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PROACTIVE CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

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The phrase *proactive classroom management* may at first seem like a contradiction in terms. A common conception of classroom management is that it is synonymous with discipline and behavior control. The term is associated with strategies for controlling students' behavior, responding to disruptions, reacting to misbehavior, meting out appropriate rewards and punishments, and generally keeping the noise down. In contrast to this conception, we argue in this chapter that the term *classroom management* be broadened beyond student behavior control to include "the actions teachers take to create an environment that supports and facilitates both academic and social-emotional learning" (Evertson & Weinstein, 2006, p. 4).

Everything the teacher does has implications for the classroom, from creating the setting, decorating the room, and arranging the chairs; to speaking to children and handling their responses; to putting routines in place, then executing, modifying, and reinstating them; to developing and communicating rules so that they are understood by students. Consistent with the definition we propose is the idea that enacting such a classroom requires forethought, planning, and advance consideration of the integrated systems that will support students' social, emotional, and cognitive learning. Effective classrooms are developed through proactive classroom management.

On the surface, smoothly running, academically focused classrooms may have the look of management in absentia or no management at all (Randolph & Evertson, 1995).

What appears to be a seamless flow of interactions among teacher, students, and content is actually thousands of small decisions that direct the events unfolding and contribute to an overall climate. They are carefully orchestrated at a complex level so that meaningful learning can occur. Most of the decisions about how a classroom will function are made implicitly or explicitly before students arrive. It is the nature of these decisions that shape the classroom culture.

Because management actions communicate information about the norms, expectations, routines, knowledge, and participation valued in the classroom, the teacher's first task is to determine what messages about knowledge and participation students will need to understand. Conceptions of learning that emphasize students' active construction of knowledge, including how to regulate their own behavior and interact socially with others, do not fit with conceptions of management as merely behavioral control, compliance, and obedience (McCaslin & Good, 1992). Learning-centered classrooms are much more complex than traditional classrooms in terms of long- and short-term goals enacted, variety and flexibility of activities offered, and opportunities for multiple roles for students and teachers provided.

In this chapter, we describe the unique characteristics of classrooms that make proactive planning necessary, including the time before students' arrival, once students have arrived, and once misbehavior occurs. We also cite research supporting teacher action toward developing smoothly

running classrooms. Simultaneously, we address the distinct needs of creating learning-centered classrooms. Finally, we discuss continuing issues and debates about classroom management.

Unique Characteristics of Classrooms

To provide a loose analogy, classrooms share several characteristics with formal meetings. For example, both are gatherings of people with a leader and some form of agenda. Regardless of the topic of the meeting or the content of the classroom, there are expectations about the purpose, the content, the time frame, the leadership, and who can participate and in what ways. It is easy to identify if these gatherings are well or poorly run. What may not be as easy to discern, however, is what makes them so. To consider what is meant by *well-run classrooms*, we first describe some of the unique characteristics of classrooms that distinguish them from formal or informal meetings and other types of human gatherings.

Classrooms are distinct from meetings in a variety of ways and vary on many dimensions; yet, there are identifiable core characteristics across these variations. In general, classrooms typically involve:

- one teacher leading instruction for 20 to 40 students of varying backgrounds;
- a designated period of instructional time each weekday;
- a physical space including equipment, furniture, and materials in which to coordinate all instruction and interactions;
- dynamic settings in which actions and events change rapidly;
- a designated purpose (e.g., specified content area[s] to cover); and
- accountability for demonstrating evidence of student learning.

As dynamic systems, classrooms adjust to reflect the developing community of their members. Classrooms also adapt to the pressures and vulnerabilities of a group of individuals learning new information and skills. As purposeful entities, classrooms focus instruction on information or skill in specific areas. School districts and governmental agencies may legislate the academic content to be covered in schools, but specific classroom tasks offer the opportunities for students to engage with this content in ways that make it meaningful and accessible. As accountable units, classrooms connect students and judgments, teachers and evaluations. While we might prefer to minimize this accountability, the overwhelming majority of classrooms provide evaluative statements about a student's performance to the student or parents. Most districts maintain student records across years of schooling, and all public schools in the United States fall under current accountability legislation (i.e., the No Child Left Behind Act).

Proactive Classroom Management

Kounin's (1970) landmark study on group management concluded that how teachers prevented problems from occurring differentiated more versus less effective managers. The preparatory work that a teacher completes enhances the likelihood that students will know what to expect. This forethought occurs in three areas: proactive actions teachers take before the students' arrival, proactive interactions teachers plan once students arrive, and proactive reactions teachers prepare for when students misbehave. All of these actions integrate into a system of proactive classroom management to minimize disruption, distraction, and interference with students' academic and social-emotional learning.

Actions Before Students' Arrival

Unfortunately, it is a rare teacher education program that provides preservice teachers with observation or student teaching time at the start of the school year. This lack of access can communicate that a teacher's job begins when students arrive. But before students walk in the door, there are a number of actions a teacher takes to prepare the physical, social, and instructional space.

Teachers must ask, What are the goals I want to set for myself and my students? This question focuses attention on explicitly acknowledging the philosophy that will drive a teacher's approach to teaching, stating the desired results, and framing the subsequent decisions he or she will make. Goals might include teaching all first-grade students to read, focusing chemistry students' attention on safety in the science lab, and modeling the social behavior desired from middle-schoolers. Then teachers need to ask, How do I construct the physical space to support these goals? What rules will frame the social interactions? What overarching curriculum will guide my daily instructional decisions?

Physical Space

Proactive planning of the physical space includes both the layout of furniture and the design of accesses and pathways. The arrangement of a classroom provides clues to students of the types of interactions expected. When rows of chairs face a podium, participants are cued to an expectation that one individual will do most of the talking; whereas chairs set in a circle communicates that all participants are expected to speak. A typical classroom contains a teacher's desk, student desks and chairs, some type of presentation equipment (e.g., overhead projector on a cart), and storage (e.g., bookshelves, cabinets). Some of these items will be movable, while others may not.

When deciding how to arrange the movable furniture, a major consideration is determining what types of instruction will occur. If it is to be a more traditional classroom wherein the teacher will lead whole-group lessons, the

teacher may arrange the furniture in rows that face a dry erase board or presentation screen. If the teacher anticipates teaching small groups of students, he or she may place sets of desks together. With each arrangement possibility, the teacher needs to consider where the instruction will be presented, how to keep an eye on each student, and how the selected arrangement will look to each student. If the presentation is going to be from a single location, the teacher can stand at that place and test whether or not he or she could see students seated in all of the chairs. If the presentation is in multiple locations, the teacher should note if all students can be seen from each location as well as the transition between. To imagine the students' perspective, a teacher can sit in each of the chairs. From the students' point of view, the teacher and any presentation materials should be easily visible.¹

In learning-centered classrooms, teachers do not determine physical arrangements primarily to provide personally assigned individual space. Rather, the spatial environment is designed to facilitate collaboration. Some teachers in learning-centered classrooms plan the arrangement of their rooms in advance; others set up the room arrangement after negotiations with their students. Lambert (1995) concluded that seating flexibility—as opposed to a perpetually fixed seating arrangement—is a necessary prerequisite for an interactive classroom.

Some researchers (David, 1979) have found that students consistently listed adequate personal space and having private places as concerns. The emphasis on collaboration in learning-centered classrooms should not be misinterpreted to mean that students never work alone. Not all students learn in the same way. Classrooms that nurture a social environment can also attend to students as individuals. Teachers can plan for students to have greater choice about when and where they might need personal space. Teachers also need flexibility to confer either with groups or privately with individual students.

Appropriate room arrangements that support the curriculum will often shift across grade levels, and these tend to become more formalized with increasing grade levels. Therefore, teachers at higher grade levels who are establishing learning-centered environments may be especially aware of the shift from prevailing norms as they arrange seating to support more face-to-face interaction. If room arrangements change, students must be socialized to working in these different configurations.

Just as important as the arrangement of furniture is the design of empty space. The aisles between furniture are the pathways students use to move through the classroom. Placement of these aisles can anticipate students' needs to move in and out of their chairs to access classroom materials, to work in small groups, and to enter and exit the classroom (e.g., end of class, fire drill). Careful forethought about the aisles helps avoid congestion at key areas in the classroom such as a door, wastebasket, pencil sharpener, bookshelves, or materials cabinets. Preparation of a place for students' personal belongings prevents the build-up of

clutter in passageways and keeps students safe. Aisles are also a teacher's pathways through the classroom. Aisles should allow a teacher to interact with each individual student and to retrieve needed instructional materials.

Furthermore, the design of the physical space in a classroom either supports or constrains interferences to students' attention. Windows, doors, class pets, restrooms, wastebaskets, and pencil sharpeners are all examples of potential distractions to the students seated nearby. As students pass through the aisles or congregate at an area, their peers may find the commotion too inviting to ignore. Effective classroom arrangements reduce distractions, encouraging the students' focus to be on the instruction at hand.

Social Space

The social space of a classroom comprises the exchanges between teacher and students and among students. Before students' arrival, a teacher can plan the basic structure of this space by considering what norms should be established and what expectations endorsed.² Norms are the familiar ways of interacting in a particular setting that develop across interactions. For example, the norm for riding on an elevator is that a passenger enters, selects a floor button, faces the door, provides room for fellow passengers to enter or leave as needed, and exits when the selected floor is reached. Expectations are the desired behaviors in a given situation. Elevator passengers have the expectation that departing passengers will be allowed to leave before embarking passengers enter.

When a teacher proactively plans for the norms and expectations that he or she wants established in the classroom, the teacher considers the types of interactions he or she hopes students will have and the ways they will behave. For example, the teacher may set a goal for students to listen during instruction to maximize the available instructional time. In this case, the teacher may want a norm established for students to give their full attention when he or she begins to speak at the start of class by preparing themselves and their space for instruction when they enter. To establish this norm, the teacher may write a rule that states, "Be in your seat and ready for class when the bell rings." The teacher will also need to design the associated procedures for entering the classroom quietly, placing completed homework in the designated bin, being seated, placing texts and notebooks on desks, and beginning the displayed task before the bell's ring.

Teachers of learning-centered classrooms must provide students the following knowledge:

- how and when to move from group to group
- what the appropriate noise and voice levels are for group interactions
- how, when, and from whom to get help with academic content
- how, when, and from whom to get help with procedural content

- how, when, and where to obtain needed materials (Evertson & Randolph, 1999)

Teachers typically plan to have a manageable set of general rules (e.g., five to eight), or written expectations, posted in the classroom. A multitude of procedures, or patterns for completing classroom tasks, are designed to support these written rules. Advance planning of rules and procedures can help establish group norms that support, as opposed to inhibit, student learning.

Instructional Space

The instructional space of a classroom consists of all of the student learning goals associated with the class and may be guided by district, state, or federal mandates, as well as the textbook. The learning goals should contain both the deep ideas of a subject (e.g., history holds the bias of those who recorded it) as well as the skills and abilities necessary to attain these deep ideas (e.g., locating a primary document, identifying its author[s], considering it within its historical context, and determining its potential bias). Before students' arrival in the classroom, a teacher can organize the instructional space by planning the overarching curriculum. For a beginning teacher, this may simply be getting familiar with the assigned text(s) for the class or the subject area standards, for example the National Science Standards (National Research Council [NRC], 1996).

A teacher's classroom management system communicates the teacher's beliefs about content and the learning process. It also circumscribes the kinds of instruction that will take place in a particular classroom. Room arrangements, rules, and routines that all point to the teacher create a different learning environment than one in which these elements point to the students or turn students toward each other. Content will be approached and understood differently in each of these settings. Furthermore, intellectually demanding academic work and activities in which students create products or encounter novel problems require complex management decisions.

The actions that a teacher takes before students' arrival prepares the physical, social, and instructional space to ensure that appropriate goals are set and can be accomplished. Ignoring preparation before students' arrival invites unnecessary complexity to teaching. A lack of action sets up the process of teaching much like building a plane while piloting it in the air, literally flying by the seat of your pants. Effective teachers practice proactive classroom management before students' arrival. In addition, teachers must also plan for interactions once students arrive.

Interactions Once Students Arrive

Once students arrive in the classroom, the teacher's prior planning is merged with a developing knowledge of indi-

vidual students and the class as a whole. The first few weeks of interactions are critical in establishing norms and expectations for the year. The getting started period offers special opportunities to set a positive tone for success. In a series of studies (Emmer, Evertson & Anderson, 1980; Evertson, 1985, 1989; Evertson & Emmer 1982; Evertson, Emmer, Sanford, & Clements, 1983), researchers documented the importance of the first day of school for establishing these expectations. In fact, teachers who take time at the beginning of the year to teach units with lower content demands and higher emphasis on procedures are more likely to have classrooms that function effectively and that truly facilitate student learning in the long run (Emmer et al., 1980). Students in elementary and secondary classrooms who receive explicit information and signals early in the school year become socialized and settled in more quickly.

Relational Interactions

Trust is a key component of an effective classroom. Yet this implicit understanding between students and teacher cannot be demanded nor does it automatically emerge as a factor of sharing a classroom. Teachers establish trust by being dependable and by establishing a dependable environment. The relational interactions within a classroom foster dependability when a teacher puts into practice the norms and expectations planned for the social space of the class. These norms and expectations are typically outlined through class rules and procedures.

A teacher who opens the school year by providing instruction in class rules and procedures increases the percentage of students who have access to and engage in academic instruction across the year (Emmer et al., 1980). This instruction includes posting the rules, discussing what these rules look like in action (which can include student role-play), and identifying the consequences of breaking the rules (see the section Reactions Once Misbehavior Occurs below). Additionally, this instruction comprises classroom procedures. Teaching these procedures includes explaining the desired behavior and its rationale, demonstrating the behavior, helping students practice the behavior, providing positive consequences³ to students for meeting the expectation, and providing instructive feedback when students are not meeting the expectation in full.

For example, the procedures for debate in a civics class include the time limits of 5 minutes to explain an argument, 3 minutes to counter the argument, and 2 minutes for rebuttal. The civics teacher identifies these limits, demonstrates the timer signaling the end of a student's turn, and then helps the class practice using the designated limits. When students effectively complete their arguments within the allotted time, the teacher compliments their performance. If students do not finish by the signal, the teacher stops their turn and reminds them of the procedure. The practice continues until the procedure is habituated. A

maintenance reminder of the procedure may be required on occasion.

In learning-centered classrooms, teachers establish norms of participation by creating activities that allow students to practice participating in discussion and then recognizing student behaviors both publicly and privately that support the norm. Making public what is meant by a successful assignment—defined not by mere completion, but by having garnered information from others and contributed to others' collective knowledge—helps students understand how participation in the classroom manifests itself in academic work.

Participation in a learning-centered classroom is also defined in other ways. Norms such as students calling on each other and contributing to the discussion without teacher direction, and students looking at the person who is speaking rather than the teacher, might be part of the shared norms for classroom participation. Students' and teachers' roles become less clearly delineated. For example, students may take responsibility for teaching each other and even for instructing the teacher during class discussions. As in the classroom described by Randolph and Evertson (1995), the teacher's roles and tasks were sometimes delegated to students, the students' roles taken on by the teacher, and both shared in the negotiation of meaning.

Thus, teachers alone do not establish and support classroom norms; students also play a vital role. For example, students communicate norms for participation when a new student arrives to join an already formed research team. Instead of waiting for directions to be given by the teacher, the students in the group immediately engage the newcomer and describe his or her possible new role. Contrast this experience to a student's entering during a more teacher-directed lesson, in which the student might have joined by sitting quietly, listening to the teacher, and working independently until the teacher had time to explain classroom procedures. One means teachers have for observing students following the designated rules and procedures is monitoring.

Monitoring is moving through the room, with either the teacher's eyes or person, to supervise the students' academic and social behavior. As a teacher monitors the class, he or she looks for evidence of engagement and may reward this if it supports continued on-task behavior. The teacher also looks for disengagement and redirects the student to the desired behavior (see the section *Reactions Once Misbehavior Occurs* below). When a teacher moves through the room to monitor, it is easier to apply positive consequences to an individual student's actions and respond to individual acts of misbehavior. Monitoring also provides a teacher with information regarding a student's academic performance.

Instructional Interactions

Once students arrive in the classroom, a teacher enacts daily instructional plans that lead students toward estab-

lished goals. These daily plans are sequenced to connect students' previous learning with the present content. Each step of instruction builds upon previous steps. For example, a Spanish teacher first has students practice repeating the basic conversational phrases for "Hello. My name is _____," and "It is nice to meet you." Next, the teacher asks students to say the phrases in context by introducing themselves to peers. Several lessons later the students may be using the phrases to present a brief role-play of meeting their future college roommate for the first time.

As a teacher establishes relationships with students, he or she becomes more aware of students' individual learning needs and interests. This information helps the teacher to plan more effective lessons. For example, when a middle school math teacher learns that a struggling student is a baseball fan, the teacher can plan a lesson on averages to work with actual baseball statistics. Providing the student this personal connection to the lesson may keep the student's interest long enough to learn the math content.

Across instruction, teachers use proactive classroom management to keep the interactions going smoothly. Teachers can assess if students are following the flow of instruction by checking student understanding. This check can occur as verbal questions and answers during instruction, seatwork, written summaries, homework, labs, quizzes, tests, or other forms of assessment. By checking to make sure students understand the content presented, a teacher can supplement instruction as needed to avert potential frustration and possible subsequent misbehavior. Teachers can also assist students with understanding their own learning process by providing instructional feedback. For example, if homework demonstrates a misunderstanding of subject-verb agreement, a written comment to see the teacher for a minilesson can provide timely and informative feedback.

Teachers provide additional guidance to meet instructional goals when they model the academic behavior they are seeking. Providing work samples, demonstrating lab exercises, and displaying class examples as they are generated are all ways teachers can model their expectations. Furthermore, teachers guide students to integrate multiple instructional goals when they proactively manage the transitions within their classrooms. These transitions occur between activities in a lesson, from lesson to lesson, and from one class to the next. At the beginning of a lesson, a teacher helps students shift into it by reviewing the previous lesson(s), indicating where the present lesson will go, and designating which materials the students need. Between segments of a lesson, a teacher identifies what has been covered, demonstrates how it applies to the next activity, and instructs students how to get themselves or their materials ready for the activity. At the close of a lesson, a teacher reviews with the class what has been covered, how it connects with the broader instructional goals set for that class, and prepares students for future instruction.

Proactive classroom management includes forethought concerning the many and varied interactions that take place once students arrive in a classroom. A teacher's anticipation of the relationships with and instruction of a class of students helps ensure a safe and smoothly run learning environment. Failing to anticipate these interactions promotes confusion for students much like airplane passengers would experience if airports did not provide directional signage, airlines did not use gates or schedules, and tickets did not correspond to a specific flight. Yet even when airports, airlines, and tickets all are coordinated toward pairing each passenger with the appropriate manifest on the correct plane at the specified gate at the right time, there are still people who miss the plane. Other passengers will introduce difficulties once the plane is in the air or even after the plane has landed. Similarly, a teacher's carefully planned actions and interactions will not prevent all possible glitches in a classroom. Therefore, proactive classroom management includes anticipating suitable reactions to student misbehavior.

Reactions Once Misbehavior Occurs

Despite the best laid plans, student misbehavior will occur. Reactions to this misbehavior require careful planning to ensure a teacher's responses are productive.

Anticipating Responses to Student Misbehavior

The interventions teachers prepare allow them to match the significance of a consequence to the seriousness of the infraction. For example, a teacher would want one consequence for students who forget to write their name on a physics assignment, but an entirely different response for students who are blatantly disrespectful to a substitute teacher. Interventions can also take into account students' intent. For instance, the consequence for bumping into a peer at recess varies from that administered for intentionally pushing the peer.

Two major categories of consequences, corrective and negative, are directly tied to interventions. Corrective consequences involve reteaching a desired behavior. If, for example, the procedure for lining up in a fourth-grade classroom is for students to stand, push in their chairs, and form a silent, single file line at the door, but the class is noisy and haphazard about following this procedure, a corrective consequence is for the teacher to have students return to their seats, review the procedure, and then try again. Negative consequences involve applying an undesired response to counter a student's misbehavior. If a student misuses access to a computer by visiting inappropriate Web sites, a negative consequence is for the student to lose the privilege of using the computer without direct supervision.

In classrooms where norms for behaviors are negotiated and sanctioned by both the teacher and students, students

play a role in ensuring adherence to social norms and handling conflict. Some conflicts may arise as a natural outcome of the creation of an environment that fosters the exchange of ideas and are a normal part of classroom life (Putnam & Burke, 1992). For example, a classroom debate over a controversial topic will naturally foster strong differences of opinion among students. Other conflicts may occur as students encounter problems in learning to regulate their behavior and work responsibly with peers. According to Dewey (1938), in a collaborative community, control is part of the shared responsibility. Teaching students to resolve conflict is one way to share control.

Responsibility for managing conflict rests with all members of the classroom community. Teachers cannot assume that students already know how to resolve problems or how to help peers. Therefore, one task for the teacher is to create opportunities for students to learn how to manage conflict when it occurs. A classroom discussion about problems, such as playing during center time or not taking turns, is an opportunity for students to devise class strategies to address the problem. Peers often have a powerful effect on others' behaviors.

Managing conflict also has implications for the teacher who decides to use personal influence unobtrusively as a sanctioning technique instead of public "desists" (Bossert, 1979). Relying on personal rapport to influence behavior, some teachers privately hold needed conversations with students. The above examples illustrate three strategies teachers can prepare for learning-centered classrooms to handle conflict: (1) teaching students how to participate in handling the conflict, (2) leading discussions among students to resolve conflict, and (3) holding private discussions with individual students.

The range of interventions a teacher prepares includes such mild responses as moving closer to the student, making eye contact or giving a knowing glance, using a corrective consequence, or even ignoring the behavior if it self-corrects. These mild responses apply to situations such as making eye contact with two students whispering during a silent reading time, gesturing for a student to be seated who stands to go to the trash can during a test, asking a student to remeasure the mass of an item after she zeroes the scale, or ignoring a student who accidentally knocks a book off a peer's desk and picks it back up.

Mild responses are appropriate only for minor misbehaviors or accidental misdeeds. Students interpret applying a more serious consequence for a minor offense as an attack. This perceived confrontation may lead to student defensiveness or a counterattack. For example, sending a student to in-school suspension for not having a title page on his book report (as opposed to asking the student to supply one or marking off the designated number of points) could lead to a verbal outburst or the student's refusal to complete other assigned tasks. If occurring publicly, other students may sense a break of trust and join in the resistance. Research on student perspectives on classroom management (Hoy & Weinstein, 2006) indicates that

students suggest the types of strategies employed need to be fair and reasonable. Students consider public reprimands, harsh sanctions, and negative group sanctions for individual misbehavior as unacceptable means for handling conflict and other disciplinary problems.

Moderate interventions can entail using a more involved corrective consequence, confiscating a distracting item, relocating the student within the room, or removing a student privilege. When an initial mild intervention does not result in stopping the misbehavior, or if a student's misbehavior disturbs his or her own or peers' learning opportunities, a moderate intervention is necessary. In the example given earlier, if the students continue to whisper during silent reading time despite connecting with the teacher visually, the next step could be to quietly indicate the students are to move away from one another. For another example, if a student's handheld media player is distracting from learning opportunities, a teacher may indicate for the student to put the player on the teacher's desk and pick it up after class.

Serious interventions often involve removal of the student from the class. These and other issues are discussed further in Chapter 15. Serious interventions require documentation from the teacher, either of a significant incident or of a pattern of repeated misbehavior. The offending student may also be required to complete a description of or reflect in writing on the misdeed as a part of this documentation. Applying serious consequences also typically involves the school administration. An example of a serious infraction is discovering a junior high student defacing school property with a can of spray paint. The serious intervention would follow school, district, and legal stipulations, but might include a set time of in-school suspension and assistance in cleaning the damage. Documentation could include a police report of the vandalism, photographs of the graffiti, and a written statement from the student acknowledging his misdeed. Using a milder response for a serious infraction makes a teacher look timid and ineffective. Classmates can interpret this as an invitation to push the limits.

Reacting Consistently

With interventions, a teacher demonstrates dependability through the consistent application of consequences. In a high school English class, if a teacher docks late essays five points per day, students come to accept this penalty when applied consistently. But these same students will quickly complain, and may even push the established boundaries, if they sense the teacher offers an unfair extension only to some students. Consistency shows students a teacher's word is reliable and without favoritism.

One student who acts out, or the loose confederation of students who push the limits, serve the role of checking the boundaries within a classroom. They test the credibility of stated expectations, and because these actions are public, this provides information to the entire class. The more

students push the limit, the greater their need for information, and the greater the indication that they do not understand the real limits. Consistency both validates what a teacher says and supports the connections the teacher makes with students.

Inconsistencies prompt students to rethink what is expected and test to see if this new interpretation is true. Unpredictability shakes the foundation of what students know. In really chaotic classrooms this earthquake is repeated, sometimes on an interactional basis. Consistency is not easy. In fact, it can be tiring. Yet, initial efforts reassure students that what they have come to believe is reliable and these consistent reactions provide stability. As a result of feeling protected, students even will offer tolerance to the teacher they trust.

While the vast majority of reactions to student misbehavior will fall within the above discussion of interventions and their consistent application, we want to acknowledge that humor can also play a role. To be effective and to maintain the class's established trust, this humor must be kind rather than sarcastic and inclusive rather than alienating. For example, some middle school students continue to sit on a table at the back of the class after the teacher explains the expectation for them to sit in chairs during their break. The teacher consistently applies the consequence of having the offending students return to their assigned seats, effectively limiting the students' freedom during the break. As an alternative, the teacher could state humorously to students seated on the table, "I put the food I eat for lunch on that table," to prompt their moving to chairs.⁴

Anticipation of suitable responses to student misbehavior is an important component of proactive classroom management. Teachers who can prepare productive reactions and apply them consistently shift situations from probable disruption to potential instruction. Conversely, a teacher's reactive approach to student misbehavior could be akin to flight attendants ignoring warning signs (e.g., smoke) or waiting to provide emergency procedures until after the pilot indicates trouble. Instead, attendants begin each flight highlighting the safety features of an aircraft to ensure that during difficulty order, rather than chaos, and procedure, rather than panic, frame passengers' reactions. Simultaneously, the flight attendants identify consequences for prohibited behavior (e.g., federal fine for tampering with a smoke detector) and consistently apply these as needed. When teachers plan their reactions to student misbehavior and consistently apply them, students know what to expect. Students' resulting sense of security helps structure the class for joint success, even in an emergency.

Issues and Debates Within Classroom Management

No area of research is free of debate. Rather, it is the gentle tension of continued questioning in an area of study that

keeps the research fresh, focused, and pertinent. Issues and debates are a frequent component of research on classroom management. As referenced early in the chapter, one key debate concerning this area of research focuses on the vocabulary itself. Differing from our use in this chapter, some see *classroom management* as distinct from instruction. The term *classroom management* to some is synonymous with “discipline,” “punishment,” or “control.” And while some see *discipline* as the implementation of negative consequences or tight teacher control, others view this word as indicating the self-discipline we have as a goal for students to ultimately achieve. Without sufficient explanation or example, the mention of any one of these terms can bring about an unanticipated response when the listener’s semantics clash.

One issue that has compounded the successful use of classroom management research has been the focus of educational research in general on the individual student or single interaction. This microperspective does not take into account the macrocontext of the classroom within which the individual lives or the single interaction occurs. Although this research perspective is important to enlarge our understanding of teaching and learning, its predominance has biased the educational research base in ways that sometimes leads to decisions being made out of context. A sea change of attitudes and perspectives across the educational research community is needed to continue progress in recognizing the value classroom management research has across settings and situations.

An additional issue in the past has been the absence of any primary, comprehensive compendium for reporting research in classroom management. Before 2006, published research on classroom management was scattered throughout professional journals and texts. This absence of a central source allowed gaps in the research to develop and widen in areas such as classroom management within urban settings. The resolution of this issue began with the publication of the *Handbook of Classroom Management: Research, Practice, and Contemporary Issues* (Evertson & Weinstein, 2006).

Conclusion

When we see a classroom in which the children are disruptive and the instruction fractured, the evaluation could be reached that the teacher’s classroom management is bad. This judgment, however, glosses over some important components, blanketing the problems with an overloaded phrase rather than understanding that literally thousands of small decisions are adding up to this total picture. Is there trust within the relationships between teacher and students? Does the teacher have rules and procedures in place? Are they consistently reinforced? Do students know the goals they are working toward? Are expectations stated clearly?

Unless the observer has seen a number of classrooms with which to compare this one that is struggling, it is dif-

ficult to identify the cracks in the system. Similarly, it takes a practiced eye to look at a setting and identify the areas in which the teacher and students have come to agreement and are working together toward the end goals. Invisibility is the hallmark of an effective classroom management system. It is difficult to identify what steps were taken to enact the effectively running classroom and nearly impossible to understand the previous agreements among the members that make the class run smoothly.

The intent of this chapter has been to hone the reader’s eye, to make the invisible visible, accessible, and possible to enact. Therefore, we first used a loose comparison of meetings with classrooms to prompt a discussion of the unique characteristics of classrooms. Next, we defined classroom management as “the actions teachers take to create an environment that supports and facilitates both academic and social-emotional learning” (Evertson & Weinstein, 2006, p. 4). We argued for three areas of action for proactive classroom management. Actions taken before students’ arrival prepare the physical, social, and instructional space students soon enter. Preparation for interactions with students once they arrive considers the emerging relationships with and instruction of a class of students. Anticipating reactions to students’ misbehavior prepares consistent productive, instructional responses to emerging difficulties. Finally, we suggested points of debate for further study and application of the research on classroom management.

Notes

1. The Classroom Organization and Management Program (COMP: Creating Conditions for Learning), Peabody College, Vanderbilt University, uses the abbreviation VAD to draw attention to maximizing *visibility* and *accessibility*, while minimizing *distractibility* in a classroom’s physical arrangement (Module 1, 7th edition, 2007). Visit <http://www.comp.org> for more information on this classroom management program.
2. Norms and expectations, as well as other pertinent topics, can be further explored at the IRIS Center for Faculty Enhancement Web site (<http://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu>).
3. Positive consequences apply desired responses to encourage continued appropriate behavior. Praise, prizes, and high-fives are examples of positive consequences.
4. We thank Stephen Thompson, Assistant Professor of Elementary Education, University of South Carolina, for this example.

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