any medical conditions at the beginning of the year, or add such a question to a Parent/Guardian Survey.

4. Finally, think through how you might handle situations such as a medical emergency, fire, student fight, or intruder ahead of time. Consider what you would do and to whom you would turn if a student suddenly collapsed in your presence, or what steps you would take if a small fire started in your classroom. We do not mention these situations to frighten anyone; however, if you do not have children of your own, you probably have never thought of some of these scenarios before. Having a plan should help to put you at ease, and, more importantly, allow you to act in a more decisive manner if a serious situation did occur in your classroom.

> **Teaching and Personal Safety**
> Threats to physical safety do happen on school campuses, including those campuses where corps members work. By discussing the possibility of school violence and teachers' personal safety, we do not mean to feed the stereotypes propagated by television and the media. Your school will most certainly be, first and foremost, a community of students, teachers, and families, working together against a number of social ills that affect all communities, not just theirs. Still, vigilance about physical safety is a component of many of your students' lives, and it should be a component of yours. All teachers in all schools should be concerned and vigilant about personal safety, for the sake of their students and themselves. While crime on school campuses remains very rare, and while no amount of preparation can guarantee any individual's safety, complacency about the possibility that you will need to respond to a dangerous situation can increase your risks of being in one.
>
> We do not raise these issues to alarm anyone. Rather, we want to acknowledge that assaults and weapons are sometimes a part of some of our students' lives and communities. And, as a member of that community, there is the possibility – however remote – that you will encounter these issues yourself, even if only indirectly. We welcome your thoughts and concerns about personal safety. Also, for some safety tips for teachers and a list of safety resources on the Internet, see the **Classroom Management & Culture Toolkit** (pp. 38 & 40); this Toolkit can be found online at the Resource Exchange on TFANet. ✂

Because fights between students, while relatively rare, are probably the most common of the major incidents that could arise in your school or classroom, let's discuss possible responses now. First, because most schools have policies for this type of situation, you should work with your administration to clearly determine your course of action. You should also think through the specific aspects of your own response. Remember that in this scenario, your response does not need to be gradual, even if your general consequences utilize a gradual approach; you'll recall that effective consequences include a "serious offense" clause that allows the teacher to take any step necessary to defuse the situation.

Responding to Misbehavior

There is no one precise protocol for handling a fight between students. In most cases you have other options besides physically intervening with the students. When students are fighting, you should first use your voice to intervene. Use a strong, calm, clear voice and direct the fighters to stop fighting. Repeat this message, like a broken record. While you are doing so, send another child to get help from other adults. Remember that anger, excessive panic, or unnecessary volume on your part will only exacerbate the situation. However, it is also possible that you will weigh the risks of injury to the students and to yourself and decide to break up the fight. If you are significantly larger and stronger than the students in the altercation, and it is not in direct violation of school policies to do so, you should try to separate the students rather than allow either child to get seriously injured. If you are smaller or weaker than the students, it may be better for you to wait for help. Knowing the policies of your school, knowing your students, and thinking through the response with which you are comfortable will allow you to act decisively in the heat of the moment.

It is also possible that as a teacher you will find yourself having to respond to a potential *threat* of violence. As a teacher, you might hear a rumor that a student has a knife or gun in school or that a student is high or under the influence of alcohol. If you hear such a rumor, take it seriously. Keep the student within sight (if he or she is in your classroom) while immediately sending for help. Ideally, your school will have a plan set up for such an incident specifically addressing who will confront the student. If not, speak with experienced staff and/or an administrator ahead of time to learn what you should do in such a circumstance.

As former Attorney General Janet Reno explained in the *2000 Report on School Safety*, "Physical fights and the presence of weapons at school are dangerous, and they are also highly disruptive to the learning environment. Contrary to public perception, however, both weapon-carrying by students and physical fighting have declined steadily in recent years."[18] For most teachers, these issues rarely, if ever, arise. At the same time, the reality is that all teachers must be vigilant about fighting, weapons, and threats in school.

Building a Culture of Achievement
Taking Control For Learning's Sake

High school math teacher Diana Percival (New Jersey '02) had trouble responding to misbehavior appropriately during her first semester of teaching. If a student would yell for something across the room, Diana would respond with equal volume, resulting in a shouting match between teacher and student. When she gave students detention based on a progression of consequences that was unclear even to her, her students would protest until she gave in. One day, Diana spent a lot of time and energy creating a math lesson involving colored cubes, which her students proceeded to fling across the room. She describes how she felt that day:

For the past three months, I had been completely overwhelmed with paper work, grading, and calling parents. I was exhausted from coming home and working on lesson plans – usually for the next day. I was bitter that I spent so much time, tears, money, and effort for students that were disrespectful towards me.

After speaking with colleagues and friends, Diana rethought her approach. She waited until the class was completely silent before proceeding with directions. She made an official seating chart. She responded calmly to classroom disturbances. She tracked her students' inappropriate behavior using a clipboard and followed through on her consequences. She also praised students who did what they were supposed to do, and she developed P.R.I.D.E (Personal Responsibility in Demanding Excellence) Reports for each student, where she marked down when students came to class on time, participated appropriately and acted respectfully. Diana had realized that, in order for her students to take her class seriously, she would need to take maintaining her own rules and systems seriously. Once she did, they did.

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[18] U.S. Departments of Education and Justice. *2000 Annual Report on School Safety.* Washington, DC, 2000, p. 6.

Conclusion and Key Concepts

- It is critical that you **reflect on the causes of misbehavior.** Consider that you might have done something to incite a student to act inappropriately. Perhaps a student is bored and is causing a disruption because of your poor lesson planning, or maybe the student is angry and causing a disturbance because of a sarcastic remark you made.

- You should also consider that the student may need **special support** in learning to control his or her behavior or express feelings; your student may be trying to fulfill needs that he or she does not know how to handle otherwise: the need for **attention, power, revenge** or an **avoidance of failure**.

- Inevitably, you will need to respond to **minor disruptions** that prevent the misbehaving student, and perhaps his or her classmates, from learning. You might respond to these often unintentional interruptions by using one or more of the following techniques: proximity, individual signals, the "post-it" note, physical cues, touch, ignoring, silence, and the "we are not amused look," among others.

- You will also need **to implement consequences** when a student breaks a classroom rule. You must do so consistently and respectfully, providing the student with some control over the outcome and an opportunity to achieve a fresh start. You should also communicate to the student that his or her choice to violate the rules represents a perhaps unwitting choice to accept the consequences for breaking those rules, and that the ultimate consequence of misbehavior is interrupted learning.

- You should also consider your own plans for any **major incidents** that might arise in your classroom, whether due to student behavior or other outside factors.

Building a Sense of Community
Chapter Five
I.   Establishing a Respectful Tone
II.   Establishing a Bond With and Among Your Students
III. Creating a Community That Values All Students
IV.   Helping Students Resolve Conflicts

Introduction

Javier feels like his teacher treats his limited English proficiency as an inconvenience. When Kenisha does not turn in her homework, the teacher hardly bats an eye. Josh has a learning disability, and his assignments are so mismatched with his strengths and current performance level that he feels at a complete loss. In her article "Invitations to Learn," Carol Tomlinson profiles these three students and summarizes their problem in school with one word: affirmation. [19]

Josh needs to know that he is "accepted and acceptable" for who he is, Tomlinson argues. Javier needs to be listened to, a challenging feat for the teacher when there are dozens of children to listen to, but important nonetheless. Kenisha needs to feel like someone cares, even when she appears to shun this attention. They all want to know they are successful and capable. As the leader of your classroom, you are responsible for building an environment that meets your students' needs for acceptance, belonging, and safety. Certainly, the first four chapters of this text outlined strategies that help students feel "comfortable" in the classroom. Rules, consequences, positive reinforcement, procedures and consistent response to student misbehavior all contribute to a structured, predictable environment.

However, building a classroom community in which every student feels secure reading their latest piece of writing, or respected and valued regardless of their gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, learning differences or any other personal characteristic, requires more than just the consistent implementation of your classroom management structures. With this chapter, we address the fact that students not only need physical safety and security, but they also need social belonging and acceptance.

Your classroom *can* be a place where Tracy seeks to verbally resolve the conflict with Kevin rather than smacking him on the back of the head; a community where Teela and Kimberly (the two "popular girls" who at the beginning of the year snubbed everyone) reach out and welcome a new student to class; an environment where Monroe spontaneously compliments Lester for his self-discipline rather than labeling him "teacher's pet."

Teachers who create such a sense of community do so through proactive team building and through consistent, thoughtful reactions to incidents that make any student feel ostracized. In addition, these teachers actively work to uncover and confront their own biases and prejudices.

This chapter aims to help you think systematically about how best to build a sense of community and discusses what it will take to do this, through:

- Establishing a respectful tone
- Helping students bond with you and their classmates
- Promoting an environment of respect and tolerance in which each individual feels valued
- Helping students to resolve conflicts effectively

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[19] Tomlinson, Carol. "Invitations to Learn." *Educational Leadership,* 60:1 (2002), 6-10.

Building a Sense of Community

The result of all of this hard work is a classroom of students who – because their need to be a part of an inclusive, supportive environment is realized – will feel motivated to learn and work with you to reach ambitious academic goals.

I. Establishing a Respectful Tone

No matter what outward behaviors might suggest, your students care deeply that you think highly of them and can be profoundly affected by language that implies you do not. As the authority figure in the classroom, it is your responsibility to remain "above the fray" and to maintain a tone of respect regardless of the behavior you might see in your students – whether it is directed toward other students or yourself.

I turned my classroom into the "Peace Place" and expected that everyone would speak respectfully to each other. And I constantly modeled "please," "I'm sorry," "no, thank you" and all those other cordial things until I thought I was going to die. Then one day out of the clear blue, Floyd, one of my most challenging students, used "please" and "thank you" in the same sentence. Something got through…

C. Allison Jack, Los Angeles '91
Senior Program Director, Effective Practice
Incentive Community
New Leaders for New Schools

Remember that your own behavior should model appropriate speech and actions to your students. If you expect them to use "please" and "thank you," to refrain from eye rolling and teeth sucking, and to use a respectful tone when speaking to others, you must exhibit that same behavior. That means thanking students for passing in their papers, refraining from sighing and rolling your eyes if there are multiple announcements during 3rd period, and always maintaining a professional, respectful demeanor with your colleagues.

When interacting with your students, it is usually safer to err on the side of being "overly" sensitive to their feelings. For example, teachers should exercise caution in using sarcasm, even in a joking manner, especially with younger children, English language learners or those with language disabilities. Sarcasm may hurt students' feelings, damage self-esteem, or humiliate students in front of others. Because sarcasm is a large part of adult discourse, teachers of older students should explicitly point out any use of sarcasm while ensuring that they are not using it in a way that students may find hurtful. Of course, your respect for students is displayed not just in overt ways, but also in subtle body language, speech, and tone. For example, by speaking in your own natural voice, rather than yelling or using a condescending tone, you send the message that you respect your students as people.

Remaining aware of your language and tone – including all the subtle nuances of what you say and how you say it – will be vital to creating and maintaining a mutually respectful relationship with your students. (A helpful exercise in monitoring your own tone is to audiotape your teaching sessions or to have a peer observe you.) Another way to show students that you respect their thoughts and ideas is to ask them for feedback on the classroom culture and your instructional practices. You might consider having a special box in your room in which students can place notes to you. Be sure to respond and thank them for their comments. You might also benefit from gathering students' feedback in a more formal way. For an example of a tool you might use, look at the "Sample Survey for Collecting Student Feedback" and the "Student Assessment of Classroom Culture" in the **Classroom Management & Culture Toolkit** (pp. 41-44) found online at the Resource Exchange on TFANet. �

II. Establishing a Bond With and Among Your Students

One of the most important things you can do to create a classroom community is to develop a strong bond with and among your students. Remember that, according to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, belonging and self-esteem precede the need to achieve lofty goals. For some students, a teacher's care and concern is the number one factor that influences their learning.[20]

Building Strong Teacher-Student Relationships
It will be important to take the initiative to learn about your students' personal lives, interests, and goals. Seeking this information will show students that you value, respect, and care about them. Additionally, this information will also allow you to be more purposeful in your instruction; recall that "students' interests" is one of the factors to consider when designing your lessons. Beyond relying on informal conversations and formal surveys, it can be invaluable to plan systematic ways to get to know your students outside of the classroom environment. Your strategies will differ depending on how many students you teach and how old they are. The following section provides a starter menu of strategies you might pursue to build strong relationships with your students.

I set a respectful tone in my classroom by respecting my students and respecting myself. First, I always dress professionally. I find that when I look my best, my students immediately respect me. Second, I always greet my students by their names when they enter my room and ask how they are doing. I never yell at my students. I stay calm when I am speaking to them even when I am upset with their actions. This way, we can have a discussion about their behavior as opposed to yelling at each other.

Devon Keefe, NJ-Camden '04
Educator, Camden High School

Attend student activities
- Attending student award ceremonies, sporting events, performances or other activities beyond the school walls demonstrates a genuine interest in students' lives while providing you with a chance to see students' strengths, personalities, and abilities that may not manifest themselves in the classroom.
- Attending these events provides the added benefit of creating opportunities to speak with parents and community members, who will greatly appreciate your presence and demonstration of interest.

Lead student activities
- Becoming a coach or club sponsor can allow you to contribute to the school community in a new and important way and give you a different perspective on your students. With the principal's permission and some outside funding, you could create your own after-school activity that matches your own talents and your students' interests.

Eat lunch with students
- You probably want to avoid eating lunch with students in their own environment, as sitting down with students at a cafeteria table conveys the feeling that you are their "friend" and may hinder your ability to build a positive yet authoritative relationship with students.

Of all the wonderful advice I received from veteran teachers, I know this much is true: "Students don't care how much you know until they know how much you care." Attend their basketball and volleyball games, bring flowers to theatrical performances and choir concerns, participate (even as a visitor) in after-school clubs. Not only will you create a lasting bond with your students, but you will begin to develop a stronger sense of connection with your community as well.

Erin Mack Trapanese, RGV '04
Assistant Principal, West High School,
Denver Public Schools

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[20] McCombs, B. and Whisler, J. *The Learner-Centered Classroom and School.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1997.

Building a Sense of Community

- However, inviting students to eat lunch with you in your classroom as part of a club or special "lunch time jam session" allows you to really connect with students one-on-one. These interactions will often reveal student characteristics that cannot be revealed in a classroom of thirty students.
- You might develop a process where you meet with students on a regular basis and post a sign up list to schedule each student.

Send personal notes to students
- At the beginning of the school year, this can take the shape of a classroom welcoming letter and an expression of your vision for the upcoming year.
- Post-it notes allow you to easily write notes on a more daily basis. By writing the student's name on the top and the message on the reverse (the adhesive side) you can put notes on student desks without compromising confidentiality. In classrooms with the same students all day, individual mailboxes provide the perfect space to deposit personal notes.
- Throughout the year student notes can reinforce classroom successes, support students through personal struggles, or send best wishes through a birthday card or a welcome back card for a student that has been absent.
- Additionally, many new teachers find it personally beneficial to recognize the positive aspects of each student in personal letters or notes.

Allow students to contact you outside of school with school-related questions
- Many teachers have strong feelings about not allowing students and parents to contact them outside of school. However, most teachers who decide to provide their home or cell phone number (and ask that they not be called later than a certain time) report that this privilege is rarely abused and facilitates teacher-student and teacher-parent relationships.
- Even if you don't want to give students the opportunity to call you outside of school, you should call home periodically to speak to parents and ask to speak quickly to the student as well. That way you can encourage them to do their homework, address any questions, and tell them that you're looking forward to seeing them in school the next day.
- Several corps members report that they print out their contact information on card stock and then attach magnetic strips to the back. They give a magnet to each of their students' parents to put on their refrigerator.

Use a suggestion box
- As mentioned above, students feel respected and valued when they have input in classroom policies, curriculum, and culture; providing a suggestion box creates a space for student contribution. This strategy is most powerful when suggestions are discussed, perhaps in a classroom meeting, and changes that would produce a more effective classroom setting are made. For example, some teachers hold weekly class meetings to address suggestions and concerns.
- Note that there is a fine line between encouraging student feedback and undermining your authority by appearing uncertain about how your classroom should run. Discuss classroom improvements in a controlled, confident manner.

Celebrate birthdays
- Students of any age know that you are thinking about them beyond the classroom when you acknowledge or celebrate their birthdays – with songs, cards, or special privileges for the day.
- However, be sensitive to the fact that some cultures and religions do not celebrate birthdays.

Join in physical activities

- Students enjoy teacher participation in physical activities, such as playing basketball with students after school. Not only is it enjoyable for students to see their teacher in another context, but if you enjoy sports, it could be an opportunity for you to relax.
- If possible, work with other colleagues to develop friendly student–teacher athletic events, such as a teacher-student soccer game.

Join in school and community events

- Your school will hopefully have (or perhaps you will initiate) numerous events that will invite teacher participation and foster teacher-parent interaction, from back-to-school nights and PTA meetings to school service projects and fundraisers. These events give you the opportunity to further deepen your relationships with parents. Being able to share compliments about Angela's recent story project with her aunt at a bake sale or city hall meeting, and later mentioning that to Angela, will foster your relationship with both Angela and her family.
- In addition, you can find out about non-school events – sometimes connected to places of worship, community centers, or neighborhood associations – that draw a lot of your students; participating in these gatherings shows that you're making an active effort to get to know them outside of the school context.

Take short field trips on Saturday, Sunday, or school holidays

- Many corps members report success with taking small groups of students on short field trips on weekend days or school holidays. This might include taking four students to the zoo, a movie, or an athletic event as a reward for excellent behavior, impressive effort, or exemplary achievement. Often, parents are interested in coming along too. Of course, be sure to check with your school administration and obtain written permission from parents before even inviting students.

> *Your school is a community within an even greater community. Kids play sports, go to church, go shopping. I attend many games and concerts, family outings, and live near my school. Living in or close to your community is essential - I bump in to my kids and their parents at the grocery store. Living in and becoming involved in my community has led to some very strong bonds with my students.*
>
> **Christopher Ruszkowski, Miami '03**
> **Site Manager, The New Teacher Project**

Reach out, especially when it's difficult

- There are some children who go through school all day without having heard a positive thing said to or about them. It is your job to go out of your way to find encouraging things to say to everyone – especially to those students who do not tend to receive any positivity from others, or who rub *you* the wrong way. Even if you are simply complimenting the student's haircut, find a way to establish positive channels between the two of you and to show the child that you find him or her unique and special.

Building Strong Student-Student Relationships

When members of the class know each other well, they are far more likely to value and respect each other and to feel valued and respected. However, don't assume this will happen naturally just because students come from the same middle school or live in the same neighborhood. The following list provides strategies you might pursue to build strong relationships among your students.

Building a Sense of Community

Employ getting-to-know-you strategies
- On the secondary level, you can have students interview each other using set questions that you develop as a class. Then, have students present their partners to the rest of the group. The questions can serve a curricular function, as well: "share one way in which you use science in your everyday life," for example.
- These strategies are probably most effective at the beginning of the year, but it is also important to employ some of these strategies when a new student enters the classroom. While you certainly can't repeat the entire getting-to-know-you process utilized at the beginning of the year, consider assigning the new student a mature and welcoming "buddy" who will help introduce him or her to other students.

Utilize team-building activities
- The best team building activities that contribute to a culture of achievement are those that require students to work toward an academic goal of some sort. Rather than simply having students work together to untie their "human knot," you might have students work in small groups to build a clay boat that holds the greatest number of pennies with out sinking (as part of a unit on buoyancy and other forces). The **Classroom Management & Culture Toolkit** contains a list of team building and other beginning-of-year activities (pp. 45-46); this Toolkit is found online at the Resource Exchange on TFANet. ✕

Create a safe, respectful place for ongoing conversation and communication
- Some teachers set one or more weekly or even daily meeting times to share news, recognize individuals who have exemplified the expectations of the learning community, and check in on how members of the classroom are feeling. This strategy may be more of a regular occurrence in an elementary classroom since these students spend the whole day with one another.
- It is very important to set rules for class meetings to ensure the environment is, in fact, safe and respectful (e.g., only one person talks at a time, everyone else listens, confidentiality is expected, no put-downs of self or others are allowed). For specific strategies to utilize in these "class" or "community" meetings, check out the **Classroom Management & Culture Toolkit** (pp. 47-52: "Implementing Community Meetings"). ✕

> *On the first day of school I began sending home "community bags" with two students each night. They could fill the bag with two or three things that were important to them, bring them back to school, and share them with the class. The community bags did a lot to teach us about each other. Dymond brought in pictures from her parent's wedding that summer, Marcus brought in a toy truck that is special because his dad gave it to him, and Octavia (having very little to bring) brought in some autumn leaves that had fallen and talked about how she likes to play with her brothers and sisters in the leaves.*
>
> **Annie Lewis O'Donnell, Baltimore '01**
> **Vice President, Program Design**
> **Teach For America**

III. Creating a Community That Values All Students

Fostering a sense of community among students depends on creating a space in which all students feel valued and no students feel marginalized because of their personal identity. As we all know from personal experience, social acceptance is a basic human need, and during childhood and adolescence, the need for peer approval is particularly strong. Students can be marginalized for a variety of reasons, perhaps because their race or ethnicity is different from others, because of weak social or academic skills, because of physical appearance, because of perceived or real sexual orientation, or because of family background. It will be important for you to take proactive steps to build a classroom environment based on tolerance and respect. Accomplishing this end requires that you:

- Deconstruct your own personal biases;
- Engage and involve all students;
- Teach tolerance; and
- Respond effectively to insensitivity.

Deconstructing Your Personal Biases

Perhaps the first step in building a community that values diversity is to recognize and challenge your own prejudices. Regardless of your cultural, ethnic, religious, gender, sexual orientation or racial identity, you cannot walk into a classroom free of stereotypes and assumptions. Many corps members have been shocked to discover racism, classism, sexism, and other prejudices they thought they had deconstructed before, but which flared up in the heat and challenge of teaching. Working through a prejudice as a university student is different from confronting it as a teacher. Left un-checked, these stereotypes can impact the expectations you hold for your students and the way you communicate with them. It will be essential for you to constantly reflect on your assumptions about your students and their families, recognize when your perceptions may be based on prejudice, and challenge these prejudices in order to break them down.

Also, reflect on your biases about certain "kinds" of students. When you were in school, did "the thug" make you angry and perhaps a little scared? Did "the know-it-all" annoy you? Did "the star athlete" make you green with envy? You may feel your own teenage reactions bubble up within you when you see these qualities in your own students. As the adult, the personal demeanors of your students must not influence the way you treat them; remember that you are caring for fragile children and adolescents.

Here is one practical strategy for reflecting on your feelings toward each student: read through each name in your roll book and consider what first comes to mind and how you act toward him or her. Do you think of Devin as the "disruptive one"? Do you treat her that way? Do you groan in annoyance when you think of Juanita? Do you ignore insensitive comments made to her? Do you think of David as the "LD" student who requires all the accommodations? Do you send him that message when you dismiss him to the resource room? Acknowledge your thoughts honestly, admit any inappropriate behavior, and work to establish a mental fresh slate with that student. Verbalizing and working through your biases with a fellow corps member or someone on your regional staff is helpful.

> *As a women's studies major, I thought I would be acutely aware of the needs of all my female students. However, during a post-observation with my program director, I began to realize that I was giving the boys in my class much more attention—their rowdiness made me more apt to discipline and pay attention to them. Once my PD pointed out this trend, I immediately took steps to change. I began walking around with a spreadsheet of all of my students' names and noting each time I called on them or gave them attention. This really helped me spread my awareness and focus on all of my students, regardless if they were rambunctious or shy. I noticed a major change in my female students as well, as now I was chatting with them more and giving them the attention they deserved.*
>
> **Cheryl Bratt, Greater New Orleans '01**
> **Judicial Law Clerk, Eastern District of Pennsylvania**

Elizabeth Cohen, a former Stanford University Professor of Education and Sociology, argues that all students have a kind of *status* in their class that is a reflection of the combined teacher and student expectations for that student. She argues and illustrates through her research that even the best-intentioned teachers can thwart the low-status students with their biases. The following anecdote serves as an example.

Maria was the forgotten student in my class. Quiet and well-behaved, she was a consummate survivor who slipped though all the cracks. It took me three months to discover she could not read, and another two to have her tested and sent to special education classes for reading. When asked to identify low-status students in my class, I had little difficulty coming up with Maria – once I remembered she was there.

I remember that year well. A Stanford doctoral student was filming my students in order to help me recognize and treat status problems. I was committed to this course of action. An idealistic bilingual teacher, working in a class characterized by linguistic and academic diversity, I wanted <u>all</u> my students to learn.

My class was completing a series of cooperative science activities centered around the theme of light. Maria's group was constructing a color wheel, a device made with a circle of heavy paper or cardboard and a rubber band. Students paint different color wedges on the circular paper, insert a rubber band through a small hole in the center of their 'wheel' and tightly twist the rubber band. Theoretically, when they pull on opposite ends of the rubber band, the color wheel spins. The purpose of the activity, of course, is for students to observe what happens to the different colors as the wheel spins.

I remember feeling harassed that day. The camera's eye followed me relentlessly as I moved about the class. Two of my seven groups were struggling, one with a cooperation problem, the other clearly confused by the directions for their task. Maria's group looked like the least of my problems. Most of the students had made their color wheels and were trying them out. With a sigh of relief I took a moment to ask the group what new colors they had expected to create. While the other students eagerly called out their predictions, Maria was silent. She was the only student still working on her color wheel. I suggested that the group test their predictions, observed a few more moments, and moved to the next group.

That afternoon I watched the tape of Maria's group. At first I didn't see it. Then it became too obvious. No one in the group could make their color wheel spin. The paper I had given them for the project was too thin and light. Rather than spinning, the color wheels flopped uselessly side to side. I watched myself on the tape, oblivious to the problem, asking questions and reminding students to test their predictions with their color wheels. Only when prompted to look more closely did I notice Maria, directly in front of me, carefully pasting circles of paper, one on top of another, to her color wheel. When she was satisfied with the thickness of the wheel, she twisted her rubber band tightly and sent her color wheel spinning. I watched myself look through her and walk away. [21]

Cohen attributes this tendency to look "through" certain students to a common bias that intelligence is a one-dimensional trait, rather than a multifaceted phenomenon that reveals itself in different ways and at different times in different students. Remember, with all of your students, your expectations play a large role in their actual achievement, and it is important that you both hold high expectations for, and watch for examples of, academic mastery from *all* students.

Beyond engaging in personal reflection, teachers often find it valuable to participate in workshops and seminars aimed at helping them become more sensitive to issues of diversity. Moreover, perhaps the

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[21] Cohen, Elizabeth G., Diane Kepner and Patricia Swanson. "Dismantling Status Hierarchies in Heterogeneous Classrooms." *New Educational Communities: Schools and Classrooms Where All Children Can Be Smart.* Ed. Jeannie Oakes. National Society for the Study of Education Handbook, Vol. 94. June, 1993.

most helpful strategy is to get to know your students and their families, which will help ensure that you are treating your students as the individuals they are rather than on the basis of any group perceptions.

Engaging, Involving, and Valuing All Students
As obvious as this may sound, it is difficult in practice to ensure that all of your students, regardless of individual differences, feel equally valued as members of the community. Part of the challenge will lie in engaging those students who routinely appear to be left out in the cafeteria, on the playground, or in other social settings. Another part of the challenge, as already mentioned, will be submitting yourself to the difficult self-reflection that might uncover your own prejudices and preferences so that you can work to mitigate those (sometimes subconscious) biases.

One practical way to actually measure your engagement of all students during class time is to track the students who participate. Some teachers carry a clipboard with students' names on it and put a check by the student's name as he or she shares a response or gets to participate in a demonstration. A quick scan of the list lets you see who should participate next or to whom you might direct your next question.

> *It became apparent that most teacher supply stores did not sell pictures or posters with kids who looked like my students. So we postered the walls with pictures of them doing their work, with their parents, at their sports events. I also put books with characters that resembled them all around the room. It was more original and a more fun room to be in.*
>
> **Cate Reed, DC '00**
> **Project Manager (via Broad Residency),**
> **Pittsburgh Public Schools**

You will also want to ensure that your classroom does not perpetuate gender stereotypes. Do your students think that only girls should use the measuring cups at the kitchen station? Do your students think only boys should help carry your 150 textbooks up from the storage room? Look for opportunities to challenge their views, perhaps, for example, by inviting a male nurse and a female police officer to come and speak to the class if you're doing a thematic unit on careers.

Beyond ensuring that you are treating your students consistently and engaging them at the same levels, you will want to choose your language consciously to ensure that you are not inadvertently alienating some of your students. For example, you probably want to use the term "family" rather than "parents," as some students will live with extended family or other caretakers rather than their biological parents. You will also want to use language that does not exclude gay and lesbian relationships (for example, "spouse" or "partner" rather than "wife" or "husband," "parent" rather than "mother" or "father").

It is likely, too, that some of your students themselves are gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgendered, or at least attempting to understand their sexual identity. Homosexual students are more likely than heterosexual students to report missing school due to fear, being threatened by other students, and having their property damaged at school.[22] Because of their fear of being harassed or hurt, gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgendered students are less likely to ask for help of teachers or peers. An article in the 2001 Journal of Public Health states that adolescents in gay and lesbian relationships or those with same-sex attractions are twice as likely as their heterosexual counterparts to commit suicide.[23] Studies of gay teens have shown that the overwhelming rejection and isolation they feel put them at higher risk for academic failure. It is your responsibility to create a safe environment for all students, including

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[22] Garofalo, R., et al. "The association between health risk behaviors and sexual orientation among a school-based sample of adolescents." *Pediatrics*, 101(5), 895-902.
[23] Russel, S.T. and Joyner, K. (2001). "Adolescent Sexual Orientation and Suicide Risk: Evidence from a National Study." *American Journal of Public Health*, 91, 1276-1281.

those who identify as homosexual. Resources on "GLBTQ Issues in Education" are in the **Classroom Management & Culture Toolkit** (p. 53), found online at the Resource Exchange on TFANet. ⚒

Teaching Tolerance
Even in ethnically homogenous classrooms, all classrooms will be heterogeneous in terms of students' skills and abilities. Each of your students will be at a different point in the continuum of learning, and you will need to set a tone of acceptance for those differences. Also, whether or not you teach in a community where most students are the same race or ethnicity, it is common for students to have misconceptions about people different from them. Successful teachers proactively teach the social and interpersonal skills that allow students to appreciate diversity – whether that diversity exists in the greater community or in the classroom itself. To accomplish this, you'll need to help children recognize instances of prejudice, discrimination, and stereotyping and determine appropriate responses to such attitudes and behaviors – and make sure you're modeling appropriate behaviors yourself. To help your students explore appropriate behaviors and responses to differences, consider using some of the "Take a Stand Role Plays" included in the online **Classroom Management & Culture Toolkit** (p. 54). ⚒   You also might organize a pen-pal exchange with children of a different background – and raise the funds for a trip to meet them.

Review your curricular material for opportunities to teach tolerance. For example, reading and discussing books can be an excellent way to prompt classroom discussions about the diversity of cultures, traditions, and lifestyles in our society. Books also help children to develop empathy by helping them to understand the points of view of other people. The Toolkit in your *Literacy* text contains a list of **Multicultural Books** that students might read to expand their understanding of diversity (note – this Toolkit can be found online at the Resource Exchange on TFANet). ⚒

> *Social skills must be taught like anything else. We cannot assume that a student comes to school understanding how to resolve conflict, avoid fighting, or be respectful to other students. We must lead discussions about these skills and directly teach them to students, providing modeling and opportunities for students to practice.*
>
> **Melissa Storm, South Louisiana '94**
> **Senior Research Analyst,**
> **American Institutes for Research**

The book *Starting Small: Teaching Tolerance in Preschool and the Early Grades* relates how one early elementary teacher developed a unit on black-and-white art to help students break down negative associations with these colors. "Whether they grasp the particular meanings or not, children hear the negative messages in terms like *black eye*, *blackmail* and *black hole*, in contrast with the positive associations of *white knight*, *white collar* and *snow white*."[24] After decorating her classroom with black-and-white drawings and paintings from different cultures, the teacher had the students create their own black-and-white designs. "In the process, they learn that those contrasting colors are equally expressive and especially vibrant when used side by side."[25]

History lessons also provide rich opportunities to help students learn to recognize the impact of a lack of tolerance in contemporary society. By studying the various manifestations of hate throughout our nation's history, regardless of the specific identity or characteristics of the victims or perpetrators, you will be able to help your students understand elements common to all forms of intolerance and persecution. For example, you might have students research historical incidents of bigotry against particular groups and present their reports to the class. Students can discuss what these reports show about why some people do not accept individuals who are different than themselves, and what individuals, groups, and countries have

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[24] Teaching Tolerance. *Starting Small: Teaching Tolerance in Preschool and the Early Grades*. Southern Poverty Law Center, 1997, p. 92.
[25] Ibid.

done to respond to acts of intolerance. You also might have students study legal cases dealing with discrimination to help students see that a person can disagree with something or feel that it violates your religion, and still respect it as a choice and advocate for the rights of those who are different.

Beyond seeking curricular opportunities to reinforce the importance of tolerance, you can use current events to bring these lessons to your class. Newspaper and magazine articles, movies, and television shows can all provide opportunities for classroom discussion. If, sadly, a hate crime were to occur in your community, you should look for ways to denounce the crime and discuss the event with your students. Similarly, hate incidents that are widely reported in regional or national media call for a response at school. Discussions give students a chance to get the facts and consider ways they can respond. To see how one corps member addressed September 11th and the ensuing stereotypes in his classroom, read "Building Peace" in the **Classroom Management & Culture Toolkit** (pp. 55-56) found online at the Resource Exchange on TFANet. �֍

Responding Effectively to Insensitivity
Your students may mock each other's appearance, manners or style, or they may make negative comments that relate to an aspect of a student's actual or perceived identity. It can be difficult to know how to handle your students' insensitive comments. On the one hand, it is important to denounce insensitivity immediately, each time you hear it, so that students learn that such hurtful behavior is unacceptable and so that they know the classroom environment is safe for them. Yet at the same time, it is important to address insensitivity without alienating the offending student; students will be more likely to learn to be sensitive if they themselves are treated sensitively. This is a difficult balance to achieve and will require a great deal of critical thought before even entering the classroom. With that in mind, here are some general guidelines:

> *I realized I had a classroom issue with insensitivity when Pablo stood up and called Terani the "N" word. I was so outraged I couldn't speak for a moment. I asked him to leave the room so I could calm Terani, as well as the class and myself, down. I immediately called a community meeting, and we discussed what happened. As a group we debriefed and came up with strategies to keep this from happening again. My students were very sensitive to the issue and decided that we didn't need name-calling to pull us down.*
>
> **Kathleen McManus, Phoenix '02**
> **4th Grade Teacher,**
> **Orange County Public Schools**

Do not allow insensitive comments to go unnoticed. When you hear an insensitive comment, make a strong, positive statement to the full class about the importance of respecting others. It is important to denounce insensitivity whether the speaker is joking or serious so that students learn that such speech or action is always unacceptable. For example, if you hear unacceptable language, you might say, "That word is never acceptable in this classroom. That is on our list of off-limit words and anyone who uses it must research the history of the word and explain to the class why it should never be uttered in this classroom community." Your response to insensitive comments will depend on the setting in which it occurs and the time you have available to respond. For example, you will have less time to respond to an insensitive comment made by a student in the hallway as you walked by on your way to class ("That was a putdown and such language is not used at Riverside Middle School") than if you heard the same comment while tutoring a few students after school ("That was a putdown…you may not have meant to be hurtful, but here's how your comment hurt…Why did you say that?"). However, in either situation you should respond.

Recognize the teachable moment in moments of insensitivity. When a student uses pejorative words or hate speech, you'll want to determine whether the entire class would benefit from a discussion of the words' offensiveness. If a particular type of disrespectful language occurs frequently, it makes sense to address this with the entire class. If you do address the entire class, work to create a situation that is more educational than confrontational.

Building a Sense of Community

Mobilize student support for eliminating insensitive remarks in the classroom. Group or individual discussions about the effects of insensitive comments – how words can indeed lead to violence – can motivate students to discourage such behavior and provide support for victimized students. Your response to insensitivity will model a proper response among the students. Students can often recognize instances of injustice and may even develop a sense of genuine outrage that carries far beyond the lesson you present.

Implement consequences for the offending student according to the classroom or school policies. When a student participates in an insensitive or hateful action, there must be a consequence. Depending on the severity of the situation, you can utilize a wide range of non-disciplinary corrective actions to respond to such incidents, including counseling, parent conferences, suggested community service, awareness training, or completion of a research paper on an issue related to intolerance, as well as disciplinary actions.

IV. Helping Students Resolve Conflicts

While you are working to develop a culture based on respect for others and in which students feel a sense of community and inter-dependence, it is important to realize that some conflict is inevitable. Conflict happens in even the most collaborative environments and should be treated as an opportunity to learn about each other and deepen relationships. It will be critical to teach students how to manage conflict so that they can realize these positive effects while at the same time ensuring that the conflicts don't escalate into negative situations.

Some schools and communities have adopted formal conflict resolution education programs that encourage students to express their points of view, voice their interests, and find mutually acceptable solutions. These programs might involve peer mediation, in which students are trained to serve as mediators; or a process curriculum, in which whole lessons or courses are devoted to problem-solving skills.

Whether or not your school has a formal program, you can bring the principles of conflict resolution into your classroom. It may be a good idea to gain formal training in conflict resolution before trying to implement conflict resolution in your classroom. Still, even if you do not have this opportunity, you can help your students manage conflict constructively by keeping in mind the following principles:

> When conflicts arise in class, I ask the whole class, "How are we going to solve this?" Sometimes the whole class has to be involved, and we'll sit in a circle and discuss the problem. Other times the students involved in the conflict go to the back carpet and talk it out. My students have become so good at this that I usually just have to go check in with them to see how they've resolved it. The key is getting the kids to buy into the shared vision of what they want our class to be, and then to really think about what it takes to make that vision a reality. We have talked so much about wanting a classroom in which they have friends, people are kind to them, classmates help each other, etc., that they really want it. Having this shared vision helps us to want to work out conflicts instead of getting stuck on them.
>
> **Annie Lewis O'Donnell, Baltimore '01**
> **Vice President, Program Design**
> **Teach For America**

Students who explain their actions to each other are more likely to create solutions. Whenever possible, you should encourage students who experience conflict to step back and describe what happened and how it makes them feel using "I" statements. Most teachers find it effective to have students first record their thoughts in writing. After having time to calm down and reflect, students can then interact and work towards a solution. The **Classroom Management & Culture Toolkit** contains a "Sample Lesson for Teaching Students to Use "I" Statements" (pp. 57-58); this Toolkit can be found online at the Resource Exchange on TFANet. ✄

For conflict resolution to work, students will need to listen actively. Students on each side of the conflict need to feel that they are heard and understood. Again, this type of active listening is something that should be taught and modeled.

Encourage students to develop a set of options for resolving the conflict, and to choose the solution that is mutually beneficial. If you encourage creative problem-solving, students will begin to see that there are mutually beneficial ways to solve problems that will allow them to work toward the classroom community they desire. For a list of general "Teaching Peace and Teaching Tolerance Resources," see the online **Classroom Management & Culture Toolkit** (p. 59). ✖

> **Building a Culture of Achievement**
> Zero Tolerance for Intolerance
>
> Katherine Smith (Delta '02) knew that all students in her classroom needed to support one another before they could strive toward academic success together. In an incident she relates below, Katherine made sure she didn't just reprimand her students' unkind remarks; she took simple but important steps to ensure it wouldn't happen again.
>
> *After the beginning of the year I was told that I would have an autistic student in my room for certain subjects. As much as I tried to create a culture of respect in my classroom, my students did make fun of this student by mimicking his behavior and laughing at times. I first began to counteract this activity by addressing it with my class when he was out of the room, and then by bringing in professionals who knew more about autism and could educate my students on his disability. Once my students knew more about why he acted a certain way, they no longer resorted to taunting him because their prejudices were broken down. It also showed them that I was intent that they be respectful to a diverse group of people besides each other.*

Conclusion and Key Concepts

- Building **a sense of community in your classroom is a key strategy for reaching your academic goals** for your students. Your students will not attempt to master challenging academic content, share their work in front of their peers, or resolve conflicts in order to remain focused on learning if your students do not feel safe, respected, and valued by you and their peers. As the leader of your classroom, it is your responsibility to create an environment where students' needs for safety and acceptance are met.

- Teachers who achieve this level of community in their classroom utilize a number of techniques, especially preserving the dignity of students by asserting their authority with a **respectful tone.**

- It is also fundamentally important to **actively build relationships** between you and your students and among your students. To do so, you might consider attending students' activities outside of class, having students eat lunch with you, allowing students to contact you outside of school with school-related questions, sending personal notes, joining in physical activities, joining in school and community events, utilizing a suggestion box, taking short field trips on the weekend or school holidays, and celebrating birthdays.

Building a Sense of Community

- It takes careful planning (and self-reflection that sometimes leads to uncomfortable revelations) to **create a community that values all students.** Teachers must deconstruct their own personal biases, as well as respond thoughtfully to incidents of insensitivity or prejudice in the classroom. Many teachers choose to explicitly teach the notion of tolerance and the skills of conflict resolution.

Valuing Hard Work, Team Effort, and Academic Achievement

Chapter Six

I.   Begin with a Shared Academic Vision
II. Select Your Messages
III. Reinforce Your Messages Over Time

Introduction

Recall the vignettes from the introduction to this text:

"…if the field trip lasts all day, we're going to miss all our learning time…can we at least bring flashcards on the bus?"

Demanding 100 percent mastery communicated the value of persistence and the primacy of our academic skills. Best of all, with all of the different ways to earn status at school, I was thrilled it was cool to be an expert.

Some students who had passed the quiz already would come to the GOAL sessions in order to help their peers…It was pretty powerful. Students would correct each other's mistakes and gently encourage their peers to stay positive when frustration would set in.

This chapter addresses the final piece necessary to create a culture of achievement in your classroom, the ultimate "end" of classroom management as discussed throughout this text. Effective teachers like those highlighted in the introductory vignettes take "classroom management" a step beyond establishing rules, consequences, and procedures. They consider classroom management to be much more than responding to misbehavior. And they go beyond meeting students' needs for acceptance and group membership by creating a respectful and supportive classroom community. Indeed, it is entirely possible to create an environment in which students behave and feel respected and valued by others – and yet aren't especially motivated to work hard or achieve significant academic goals.

Teachers who effectively motivate their students to work hard and to achieve at high levels realize that within the four walls of their classroom they get to determine what they and their students will value. They are purposeful about the ideals they promote to their students, and they determine ways to package those ideals in ways students will understand. They also recognize that they have the opportunity to set up structures in their classroom that reinforce what they value.

Teachers who lead their students to significant academic gains do so by convincing students – and reinforcing whenever possible – the following three values:

- Academic achievement is highly valuable
- Hard work leads to academic achievement
- Academic achievement requires a team effort

This chapter aims to help you think systematically about how to relentlessly value academic achievement, hard work, and team effort with your students. First, we will examine the ways in which you can develop an ambitious academic vision for your students to get them inspired to achieve at high levels. Then, we

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will explore how to select the explicit messages and values that will help students believe that they can attain your shared goals. Finally, we will outline concrete steps to ensure you are "walking the walk" and that your classroom reinforces your values. Those steps are to model your messages in your interaction with students, to develop class "policies" that reflect what you value, to establish motivating academic destinations, and to implement systems that reward achievement or progress toward your values.

I. Begin with a Shared Academic Vision

In order to establish a culture of achievement in your classroom, your students must yearn for more than simply passing your class. They must develop a desire to gain enough knowledge and skills to catapult them onto a new track of academic possibility and opportunity. Students need to view academic achievement as valuable and with inherent purpose. You can foster this attitude by articulating a clear, ambitious goal toward which your students will work during the year.

The *Teaching As Leadership* book outlines how you can develop a specific Big Goal in your classroom, based on the grade level and subject area you teach. Each child in a second-grade classroom could rally around the goal of gaining two grade levels of growth in reading, which would give students access to whole new shelves in the library. Each student in an A.P. Calculus classroom could rally around scoring a 3 or higher on the Advanced Placement examination, which would open both college's and employers' doors. By communicating this goal to your class and consistently conveying how your daily work is making headway toward that vision, you can foster a sense of purpose, excitement, hope, and self-determination among your students.

The seventh graders in Sara Wernick's (Bay Area '02) writing class are working toward the Big Goal of developing a high-school level, five-paragraph response to literature that uses both direct and paraphrased evidence from the text. Sara posted a ladder on one of her bulletin boards, placing an objective leading to this goal on each rung; once students master how to use evidence effectively, they can learn how to cite sources, for example. Throughout the year, Sara refers to the class's ladder as both an explanation of her daily instruction and a rallying cry for her roomful of scholars:

> When I introduce each unit, or if we hit a confusing place in the unit, I can point to the ladder and explain how what we're doing is relevant to reaching our Big Goal. The students are excited about the fact that we're doing high school level work, and they're even pushing themselves (and me!) to reach our Big Goal by April rather than June. Although the "ultimate result" of the goal is yet to be seen, I know that having added a Big Goal to my classroom this year has instilled a sense of urgency and necessity in everything we do. Rather than the students feeling as if their lessons are coming out of left field, working towards our Big Goal has meant a sort of continuity embedded into our curriculum that simply demands on-task behavior and a desire to achieve.

Develop Motivating Academic Destinations
In addition to the Big Goal that serves to encapsulate all of the work that your students accomplish during the year, you may find it effective to develop shorter-term "motivating academic destinations," or authentic tasks, as discussed in the *Instructional Planning & Delivery* text. Two essential characteristics of authentic tasks are that:

1. The end result is something that excites students, and
2. Students must utilize the academic skills and information they have gained throughout the unit, or the year, to produce the end result.

By establishing a motivating academic goal in your classroom, you are communicating a very important message about high expectations; you are saying that you believe in your students so much that an ambitious destination is worth pursuing. Danielle Neves (Los Angeles '99) shares how she bundles the knowledge and skills from her middle school social studies and language arts class into a motivating academic destination:

> I always try to provide a culminating unit activity in which students can use the skills and information they've learned. For example, the first unit we do is called "Why Study History?" I tell students that they are the superintendent of schools, and that their social studies teachers are arguing over the curriculum – some think teaching history should be stopped, others think it must continue, and other can't decide. As the superintendent, they must decide and present their argument at a press conference. We then research and discuss arguments for and against studying history. They write their speech in the form of a 5-paragraph essay because that is what they are learning in English. They work in groups to rate each speech against a rubric and the most persuasive from each group is read before the class. Everyone dresses up for the "press conference" and we videotape the speeches.

One of the most difficult hurdles to jump as a teacher is convincing your students that the hard work they put into these authentic tasks actually matters – that the problems they solve, the writing they draft, or the issues they research have a purpose beyond your grade book and the abstract "Future" to which you keep referring. "Who cares if it's spelled correctly?" a child may say. "It's only *you* reading it."

But quicker than you can say, "gee, thanks for the ego-boost," you can create authentic tasks that open students' work up to a broader audience. This goes beyond the traditional art project on the bulletin board and into the realm of writing letters to city council members, companies, or school officials; making price comparison guides for families; developing a lesson to teach younger students; or producing a play or video that illustrates key concepts from recent lessons. Students are much more likely to invest time and care into their writing, for example, when they know that someone else is going to view it. If you can develop ways for your students to "go public" with their assignments, you will find them more conscious of their presentation – and more apt to see the connections between what they do inside school walls and beyond.

I published books with my students on the history of our town during my first year and on hate crimes after September 11 during my second. Those projects required my students to learn all sorts of researching and writing skills, and my students were very motivated because they knew others were going to be reading and using their work!

Andrew Mandel, Rio Grande Valley '00
Vice President, Interactive Learning & Engagement
Teach For America

One way to go public is to pursue a "service learning" project, in which you link your academic objectives to an initiative that meets a need of the community – such as establishing a garden that helps students see botany at work, creating a soup kitchen that requires students to maintain inventory, interviewing senior citizens to capture the unsung voices of the Great Depression, teaching civics to immigrants preparing for citizenship exams, or drafting and mailing brochures that highlight a community problem. Each of these projects requires academic objectives to complete – and allows students to see themselves making a difference with the knowledge and skills they've acquired.

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II.   Select Your Messages

Once you have established and outlined a clear and ambitious vision for your class, you need to confront the fact that your students come to you with their own beliefs about learning and their ability or inability to succeed.   As explained in the *Teaching As Leadership* text, the self-fulfilling prophecy of high expectations, the two contrasting theories of intelligence, the influence of personal biases and societal stereotypes, and the effects of poverty have a significant impact on student motivation. In some cases, students have internalized low expectations that society has had for them. They have become convinced that intelligence and academic success are traits that one either has or doesn't – and that they don't. Some of the students you will teach may have adopted this theory of "fixed intelligence" and therefore don't believe that intelligence and academic success are accessible to them through hard work.

To counter these beliefs, you must celebrate and value effort, growth, collaboration, and other behaviors that support your goals of effecting significant gains in student achievement and of building a culture of achievement in your classroom. To do this you must first package what you value in language that your students will understand and be able to internalize – essentially manifesting those values in clear, comprehensible "messages."

In selecting your messages, identify the fundamental ideas you believe will help your students succeed in your class and ultimately in school and in life. While it is important to ensure that the messages you develop are appropriate for your particular group of students, this text and others have shown us the general importance of the following ideas that might serve as a useful starting point:

Value #1: Academic Achievement Is Highly Valuable.
- In order to help students realize the value in academic achievement, you might communicate that **Academic Achievement = Opportunity.**
- At KIPP Academies, students believe that academic achievement now will result in improved educational opportunities later, as they **Climb the Mountain to College in 200X.**

Value #2: Hard Work Leads to Academic Achievement.
- The *Teaching As Leadership* text explains why the most successful students are those who recognize that academic success does not come easily. True achievement requires hard work. Consequently, you might want to promote the message **Effort Breeds Success.**
- Another subset of the "hard work" message is the notion that **Mistakes are Learning Opportunities.** It is essential that students interpret errors not as a sign of personal weakness but rather as an inevitable part of reaching their goals and an opportunity to deepen their understanding.
- It is important that your students understand that they have the ability to succeed. You might consider conveying some form of the idea **You Have the Ability to Excel**, which KIPP Academies do with the message **ALL of us WILL Learn.**

Value #3: Academic Achievement Requires Team Effort.
- Effective teachers testify to the power of developing a sense of inter-dependence among students and of communicating the idea that **We Succeed Together.**
- At KIPP Academies, every student has internalized the notion that **Team Beats Individual.** As a result, students are inclined to monitor, push, protect, and collaborate with their peers. Jaime Escalante used similar messages to make his students understand that each *individual's* goal is to have the *whole class* succeed.
- Several corps members have cited the success of the message **Together Everyone Achieves More** (which has the very convenient acronym, TEAM).

Valuable, too, are the suggestions of Jon Saphier, author of *The Skillful Teacher*. He recommends that three short messages pervade every teacher's classroom, regardless of grade level. They are: "This is important! You can do it! I won't give up on you!"[26]

In order to create a classroom culture in which students truly *want* and are *driven* to achieve, messages such as these will help you break through what many students currently believe about themselves and their potential. These messages will help to communicate your high expectations, instill the theory of malleable intelligence, and convince students that hard work will, in fact, lead to success and greater opportunities.

But even if you know you want to instill the mantra "effort breeds success" in your students, how do you actually convince Theodore that if he worked harder, he would be able to master the addition of fractions with unlike denominators? How do you get students to reply, "From now on I'll remember the difference between 'there' and 'their'!" How do you get Francisco and Rosalyn – two students that resist working in cooperative groups – to realize that together they *will* achieve more? Your students won't change their beliefs and celebrate and value what you do if you merely share your messages with your students. Rather, you will need to think of yourself as a marketer.

III. Reinforce Your Messages Over Time

In this section, we turn to several strategies for ensuring your classroom reflects the messages you are trying to send. Those strategies are to:

- Model your messages in your behavior around and interaction with students
- Market your messages
- Develop class "policies" that reflect what you value
- Implement systems that reward achievement or progress toward your values

Model Your Messages
If you want students to believe that hard work leads to success, you need to model hard work yourself. That might mean making yourself available before school and for after school study sessions, or by using every second of class time productively (by refraining from "filling time" with games of Tic Tac Toe or Seven-Up, for example). Students need to see you working hard and feel your sense of urgency in your interactions with them.

For students to believe that mistakes are an opportunity for growth, you need to show that *you* believe that as well. Avoid simply telling a student that his answer is wrong, or even quickly giving him or her the correct answer. Instead you might ask, "What led you to that answer?" or "How do you know that is a good answer?" Use the mistake to explore the student's thinking and eliminate the source of the confusion. If you make a mistake when grading a test, writing on the board, or responding to a question, admit it and model how you plan to avoid that same mistake in the future. In response to her own spelling mistake (spinal *chord*), Margaret Cate (DC '98) thanked the student who noted her error and later posted the piece of paper on which she wrote the proper spelling twenty-five times. She explained to her students that looking at and writing the word multiple times helped her internalize the proper spelling for the future. In sum, you need to practice what you preach.

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[26] Saphier, Jon and Robert Gower. *The Skillful Teacher: Buildling Your Teaching Skills.* Acton, MA: Research For Better Teaching, 1997.

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Market Your Messages

Marketers spend their time thinking of ways to get their audience to internalize the desired message and act accordingly. They think of clever slogans and visual images, plan events and rituals, develop promotional contests, create symbols or mascots to give personality to their messages, and so on. You're the chief marketer in your classroom, and you'll want to think of every creative way possible to reinforce what you value and want to celebrate with your students.

The following strategies, while no means comprehensive, give some starting ideas. You will need to think about what makes the most sense given your content, grade-level and community.

Establish a Class Name, Theme, or Motto

Class names, such as "The A+ Class" (which reinforces the value of achievement) or "The Helping Hands Classroom" (which emphasizes collaboration and teamwork) allow you to shape your class identity as a whole. As a way to communicate that your students have the potential to go to college while also encouraging hard work, you might name your room "The College Prep Class." You might invest students (especially very young students) in a class name by allowing them to brainstorm and vote on a name, even if their choice doesn't convey a specific identity, such as "The Super Sonics." You can later guide students to delineate the characteristics that are true of a "Super Sonic," such as perseverance, a positive attitude, and respect for others. Danielle Neves (Los Angeles '99) thought her middle school students would recoil at a classroom name but established "Excellence" as her classroom theme. At the beginning of the year, she and her students talk about what excellence is and looks like in the classroom – considering everything from interaction between students to the quality of finished assignments. They write down what excellence will mean in their class throughout the year, and constantly refer to their "Excellence is..." poster at the front of the room. Class mottos, such as "There are no shortcuts" can be written on every assignment, test or quiz. Brent Maddin (South Louisiana '99) has his high school students write "No Excuses" as part of their heading on every paper.

> *I decided to call my students "scholars" because the word embodies what I want my students to be. I call them scholars all the time. When a student turns in an excellent piece of work, I say, "Now this is work from a scholar." When a student misbehaves, I say, "Remember, you're a scholar. Scholars interact respectfully with their peers." I decided what I was going to value and celebrate in my room, and I constantly use the term "scholar" to reinforce that.*
>
> **Preston Smith, Bay Area '01**
> **CAO, Rocketship Education**

Implement Class Chants

Although most common at the elementary level, class chants are another effective way to market your messages. Preston Smith (Bay Area '01) reinforces the message that mistakes are learning opportunities by teaching his first grade students the following class chant, "_____ made a mistake, but that's ok, because as long as he learns from it, we say hurray!" Sara Cotner (South Louisiana '00) uses a teacher-student call and response. Teacher: *A+ Attitude*. Students: *Work Hard. Get Smart*. Sara also has her students recite the A+ Class Pledge every morning in unison. That class pledge reads as follows: *I pledge allegiance to the A+ Class at J.A. Hernandez. I will do my best at all times. I am here to learn and get smart. I will make myself, my family, and my teacher proud. I will always be respectful, responsible, and ready to learn for my sake and for the sake of those around me.* Rachel Schankula (Delta '98) now the Vice President of Program Design at Teach For America, had her students recite the following class creed:

> I believe in myself and my ability to do my best.
> I am intelligent. I am capable of greatness.
> I can learn. I will learn. I must learn.

Today, I will listen. I will speak. I will see.
I will think. I will feel. I will reason.
I will read, and I will write.
I will do all these things with one purpose in mind: to do my best.
I am too smart to waste today.

Create Visual Displays

To communicate the importance of respect and collaboration with others, you might create an Acts of Kindness Wall or a T.E.A.M. (Together Everyone Achieves More) display where you post supportive things you've seen your students doing or assignments where students have collaborated to produce a high quality product. To communicate that success is achieved through hard work, an elementary teacher might create a big red train engine on one of his walls where he hangs up pieces of work that represent tremendous effort and accomplishment under the title "The Engine That Could." You might hang banners that present your messages in catchy slogans such as "There Are No Shortcuts," "Team Beats Individual," or "Work Hard. Be Nice." (All three of these are slogans utilized in the KIPP Academies.) You may recall that Jaime Escalante paced a large sign in his classroom that read "DETERMINATION + HARD WORK + DISCIPLINE = THE WAY TO SUCCESS."

We asked Mike Feinberg (Houston '92), who co-founded KIPP, to reflect on the rationale and success of KIPP's use of these "messages" with students:

> Students need to be set up for success before we place high expectations on them and hold them accountable to meet those expectations. Whether it is an academic skill or a preferred behavior, we need to reverse engineer from the goal to uncover all of the ingredients necessary to achieving the goal. Then we must ensure that all of these ingredients are present in our teaching.

> At KIPP, the teachers have realized that before students can DO the actions we want them to do, they first have to be able to SAY those actions. Therefore, those actions and expectations need to be taught, explained, and constantly reviewed in our classrooms. By saying the actions and expectations, the students acknowledge the existence of this particular expectation, buy into the fairness of its existence, and realize their responsibility to maintain it. At KIPP, this translates into "Say it, do it."

> Now, saying an expectation such as "work hard" or "be nice" is a great starting point. Getting students to agree with the importance of those phrases is another important step. As we've learned in our professional development efforts, however, teaching a concept one time to children does not guarantee mastery. We need to reach and teach from many different angles, and we need to review previous work in a spiral form to ensure long-term mastery. This is why KIPP has plastered its campuses with various sayings, slogans, values, rallying cries, and expectations. It is our assurance that all of our children are constantly bombarded by our positive expectations and values throughout the day – they hear it in class and they see it wherever they happen to look (even when they're off task ☺). On day one each year, we begin teaching such concepts as:

> 1. Team always beats individual.
> 2. There are no shortcuts.
> 3. Work hard. Be nice.
> 4. Climb the mountain to college in 20XX (XX = the graduation year)
> 5. Focus.

6.	Be the constant, not the variable.
7.	Actions speak louder than words.
8.	Time and Place.
9.	If you can't run with the Big Dogs, stay on the porch!
10.	ALL of us WILL learn.

...and many more to create productive classroom environments. These slogans and expectations are on the walls in our classrooms, are painted onto our sidewalks in between our modular buildings, hang from the ceiling over our covered walkways, decorate the windows in our front entrance, are on our letterhead, are on our bumper stickers, are on the students' uniforms, and if I could hire planes to sky-write these slogans, I'd do that, too ☺. Children at KIPP are expected to learn, understand, and always remember what we ask them to do, and when they do the right thing, good things happen. A daily reminder is one small way that we as teachers make sure our students are set up to succeed.

The KIPP Academies would be the first to admit the danger of class names, slogans, or visual displays that have no reality behind them. If students in the "Helping Hands Classroom" never work with a partner or in collaborative groups, or are never affirmed for supporting their classmates' achievement, that class name will probably ring false to students. Imagine if you hang a banner that reads "Try, Try, Try Again: Effort Breeds Success" and yet when Chantelle asks to retake the test on which she got 62%, you respond flatly, "No. What you got is what you got. You'll just have to study harder for the next test." Translating your values into messages and packaging them in a way that students can understand is one thing. Securing the reality behind those messages is another key piece. As any good marketer will tell you, you can't send messages effectively unless there is a reality behind them – you must "walk the walk."

> *Every mistake a student makes HAS to be fixed so that the student learns from it. Nothing is "done" until it is perfect. Even in first grade, I'd just hand it back with a circle around it and the students would have to figure out how to fix it. In my grade book, I'd keep track of the first and last attempt.*
>
> **Justin May, Greater New Orleans '00**
> **Second Grade Teacher,**
> **Addison Northeast Supervisory**
> **Union**

Develop Policies that Reflect What You Value
Here's how to walk the walk. If you want students to see mistakes as opportunities for improvement, you should allow, if not require, students to retake an assessment on which they did not demonstrate adequate mastery of the objectives. This assessment should address the same objectives but in a slightly different way. You might also create a "Mistakes Wall" in your classroom where students can post their imperfect work with notes about what they learned from those mistakes. To show students that hard work does lead to success, you should ensure that your grading system includes the higher grade on a re-done assessment or incorporates homework completion as part of an effort grade.

Some elementary teachers have their students develop "I Can" cans (simply a decorated coffee can). When students master a skill, they write that skill ("I can multiply fractions" or "I can write a friendly letter") on a strip of paper and put it in the can. Later, if students are struggling to master a new skill, the teacher can say, "Remember when you couldn't add, subtract, or multiply fractions? Now look in your "I Can" can! Soon you'll be adding strips about how you have mastered decimals."

To reinforce the idea that student inter-dependence will lead to greater achievement for everyone, you might have students work in collaborative groups where everyone is responsible for one piece of a complete project. As Kristin Bourguet (South Louisiana '99) related, you might keep a large chart of your learning goals and cross off the goals once everyone in the class has demonstrated mastery of the

objective. If you wanted to demonstrate how each student can contribute to a collective goal, consider doing some sort of play or performance as a class. Debrief afterward, highlighting the importance of each character and stagehand.

Implement Systems That Celebrate What You Value

As we discussed in chapter two of this text, Creating and Implementing Effective Rules and Consequences, students need to know when they are meeting the desired expectations. Then, it was in the context of how to give positive reinforcement for appropriate behavior. Here, we discuss positive reinforcement in light of how students are internalizing and manifesting the values of hard work, team unity, and academic achievement.

Because most students do not have the maturity or self-discipline to work entirely from intrinsic motivation, teachers often integrate various extrinsic reward systems into their classroom. Realize that relying *solely* on extrinsic motivators sends students the message that tangible rewards are the ultimate goal, not the academic achievement. If you discover that you are relying solely on extrinsic rewards – that students are only on task if you tempt them with a cookie or more points in the class challenge – you should reflect on whether your values really permeate your classroom through effective marketing, modeling, and motivating instructional strategies. Essentially, teachers should view extrinsic motivators as a bridge to intrinsic motivation.

> *I have tracking charts for everything – fluency, mastery of multiplication, addition, subtraction, number of books read, attendance, homework completion, etc. I did it because I wanted my students to be constantly aware of their progress. I talked with individual students about putting in more effort to improve certain areas. When their hard work led to success, I made sure it was well documented as proof.*
>
> **Jenny Tan, Los Angeles '00 Elementary School Principal, Clark County**

With the above caveat in mind, here are some basic, but not necessarily obvious, rules for establishing and maintaining systems of extrinsic rewards:

- First, ensure that students are working towards a reward that is motivating to them. While the examples of positive reinforcement in the following table are a good starting point, it is often helpful to *ask* students what they would find exciting. They are sure to have lots of good ideas for what would motivate them to work hard! "If we had a party, what kind of food would you be most excited to have at the party?" "If you could spend 30 minutes on Friday afternoon doing exactly what you wanted to do, what would you do?"
- Next, create a system with a positive, rather than negative, root. For example, a system where students achieve X reward after earning Y points for being on task is infinitely more successful than a system where students achieve X reward for wasting less than Y minutes over the course of a month. The former allows you to "catch students being good," while the latter system sets up a divide between you and the students because you are keeping track of what they are *not* doing well.
- Then, establish a system that allows every student, group or class to receive recognition for reaching a certain threshold. Do not pit students or classes against each other when competing for the reward because some students might give up easily.

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- Finally, and most importantly, execute these reward systems flawlessly. If you have determined that every Monday morning you will read the list of "Top Dogs" (students who completed all of their homework from the previous week) with great fanfare from the colorful list posted on the door, you must make that colorful list and read it, every Monday morning, with just as much fanfare each time. If you decide that anytime you put students in collaborative groups for an extended period you will pick a "star group" at the end of the activity and the rest of the class will do a special cheer for that group's effective collaboration, you need to identify your most effective group and lead the class in that cheer each time. If you determine that you will send home a positive note or call parents every time a student receives a 100% on a test, you need to do that…you got it, every time.

Students would stop by my room first thing Monday morning to see if I had put up the Top Dog list yet. I would often see students standing in front of the wall, counting the number of lists they were on for the quarter, pointing out their names to friends, and encouraging other classmates to "get their names up there too." At the end of the year, I was just going to throw the lists out, but the students wouldn't let me. We actually had to raffle them off. Making that Top Dog list was on my to do list every single weekend.

Margaret Cate, DC '98
Selection Associate, Teach For America

You must never miss an opportunity to celebrate the success you told your students you valued; failing to celebrate a level of success you told students was celebration-worthy or neglecting to laud a specific behavior that you told students was laudable will quickly wilt your students' desire to achieve those levels and exhibit those behaviors.

The following table lists some examples of how you might motivate your students and celebrate their success:

Strategy	Explanation
Class Challenges	- Many teachers recognize exemplary student behavior, participation by usually shy students, dramatic improvement on tests, and 100% homework completion with class points. These systems harness the power of adolescent peer pressure. "Well, if it's for points, I'll share…" "I don't want to let my team down, so I'll stay up and complete the homework…" - Set a threshold that the class must meet within a certain time frame (six-weeks, for example) and then celebrate success once the threshold is reached. - This basic strategy works equally well for elementary teachers with a self-contained class and secondary teachers with multiple classes of students.
The Peace Pole	- To reinforce students as they interact respectfully and peacefully with each other, you can add a block to the "Peace Pole" for each consecutive day without tattling, fights, disrespectful comments, etc. Once the pole is 25 blocks high, you can celebrate with a predetermined reward.
Earn a Class Pet	- Have students brainstorm possible class pets and then vote, in the beginning of the year, on whether they want fish, a hamster, a turtle, etc. - Once students have reached the goal that you have set for them (perfect homework completion from everyone for fifteen days, bathroom breaks that take 5 minutes or less for 3 weeks, etc.) you and a few students can take a trip to the pet store. - You might find that the local pet store is willing to give you the pet and starter supplies for free or at a discount.

Strategy	Explanation
Guest Speakers	• Consider the reflections of secondary science corps member Kristen Bourguet (South Louisiana '99): "Creating a positive rewards system that aligned with my belief that all students can continue their education after high school was very important. Often I would reward students with candy, but I realized I was not showing them the opportunities that awaited them outside our fence. Using a guest speaker from a local program was an excellent way to show them both my appreciation for their hard work and an opportunity that they could experience post-graduation."
Build a Bookworm	• Create book report forms in the shape of a large circle (you might have a space for title, author, publisher, number of pages, description of main character, basic conflict in the story, and resolution). Every time a child reads a book, he or she should complete a form and have an interview with the Bookworm monitor (either yourself or a student who has been taught to ask questions about the book). • After the interview, the Bookworm monitor tapes the form to the growing "Bookworm" on the wall. As soon as the Bookworm's tail comes around to touch his head, the class earns a pre-determined reward.
Popcorn Party	• A popcorn party is a very inexpensive way to celebrate student success, and early elementary corps members report the effectiveness of this strategy. • Similar to the class challenge, the teacher places a few kernels of popcorn in a jar as recognition of, for example, excellent behavior and respectful, encouraging comments during a community meeting. Once the jar is full, the class has a popcorn party.
Class Feasts	• At the end of each unit, Cecily Feltham (Los Angeles '99) and her third grade students throw an "Authentic Feast, _____-style" (the style being Egyptian, or Mesopotamian, or whichever culture they had been studying). • Any student who passes the end-of-the-unit exam and submits an excellent "If I Lived in _____" project can attend the feast, where they have a party the way that civilization would have. At their Egyptian-style feast they listened to Egyptian music, ate Egyptian food, wore Egyptian clothes, and played Egyptian games.
Paper Chain	• To motivate students to follow the class rules even when not in the classroom, Crystal Taylor-Perry (Atlanta '00) adds a link to a paper chain that hangs from the ceiling every time her class receives a compliment or good report when they are away from her (for example, at a special or at lunch). Once the chain reaches the floor, the class has a pizza party.
Student of the...	• Although you want to emphasize teamwork and group success, it is also important to offer individual recognition. You might have a Student of the Week for any student who completes all of her homework and never has to change her color card. • In Sara Cotner's (South Louisiana '00) class, students who hold on to their 100 points for the entire week (90 points come from behavior and 10 from homework completion) are Star Students for the week, and they earn one Dazzling Dollar that can be used to purchase things like Line Leader for the Day, a maze worksheet, five minutes of show and tell, etc. One student is selected to be the Special Star Student of the week. At the end of the month, she takes the four Special Star Students out for ice cream.

The **Classroom Management & Culture Toolkit** (found online at the Resource Exchange on TFANet) has examples of positive reinforcers (p. 60) that can serve as rewards for individual students or the whole class. ✖ As you consider how you might implement these motivational systems, keep the following caveat in mind: a good teacher thinks of *specific* things that will motivate *specific* children. An effective coach knows he sometimes needs to deliver slightly different pep talks to each key player in order to spur them to strive tirelessly in the big game. A strong political leader knows and appeals to the values, feelings, and interests of her constituencies when crafting new legislation. And a successful teacher

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constantly discovers more and more of what makes each student "tick" and uses that information to draw out and motivate him or her. You discover that Ayodele eats up the *Animorphs* series and that Kenneth could spend days drawing cartoon characters. You learn that Sheldon is the star of the basketball team and has a deep respect for his coach.

What do you do with this information? You use it. You read *Animorphs: The Pretender* and you discuss it with Ayodele after reviewing spelling words with her after school. You help Kenneth improve his paragraph writing by asking him to write about the pictures he draws. You meet with Sheldon's coach and invest him in your academic and behavioral goals for Sheldon. In a nutshell, you determine the interests, values, fears, dreams, and influential relationships of your students and you differentiate your motivational techniques for each student in your class. This isn't an easy task. Getting to know what makes a student tick takes time. One of the best ways to get a jumpstart on finding out what students are interested in, whom they admire, and what tangible reward they might be willing to work towards – all insights you can utilize to motivate them to work hard – is to administer a student survey at the beginning of the year.

Just as we ended your *Instructional Planning & Delivery* text with a message of differentiating your instruction to meet the needs of your students, we cannot overstate how critical it is to remember that we teach individuals. Building a culture of achievement involves managing group dynamics, but it also requires serving the needs and desires of every student in the room. By taking the time to listen to your students, you can develop a stronger grasp of how you might tap into your students' experiences and opinions to develop in them an infectious desire to reach new academic heights.

Conclusion and Key Concepts

Throughout these texts, we emphasize the direct correlation between leadership skills and teaching. Teachers are leaders, of their classrooms, their schools, and their communities. As a strong leader moving your students toward the class's ambitious academic goals, you should think of every way you can to rally and motivate them.

- First, **develop an academic vision** for your classroom to help students see what they will accomplish during the year. Excellent teachers develop motivating academic destinations throughout the year that require students to use many of the competencies they've developed.

- In order to convince students that they can achieve the yearlong vision, **reflect on what you will celebrate and value in your classroom.** It is especially important that you help students realize that hard work will lead to success and the importance of collaboration in reaching your class goals.

- You should then translate these values into **clear, recurring messages** that are reinforced through class names, themes, mottos, chants, or visual displays. You must think of yourself as a marketer and maximize every opportunity to convey your values.

- You must ensure that **your classroom reflects and reinforces your values** – that your students experience a reality behind your messages. To do that, you should model your messages in your interaction with students, develop class "policies" that reflect what you value, establish motivating academic destinations, and implement systems that reward achievement or progress toward your values.