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Student Discipline: Excellent Teachers Share Their Thoughts, Beliefs, and Classroom Practices

by

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A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education

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Edmonton, Alberta

Fall 2005

This dissertation is dedicated in loving memory to my mother, "Baba" Yaniw, who taught by example, the richness and value of love, care, compassion, family, equality, and goodwill.

Abstract

The major purpose of this study was to investigate the thoughts, beliefs, and classroom practices of excellent teachers on the topic of student discipline. Six participant teachers awarded the distinction of "finalist" for an Alberta Excellence in Teaching Award were selected from the three levels of elementary school, junior high school, and senior high school. Utilizing the methodology of interpretive inquiry, constructivist paradigm, and personal interview, data were collected through an initial semistructured interview. Further data were collected through a second interview that followed an observation of the teacher instructing his/her class.

Data analysis resulted in the generation of six areas of focus and findings: defining student discipline, setting the classroom conditions for success student discipline, disciplinary interaction and intervention, factors that affect student discipline, stories from the field, and professional development (PD) support.

This study concluded, among other conclusions, that student discipline is the process of teaching prosocial skills and behaviors to children in a school classroom setting. This process is guided by an ongoing interplay of direct instruction, signals, gestures, praise and specific feedback, incentives, and sanctions. This study concluded that effective student discipline requires clearly established rules, standards, and routines to assist in creating expected protocols of behavior. The findings indicate that encouraging comments and positive feedback are essential to reinforcing appropriate social/learning behavior. Well-planned curricular materials and interesting instructional activities also assist in keeping students meaningfully engaged and on task.

The findings from this study support other educational research that indicated that the most common classroom problems that teachers face are minor infractions rather than major crises. Minor problems, however, can escalate into major conflict and concern if left unattended.

Recommendations for practice and theory include that the teacher associations provide an updated definition of student discipline to assist their members in maintaining a commonly held professional perspective on this topic. It is recommended that teacher associations, in collaboration with the school board associations, sponsor an elaborate yearly series of inservices for teachers on student discipline. Collegial intervisitations are also recommended as a best practice to enhance understanding and skill development.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my wonderful soul mate and partner, Wilma Bayko, and my daughter, Jacqueline Yaniw, for their unconditional support throughout this educational marathon. Both provided me with much encouragement and laughter along the way.

I would like to extend special thanks to my first supervisor, Dr. Larry Beauchamp, for his down-to-earth advice and mentorship. Dr. Beauchamp has a gift for cutting to the chase and keeping everything in perspective. His inspirational character and quiet patience were extremely helpful in balancing the demands of my career and quest for lifelong learning. Dr. Beauchamp's support of the EdD Cohort program gave a group of colleagues the opportunity to experience an educational journey of a lifetime. I will forever be grateful to him.

I would also like to thank Dr. Jim Parsons for taking over as my supervisor in the last part of this journey. His thoughts and ideas were challenging and greatly appreciated and he cheerfully made himself available for consultation. He also demonstrated great kindness and compassion to those around him.

I wish to thank my committee members Dr. Joe da Costa, Dr. Maryanne Doherty, Dr. Ken Jacknicke, Dr. Bill Maynes, and Dr. Sam Robinson for their interest, guidance, questions, and many helpful comments.

I wish as well to thank Dr. Emery Dosdall, former Superintendent of Edmonton Public Schools, for encouraging practicing principals to pursue further educational studies and for his support of the original EdD Cohort program. Further thanks to Edmonton Public Schools and Superintendent Angus McBeath for providing me with the opportunity and funding for a part-time sabbatical leave to complete my research.

The teachers who acted as research participants in this study are to be commended, first and foremost, for the valuable contributions that they have provided to children and public school education. I am extremely grateful for their willingness to openly share their many thoughts, experiences, and expertise. All participants were very generous as well with both their time and patience throughout the study.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

> Education is the factor, which determines a person's subsequent direction in life. . . . Education should be . . . the art of orientation. Educators should devise the simplest and most effective methods for turning minds around. It shouldn't be the art of the implanting sight in the organ, but should proceed on the understanding the organ already has the capacity, but is improperly aligned and isn't facing the right way. (Plato; as cited in Pojman, 1998, pp. 131, 183)

Whenever teachers gather in staff rooms or convention halls, sooner or later the discourse will center on the topic of student conduct and behavior. As teachers speak openly and candidly about children and education, student discipline will likely surface as a major concern. The daily experience of classroom life can be "frustrating, irritating and stressful, in extreme cases it may lead to complete breakdown of the classroom order and, more seriously, of the teachers health" (Lawrence & Steadman; as cited in Charlton & David, 1993, p. 5). The results from the *Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF) Workplace Survey* (2003) indicated that

> sixty percent of teachers surveyed reported their job was more stressful than it was two years ago, while only nine percent indicated it was less stressful. . . . Student behavior and discipline issues were reported most frequently as the most stressful aspect of the job. (p. 6)

Lack of funding or resources and curriculum problems ranked second and third, respectively, behind student behavior and discipline.

Research on student discipline has shed much light on the often frustrating and bewildering experiences of classroom teachers. Charles (2002) stated that discipline

concerns are not declining, but rather continuing to rise. Numerous studies that he cited indicated that lack of discipline is

> among the most serious problems with which teachers must contend and a significant factor in their leaving the profession. [Lack of discipline] is largely responsible for the teacher dropout rate of between 30 and 40% within the first three years on the job. (p. 4)

Problems surrounding discipline are often compounded when experienced teachers transfer from schools characterized as "needy or high risk." This, unfortunately, leaves such schools staffed by younger and inexperienced teachers or, worse, marginally competent teachers who are not able to win competitions in more sought-after schools.

Roberts and Clifton (1995), in their book on Canadian educational issues, lamented:

> A growing body of research from Canada, the United States and many Western European countries illustrate that schools are in trouble—the curriculum content is deteriorating, students are increasingly disengaged from the learning process, the quality of learning is low, and student violence is increasing. (p. 467)

In far too many classrooms, children do not exhibit behavior conducive to learning. The disruptive student is only too eager to challenge the hearty and, most certainly, the "foolhardy" teacher. In some cases disruptive and antisocial behavior is the rule of the day. Teachers are interrupted in their attempts to teach, and many students are thwarted in their attempts to learn. Together these problems have generated public and professional concern about the need for better student discipline and the development of safe and caring schools.

Historically, student discipline was commonly viewed as earned punishment for inappropriate behavior. Unfortunately, this led teachers, students, and parents to view discipline through a negative and punitive lens. As Beauchamp and Parsons (2000)

stated, "It is absolutely wrong- minded to think of discipline as a negative thing. It is one of the most positive learning experiences a human can achieve" (p. 46). Prosocial-based classroom discipline is the result of many supportive practices and procedures rather than punitive measures. It stems first from a confirmed belief that teachers do influence the development of self-discipline in children. Regardless of the negative factors in the home, community, or counterculture, classroom teachers can have a significant positive effect on the attitudes, values, and behavior of the children they serve.

A meaningful understanding of discipline requires a great deal of time and attention. Many educators believe that behavior problems in classrooms stem from the growing number of parents who are failing to raise their children in ways that reinforce the virtues of responsibility and cooperative goodwill. Research has found that poor parenting skills in the area of discipline relate to patterns of parent-child social interactions that place children at risk for later antisocial behavior and emotional difficulty (Bornstein, 1995). Numerous studies confirmed that low parental supervision and involvement and inconsistent family discipline are linked to child-conduct problems such as lying, stealing, physical fighting, illegal drug use, and poor achievement in school (Baumrid, 1991; Crouter, MacDermid, MacHale, & Penny-Jenkins, 1990; Laub & Sampson, 1988; Loeber & Dishion, 1984; Stouthamer-Loeber & Loeber, 1986). Discipline is a salient aspect of family life that strongly influences a child's future adjustment.

In supportive and functional families

> children are socialized by their parents to comply with reasonable requests [i.e., please/thank you, suppertime, bedtime, bath time, pick up clothes, assist with cleaning dishes, vacuuming, washing, ironing clothes] or commands most of the time. . . . The socialization of the child is something that emerges from thousands

> of exchanges between child and family members spread out over many years. (Chamberlain & Patterson, 1995, p. 211)

At an early age many willful children learn to manipulate and control their environment. As a technique of "getting their own way," these children learn that using coercive behavior such as whining, crying, screaming, hitting, kicking, and throwing objects is a successful means of achieving what is desired. The weak parent acquiesces and gives in to the child. A three-year-old who may use these techniques to get a candy bar in a supermarket is likely to successfully continue to use the same technique over a decade later to get the keys to the family car. Ramsey, Patterson, and Walker (1990) found that by the time many children enter Grade 1, they have become masters of the coercive process. They apply these behaviors to the school and neighborhood settings in a highly generalized fashion.

The most important and meaningful teachers in a child's life are, of course, the parents of the child. Parents should and must be held accountable for the special role they play in their child's development. Schools, however, also have both a direct and an indirect influence on the students and communities they serve. In some cases the school may be the only stable positive influence in the lives of young people who come from dysfunctional families and violent backgrounds. Schools must "advocate the idea that behavior and the ability to choose how to behave must be taught like all other aspects of the curriculum and that every educator has a responsibility to be actively involved" (Curwin & Mendler, 1997, p. 7).

If the discourse and practice of education are viewed as the transmission of knowledge, skills, ideas, values, beliefs, and behaviors, the publicly funded school system is the social agency of greatest impact and responsibility. As James Michener (as

cited in Walsh, 1991) stated, "The school is the only agency legally established, organized by society and supported by taxation, whose sole job it is, to teach children, knowledge, skills and the values required for a successful adult life within the bounds of society". The culture of our classrooms will be the deciding factor as to whether or not public schools will be successful in meeting this mandate.

Fortunately, regardless of school size, age, socioeconomic status, student-teacher ratio, or budgeting restraints, in every school district examples of teachers with exemplary discipline can be found. These lighthouse examples often stand in brilliant contrast to their neighbors across the hallway who have similar populations and conditions. Excellent teachers are able to develop a strong sense of family and community bonding with their students. In such classrooms all members are expected to treat each other with dignity, respect, and cooperative support. Teachers offer themselves as role models and mentors of appropriate citizenship. They share and communicate expectations and behavioral standards that are fair and reasonable for all.

As educational leaders, teachers have the challenge, as Plato implied, of turning their students in the right direction. In accepting this challenge, teachers have an opportunity to view themselves as the new "search engines" of social change. Fortunately, many teachers are fine examples of what quality teaching and learning can accomplish. These teachers continue to stand out and set a social standard and tone in their classrooms and make us proud and confident of publicly funded education. These agents of social and cultural stability are simply called "excellent teachers."

Are excellent teachers doing something differently from the rest? How would they describe their disciplinary beliefs and practices? What can be learned from these role models and mentors? How would they answer the question, **what is student discipline?**

Background to the Problem

Society in general and parents specifically expect that order and discipline will take place in the schools to which they send their children. Over the past 30 years concerns about discipline have been repeatedly expressed on the Phi Delta Kappa annual Gallup poll survey of public attitudes towards education. In answer to the question "What do you think are the biggest problems with which the public schools of this community must contend?" the results reveal that our public believes that lack of discipline and uncooperative students are two of the most troublesome problems in public education (Charles, 2002). In Alberta, "lack of discipline" was cited as a major concern by parents and community members in a survey conducted by Edmonton Public Schools (EPS; 2002).

As Larson (1999) indicated, the classroom is a very "busy kitchen" (p. 52) where it finally all happens. Developing relationships between the classroom teacher and students is "critical in establishing order and discipline; without them, not much learning will occur. The teacher has to deal with affect and control before addressing what is to be learned to create an environment that can produce learners" (p. 54). This requires, of course, a great deal of energy and a professional focus on the part of the classroom teacher, who is often confronted with individuals and groups who are poorly motivated and uncooperative.

Responding to the findings of the highly publicized Elton Report of 1989 on school discipline, Wheldall and Merrett (1992) emphasized that

> effective classroom behavior management is an essential prerequisite for effective classroom learning. . . . The child whose behavior is continually disruptive, or who is even quietly but regularly off task, is seriously educationally disadvantaged, since we know that academic engaged time is one of the most important correlates of academic progress.
>
> Problems of discipline and classroom control have been perennial concerns for teachers but, until recent years, academic educationists and teacher trainers have largely ignored these issues focusing instead on such matters as curriculum design and content . . . Our own findings from a recent study confirmed that the vast majority of teachers claim to have learned to manage classes 'on the job' by trial and error, with little or no training in behavior management having been provided in their teacher training courses. (p. 46)

The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to ask educators who have been recognized as being excellent teachers share their thoughts, beliefs, and practices pertaining to student discipline in their classrooms.

Qualitative Boundaries of the Study

Boundaries of a study can be part of the research planning and design and/or a natural component of the subject matter itself. Writing on qualitative research and case study, Merriam (1998) assesses "boundaries" by whether or not a qualitative study data collection is limited to a number of people involved or whether or not a finite amount of time for observations has been set. She points out that if, in fact, there is no end limit, actually or theoretically, then the topic under study does not have boundaries. If there is, however, a limit to the number of participants and time limits attached to interviews and observations, then the phenomena under study indeed has "boundedness." Boundaries of this study are set, to a certain degree, by the number of participants involved and the

limited thoughts and experiences of each individual. Using the metaphor of "a fence" (Merriam, 1998), this study seeks to understand the "fenced in narrative thoughts and experiences" that six excellent teachers have on the topic of student discipline. Although each participant is limited to their individual thoughts and experiences; my study, as a whole, is larger than any single fenced-in participant as it integrates and encompasses the thoughts and experiences of all six participants. It is, however, a fenced-in, bounded system of research and study as it has definite limits to its research design. This study is bounded by:

1. Six teachers from six separate schools in a large urban Alberta Public School District
2. Teachers with ten (10) or more years of experience who were awarded the distinction of "finalist" for a provincial Excellence in Teaching Award selected by a committee made up of representatives from:
    - Alberta Learning
    - Alberta Teachers' Association
    - Council of Alberta Teaching Standards
    - Alberta School Boards Association
    - College of Alberta School Superintendents
    - Universities Coordinating Council
    - Association of Independent Schools and Colleges
    - Alberta Home and School Councils Association

Other Boundaries of the Study

The limited views and opinions from the use of interviews, questions, and observations may possibly bias the results.

It is possible that the construction of the questions and organization of the interviews did not cover the full range of possible responses. Thus, the responses of the participants might not have reflected the full range of thoughts, beliefs, perceptions, and experiences of the respondents.

The study was limited by other factors that cannot be readily assessed. They include the following:

- The influence of specific school and teaching experiences the respondents had had
- Other professional or nonprofessional experiences in which the respondents were engaged during the study

Assumptions

It is assumed that the thoughts, opinions, and beliefs of the responding teachers are a true and accurate indicator of their perceptions.

Research Questions

The main research question of this study is, ***What is student discipline, and what are the thoughts, beliefs, and classroom practices of excellent teachers with regard to student discipline?***

Other related questions that are pertinent to this study include the following:

1. What is student discipline, and how do excellent teachers define it?

2. How do excellent teachers describe, organize, and manage student discipline in their classroom?
3. How do excellent teachers most often respond to appropriate student behavior in their classrooms, and how do they most often respond to inappropriate student behavior?
4. What are the most common types of inappropriate student behavior that occur in the classroom of excellent teachers, and are there more extreme and/or severe inappropriate behaviors that sometimes occur in their classrooms?
5. How do excellent teachers limit the occurrence of misbehavior and help students to actually want to behave appropriately and responsibly?
6. What classroom factors do excellent teachers believe contribute most to the success of student discipline, and does any single factor contribute significantly more than the rest?
7. What factors outside the classroom do excellent teachers believe contribute most to student discipline, and does any single factor contribute significantly more than the rest?
8. What story or vignette would excellent teachers share that accurately represents student discipline in their classrooms?
9. What do excellent teachers believe are the educational benefits of student discipline?

10. What do excellent teachers believe is the role that others play in supporting student discipline in their classrooms—that is, colleagues, school administrator, parents?
11. What do excellent teachers believe are the professional development needs of teachers regarding student discipline?
12. Do excellent teachers view student discipline differently at the various levels of schooling—that is, elementary, junior high, senior high?

Significance of the Study

This study is significant and meaningful for a number of reasons. Common conversation with teachers, as well as, a great deal of research literature, point to the topic of student discipline as a salient and significant component of the practice of effective teaching and learning. Many capable and committed teachers leave the profession prematurely because of the stress and fatigue of dealing with student discipline problems. Many cooperative and well-mannered students face constant learning interruptions that result from the mismanagement of discipline in their classroom. The educational community must accept and recognize these concerns as detrimental to the learning process.

The results of this study provide meaningful insights and understandings to assist educators in dealing with this ongoing issue. The findings contribute to the body of knowledge that can assist teachers in reviewing their own beliefs and practices surrounding student discipline. This study also sheds an optimistic light on what is possible for teachers to attain in their classrooms. Finally, the information gathered from this study provides a direction for further study that can continue to broaden our

knowledge base of how student discipline affects the teaching/learning process and the citizenship of our students.

Summary

This chapter introduced the purpose of the study, the main research question and subquestions, definitions, limitations, assumptions, and delimitations. It also presented background information on the important influence of student discipline on the teaching and learning process. Research has found that student behavior and discipline issues greatly impact on a teacher's ability to cope in the classroom. Many find it so overwhelmingly stressful that they leave the profession within the first few years of their career. Public opinion polls and school district surveys have revealed problems surrounding "student discipline" to be major issues of concern.

For classrooms to be safe, caring, and cooperative domains of learning, further research on student discipline needs to continue. Fortunately, regardless of school size, age, socioeconomic status, student-teacher ratio, or budgeting restraints, examples of excellent teachers with exemplary student discipline can be found in every school district. How would these lighthouse teachers describe their disciplinary practices? By sharing their thoughts and expertise, they will contribute to a growing body of student discipline research that has the potential to affect the lives of many.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Historical Background

> He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes. (Proverbs 13:24)
>
> Foolishness is bound in the heart of the child; but the rod of correction shall drive it too far from him. (Proverbs 22:15)
>
> Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell. (Proverbs 23:13-14)
>
> The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame. (Proverbs 29:15)
>
> But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. (Hebrews 13:8; all as cited in Wesley, 1979, p. 1)

Throughout history many examples can be found of mankind using "coercion and persuasion" to move people and society in a particular direction. In the field of education, teachers and administrators have engaged these two methods through a variety of models in an attempt to bring order to the classroom. The ideas and practices of classroom discipline in schools of the past were well embedded in the beliefs of ancient world thinking. From the standpoint of religion and puritan teaching, it was believed that everyone was innately depraved because of original sin. Colonial schoolteachers, clergy, and parents thought it necessary to break the will of the child and ensure conformity with

"divine will." The simplified notion of "spare the rod, spoil the child" was commonly accepted by most adults.

Nikiforuk (1993) reported that most early North American schools taught children to read the Bible and quote from it. Basic school curriculum consisted of "reading and 'riting and religion." Because the Bible was the only book that most early settlers owned, it played an essential role in the learning curriculum of the time. Biblical thought and moral discourse helped to create a common culture with accepted codes of conduct for everyone. In many early one-room schoolhouses, *discipline* meant learning how to be a disciple and accept the teachings of another. The spirit of cooperation and support was an everyday practice. Young students watched as older students mastered different concepts, and senior students assisted the young with their elementary learnings.

> The highest hope that every parent had for a child was that he or she would become, as wise as Solomon. The idea of sending a child to school to be, competent in a specialty, or to feel good about himself [*sic*], or to prepare for material success, would have struck the early pioneers as demonic. (p. 11)

Traditionally school discipline meant maintaining order and control through the dispensing of punishment. When a teacher or school administrator thought it necessary, there was no hesitation in applying corporal punishment through the use of a switch, whip, belt, paddle, or strap. A schoolmaster or schoolmistress who could not maintain a quiet order in the classroom by properly breaking the will of students was simply thought not fit to teach. Obedience to those in authority was highly prized and stressed. Through physical punishment, a child was taught to submit and obey the commands and demands of his/her teachers.

The research literature demonstrated that historians commonly agreed that cruel, severe, and often brutal punishment in schools was the rule and not the exception. Falk

(1941; as cited in Chamberlin, 1971) reported that a Massachusetts school teacher recorded the punishments that he had inflicted on the pupils in his charge during 51 years and 7 months of teaching in the 18th century. This example and others show the kind of punishment considered acceptable:

Punishment – Early 1770s
One teacher's report:

Punishments	Number of Times
Blows with a cane	911,257
Blows with a rod	124,010
Blows with a ruler	20,989
Blows with the hand	136,715
Blows over the mouth	12,235
Boxes on the ear	7,905
Raps on the head	1,115,800
Blows with a book	22,763
Forced kneeling on peas	777
Hold up a heavy stick	1,707
Kneeling on a triangular wood block	613

(p. 5)

Kostek (1992) reported on some of the school rules, student violations, and punishment records of EPS that are now on display in the EPS Archives and Museum:

> Principals maintained law and order in the schools that served Edmonton. . . . Like other schools of the time, much of the discipline was enforced through the use of the strap, usually a segment of rubberized belting about 2 in. wide and 20 in. long. The Old Queen's Avenue punishment book, now on display in the Edmonton Public Schools Archives and Museum, attests to the generous administration of corporal punishment for a variety of noted misdemeanors, violations of school rules and sundry indiscretions. In the month of March, 1906, more than 70 Queen's Avenue students had their names recorded in the black book. In addition to the traditional reasons for corporal punishment—talking, swearing, impudence, freshness, impertinence, chewing gum, truancy, cheating or fighting, the entries in the punishment book reveal other interesting transgressions. Teacher Emma Chegwin administered four strokes of the strap to Warren McCartney, Bert Potter, Willie Davidson and Emma McCauley for mischief and disobedience. George Lambert prompted Miss Lillian Osborn to administer six slaps for tripping girls in the aisle on the same day that Miss McKee warmed Edward Hillman's hands for taking a note from the teacher's

> desk. Harold Blayney, Virgil Starnes and Margaret Inglis also had the palms of their hands warmed for one of the most serious pupil transgressions imaginable—showing off before the inspector. . . . On February 25, 1907, Howard English would be the recipient of another record. On that date, newly appointed Principal Fred Carr would inflect 50 strokes of the strap across Howard's palms because he laughed after getting a previous strap that day. . . . It was not uncommon to be strapped for incorrect spelling and careless work at this time. (pp. 62-64)

Kostek attended schools within Western Canada from Grades 1 through 12 and received "the strap" along with his classmates for misdemeanors that today would be considered very minor. I have a copy of a punishment book from an elementary school in Alberta which indicates that between 1965 and 1988, students at this school were strapped for violations that included the following:

Violation	Number of strokes per hand
Chewing gum in class	3
Making noise in class	3
Taking a fellow students ear muffs	2
Doing art work during spelling class	6
Fighting	2
Passing notes	3
Throwing things in class	5
Flagrant disobedience of the no food in school rule	1
Squirting water at boys	4
Passing around a filthy note	8
Wasting time	3
Fighting in school	10
Talking out loud	3
Lying about having a pocketful of beans	4
Persistent daydreaming	4
Climbing up soccer goal post	3
Annoying other boys	1
Playing with an elastic band	1
Stealing a watch	2

In addition to the wide range of student behaviors that brought out the use of the strap at this school, it is interesting to note how subjectively it was applied. Stealing a watch, for example, resulted in two strokes of the strap on each hand for one student,

whereas chewing gum in class resulted in three blows of the strap on each hand for another student. It is hard to imagine that gum chewing would be considered more inappropriate than stealing someone's valued property. This is an example of how subjective the administration of the strap was.

Archival records and first-person accounts of the past century indicate that in the province of Alberta strapping students as a form of corporal punishment was very common. In EPS this practice was permitted for over 100 years. Not until 1988 did the EPS Board of Trustees officially ban strapping students as a form of corporal punishment from all of its schools.

Definitions of Student Discipline

> Broadly interpreted, the achievement of discipline in a group setting is the process whereby a teacher arranges an environment and controls the stimuli in such a manner that the participants in a certain situation cooperate in the prescribed activities and experience satisfaction and growth in the undertaking. (Chamberlin, 1971, p. 3)

Many educational authors have shared their views and definitions regarding student discipline. There does not, however, appear to be a commonly accepted definition of discipline held by all or even most. In some cases it is described as a system or process to mold or direct student behavior; in other examples it is referred to as a state or condition of order; and in still other cases it is defined as a means of controlling, correcting, and/or maintaining order in the classroom.

The word *discipline* itself comes from the Latin word *disciplina*, which means "instruction" (Allen, 1984). Applying this definition, when one engages in discipline, one engages in teaching. Hence the word *disciple*, which is derived from the word *discipline*, means one who accepts and follows a teacher or a doctrine.

Other definitions that have been shared in the educational research literature include the following:

> The procedures including rules by which order is maintained in the school are referred to as discipline. In general the system of discipline in a school will reflect the system found in the broader society. In the Western World the system of discipline characterizing society has been moving from force to persuasion and hence in the direction of self-control. The same development is occurring in the school system. In the early days order was secured by coercion but persuasion and self-control are coming to be substituted for force. But, as in society generally, teachers and principals alike must resort to force when self-control and persuasion fail. (Smith, 1969; as cited in Alberta Education, 1977, p. 11)

Writing for the Alberta Teachers' Association, Clarke and Stuart (1978) suggested, "The discipline of a classroom or school is the state or condition of order or good behavior among students, and the procedures used to secure and maintain this state or condition" (p. 2). Walch (1984) affirmed that "discipline is a process which strengthens, molds and corrects students through a program of teaching and supervisory control, a system of essential rules, and when necessary, involves just and constructive punishment" (p. 2).

Beauchamp and Parsons (2000) defined four different types of discipline as follows:

- Preventive discipline is used to create a positive learning environment and to set up rules and consequences
- Supportive discipline enhances the accomplishments of the class
- Corrective discipline helps to solve further problems by democratically solving problems and helping students make good choices
- Adaptive discipline is individualistic. A student is dealt with in a personal manner.

  > The goal of discipline should be to help the student grow intellectually and learn to handle personal behavior more maturely. (p. 46)

Charles (2002) stated:

> The word discipline has several different definitions, but two predominate in education. The first refers to school misbehavior; for example, 'The discipline in that room and is pretty bad.' The second refers to what teachers do to help students behave acceptably; 'Mr. Smythe's discipline system is one of the best I've seen.' . . . Discipline is interconnected with misbehavior. Where there is no misbehavior, discipline is not a consideration. . . . Discipline (what teachers do) is intended to prevent, suppress and redirect misbehavior. . . . Ideally, the goal of discipline is to reduce the need for teacher intervention over time by helping students become self-disciplined, that is, able to control their own behavior appropriately. (p. 3)

Approaches to Student Discipline

The belief "spare the rod and spoil the child" was an essential part of the theory and practice of discipline in schools for many years (Chamberlin, 1971; Newell, 1972; Wesley, 1979). Not until 1951 did Fritz Redl and William Wattenberg present the first set of theory-based suggestions to help teachers understand and deal with misbehavior. Prior to the publication of Redl and Wattenberg's (1951) landmark book entitled *Mental Hygiene in Teaching*, "classroom discipline was generally viewed as a teacher's strong efforts to impose behavior requirements upon resistant students, a view held of discipline virtually since the beginning of teaching" (Charles, 1999, p. 17). Charles added, "Although many fine teachers had historically been humane and considerate of students, the common practice was to apply discipline requirements autocratically and somewhat harshly" (p. 17). Redl and Wattenberg pioneered a fresh new look at discipline and helped to establish an enthusiastic interest in a field so relevant to education. It was not long before other researchers and writers began to follow and publish new views on an ancient process.

Over the past 50 years several approaches to student discipline have received respectful review. The following is not an attempt to critique all, but rather to highlight some of the more significant and popular approaches. Some models are more original in design and rely on unique concepts or specific theoretical frameworks. Other approaches refer and give credit to the foundational work of earlier authors but add new ideas and modifications that show evolutionary growth and enhancement.

Redl and Wattenberg: Guiding Students and Groups to Good Mental Hygiene

From their investigations and research, Fritz Redl and William Wattenberg (1951) submitted that a markedly different approach to classroom discipline could help to maintain control and at the same time help students to develop their own self-discipline. In their pioneer work they studied and described how differently students behaved in a group setting compared to being by themselves without the influence of their peers (Charles, 1999). Redl and Wattenberg also identified various social and psychological forces that affect classroom behavior. They took their ideas further and formulated specific disciplinary techniques to help teachers maintain classroom control in the belief that these techniques would strengthen students' emotional growth and ability to work effectively with others.

Redl and Wattenberg (1951) stated:

> Schools are institutions set up by society to help the young acquire the skills, knowledge and attitudes needed in adult living. . . . The very core of good mental hygiene in schools is the way in which learning activities are guided. . . . The art of using school situations to improve the mental well-being is centered in the realization that through mastering their environment children gain freedom to develop with a minimum of distortion. In school that environment is under professional control. Teachers can arrange matters so that the school environment is simple enough to be mastered. Thus, youngsters may gain in confidence. (pp. 187, 207)

Redl and Wattenberg (1951) believed that students in groups behave differently than they do individually: "There is all the difference in the world between dealing with people old or young, one at a time, and working with them in groups of thirty or forty" (p. 209). In classroom groupings, students adopt roles such as leaders, followers, clowns, instigators, and fall guys. Teachers must not only understand these roles and group dynamics, but must also be prepared to deal effectively with them as they affect behavior in the classroom. Redl and Wattenberg suggested that teachers as well play a variety of different roles in the classroom that range from sources of knowledge to judges and juries to surrogate parents. All of these roles have an effect on student learning and behavior. Redl and Wattenberg contended that teachers can have a great influence on classroom control by using a "diagnostic thinking" process that includes (a) following a first hunch, (b) gathering facts, (c) exploring hidden factors (such as a family background, etc.), (d) taking action, and (e) remaining flexible.

Additional techniques that a teacher can use include supporting student self-control with low-key influences such as making direct eye contact, moving closer to misbehaving students, providing encouragement, making use of humor, and in some cases simply ignoring minor misbehavior. Other techniques that Redl and Wattenberg (1951) shared include providing situational assistance to help students over a hurdle, restructuring time schedules, establishing new routines, removing distractive seductive objects, and occasionally removing the student from the situation.

According to Redl and Wattenberg (1951), appraising reality is a teacher influence technique that can help students to understand the underlying causes of their misbehavior and the possible consequences if it continues. Teachers must speak, they

suggested, both openly and frankly about a conflict situation and emphasize classroom limits on behavior. In more severe cases this can be done in individual conferences with the student. They cautioned that in all cases the teacher must be careful to offer ongoing encouragement. Punishment should be used only as a last resort because it is frequently counterproductive. Moreover,

> we must always be aware of the fact that punishment rarely ends an incident. . . . Unless the aftermath is watched we can often be deceived into believing we have achieved results, which we have not. Children are quite likely to show surface deference and good behavior after any such incident. Inwardly, they may be seething with contempt or be bitter at injustice. . . . In view of the higher risk of undesirable results, punishment should be employed rarely and then only with the greatest caution. As a very minimum it should be clear in our minds what we hope to accomplish. This means that there should be some solid reason for believing a particular child really benefits from it. Too often the decision is made on the spur of the moment because a teacher just can no longer stand a type of conduct or the personality of a particular offender. In truth, the real purpose is to relieve tension in the teacher or parent. If that is the case, then the problem is to find some way of establishing emotional balance without damaging children in the process. (pp. 307-308)

Redl and Wattenberg (1951) concluded that "aggressive feelings driven underground often turn up later in fights among children" (p. 308). Finally, they pointed out that wrongful handling of a situation "is rarely disastrous in its effect on a child or a group if it is only occasional, but it can be serious if it is made a matter of principle or if it is repeated persistently" (p. 313).

Dreikurs: Need To Belong, Mistaken Goals, Democratic Teaching, Natural And Logical Consequences

Dreikurs and Grey (1968), Dreikurs, Bronia, and Pepper (1971), and Dreikurs and Cassel (1972) believed that maintaining discipline is essential to the process of educating students. They submitted that discipline is "the foundation of social living. . . .

[Therefore,] the teaching of discipline is an ongoing process, not something to resort to only in times of stress or misbehavior" (Dreikurs et al., 1971, p. 21). Furthermore, "in school, the teacher helps to provide the discipline for studying. Of prime concern is helping the child to develop behavior patterns that are conducive to learning" (p. 22). Dreikurs and his associates believed that classroom discipline meant teaching children a set of inner controls that would provide the student with patterns of behavior that were acceptable to society and would contribute to the student's own welfare and progress. "As teachers, it is necessary to take time for training and teaching the child essentials skills and habits. If this is not done, then the teacher must spend more time correcting an untrained child" (p. 24).

Dreikurs and his co-authors were among the first to explore the underlying causes of student misbehavior. They believed that all human beings have a primary need to belong. "The need to belong or to be accepted is the basic human motivation. . . . Ultimately this develops into a striving to function in and with a group in order to feel worthwhile or have significance" (Dreikurs & Grey, 1968, p. 27).

Dreikurs and Grey (1968) saw the need to belong as a genuine goal of human social behavior. They believed that, once students gain a genuine sense of belonging, they rarely misbehave seriously. If they are unable to attain this genuine goal, students often turned to a series of mistaken goals in an attempt to gain a sense of importance and acceptance (Charles, 1999). "All misbehavior is the result of a child's mistaken assumption about the way he [*sic*] can find a place and gain status" (Dreikurs & Grey, 1968, p. 36).

Students choose their behavior based on their understanding or misunderstanding of the situation at that moment. When students fail to achieve their genuine goal of belonging, they tend to choose other (inappropriate) behavior in the mistaken belief that those behaviors will get them the recognition they desire. Dreikurs et al. (1971), called these erroneous beliefs, mistaken goals. They identified the four mistaken goals that underlie student misbehavior:

- attention getting
- a struggle for power
- revenge
- assumed disability (inadequacy)

When students pursue mistaken goals, their actions are often disruptive and inappropriate. To assist teachers when this happens, Dreikurs et al. (1971) presented a set of tactics to use in confronting mistaken goals while at the same time reorienting the child back to the genuine goal of belonging. These tactics include pointing out to students the mistaken goals that they are pursuing. This can take the form of simply asking them in a calm and respectful manner, "Do you need me to pay more attention to you?" "Could it be that you want to show me that I can't make you complete that assignment?" "Do you want to really hurt me (or others)?" or "Could it be that you want me to believe you are not able or capable of doing that assignment?" By responding in a friendly and nonthreatening manner, Dreikurs believed that teachers could help students to examine their behavior and, in most cases, change it.

Dreikurs et al. (1971) stressed that the best way that teachers can ensure that students reach their genuine goal of belonging is to teach democratically rather than

autocratically or permissively: "A teacher who shares the responsibility for conducting the class with her students does not need this personal display of authority. . . . Only by intergrading everyone into one unit, can all be influenced and advanced" (p. 178). Democratic teaching, they pointed out, encourages the involvement of students in decisions that affect their lives in school. In Dreikurs et al. (1971) "democratic classroom," teachers and students cooperate in making decisions about rules, expectations, procedures, and consequences. The democratic teacher attempts to motivate students from within and help them to develop rules of conduct that enable the classroom group to prosper through a sense of freedom coupled with responsibility.

Dreikurs et al. (1971) posited that good discipline and democratic teaching involve a respect for orderly processes and for the recognition that actions lead to natural or logical consequences. Natural consequences, they stated, are those that occur naturally following behavior. They can bring pleasure or pain or can be neutral. For example, they explained that if a child puts his or her hand on a hot stove and experiences a burning pain, that would be considered a natural consequence. Dreikurs and Grey (1968) suggested that teachers set up with students logical consequences because they, rather than punishment, help to deter misbehavior and motivate appropriate student action: "Punishment usually has no real connection with the misbehavior. It is usually arbitrarily imposed" (Dreikurs & Grey, 1968, p. 73).

Logical consequences teach students that all behavior has a follow-up result. Students learn that appropriate behavior brings rewards, whereas inappropriate behavior brings unpleasant and/or undesirable results. Supportive classroom discipline convinces students that agreement upon logical consequences will follow each time they choose to

misbehave. They learn that poor choices are their decisions and will result in unpleasant consequences. Dreikurs et al. (1971) concluded that in democratic classrooms students know in advance what the logical consequences are because they were involved in the process of formulating them.

Glasser: Basic Needs, Social Responsibility, Choices, Quality Curriculum, Consequences

William Glasser (1969, 1986, 1990, 1992, 1998), the originator of reality therapy, has written several books over many years that describe and modify his theories about education and student discipline. In his landmark publication *Schools Without Failure*, Glasser (1969) explained that schools are in a unique position to "offer students the basic ingredients of self-worth: knowledge and thinking. Schools can be organized to stimulate children to solve problems, both academic and social" (p. 20). He stated that love and self-worth are the two pathways that people have found lead to and nurture a responsible and successful identity. He pointed out that, for most children, there are only two places where they can acquire a successful identity and learn to follow the essential pathways: "These places are the home and the school. If the home is successful, the child may succeed despite the school, but that is too big an if to rely upon" (p. 16). Glasser stressed that "we must ensure that the child's major experience in growing up, the most constant and important factor in his life, school, provides within it the two necessary pathways: a chance to become educated and therefore worthwhile" (p. 16).

Glasser (1969) clarified that, in terms of the school context, "love can best be thought of as social responsibility" (p. 16):

> Teachers and children need not love each other in a narrow family or even narrower romantic sense, but they must learn to care enough to help one another

> with the many social and educational problems of school. Education for social responsibility should be a part of every school program. (p. 7)

If this is not the case, Glasser believed, children will fail to gain successful identities. He stressed that if children do not gain successful identities, they often will follow the pathway of delinquency and withdrawal. To prevent this from happening, students must be given the opportunities to learn responsibilities by constantly evaluating the situations that surround them and choosing a path or plan that they think will be more helpful to them and to others. Given this opportunity, from kindergarten through high school children can become socially aware and responsible and thus require fewer rules and punishments to govern their behavior.

Glasser (1969) pointed out that "reasonable rules, firmly enforced through separation from the program (not punishment) and backed up by problem-solving class meetings, are a necessary part of helping students become responsible" (p. 225). He believed that school and classroom rules must be "reasonable and should be changed when conditions change; they should, when possible, be decided upon jointly by faculty and students; and they should be enforced" (p. 236). Although Glasser strongly supported students' involvement in making the rules, he made it clear that students "do not decide, however, whether or not rules, once established, should be enforced. They may choose to disobey the rules; this choice is open to all. But they then have to accept the consequences of their choice" (p. 232).

As rational beings, according to Glasser (1969), students are in control of their behavior and therefore choose to act in the many ways that they do. Students must come to understand that good choices equal good behavior and bad choices equal bad behavior. Glasser suggested that if educators do not enforce the rules, students will often interpret

this as a demonstration of not caring about them enough to make them accountable and responsible for their social commitments. Students need "teachers who will not excuse them when they fail their commitments, but who will work with them again and again as they commit and recommit until they finally learn to fulfill a commitment" (p. 28). To this end, Glasser suggested "if all else fails and the only discipline that makes sense is exclusion, that this be done with the opportunity for the student to return and try again sometime in the future" (p. 235).

With the publications *Control Theory in the Classroom*, *The Quality School: Managing Students Without Coercion*, "The Quality School Curriculum," and *The Quality Teacher*, Glasser (1986, 1990, 1992, 1998, respectively) extended, refocused, and updated his views on student discipline. He pointed out that, as human beings, "our behavior is always our best attempt at the time to satisfy at least five powerful forces which because they are built into our genetic structure, are best called basic needs" (Glasser, 1986, p. 14). These five basic needs are as follows:

1. Need to Survive (water, food, shelter, safety, security, reproduction).
2. Need to Belong (love, share, care, cooperate, membership in support group).
3. Need for Power (competence, worthfulness, importance, recognition, stature).
4. Need for Freedom (choice, self-direction, responsibility).
5. Need for Fun (enjoyment, pleasure, challenge, good time emotionally and intellectually). (p. 14)

Glasser (1986) believed that satisfying all of our needs requires a constant "give and take." This often produces conflict in our lives as situations arise that force us to choose and satisfy one need at the expense of another, i.e., doing homework versus socializing with friends. Glasser's control theory explanation of behavior is that we always choose to do what is most satisfying to us at the time and to fulfill whatever need we detect is most unsatisfied.

Glasser (1986) argued that educators are overly concerned with discipline and "with how to make students follow rules and not enough concerned with providing the satisfying education that would make our overconcern with discipline unnecessary" (p. 12). He further submitted that

> discipline is only a problem when students are forced into classes where they do not experience satisfaction. There are no discipline problems in any class where the students believe that if they make an effort to learn, they will gain some immediate satisfaction. (p. 12)

A good school is a place where nearly all students feel that by doing some work they are able to satisfy their needs sufficiently and that it therefore makes sense for them to keep working. This position requires both a retooling of the role of the teacher in the classroom and a different curricular focus.

Glasser (1992) believed that quality curriculum consists of learnings that the students find both enjoyable and useful. The rest, he stated, should be discarded as "nonsense." "There is credence in the complaint of students, even very good students, that school is boring and that the basis of this complaint is that they find it superficial" (Glasser, 1986, p. 72). To counteract this, Glasser felt that teachers must engage students much more in curricular discussions and give them opportunities to work on long-term projects together. This can be accomplished by grouping them to work in small learning teams of two to five students.

The basic need to belong provides the initial motivation for students to work together successfully in this way. Stronger students find fulfillment in assisting weaker ones, and these weaker students, in turn, find fulfillment in contributing whatever they can to support the team effort. Glasser (1986) asserted that in the traditional model, when weaker students work alone, their minimal contribution and effort get them nowhere. The

learning-team model provides the structure for students to learn enough in depth and make the connection that knowledge is power. The teacher can organize and change teams on a regular basis so that all students have the opportunity to be on high-scoring teams.

Glasser (1998) also believed that the teacher's role must change from boss teaching to lead teaching. Teachers, he claimed, typically act as bosses, arbitrarily setting the learning tasks, lecturing rather than discussing, grading without student input, and using coercion when students resist or rebel. A lead teacher, he contended, realizes that genuine motivation to learn arises from students' needs and interests being met. To accomplish this, teachers must devote most of their time to organizing interesting materials and activities and providing a great deal of assistance to students. Lead teachers are very involved in discussing curriculum, encouraging students to identify topics of interest to explore, discussing the criteria for quality school work, exploring learning resources for quality work, demonstrating models of quality, emphasizing the importance of inspecting and evaluating their own school work, and ensuring students a noncoercive and nonadversarial classroom setting.

Glasser (1998) further stated that lead teachers engage students in establishing the standards of conduct or rules in the classroom. This begins, he recommended, with a discussion of quality schoolwork and the classroom conditions needed to support learning and quality work. Glasser suggested that teachers also solicit student feedback about what should be the consequences of rule violations and the best ways to remedy problems or conflicts. Once rules and consequences have been agreed to and written out, Glasser proposed that teachers gain a commitment from students by asking them to sign the

document to attest that they understand the rules and will try, with teacher support, to correct any problems. Glasser also believed that holding regular classroom meetings to discuss behavioral concerns is an excellent way to strengthen supportive student conduct. The meetings should always be directed to correcting or improving the classroom learning culture.

Consciously by design, classroom-meeting discussion steers away from blame or criticism. When a student misbehaves, the teacher must interact with him/her in nonpunitive ways with the goal of getting the student back to work as soon as possible. According to Wubbolding (1994), many teachers trained in Glasser's reality therapy approach to discipline have found that intervention focused on asking questions rather than telling is a very successful model:

Ask:	What are you doing? What do you want to accomplish this period (today/week/year)? What do you want from school/teacher/friends/parent?
Ask:	How is your present behavior helping you? Is what you're doing getting your needs/goals met? Is this behavior effective for you?
Ask:	What can you do now to make things better? How can you work things out? What's your plan/next step?

Practitioners of Glasser's approach have found that useful questions assist the student in defining his/her needs and goals. A cardinal sin is asking the student *why* he/she behaved in a certain way. In most cases this results in students' making excuses or blaming others. More effectiveness is found in focusing on the facts of what has happened and where the student can productively go from there. Effective questions help to develop and direct more responsible behavior in the future.

Finally, Glasser (1986) cautioned:

> Teachers should not depend on any discipline program that demands that they do something to, or for, students to get them to stop behaving badly in unsatisfying classes. Only a discipline program that is also concerned with classroom satisfaction will work. (p. 56)

Skinner: Behavior Modification: Stimulus, Response, Reinforcement

Burrhus Fredric Skinner (1971, 1972a, 1972b, 1973, 1974, 1978) is regarded by many to be one of the most influential psychologists of all time. His laboratory experiments and writings have been both insightful and controversial, and his work and ideas on reinforcement can be found in many models of learning and behavior modification. *Behavior modification* commonly refers to the procedures of shaping behavior through the use of reinforcement schedules. This practice has been widely used in a variety of educational, therapeutic, correctional, sport, and business training programs.

Skinner did not specifically study or research the area of student discipline, but his ideas and discoveries in shaping and reinforcing human behavior have played a major role in student learning theory and classroom discipline practices. Skinner (1972a) did, however, state that to support and improve student behavior, a teacher must construct the kind of environment that would bring the child under some kind of control:

> As you know very often a classroom will these days get just about out of control. . . . It's very hard to keep children from talking out, running around and so on. Hard to get them to do their homework at night and bring it in. These are the kinds of management problems which we are failing at the moment to solve. . . . This is because we have not been able to find positive reasons for doing the kinds of things that students need to do in order to learn. Those reasons can be supplied by simply examining the situation, finding out what in it is actually reinforcing and then making those reinforcers or rewards contingent on the behaviors you want. (audiotape recording)

Skinner (1973) further proposed that educators "make sure that the child is reinforced for coming to school, for sitting down, getting to work and learning something" (videotape recording). To do this,

> you have to set up some conspicuous rewarding or reinforcing contingencies and you can do it with tokens or with credit points or personal approval or something of that kind. . . . Now you have to make it very explicit in the beginning. Something as conspicuous as a token he [sic] can pocket or exchange for something at lunch time. . . . You can discover things which will be reinforcing to students at any level. You can have special foods at lunchtime, access to play space or privileges to associate with other kids of your choice. [These are] the kinds of contrived reinforcers that can be used temporarily to get the kinds of behaviors which will then eventually have their own natural consequences. . . . Fortunately for us all, the human organism is reinforced for just being successful at something. . . . You can't start there but that's where you want the child to move as fast as possible. (videotape recording)

Skinner (1972a) even went so far as to suggest that educators use money as a reinforcer:

> I myself would not object to paying students for right answers. . . . Suppose for example you decide that a child who does homework is to get a little ticket which indicated that a credit will be given to his family of which he gets 10% himself to spend. And suppose this amounts to several dollars a day for a student who really gets down to work and learns something. Wouldn't that be an extremely efficient use of educational money? . . . Often teachers complain that the family or the home is not involved in education. Well, can you imagine the involvement at the breakfast table when say three children are going off that day to school and are going to come back with chips indicating the family is now eight to ten dollars better off than it was when they left in the morning and the children themselves of course picking up some of this to spend. I see no objection to this really. (audiotape recording)

Skinner (1971) believed that learning and conditioning are significantly affected by reinforcing stimuli. Voluntary acts, which he called operants, are powerfully influenced by stimuli received by the organism immediately after the operant is emitted. He demonstrated that a wide variety of behaviors can be shaped in a desired direction by applying reinforcement systematically. Skinner's research provided many principles of

learning that led to the development of behavior modification. Many neo-Skinnerians took these principles and applied them effectively to the area of classroom management and disciplinary control (Charles, 1999; Martin, 1981).

Classroom systems of behavior modification using Skinnerian principles rest on the belief that learning results from the interaction between behavior and environment. *Behavior* refers to all operant or voluntary student actions, and *environment* refers to all the circumstances, conditions, events, and activities that come immediately before and after an operant behavior occurs. The relationship between behavior and environment can be viewed as a three-component sequence: A (stimulus) → B (response) → C (reinforcement). *Stimulus* refers to the antecedent environment before a behavior occurs, *response* refers to the emission of a behavior, and *reinforcement* refers to the environmental consequences that follow or are a result of the behavior.

Behavior and environments have an effect on each other. Some consequences strengthen behavior and make it appear more commonly and frequently, whereas other consequences weaken behavior and make it less likely to appear. A change in behavior that results from the consequences that follow a behavior is called *learning*. Learning is thus synonymous with *behavior change* or *modification* (hence the term *behavior modification*). The relationship and interaction between environment and behavior that result in learning are reciprocal. Behavior is affected by environmental consequences just as the environment is affected by behaviors that occur within it.

Operant behavior is a voluntary action, not simply a responsive reflex. Consequences, which strengthen operant behaviors, are called *reinforcers*. *Reinforcement*

refers to the process of supplying reinforcers to individuals after they have performed a particular action or behavioral pattern.

There are two kinds of reinforcement: positive and negative. *Positive* reinforcement is the process of supplying a stimulus that reinforces behavior and strengths its emission in the future. Positive reinforcers in a classroom environment can range from verbal comments and tangible objects to credit points for future privileges. *Negative* reinforcement (wrongly associated with punishment) is the process of removing something following an operant that results in the probability of the operant behavior being strengthened or reoccurring more frequently in the future (i.e., "Because everyone worked hard without any disruptions during the past 30 minutes, I will not assign any homework tonight."). The homework assignment is taken away as a reward for sustained on-task behavior. As a result of this consequence, students are more likely in the future to be on task without engaging in disruptive action.

Schedules of reinforcement refer to the patterns of how and when reinforcement is provided. Different schedules of reinforcement are used to affect behavior in different ways. Consistent reinforcement is applied every time an appropriate behavior takes place. This schedule is most often used initially to establish a behavioral pattern. Once a new behavior has been learned, it can most often be maintained by using intermittent reinforcement, in which the reinforcer is provided only occasionally.

Shaping. Behavior modification techniques that use Skinnerian principles to shape and reinforce desired classroom behavior generally follow a simple sequence:

- Teacher observes student(s) displaying desired behavior (or close approximation).

- Teacher immediately provides reinforcement to the student(s).
- Student(s) reinforced this way are more apt to repeat behavior.

The key to behavior modification lies in discovering what reinforcers or consequences work best for individual students or groups of students.

Extinction. Behaviors can also be reduced in frequency or eliminated from occurrence through the process of *extinction*. Extinction refers simply to the nonreinforcement of a particular behavior. When a student's inappropriate behavior produces no discernible effect on his/her immediate environment, it very often weakens and eventually discontinues. Through ignoring and paying no observable attention to a student's constant call for help ("Teacher, teacher!"), the classroom teacher can often eliminate disruptive and annoying behavior.

Punishment. Educational history has many examples of the use of punishment to stop or reduce the frequency of undesirable behavior(s). Highly criticized as a corrective technique, punishment has been used in an attempt to weaken the inappropriate behavior of chronically disruptive and/or aggressive students. Charles (1999) advised that punishment be used only as a last resort when all else fails: "Punishment has no part in behavior modification except in rare instances where individuals are exceedingly difficult to teach" (p. 72).

Generally speaking, there are two types of punishing consequences. Type A punishment occurs when aversive stimuli (punishers) are added to the environment following the display of undesirable behavior. An example may be a teacher's yelling at and ridiculing a student in front of his/her peers (which causes embarrassment) following an act of "clowning" behavior in class. Another example may be a teacher's requesting a

student to pick up all of the papers off the classroom floor at the end of the day for a week as a result of the student's being caught throwing a spitball across the room. In both cases an aversive consequence is added to the student's immediate environment following an inappropriate behavior.

Type B punishment entails the removal of something pleasant from the student's environment as a result of that student's behavior in class. An example is the removal of "math manipulatives" from a student's desk following the observation that he/she is playfully using them as toy airplanes. Another example, using the same incident, is the removal of the student from the classroom with the request that he/she stand in the hallway for a period of time. In both cases some pleasant aspect of the student's environment has been removed as a consequence of the student's off-task, playful behavior.

An obvious drawback to using punishment is that it generally teaches students what not to do rather than teaching and reinforcing what the teacher wishes the student to do. Some teachers falsely assume that if you punish a student for off-task behavior he/she will learn to be more on task in the future. In most cases this does not happen. Many students who are punished for being off task simply learn to be more discreet about their actions to avoid being caught.

Most behaviorists accept that punishment is not a positive learning strategy. Used excessively, punishment leads to avoidance, anger, resentment, revenge, inactivity, and/or withdrawal. In most cases socially appropriate and productive behaviors must be directly taught and positively reinforced.

Although the negative side of punishment is obvious, it still may be necessary to employ under conditions of excessive disruption or danger to self or others. Responsible teachers cannot simply ignore constant interruptions, offensive acts, or aggressive behavior. In such cases it may be necessary to withdraw or even restrain a student to safeguard the welfare and security of others. Classroom expectations and advanced warnings of possible consequences must always precede punishment. These give students an opportunity to correct their behavior and avoid the unpleasant consequences of punishment.

Momentary "time-out" is one form of punishment that has been found to be fairly effective without being perceived as an overly aversive technique. Many teachers claim success in removing or timing-out a student from the classroom for short periods of time (usually 5-30 minutes). If inappropriate behavior continues in the time-out area, the period of time (5-30 minutes) will begin only after the student has settled down and maintains self-control. This applies as well if the student loses control at any point during the time-out phase. It is therefore important to start with an acceptable, age-appropriate timeframe. For a time-out to be effective, however, the classroom environment must be perceived by the offending student to be generally reinforcing and a place where he/she wishes to be.

By making efforts to provide conditions that reinforce desired classroom behavior, a teacher can significantly improve general student conduct. The range of reinforcers that a teacher may use are many. Generally speaking, they fall into the following categories:

1. Nonverbal recognition	Smile, nod, pat, wink, handshake, thumbs up, eye contact
2. Verbal recognition	"Excellent work," "Well done," positive phone call to parent
3. Preferred activities	Extra recess, social time, gym time, art, discussion, free reading, watching a nature film, movie, special field trip
4. Tangible	Positive note to parent, certificate, stickers, school-labeled pencils, pen, candy, food, used magazine, books, various garage-sale items to be auctioned off or drawn for
5. Token/graphic	Points, plastic chips, coupons, check marks, stars that graphically display progress or can be traded in for tangible items, activities, lottery draws, and auctions.

Charles (1999) emphasized that applying behavior modification to classroom settings generally produces successful results even when used sporadically. Of course, it works best when used regularly and in a systematic manner. Charles grouped organized systems of classroom behavior modification into five categories:

1. **Catch 'em being good** involves high-frequency reinforcing of students who are observed demonstrating desirable behavior. Primary students respond well to lavish public recognition. Older students generally respond positively when

they are reinforced privately or as a group rather than being "spotlighted" in front of their peers.

2. **Rules-ignore-praise (RIP).** Once classroom rules are established and understood, the teacher looks to reinforcing students who comply with the rules while ignoring those who do not follow or break the rules. This approach generally works better at the early elementary level and with students who are not overly difficult to manage.
3. **Rules-reward-punishment (RRP)** positively reinforces those students who behave desirably while providing negative consequences to those who misbehave. If it is explained well, students realize that it is their prerogative to follow or break the rules. In this way they choose the positive or negative consequence that follows. This approach generally works well at all grade levels, and most students perceive it as a system of setting fair limits.
4. **Token economies** are well-defined and organized systems that allow students to earn credit for demonstrating appropriate behavior. Through the accumulation of recorded points or tangible tokens, students become very aware of their progress and target their credit saving toward items or activities for exchange. Some token economies are designed as a one-way system that rewards only appropriate behavior. Other systems are two way and incorporate the component of "penalty" whereby students are fined for inappropriate action and therefore lose defined amounts of accumulated credit. When they are well organized and managed, token economies have been

found to be effective in both elementary and secondary settings as well as in behavioral correctional facilities.

5. **Behavior contracts** are generally used with individual students who are more difficult to manage. Like contracts in general, the terms of expectation, rules, rewards, punishment, deadlines, and work-completion dates are clearly described and confirmed. The contract is signed by the student and teacher, and often by the parent, school counselor, and principal as well. Quasi-legal terminology is sometimes used to enhance the formal and serious tone of the agreement.

Kounin: Dimensions of Teacher Behavior That Affect Student Behavior

Jacob Kounin (1970, 1977) was instrumental in researching and identifying several teacher behaviors that have a significant effect on student behavior. Using the findings from direct observation, interviews, and videotape analysis of hundreds of classrooms, Kounin and his research associates were able to highlight and show correlations between teacher behavior and its resultant effect on students.

Kounin's (1970) research interest in this area grew out of what he described as "The Accident," an unintended event that occurred in one of his college classrooms. After reprimanding a student for reading the newspaper during class, Kounin was surprised by the major observable impact that it seemed to have on other students in the room. This led him to research what he called teacher desists and the ripple effect (p.2). He used the term *desist* to designate a teacher's doing something to stop a misbehavior. The term *ripple effect* refers to the effect of this desist event upon other members of the classroom.

Kounin (1970) conducted research on desists and ripple effects in a variety of settings that ranged from kindergarten to college and from summer camp to elementary and high school classrooms. The results from this research, however, were mixed and not what Kounin had expected: "All the experiments demonstrated that different techniques of handling a misbehaving student produced different kinds of effects upon audience students" (p. v). In the kindergarten study, for example, he found that the ripple effect was influenced by the clarity, firmness, and anger of the teacher desists. Clarity and firmness produced more appropriate behavior and less deviation on the part of the audience, whereas anger produced work disruption and signs of emotional upset. On the other hand, these results were not found in the summer camp studies. With this group there did not appear to be any noticeable ripple effect following a camp counselor's desists, nor did variations in desist techniques make a difference. At the college level a mild ripple effect was discernible, whereas at the high school level desists did not relate to ripple effects. Kounin reported, however, that, for secondary students, ripple effects were related to how well the students liked their teachers.

Following the analysis of videotapes from many elementary classes, Kounin (1970) found no relationship between the qualities of desist and ripple effects on other children. This is not to say that all desists failed to affect student behavior. On the contrary, some desists with certain teachers were very effective, whereas the same desist with another teacher proved ineffective. Kounin concluded that these studies justify the statement that whether a desist is effective or ineffective is not dependent upon the qualities of the desist technique as such (except for anger that produces discomfort), but rather upon other dimensions of classroom management, related commitments, or

prevailing variables. He added that learning this involved unlearning on his part "in the sense of having to replace the original question by other questions. Questions about disciplinary techniques were eliminated and replaced by questions about classroom management in general" (p. 143).

Kounin (1970) proposed that studies of adult-child relationships, of which discipline is one facet, "cannot be separated from the milieus in which they occur and the major roles of central adults in these milieus. An understanding of teacher-child relationships must be based upon research conducted with teachers in classroom settings" (p. 142). He further stated, "We are not justified in arriving at conclusions about teacher-child relationships in classrooms, from studies, conducted with parents in homes, counsellors in offices, psychotherapists in clinics or recreation leaders in recreation settings" (p. 142).

By refocusing and analyzing hundreds of hours of videotaped classroom interactions, Kounin (1977) subsequently found specific dimensions of teacher behavior that correlated significantly with classroom management success as measured by work involvement, deviancy rate, contagion of misbehavior, and effectiveness of desists. These dimensions of classroom management were techniques relating to such issues as programming learning-related variety with intellectual challenge, managing activity movement, demonstrating knowledgeability of what was going on regarding children's behavior, attending to more than one issue simultaneously, and maintaining group focus. Kounin indicated that, to his knowledge, the correlation between these classroom-management dimensions and student behavior was higher than any previously identified

teacher attribute or student consequence in any previous study. Kounin (1977) described these dimensions as follows:

1. **Withitness and overlapping:** These dimensions demonstrate to students that the teacher knows what is going on in all parts of the room regarding student behavior as well as being able to attend to two different issues simultaneously. Kounin (1977) believed that teachers with very good classroom control seem to have the proverbial eyes in the back of their head. He added, however, that teacher awareness by itself is not enough. Students must be provided with communication that convinces them that the teacher does indeed know what is happening everywhere in the classroom. Selecting the proper student(s) for correction, attending first to the more serious deviancy when two or more misbehaviors are occurring simultaneously, and timing a desist to prevent misbehavior from spreading or getting out of hand are all very important in exercising the dimension of withitness and overlapping.
2. **Momentum and smoothness:** In videotape analysis of elementary classrooms, Kounin (1977) found a daily average of 33.2 major changes in learning activities that involved either the whole class or official subgroups of the class (i.e., moving from whole-group reading to subgroup seatwork to changing subject or student focus). This count did not include nonacademic activities such as recess or collecting fund-raising money and so on.

   Because of the high number of transitions that occur regularly, momentum and the smoothness of activity change correlated highly with student behavior and control. *Momentum* refers to teachers' getting an activity

going quickly, moving it along progressively, and bringing it to closure or transitioning to another activity. *Smoothness* refers to the steady flow of lessons without slowdowns, speedups, overdwelling, jerkiness, abrupt changes, or disturbing distractions that interfere with the flow.

Kounin (1977) found momentum and smoothness to be especially important in classroom control during lesson presentations as well as during transitions from one activity to another. He indicated that, within this dimension, it is more important for the teacher to maintain momentum by avoiding actions that slow down forward movement than it is to maintain smoothness by avoiding sudden stops and starts. He also found that techniques of movement management are more significant in controlling deviancy than are techniques of deviancy management by themselves. Movement management, he added, has the additional value of promoting work involvement.

3. **Group altering and accountability:** Kounin (1977) believed that a classroom teacher's main job is to teach groups of students rather than tutoring individuals. Sometimes the group is the entire class, and at other times it is a number of subgroups. This group focus, he felt, is very important to the management of the class as a whole. By cleverly asking questions, a teacher can gain the attention of the whole group, yet confirm the understanding of individual students at the same time. For example, a teacher may hold up a stack of flash cards and ask, "I wonder who can tell me what this word is?" The teacher pauses, looks around the group for a moment, and selects one

student by name: "James." James says, "Mat." The teacher says, "That's correct. Now I want each of you to write down three words that rhyme with *mat*. When you have done this, please raise your hand."

As the students are thinking and writing, the teacher circulates and observes the work in progress while smiling and nodding encouragingly at correct responses, and then asks, "Who can give me one word that rhymes with *mat*?" followed by, "Who has another one?" By asking questions in this way, the classroom teacher manages to hold the attention and involvement of all students. Group altering of this nature holds each student accountable for active involvement in the lesson.

4. **Programming to avoid satiation:** Kounin (1977) found that students are more apt to misbehave if they are bored or satiated with the lesson or activity. Students become tired and restless if they get too much of something or find an activity too easy or frustratingly difficult. Teachers who present instructional material with enthusiasm, challenge, and variety can postpone or avoid activity satiation. Kounin identified several categories of variety that effective teachers use: reading aloud, answering teachers' questions, writing, discussing, demonstrating, rehearsing skills, and solving problems.

Kounin (1977) confirmed that the dimensions of withitness and overlapping, momentum and smoothness, group alerting and accountabilities, and programming to avoid satiation all have a supportive effect toward inducing work involvement and preventing deviancy. These dimensions apply equally to boys and girls as well as emotionally disturbed and nondisturbed students. However, Kounin's results did point

out that these aspects of teacher style are more significant in recitation settings than in seatwork settings. He believed that these techniques of classroom management help to create an effective classroom ecology and learning milieu and that if teachers work hard on keeping students attentive and busy, they will spend much less time dealing with misbehavior and deviancy. These techniques, he said, are necessary tools that enable a teacher to do many different things with children. They far outweigh disciplinary techniques in their power to influence the behavior of children in classrooms.

Kounin (1977) concluded that "the possession of group management skills allow the teachers to accomplish her [*sic*] teaching goals—the absence of managerial skills acts as a barrier" (p. 145). In addition, "If there is a climate of work involvement and freedom from deviancy, different groups of children may be doing different things and the teacher is free to help individual children if she [*sic*] so chooses" (p. 145).

Ginott: Classroom Cooperation Through Congruent Communication and Sane Messages

Haim Ginott (1972) was a leading advocate for effective communication in building solid classroom discipline. He popularized the point that teachers can show students that they still care and respect them even when they strongly disapprove of their behavior. Ginott advised teachers that, in handling disciplinary matters, they must take caution to address the situation, not the character of the child:

> A teacher can be most destructive or most instructive in dealing with everyday disciplinary problems. His [*sic*] instant response makes the difference between condemnation and consolation, rage and peace. Good discipline is a series of little victories in which a teacher, through small decencies, reaches a child's heart. . . . For in the last analysis, who is a true disciplinarian? He [*sic*] who can move children from terror to trust. (pp. 48, 151)

Ginott (1972) believed that in every classroom encounter or conflict a teacher must ask himself or herself, "How can I be helpful right now?" (p. 179). This approach avoids simply finding who is at fault or what punishment is going to be meted out. Ginott felt that teachers need to become experts in preventing dissension, watchful of crisis escalation, and masters of conflict resolution. Managing disciplinary matters can present opportunities to convey values, provide insights, and strengthen self-esteem.

Ginott (1972) stressed that the focus of classroom discipline must always be to share congruent communication and sane messages. The cardinal principle of congruent communication is that it addresses the situation and not the character or personality of the child. Sane messages are communications from teachers that encourage students to trust their own perceptions and feelings of reality. Teachers, at their worst, use insane messages when they blame, preach, command, accuse, belittle, and threaten. Insane messages teach students to deny their feelings and to base their sense of self-worth upon the judgments of others. For example, if two students are talking during a period that a teacher has designated as quiet study time, a sane message in a calm voice might be, "Please, this is quiet time. We need to be absolutely silent. Thank you!" An insane message might express in a raised angry voice, "Stop that talking at once! I will not tolerate this in my class! You obviously have no consideration for others! Be quiet or get out!"

Supportive classroom discipline is attained over time through a series of little victories with students, according to Ginott (1972). Effective teachers invite students' cooperation by describing the situation and what needs to be done. These teachers constantly promote humaneness within students. Ginott urged teachers to invite

cooperation from students rather than simply demand it. He maintained that the most important factor in improving classroom behavior is the level of a teacher's self-discipline. If teachers constantly model courtesy, respect, cooperation, and responsibilities, as well as handle misbehavior and crisis in calm, fair, and reasonable ways, students will begin to display civil behavior themselves.

When problems of misbehavior do arise, Ginott (1972) advised, teachers must take on a solution-oriented focus and avoid making preachy speeches. "Effective discipline requires that in moments of crises, teachers remain laconic. Strength is not conveyed by long explanations or arguing. Authority calls for brevity. To be firm is to be succinct" (p. 158). An appropriate example of a teacher stopping a fight would be to use a terse command in a tense voice and say, "No fighting and no hitting. It's against the values of this classroom. Use words not fists" (p. 58).

Ginott (1972) strongly emphasized that teachers need to be very positive with students rather than negative and that praise should be appreciative rather than evaluative. He separated the two by explaining that appreciative praise does not describe the student, but instead directs attention to the student's work or effort (e.g., "John, I found the words you used in your paragraph to be very specific, which gives me a very clear image of the beautiful mountain scene you described" versus "Great work, John"). Ginott viewed evaluative praise as worse than no praise at all, for it produces anxieties in the student ("Can I live up to this?") and creates dependency ("I'm no good unless the teacher praises me.")

Ginott (1972) did not believe in using punishment with students. Punishment, he felt, only produces hostility and vengefulness and, as a result, thwarts the student's desire to improve:

> Misbehavior and punishment are not opposites that cancel each other; on the contrary, they breed and reinforce each other. Punishment does not deter misconduct. It merely makes the offender more cautious in committing his crime, more adroit in concealing his traces, more skilful in escaping detection. (p. 151)

Ginott maintained that when students are punished they resolve to be more careful in the future, not more honest and responsible. He recommended correcting by directing to handle mistakes and misbehaviors that occur in the classroom. To correct misbehavior, a teacher simply needs to tell students respectfully what they should be doing instead of focusing on the inappropriate behavior (e.g., "Let's finish the questions on page 265; there will be plenty of time for talking at lunch").

Ginott (1972) summarized his philosophy in the following words:

> I am the decisive element in the classroom. It is my personal approach that creates the climate. It is my daily mood that makes the weather. As a teacher I possess tremendous power to make a child's life miserable or joyous. I can be a tool of torture or an instrument of inspiration. I can humiliate or humour, hurt or heal. In all situations it is my response that decides whether a crisis will be escalated or de-escalated, and a child humanized or de-humanized. (p. 15)

Finally, Ginott wisely cautioned educators not to expect instant results. True discipline, he argued, occurs over time as genuine changes take place within the hearts of students.

Canter and Canter: Assertive Discipline: Rules, Recognition, and Consequences

Lee Canter and Marlene Canter (1976, 1992, 1993) were among the first to popularize the idea that students have the right to learn in an orderly environment and that teachers have the right to teach without consistent disruption from inconsiderate and unruly students. "As a teacher today, you must empower yourself to . . . create the

learning environment needed to guarantee your right to teach and your students' right to learn" (Canter & Canter, 1992, p. 12).

Canter and Canter's (1992) model of assertive discipline provides teachers with a set of understandings and procedures to support classroom discipline through the establishment of reinforced expectations as well as defined consequences for the purpose of correcting student misbehavior. They strongly emphasized the building of trusting and helpful relationships between teachers and students. This, they believed, could be accomplished by attending to student needs, establishing clear classroom rules of behavior, teaching students how to behave properly, regularly reinforcing appropriate and productive behavior, assisting students and setting limits to their misbehavior, and establishing an overall classroom climate of mutual trust and respect.

Canter and Canter (1992) believed that, for students to grow academically, socially, and emotionally, teachers must be willing and able to set limits while at the same time providing students with warmth and support. Students need to know that the teacher will recognize and reinforce positive behavior just as they will intervene, limit, and refuse to accept inappropriate, disruptive behavior. They recommended that teachers take the guessing out of the behavioral equation by ensuring that students know, without doubt, what the classroom teacher expects of them behaviorally:

> The goal of a classroom discipline plan is to have a fair and consistent way to establish a safe, orderly, positive classroom environment in which you can teach and students can learn. . . . Your classroom discipline plan . . . will recognize your individual needs as a teacher, and the needs of your particular students. Above all, a classroom discipline plan stresses positive recognition as the most powerful tool at your disposal for encouraging responsible behavior and raising student self-esteem. (p. 43)

Canter and Canter (1992) described three different teacher-response styles and their impact on student discipline, which they labeled as hostile, nonassertive, and assertive, the first two being reactive and the latter being proactive. Hostile teachers, they said, view their students as adversaries. They are rigid, authoritarian and "iron fisted." They use discipline to control students rather than teaching them to behave in socially supportive ways. There is no sense of happiness or joy for either the students or the teachers in such classrooms. Hostile teachers most often react to problems and blame the students, the parents, and/or the administration for difficulties experienced in classes.

Nonassertive teachers take on a very passive or "wishy-washy" approach to dealing with students (Canter & Canter, 1992). Nonassertive teachers do not clearly communicate expectations or standards very well. They allow certain behaviors one day while trying to prevent them the next. They do not provide firm and supportive classroom leadership, but rather are constantly reacting inconsistently to the many disruptions that occur throughout the day. Over time, both teacher and students are left feeling confused and dissatisfied.

Assertive teachers, on the other hand, clearly, confidently, and consistently state their expectations to students and back them up with actions (Canter & Canter, 1992). They treat students with kindness, consideration, and respect. Students know that they will be recognized for their efforts and accomplishments and that assertive teachers will not tolerate disruptive students who stop them from teaching or interfere with other students' learning. There is little confusion about the roles and responsibilities surrounding conduct and behavior. As a result, there is a high sense of confidence, cooperation, and motivation to learn in the classroom.

Canter and Canter (1992) indicated that no teacher responds in a hostile, nonassertive, or assertive manner all the time, in all situations. They advised that teachers understand and become aware of these response styles so that they can shift their response mode when they find themselves reacting unproductively to student behavior.

Canter and Canter's (1992) assertive discipline approach consists of three parts: (a) confirmation of rules that students are expected to follow, (b) positive recognition for following the rules and behaving appropriately, and (c) consequences that follow when students choose to break rules and act inappropriately. Canter and Canter recommended that the consequences be a "discipline hierarchy" (p. 88) that lists, in order, what will be imposed for inappropriate behavior over the course of the day for elementary students or during the period for secondary students. Figure 1 shows examples for both elementary and secondary students.

Elementary

Sample Discipline Plan for Elementary Students

1. Classroom Expectations

Follow all instructions.
Keep personal body parts & objects to yourself.
No put downs.

2. Positive Recognition

Verbal praise
Positive written communication to parents
Positive written communication to students
Spend lunch time with teacher
Select classroom seating position on Friday

3. Consequences

First time:	Warning
Second time:	Last to leave room for recess or lunch
Third time:	10 minute time-out
Fourth time:	Parent/guardian contacted
Fifth time:	Send to administrator

Secondary

Sample Discipline Plan for Secondary Students

1. Classroom Expectations

Follow all instructions.
Be on time for class.
Do not use profane language.

2. Positive Recognition

Verbal praise
Positive written communication to parents
Privilege card

3. Consequences for Rule Violations

First time:	Warning
Second time:	1 minute detention after class
Third time:	2 minute detention after class
Fourth time:	Parents/guardian contacted
Fifth time:	Send to administrator

Figure 1. Discipline hierarchy for elementary and secondary students (adapted from Canter & Canter, 1992).

Canter and Canter (1992) strongly supported the frequent use of positive recognition and attention to students who behave in accordance with classroom expectations. "Catch them being good" increases self-esteem, encourages good behavior, and helps to build a positive classroom climate. Consequences, on the other hand, are prompts or penalties that the teacher initiates when students interfere with the instruction or learning. Canter and Canter explained:

> Consequences must be something that students do not like, but they must never be physically or psychologically harmful. . . . If consequences are to be effective, if they are to be a helpful tool in teaching students how to behave in your classroom, they must be presented to students as a choice, i.e.:
>
> Teacher: "Carl, our classroom rule is to keep your hands to yourself. If you poke someone, you will choose to sit by yourself at the table. It's your choice."
>
> Carl: "Okay." (Within a minute, Carl is poking the student next to him.)
>
> Teacher: "Carl, you poked Fred. You have chosen to sit by yourself at the table." (pp. 80-81)

In addition, Canter and Canter (1992) suggested other intervention techniques:

- The look: With a firm expression on his/her face, the teacher establishes sustained direct eye contact with the student, which gives the message, "I see what you're doing and don't approve of it."
- Physical proximity: The teacher moves very close to the student, thus nonverbally prompting him/her to get back on task.
- Proximity praise: The teacher's praising others close to a student who is off task generally has the effect of prompting the offender back to work.
- Mentioning the student's name: Including a student's name in an instruction generally encourages that student to become involved in the task at hand.

- Time-out: The teacher removes a disruptive student from the group for a period of time (5-10 minutes).
- Behavior journal: The teacher asks the student to think about his/her actions and to write in a logbook the reasons that he/she acted that way and what alternative action would have been more appropriate.

Canter and Canter (1992) believed that the above approach works well with most students. For the small percentage of difficult-to-handle students who have a need for (a) extra attention, (b) firmer limits, and (c) greater motivation, the classroom teacher must provide additional support. Canter and Canter suggested getting to know such students better (by using a student interest inventory), greeting them regularly as they come into the class, taking a few minutes a day (recess, lunchtime, or break time) just to talk with students, and making encouraging phone calls and home visits. These students, they suggested, also need firmer limits that are imposed consistently in nonconfrontational ways. Canter and Canter also reasoned that reinforcing the limits quietly and privately helps to de-escalate the need for students to show how tough and defiant they can be.

Canter and Canter (1992) further recommended high levels of praise and recognition for effort and accomplishments to motivate difficult students. Greater progress is possible when assignments are well within their ability level and they believe that the teacher has confidence and faith in their capabilities for success.

As with most skills, a teacher must be prepared to teach appropriate behavior directly. Specifically instructing students on how to behave and confirming what is and what is not appropriate will make many would-be problems simply disappear. Canter and

Canter (1992) pointed out that it is best to meet with a difficult student in a one-on-one conference-like setting with the goal of ensuring that the student gains insight into his/her behavior. They suggested that through calm discussion that highlights the problem behavior, providing a rationale for change, modeling desirable behavior, checking for understanding, and reinforcing the students' efforts, success with difficult students will be greatly enhanced.

Coloroso: Rules, Respect, Responsibility, and Resolution

Barbara Coloroso's (1983, 1994, 1999) approach to discipline is based on supporting students in managing and controlling their own behavior. Coloroso believed that inner discipline develops by guiding and encouraging students to take responsibility and ownership for their actions. Teaching children *how* to think, not simply *what* to think, is critical to their development. Her humanistic method strongly supports students' taking charge of their lives by making decisions, learning how to solve problems, and accepting the logical and realistic consequences that follow. Preserving the dignity of and respect for children is central to Coloroso's (1994) approach: "Because they are children, and for no other reason, they have dignity and worth simply because they are" (p. 7).

Coloroso (1983, 1994, 1999) distinguished clearly the difference between discipline and punishment. Discipline, she contended, shows students what they have done wrong, gives them ownership of the problem, gives them options to solve the problem they created, and always leaves their dignity intact. Punishment, on the other hand, is adult oriented, requires judgment, imposes power from without, arouses anger and resentment, and invites more conflict. Punishment teaches the child that "might is right" because the adult demonstrates that he/she is able to control the child through

force. The child's most common responses to punishment are fear, fighting back, or fleeing.

Coloroso (1983) believed that for children to develop a high esteem, they need to personally develop a sense of positive power and that having and accepting responsibilities helps to build and enhance this power. Responsibilities grow when students say what they mean, mean what they say, and do what they say they will do.

Coloroso (1983) stressed that the teacher's approach to managing a classroom makes a big difference to student behavior: "Teachers must like what they are doing, do it well, establish limits and maintain consistent, clear ground rules, . . . stop misbehavior in time, . . . make statements not judgments, . . . and provide materials that are relevant, realistic and appropriate for the students (p. 16). She proposed that teachers confirm and formalize a plan for how they will work with students and manage the class. Her approach includes and recommends the following:

1. *Rules and consequences:* Establish a set of specific rules to guide the class. Involve students in this process and restrict the rules to what can be seen or heard. Consequences for violations should meet the RSVP standard: They must be reasonable, simple, valuable, and practical.
2. *Class discussions:* Students need the opportunity to discuss rules and consequences to truly understand their implications. They must believe that responsible behavior is a reasonable choice available to all.
3. *Misbehavior and violations:* Are to be dealt with as quickly as possible in the following way:

- Assist students in seeing what they did wrong.
- Give students ownership for the problem that they created.
- Assist them in generating solutions to the problem.
- Always leave their dignity intact.

More serious infractions must incorporate the three R's of restitution (fix what is done wrong), resolution (confirm how to prevent it from happening again), and reconciliation (apologize and help heal the people who have been hurt).

4. *Mistakes:* Assist students in accepting that to err is human and sometimes even beneficial. Mistakes allow students to understand themselves and the world better, thereby giving them the opportunity to learn and grow from the experience.
5. *Problem solving:* Assist students in accepting and understanding that a problem needs a plan and a solution, not another excuse. A six-step problem-solving strategy is recommended:
   - Articulate the problem.
   - List possible solutions.
   - Evaluate the options.
   - Select an option.
   - Create a plan and implement it.
   - Evaluate the problem/solution outcome and what was learned as a result.
6. *Consistency:* In establishing a discipline plan, teachers must strive for the highest level of clarity, understanding, and consistency of implementation.

Types of teachers. Coloroso (1983, 1994, 1999) contended that there are three types of teachers: Jellyfish, Brickwall, and Backbone. Each interacts with students in different ways, with corresponding levels of success.

1. *Jellyfish teachers* are wishy-washy educators who interact with students and manage their classrooms with few confirmed expectations, limitations, and follow-through consequences. Students are rarely held accountable for their actions because enforcement of standards is very relaxed. Students more or less get their own way. When the teacher is sufficiently provoked, he/she often responds with idle threats, putdowns, bribes, or lecturing. Jellyfish teachers fail to empower their students and thereby take on most of the classroom responsibilities and duties themselves. Chaos and inconsistency most often rule the day.
2. *Brickwall teachers* are authoritarian, rigid, impatient, and inflexible and use power, position, fear, and coercion to control students in their class. They demand that students simply follow their rules with blind obedience. Dialogue and discussion for understanding seldom take place. When rules are broken or patience is pushed, the teacher most often resorts to public threats, humiliation, or punishment. The climate in the classroom is often tense, with students generally feeling that they are not listened to or cared for. Students are simply told how to think and what to do with little regard for their feelings.
3. *Backbone teachers* provide sufficient coaching support to students in an attempt to build accountability, responsibility, and self-reliance. The

classroom operates around rules and expectations that are generated by both teacher and students following discussion and understanding. Students are given many opportunities to make decisions and practice responsibility. They are regularly encouraged and praised for their successes. Backbone teachers always credit students for their right choices and hold them responsible for their mistakes or misbehaviors. Students learn how to think for themselves and solve problems by taking ownership of decisions and choices on a daily basis.

Types of misbehavior. Coloroso (1994) identified three general types of misbehavior that are common to students: mistakes, mischief, and mayhem.

1. *Mistakes* are common errors in judgment with no deliberate attempt to cause harm or break the rules. When a student, for example, loses a book borrowed from the teacher or the library, it is generally the result of the student's not taking enough care with the transport or storage of the book. Regardless, for students to learn to be responsible and take greater care, they must be held accountable for the loss and make up in an age-appropriate way for their mistake.
2. *Mischief* is intentional misbehavior that is usually not seriously disruptive, harmful, and/or damaging. It is usually motivated by a spirit of fun, albeit at someone else's expense. When a student spontaneously grabs an object that belongs to a fellow classmate, which results in a momentary disruptive physical struggle for its return, the initiating student will generally argue that he/she was "just fooling around and having some fun" and further conclude

that "it's no big deal." Such a student must be given the opportunity to learn that snatching someone else's property for his/her own amusement and sporting pleasure is inconsiderate of others and overall disruptive to the learning process. With teacher support, the student should be provided with the opportunity to form a plan and make a decision to bring the incident to a close. This may range from an apology to a more serious consequence, depending on other details related to the incident.

3. *Mayhem* is conscious, intentional misbehavior that is more seriously disruptive, harmful, and/or damaging. It can be the result of a snowballing act of mischief that continues to get worse or the malicious act of a bully or vandal. As with less serious misbehaviors, the student who causes the mayhem must be given the opportunity to express his/her thoughts and feelings and identify a possible plan for resolution. Coloroso suggested that the 3Rs of justice be applied to mayhem misbehavior:
   - restitution (fix what is done wrong)
   - resolution (confirm how to prevent it from happening again)
   - reconciliation (apologize and help heal the people hurt)

   Depending on the aftermath of the mayhem, the student's plans may be accepted or rejected. For example, if a student has committed a crime, police involvement and arrest may be inevitable and unavoidable.

The three cons. Even when misbehaving students are treated with compassion, care, dignity, and respect, they will often try to get themselves off the hook for their inappropriate actions. Coloroso (1994) grouped and described such diversionary tactics

as "The Three Cons." Con 1 includes begging, bribing, weeping, and wailing: "Please, oh please, give me another chance. I promise never to do it again." If a Con 1 fails, they will often attempt a Con 2, which can be identified as an emotionally explosive verbal demonstration of anger and aggression: "I hate you! This class sucks! Wait till my mom hears about this; she'll have you fired!" When Con 2 does not work, a desperate student will often resort to a final Con 3, which can best be described as the "silent sulk": "Go ahead; see if I care what you think! You can't make me do anything!"

In all cases the classroom teacher must not give in to a Con 1, get hooked into a Con 2 by lashing back in anger or resorting to his/her own Con 1 or 2 when the student starts to sulk (e.g., "Oh, come on, let's try and be reasonable here. Let me help you through this and get you back on track"). The best thing that a teacher can do is to model calm and controlled behavior by redirecting the student to the problem-solving process. Failing that, Coloroso (1994) recommended that the teacher implement a reasonable consequence in a matter- of-fact way.

Coloroso's (1994) approach to discipline maintains that student ownership of behavior is essential to healthy growth and development. Accountability and responsibility provide the opportunities that students need to learn how to live cooperatively with others and solve any problems that arise. Because educators are significant adults in the eyes of students, how teachers handle discipline models many things for students. Teachers can significantly impact social learning by masterfully modeling how to solve problems and deal with life's traumas. Coloroso believed that appropriate disciplinary practices help students to be respectful, caring, responsible, resourceful, and resilient human beings. Punishment, she believed, simply removes vital

opportunities to learn integrity, wisdom, compassion, and mercy, all of which contribute to inner discipline. Coloroso (1999) concluded that "discipline, on the other hand, helps children learn how to handle problems they will encounter throughout life" (p. 227).

Jones: Enforcing Classroom Standards and Building Patterns of Cooperation

Fredric Jones's (1987a, 1987b, 1996) model of positive classroom discipline emphasizes the importance of four integrated areas of teacher skills: classroom structure, limit setting, cooperation/responsibility/incentives, and backup systems. Jones (1987a) noted that "classroom discipline, simply stated, is the business of enforcing classroom standards and building patterns of cooperation in order to maximize learning and minimize disruptions" (p. 8). He believed that a classroom teacher is a disciplinarian out of necessity: "Discipline begins before the students are seated in the morning and does not end until the room is empty in the afternoon. It comes as part of the territory" (p. 8). For many years Jones and his associates studied classrooms as a social system in an attempt to understand the subtleties of why success or failure was taking place. Their observations and findings led Jones to postulate that any classroom grouping has the potential to develop positively or to become a problem depending on how it is handled. Jones explained that teachers are skilled craftspeople and, as such, must possess many skills to execute their duties efficiently.

Jones (1987a) further pointed out that the most prevalent problem in classrooms is not the big-crisis problems that teachers, administrators, and media like to share or reflect on. He did not deny that these severe problems exist from time to time, but contended that they are not the most common or important discipline problems that teachers face. Jones believed that if educators focus only on big disruptions, they "will be resolutely

looking right over the most crucial issue in discipline management, which is right under our noses. The most important and costly type of discipline problem in any classroom is the small disruption" (p. 27).

Jones (1987a) found that approximately 99% of class disruptions fall into the categories of talking to neighbors, being out of seat, taking a break from work, tapping a pencil, passing notes, and playing with an object smuggled into class. In a typical class, Jones found between a quarter and a third of the students "goofing off during any given minute of the day" (p. 27); in a rowdy classroom this exceeds 50%. In research that studied nonproblem English, math, and social studies classes in a suburban junior high school that fed a high school that produced more national-merit scholars than any other in the United States, Jones reported the range of time on task for all classrooms studied varied from 0.45 to 0.58.

Jones (1987a) also discovered that most lessons have few problems as long as the teacher is actively teaching, which he described as a structured lesson in which the teacher is taking the responsibility for explaining, modeling, and specifically prompting students on the curricular material. During such time, few misbehaviors occur. Jones found that it is when the teacher directs students to work on their own that hands go up, students start talking to each other, out-of-seat behavior appears, and goofing off begins. To help teachers to avoid inattentiveness, off-task behavior, and dealing with pupil misbehavior, Jones identified four skill clusters for teachers that keep students positively involved in learning. They are as follows:

Classroom structure. Jones (1987a) believed that the best way to manage misbehavior is to prevent it from happening in the first place. By teachers' setting up a

structured classroom, he believed, many problems can be avoided. Such a classroom would be organized around general and specific rules that are taught and rehearsed to mastery. Jones felt that rules should be limited in number but sufficient to clearly outline and detail the expectations and standards for assignments and behavior. In every aspect of the classroom, students should know exactly how to proceed and conduct themselves (e.g., how to ask for assistance or the proper method of cleaning test tubes to avoid contaminating the next class's experiment).

In a structured class students are responsible for as many classroom chores as possible. Jones (1987a) observed that this helps to promote a sense of belonging and self-worth. Effective teachers delegate many portions of the workload and tasks to students. "Never do anything for a student that they are capable of doing for themselves" (p. 52).

To eliminate the time (approximately 5 minutes) that is typically wasted at the beginning of each class after the bell rings, Jones (1987a) recommended that teachers establish opening routines that get the students quickly involved and focused (e.g., three to five review questions from the last period or a short daily quiz). With the students immediately engaged, he suggested, the classroom teacher can take the first few minutes to deal with clerical concerns or late students.

Jones (1987a) also pointed out that the arrangement of the room is very important to a structured class because allowing for movement and proximity to students helps to prevent a great deal of misbehavior and off-task behavior before it starts. It is essential to the structured classroom that desks and furniture be arranged in a manner that allows for numerous pathways and intersections for teachers to efficiently move across the room.

Limit setting. Jones (1987a) commented that as much as rules *define* limits, they do not *establish* limits. Teachers can establish limits by constantly communicating with students through the primary dialogue of body language. Most classroom misbehavior occurs some distance away from the teacher. Teachers who either move regularly toward students who are prone to misbehave or move such students closer to where the teacher is located are less likely to have such students acting out in their class. Physical proximity, eye contact, facial expressions, and body posture are all important to setting and enforcing limits with students, Jones found.

According to Jones (1987b), effective teachers constantly eyeball the classroom, looking for irregularities or potential problems. Most students are uncomfortable with a teacher's looking directly at them and as a result will continue on task or get back on task when this happens. Like eye contact, a teacher's facial expression and body posture convey many messages to students. A brow frown and tight lip send an unmistakable message of disapproval. Similarly, teachers who stand erect with their arms crossed in front of them and gently nod their head from side to side as they look directly at students send a very clear signal to students to stop goofing off and get back to work. Conversely, a teacher's smile and chin nod send a message of approval to a student who is working on task and completing the assigned work. A teacher's body language is often all that is necessary to enforce and reinforce the limits of the classroom. As Jones indicated, body language is a subtle language that we all "speak." To learn how to mean business in the classroom, teachers need to learn a great deal about their body language.

Jones (1987a) pointed out that limit setting is a gentle and compassionate way to eliminate or reduce inappropriate behavior. In failing to set limits, he concluded that a teacher has only three options:

1. Teach well and reward well.
2. Pester, warn, and punish.
3. Reduce behavioral standards and accept what you get from students.

Cooperation/responsibility/incentives. Jones (1987a) saw cooperation rather than control as the central issue in the management of classroom discipline. Control deals with the issue of stopping unwanted behavior, whereas cooperation means that the students take it upon themselves to do what is expected of them. Cooperation is always voluntary and under the control of the other person. Cooperating students act appropriately and voluntarily without being forced or coerced. For this reason, Jones believed that cooperation is synonymous with responsibility and that, if students do not accept and carry out their responsibilities, the classroom teacher winds up being responsible by default. Therefore, he stated, it is very important that teachers become experts at reinforcing cooperation with students. He proposed that the best way of doing this is for teachers to create and manage incentive systems in their classroom: "an incentive system that gets everybody to do what they are supposed to do, when they are supposed to do it, to the teachers' standards as a result of simply having been asked" (pp. 145-146).

Jones (1987a) described incentive systems, whether simple or complex, as based on Grandma's rule of finishing dinner before you get any dessert. A simple incentive system, in his view, is based on the first three of the following components, whereas a complex system includes all five:

- the expectations, rules, and/or task
- the reward/reinforcer
- evaluation of the results
- bonus
- penalty

Jones (1987a) emphasized that group incentive systems are much more manageable and efficient than individually based systems because they are built on the notion that what is good for one will be good for all. A good incentive prompts students to act in particular ways, but is held back if they fail to do so. Jones further asserted that genuine incentives are things that students truly prefer (e.g., free time, extra recess, etc.) rather than things that teacher often hold in high regard (e.g., "Let's work hard so we can be proud of our results"). Jones advised teachers to avoid using tangible rewards, which are both expensive and often awkward to manage and distribute.

A reinforcer that he found to work well in elementary through high school is an activity reward that he referred to as *preferred-activity time* (PAT). PAT is a time-based opportunity for students to enjoy a specific activity (art, film, game, current-event discussion) or each other's company (social time). With a classroom incentive system reinforced by PAT, cooperative responsibility, goodwill, and relationship building are all enhanced. PAT can take place for the last 5-10 minutes of the day or period or be accumulated over a longer period that allows for an educationally based field trip excursion. When PAT is used skillfully, extra earned time becomes a bonus and withdrawn time is a meaningful penalty.

Backup systems. When all else fails, Jones (1987a) recommended that teachers have a preplanned backup system: "A backup system is a systematic, hierarchic organization of negative sanctions (from small to large) which has as its function, rendering the escalation of unacceptable behavior futile" (p. 256). Backup systems may engage all parties responsible for the child; that is, the teacher, parent, principal, police, and social services. Although the hierarchic strength of a backup system is meant to meet "force with greater force," it is designed to provide students with maximal opportunities to change and correct their misbehavior.

Jones (1987a) outlined and described backup systems as three-tiered structures of classroom, school and district, and law-enforcement sanctions. He cautioned educators to be careful of the use or abuse of and/or reliance on backup sanctions because such systems are destined for failure when they are too harsh in nature and are used reactively rather than proactively. When they are used appropriately, backup systems help to support both the student and the conditions around the student. Jones offered the following examples of backup sanctions:

- private/semi-private warning
- threat of letter or phone call home
- time out in classroom (5 minutes)
- time out in a colleague's room (15-30 minutes)
- parent conference
- collaboration with principal
- in-school suspension
- Saturday school

- out-of-school suspension
- delivering a student to a parent at work
- parent supervising student at school for a day
- police support
- expulsion

Kohn: Cooperative Community versus Controlled Compliance

Alfie Kohn (1993, 1996) is a former teacher who turned his energies to writing, lecturing, critiquing, and often strongly criticizing major educational issues. He is a popular speaker at educational conferences and is much interviewed by the audio, visual and print media. He has sharply criticized traditional approaches to discipline, referring to them as *bait-and-switch* or *carrot-and-stick* techniques.

Kohn (1996) believed that most discipline approaches, both past and present, rely heavily on punishment and rewards and that it is now time "to dig beneath the methods of discipline and take a look at the underlying goals" (p. 54) of discipline. Kohn contended that when teachers are asked what their long-term goals are for students, they invariably want students to become self-reliant, responsible, caring, creative, confident, critically thinking, and open to new ideas. Common disciplinary approaches, Kohn (1993) argued, are "worthless at best and destructive at worst for helping children develop such values and skills" (p. 161).

Kohn (1993) warned that the punishment and reward approach simply brings about temporary compliance and obedience to teacher rules, which he saw as thoughtless conformity. The real goals of education are undermined, Kohn argued, by the hidden classroom curriculum that expects students to keep quiet, not move, stay busy, and do

what the teacher asks. "The hidden curriculum dictates that teachers do not spend their time helping children to become caring and responsible, but on maintaining discipline" (p. 164).

Kohn (1993) believed that once the classroom is set up as a place where students are simply expected to obey rather than engaging in significant classroom decision making, teachers will rarely abandon this autocratic approach later. He supported the position of Silberman (1970; as cited in Kohn, 1993):

> Far from helping students to develop into mature, self-reliant, self-motivated individuals, schools seem to do everything they can to keep youngsters in a state of chronic, almost infantile, dependency. The pervasive atmosphere of distrust, together with rules covering the most minute aspects of existence, teach students every day that they are not people of worth, and certainly not individuals capable of regulating their own behavior. (p. 164)

Kohn (1993) argued that this approach simply teaches many children to "shut up and do what they are told" and criticized most classroom management programs as being exercises in extrinsic control. He was harshly critical of the Canter and Canter's (1992) assertive discipline approach and claimed that it is

> a combination of bribes and threats to enforce rules that the teacher alone devises. Children are rewarded for mindless obedience; the names of students who fail to obey are written on the blackboard for all to see; questions or objections are dismissed as irrelevant. All problems in the classroom are attributed to the students, and punishments imposed on them are said to result from their choices. (p. 165)

Furthermore, Kohn (1996) stated, "Even when judged by the narrow criterion of getting children to conform, the evidence suggests that assertive discipline is not terribly effective" (p. 57).

Kohn (1996) contended that, besides the fact that most compliance-directed discipline approaches are punitive and coercive, they do not assist students in reaching

the important goals of schooling. We should want our students to be critical thinkers and to possess a genuine understanding of themselves and others: "No one says, I want my kids to obey authority without questions, to be compliant and docile" (p. 61). Moreover, "the more we manage students behavior and try to make them do what we say, the more difficult it is for them to become morally sophisticated people who think for themselves and care about others" (pp. 61-62).

Constructivist approach. As an alternative to the traditional reward and punishment approaches, Kohn (1996) challenged educators to consider thinking beyond conventional discipline. He spoke in favor of a constructivist model, which supports learning by allowing students to construct knowledge and skills from their own experiences. Students are active meaning makers who test theories and try to make sense of themselves and the world around them. "Learning comes from discovering surprising things—perhaps from grappling with a peer's different perspective—and feeling the need to reformulate one's own approach" (p. 66). Through experiences like these, "skills are acquired in the course of arriving at the deep and personal understanding and in the context of seeking answers to one's own questions" (p. 66).

Kohn (1996) maintained that a constructivist approach to learning can best be developed in an educational environment that is built on the foundation of community, "a place in which students feel cared about and are encouraged to care about each other. They experience a sense of being valued and respected . . . [and] thus feel connected to each other; they are part of an 'us'" (p. 101). By abandoning teaching that does things to students and replacing it with cooperative engaging instruction that involves students in

decisions and curricular choices, a teacher can work with students to develop a democratic learning community that rarely demands compliance.

Kohn (1996) identified the most distinguishing feature of such a learning community as the amount of input that students have. Children of any age want a say in matters that concern them. Kohn emphasized that working with students is more successful and meaningful to their development than simply doing things to them. "The alternative to discipline is to treat an inappropriate act as a problem to be solved together—but that is predicated on the experience of being together" (p. 104). He added, "Giving students more control over their lives, more choices about how things are done in the classroom, can indeed be filed under Discipline, Practical Alternatives to" (p. 83). Kohn postulated that misbehavior will decline when students are given more decision-making opportunities. Student behavior tends to be more respectful when students are included in the decision-making process and sense that their struggle for autonomy is not being threatened.

Classroom meetings. Key to the success of a cooperative learning community is the classroom-meeting forum. Regularly scheduled, as well as impromptu, meetings allow for information and ideas to be shared. Kohn (1996) perceived classroom meetings as an opportunity for students to plan activities and events together, a vehicle to assist in helping students to make decisions as well as work out problems that arise, and a forum for reflection as students review past decisions and look at future directions.

Curriculum of studies. Kohn (1996) believed that one of the most significant instigators of misbehavior lies in the materials that teachers ask students to learn. The culprit in most of these cases, he pointed out, is that the work is either too simple and thus

very boring, or too difficult and therefore very frustrating for an individual or group of students. Ample research has shown that "when behavior problems arise in the classroom, one of the first factors to be examined should be instructional procedures and materials and then appropriateness for the offending students" (Center, Deitz & Kaufman, as cited in Kohn, 1996, p. 19). Students' attention is often diverted elsewhere when a task is either too difficult or too boring. Kohn (1993) recommended that teachers first acknowledge this condition and ask themselves what they can do to make the task more engaging and interesting for students: "When teachers use a variety of assignments that offer the right amount of challenge students are given the opportunity to feel a sense of accomplishment" (p. 220). Furthermore, "That feeling of having worked at something and mastered it, of being competent, is an essential ingredient of successful learning" (p. 220).

Structure versus control. Kohn (1996) suggested that a student's need for autonomy and the teacher's need for structure can be met by including both parties in decisions that affect the operation of the classroom. He proposed using the following criteria to balance out the need for structure and limits versus the need for control:

> Purpose: A restructure is more legitimate if it reflects a need to protect children from injury as opposed to simply imposing a limit for its own sake.
> Restrictiveness: The general rule of thumb is—the less restrictive the better.
> Flexibility: Overall age appropriate structure makes sense, as long as it doesn't impede the opportunity for flexibility of the moment.
> Developmental Appropriateness: Choices and decisions should well reflect the developmental capabilities of the student they affect.
> Presentation Style: Voice tone, physical posture, facial gestures and examples used all affect how students will react to teacher communication.
> Student Involvement: The most important distinguishing factor that separates structure from control is the amount of input that students have. As much student involvement as possible is the guiding light rule. (pp. 86-87)

Solving problems together. Kohn (1996) recognized that even the best of teachers experience problems with students, often because of other influences that affect students such as family, peers, or popular cultural norms. In working through problems with students, educators must ask, "How can we work with students to solve this problem? How can we turn this into a chance to help them learn?" (p. 21). Kohn then offered the following 10 suggestions.

1. Establish a relationship of trust, caring, and respect with students. Students must feel that they are accepted and valued as genuine members of the class.
2. Model and develop with students the skills of listening carefully, remain poised and calm, generate suggestions, and imagine someone else's point of view.
3. Diagnose what has happened and why. In a respectful relationship built on trust, a teacher can gently ask students to speculate about the way they acted.
4. Question your own practice. Be willing to look beyond the obvious situation in front of you. Is there something about the class that is aversive to the student, and if so, what could possibly be done to improve it?
5. Maximize student involvement in deciding how to resolve the problem. Increasing student involvement generally increases the possibilities for a meaningful and lasting solution.
6. Assist students in generating an authentic solution that fits the circumstance surrounding the problem. Do not settle for simple responses such as "Sorry" without asking open-ended questions that reflect on the student's motive and commitment to future change.

7. Explore ways that the student can make restitution and reparation for his/her actions. Examine how he/she might restore, replace, repair, clean up, or make a sincere apology. Making amends is an important part of the problem-solving process and helps children to learn how to treat others responsibly.
8. Follow up later to find out whether the problem-solving plan worked and determine whether additional strategies are needed. Reflection of this nature helps students to gauge the effectiveness of their solutions for the present and the future.
9. Be flexible with the logistics and process of problem solving. Sometimes it is more appropriate to delay a discussion or invite a written response than to forge ahead at the moment.
10. Use control interventions only as a last resort. Occasionally, despite a teacher's best efforts, a student is persistent in repeatedly disrupting the class. In such cases the teacher may need to remove the student from the room temporarily. The teacher's tone of voice should be warm and regretful, and the teacher should express confidence that the two of them can eventually solve the problem together later.

Beyond discipline. Kohn (1996) strongly believed in the creation of classrooms where students feel valued, involved, cared for, supported, and safe. Such classrooms become social learning communities where student input is strongly encouraged and highly regarded. The teacher's focus and time is devoted to creating a classroom culture "where problems are unlikely to occur as opposed to rehearsing responses to those that do occur" (p. 136). Both students and teachers feel that they are valued and contributing

members of a democratic community highlighted by an engaging curriculum and a caring and cooperative atmosphere that provides a great deal of latitude for choice and personal expression. When this happens, Kohn concluded, "we can move beyond discipline" (p. 37).

Summary

A review of the educational literature indicates that views surrounding student discipline have changed over the years. Historically, student discipline was conceptualized through a punitive lens and generally seen as a teacher's punitive efforts to impose behavioral standards upon resistive students. Most schoolteachers, clergy, and parents commonly accepted the simplified notion of "spare the rod, spoil the child." When a teacher thought it necessary, there was no hesitation in applying corporal punishment with a switch, paddle, or strap.

Over the past half century several new approaches to student discipline have received respectful review and acceptance by teachers. They rely more heavily on managing the dynamics of classroom interactions and the development of cooperative relationships among all members of the class grouping. These updated models, however, have not eliminated teachers' concern for student behavior. Student conduct and disciplinary issues continue to be reported as the most stressful aspect of a teacher's job and a key factor in many teachers' decision to leave the profession early.

Effective classroom discipline is essential to student learning and success. Because teachers are held responsible by the public and through the Alberta School Act (Province of Alberta, 1999) to maintain order and discipline with their students, we as educators must continue to pursue information and understanding of this primary aspect

of the teaching profession. My research has examined how excellent teachers view student discipline and what they do to create a culture of cooperative and supportive student behavior in their classrooms. The findings contribute to the growing body of knowledge on student discipline that will assist teachers in constructively reviewing their own disciplinary practices.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Interest and Personal Background

The topic of student discipline has been an area of great interest to me ever since I began my career in education over thirty years ago. Whether I was in the role of classroom teacher, school counselor, school district psychologist/consultant or school principal at all three levels of elementary school (K-Gr. 6), junior high school (Gr. 7-9), or senior high school (Gr. 10-12), I have found that, on a day-to-day basis, no other arena of education carries as much concern, drama and emotion as the subject of student behavior and discipline. Student discipline captures our attention because it deals daily with right vs wrong, appropriate vs inappropriate, respect vs disrespect, responsibility vs irresponsibility, and order vs disorder. The domain of student discipline can make or break success in the classroom and, in some cases, make or break a teacher. What I found confusing and, at times, very frustrating is how something that gets so much of our attention and energy, can be so misunderstood. This caused me, on numerous occasions, to ask myself the question, "What really is student discipline?"

I have long had a desire and quest to learn and understand more about student discipline. Although I have been actively engaged in student discipline on a day-to-day basis for over three decades, I did not wish to end my career with an "unchallenged construction" of student discipline. In pursuit of greater understanding, I asked, "What would excellent teachers have to say about student discipline?" I chose excellent teachers to work with because I have found over the years that excellent teachers are, for the most part, well-respected by students, staff and parents. They demonstrate, by example, what

is possible to achieve with children. I have also found excellent teachers to be very open, honest and freely giving of their thoughts, beliefs and classroom practices. My experience has also been that excellent teachers have far fewer problems with the behavior of students then their colleagues across the hall. With that background, I stepped forward with great excitement to qualitatively learn more about this fascinating topic.

Definitions

In this study I have examined the thoughts, beliefs, and practices of excellent teachers on the topic of student discipline. For the purposes of this study, the following definitions apply:

Participant/excellent teacher

- One who has been teaching in a public school classroom setting for a minimum of ten (10) years or more.
- One who has been awarded the distinction of "finalist" for an Excellence in Teaching Award selected by a committee made up of representatives from the following:
  - Alberta Learning
  - Alberta Teachers' Association
  - Council of Alberta Teaching Standards
  - Alberta School Boards Association
  - College of Alberta School Superintendents
  - Universities Coordinating Council
  - Association of Independent Schools and Colleges

- Alberta Home and School Councils Association

Researcher

- A graduate student in the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, University of Alberta, completing a research dissertation for the degree of Doctorate of Education.

Qualitative Inquiry

Qualitative research inquiry is rooted in the belief that human beings construct social realities in the form of meanings and interpretations. Unlike quantitative research which assumes that features of our social environment have an objective reality that are reasonably static over time and settings; qualitative inquiry assumes that social constructions are transitory, situational and much more subjective (Gall, Borg & Gall, 1996). Qualitative research relies heavily on data in the form of descriptive words as opposed to statistical numbers that make up much of the data in quantitative research. In qualitative inquiry, greater emphasis is placed on description, interpretation and discovery and less on hypotheses and verification. Qualitative methods are especially useful in understanding human phenomena and the meaning that people give to experiences they are associated with (Rudenstam & Newton, 2001).

Qualitative research is a respectable process of inquiry in its own right. It relies on narrative description and the interpretation of that description. Results of the research contain quotations from data to highlight, illustrate and substantiate meanings and understandings (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Bogdan & Knopp, 1982). By carefully listening, questioning and understanding the perspectives of participants, qualitative researchers are always looking to get a better overall inductive understanding of the

subject matter at hand. The product of a qualitative research is "a complex, quilt-like bricologe, a reflexive collage or montage—a set of fluid, interconnected images and representations. This interpretive structure is like a quilt, a performance text, a sequence of representations connecting the parts of the whole" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 6).

Gee (1996) referred to discourses as ways of coordinating and integrating words, signs, acts, values, thoughts, beliefs, attitudes, and social identities, as well as gestures, glances, body positions, objects, and settings. My research involved qualitative methods of inquiry to study the thoughts, beliefs, and practices of excellent teachers on the topic of student discipline. I wished to better understand the complex realities (perceptions, thoughts, beliefs, and practices) of excellent teachers in this focus area. As Glesne (1999) stated:

> Reality is socially constructed, complex and ever changing. To understand the nature of constructed realities, qualitative researchers interact and talk to their participants about their perceptions. . . . Qualitative research investigates the poorly understood territories of human interaction. Like scientists who seek to identify and understand the biological and geographic processes that create the patterns of a physical landscape, qualitative researchers seek to describe and understand the processes that create the patterns of human terrain. (pp. 5, 193)

Constructivist Paradigm

The paradigm of inquiry to which this research adhered lay in the "shadow" of constructivism. As Schwandt (2000) explained:

> We are all constructivists if we believe that the mind is active in the construction of knowledge. . . . Constructivism means that human beings do not find or discover knowledge so much as construct or make it. We invent concepts, models and schemes to make sense of experience and, further, we continually test and modify these constructions in light of new experiences. (p. 197)

Guba and Lincoln (1994) identified the aim of constructivist inquiry as

> understanding and reconstruction of the constructions that people (including the inquirer) initially hold, aiming toward consensus but still open to new interpretations as information and sophistication improve. The criterion for progress is that over time, everyone formulates more informed and sophisticated constructions and becomes more aware of the content and meaning of competing constructions. (p. 113)

Nelson Goodman is cited as being the most responsible for defining the contours of constructivism (Schwandt, 1994). Goodman (1978; as cited in Schwandt, 1994) proposed that "worldmaking as we know it always starts with worlds already on hand; the making is a remaking" (p. 126). According to Goodman (1988; as cited in Schwandt, 1994), our cognitive quest should not be to seek "to arrive at an accurate and comprehensive description of 'the real' readymade world" (p. 126), but rather to advance our present understanding

> from what happens to be currently adopted and proceed to integrate and organize, weed out and supplement, not in order to arrive at truth about something already made but in order to make something right—to construct something that works cognitively, that fits together and handles new cases, that may implement further inquiry and invention. (p. 127)

As with other constructivists, Lincoln and Guba (1985) believed that what a person asserts to be real is a construction in the mind of the individual. Guba and Lincoln (1989; as cited in Schwandt, 1994) stated that constructions "do not exist outside of the persons who create them and hold them; they are not part of some 'objective' world that exists apart from their constructions" (p. 128). Schwandt listed the following properties of constructions:

1. Constructions are attempts to make sense of or to interpret experience, and most are self-sustaining and self-renewing.

2. The nature or quality of a construction that can be held depends upon "the range or scope of information available to a constructor, and the constructor's sophistication in dealing with the information" (p. 71).
3. Constructions are extensively shared, and some of those shared are "disciplined constructions" (p. 71); that is, collective and systematic attempts to come to common agreements about a state of affairs (e.g., science).
4. Although all constructions must be considered meaningful, some are rightly labeled *malconstruction* because they are "incomplete, simplistic, uninformed, internally inconsistent, or derived by an inadequate methodology" (p. 143).
5. The judgment of whether a given construction is malformed can be made only with reference to the "paradigm out of which the constructor operates" (p. 43); in other words, criteria or standards are framework specific, "so for instance a religious construction can only be judged adequate or inadequate utilizing the particular theological paradigm from which it is derived" (p. 143).
6. One's constructions are challenged when one becomes aware that new information conflicts with the held construction or when one senses a lack of intellectual sophistication needed to make sense of new information (p. 129).

Within the constructivist paradigm, the process of inquiry unfolds through the interactive exchange of participants. Schwandt (1994) described this as the "dialectic of iteration, analysis, critique, reiteration, reanalysis, and so on leads eventually to a joint

(among inquirer and respondents) construction" (p. 129). Accepted truth is a matter that results at any given time from the best-informed and most sophisticated construction on which there is consensus. "Findings or outcomes of an inquiry are themselves a literal creation or construction of the inquiry process" (p. 128).

Lambert (2002) declared that, through the process of constructing meaning, we evoke the imagination: "Through imagination we discover our questions and our capacity to entertain the possibility that things could be different" (p. 64). She added that "conversation is the major approach to constructivist change as conversations host meaning making; [this includes] conversations with self" (p. 4). Moreover,

> reflection and self-construction are the central purposes of the personal conversation and this requires that we consider 'conversations' with the self in this domain. . . . Conversation is discovery, constructed in interaction with self and one another.
>
> Personal conversations take many forms; they can be the complete conversation of two colleagues talking through an idea, a preplanned conversation about teaching . . . or, a personal conversation might be . . . a postobservation conference. . . . The purpose of the postobservation of teaching conference, particularly, is the construction of meaning, of self-reflection and sense-making. (p. 8)

Lambert (2002) suggested that dialogue is perhaps the most elegant form of conversation: "In dialogue we listen, seek to understand and hold our assumptions in the air of critique. We do not seek decisions, actions or justifications. The promise of dialogue is that we may invent visions of what could be" (p. 71). She explained that the purpose of dialogue is to seek a better understanding of something, which requires the discipline of careful listening following the asking of thoughtful questions.

Zimmerman (2002) also highlighted the importance of "sustained listening" as part of the constructivist process:

> The constructivist leader's goal is to explore meaning with others as a way of deepening understanding, producing clarity, or reframing thinking. By using linguistic moves and being conscious of language choices, a leader creates spirals of meaning that are continuously formed and re-formed. . . . The linguistic moves of questioning and paraphrasing, which are designed to fold back the meaning, serve as simple rules to change the jumble of sentences into meaning making contexts. . . . In addition, these moves demand a specific type of listening—that of attending to the other. . . . To inquire, we must listen deeply to the other person's message. . . . Thus, silence and suspension of ones inner critique are essential linguistic moves as well. . . . As constructivist leaders, we listen differently. Consequently, we learn to silence our own inner chatter to achieve momentary stillness. With a quiet mind, we can focus deeply on other voices, searching for themes and ideas, finding boundaries and intersections and seeking frictions and incongruities. (pp. 89-98)

Ontology and Epistemology

The ontological question of research asks, What is the form and nature of reality? What can we know of this reality? Guba and Lincoln (1994) stated that "if a 'real' world is assumed, then what can be known about it is 'how things really are' and 'how things really work'" (p. 108). From the paradigm of constructivism, they further asserted that realities are relative and dependent for their form and content on the individual persons or group holding the constructions. Constructions are not more or less "true" in any absolute sense, but simply more or less informed and/or sophisticated. Constructions are alterable, as are their associated "realities."

For the purposes of my research I listened to, observed, and interacted with the participants to gain an understanding of how they perceived student discipline through their own lived experience in the classroom.

Epistemology seeks to understand the nature, grounds, and limits of the relationship between "the knower or would-be knower and what can be known" (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 108). Viewed through the lens of constructivism, epistemology is transactional and subjective. "The investigator and the object of investigation are

assumed to be interactively linked so that the 'findings' are literally created as the investigation proceeds" (p. 111). Through the inquiry methods of interview and observation, a meaningful and insightful construction of the participants' world surrounding student discipline emerged.

Research Design

Research design networks a flexible set of guidelines that connect a paradigm of thought to strategies of inquiry and methods for collecting data (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). This research study can primarily be classified as an interview design. Although some classroom observation was used in the design strategy, the purpose of the observation was to formulate additional questions for a follow-up interview. Interviewing the participants immediately after I observed them interacting with students stimulated additional discussion that provided a more in-depth understanding of their beliefs and practices with regard to student discipline.

"Interviewing is one of the most common and powerful ways we use to try to understand our fellow human beings. . . . The interview becomes both the tool and the object" (Fontana & Frey, 2000, p. 645). Interviews can be set up to be structured, semi-structured, or unstructured. This research used primarily a semi-structured interview design, which

> has the advantage of being reasonably objective while still permitting a more thorough understanding of the respondent's opinions and reasons behind them. . . . The semi-structured interview is generally most appropriate for interview studies in education. It provides a desirable combination of objectivity and depth and often permits gathering valuable data that could not be successfully obtained by any other approach. (Borg & Gall, 1989, p. 452)

The principal advantage of interviewing is its adaptability: "An interview permits you to follow-up leads and thus obtain more data and greater clarity" (Borg & Gall, 1989, p. 452). By using interview and observation in combination with each other, I was able to establish a broader and deeper base of participant responses. As Fontana and Frey (1994) stated, "An increasing number of researchers are using multi-method approaches to achieve broader and often better results" (p. 373). My research goal was to understand, compare, and contrast each teacher's personal constructions on the subject of student discipline in an attempt to gain a greater understanding and more sophisticated construction of this important educational topic.

I used qualitative data collection with a selected group of six teachers. Two teachers from each of the three tier levels of elementary school (K-Grade 6), junior high school (Grade 7-9), and senior high school (Grades 10-12) composed the group of six. The six participating teachers were selected on the basis of their availability and willingness to participate in the research. I informally secured their willingness to participate first, followed by formal written consent to participate in the study (Appendixes A, B, C, and D).

Selection of Participants

Anyone who has been taught by, worked with, or had the opportunity to observe, believes they know an excellent teacher when they experience one. However, it is not easy to formally evaluate teacher excellence due to a complex set of interacting factors that include political, social, research, theory, legal and measurement issues (Good, & Brophy, 2003). At the present time, there does not exist in the field of education, a universally accepted standard or measurement instrument to confirm an "excellent

teacher." The best we can do, at present, is to rely on the opinions of those that work along side and closest to outstanding teachers. I believe that parents, teachers, colleagues, supervisors, and principals intuitively know who the excellent teachers are in their schools. It would, however, benefit the profession of education to research this area more extensively so that, in the future, excellent teachers could more easily be identified. For the purposes of this study, I identified excellent teachers as those who attained the distinction of being selected as a finalist for an Excellence in Teaching Award (Alberta Learning, 2003).

There are a number of steps that lead to an educator being selected as a finalist. A teacher who is thought by others to be an excellent teacher must be nominated by a group of local individuals who are well-acquainted with the skills and talents of the nominee. Each nomination package must contain supporting documentation from a teacher colleague, school principal, school district superintendent and a parent or member of the community at large. This documentation must include clear and concise examples that show how the teacher positively affects students and their learning. A nominee must also be an individual who holds a permanent Alberta Teaching Certificate at the time of the nomination; works directly with students; and has taught courses of study and education programs authorized by the Alberta School Act.

Every year, approximately 450 excellent teachers from the 63 major school districts, and numerous charter schools and private schools across Alberta are nominated to be recognized and honored for their outstanding teaching. Nominations are sent to a committee made up of representatives from:

- Alberta Learning
- The Alberta Home and School Councils' Association

- The Alberta School Boards Association
- The Association of Independent Schools and Colleges
- The College of Alberta School Superintendents
- The Council on Alberta Teaching Standards
- The Universities Co-ordinating Council
- A Teacher Representative

The selection committee will look for specific examples of:

A. How the nominee's teaching or leadership excels at:
   - fostering the development of students and their intellectual, social, emotional and physical growth
   - establishing a stimulating learning environment
   - motivating students to exceed their own expectations
   - attending to individual student needs
   - working collaboratively with colleagues
   - demonstrating an in-depth knowledge of subject matter and curriculum
   - being involved in professional growth activities
   - achieving positive results in student learning
   - demonstrating caring for the well-being of students and colleagues, thereby contributing to a positive school climate

AND

B. How the nominee's teaching or leadership is **innovative or creative in supporting student learning** in one or more of the areas identified under section A.

Innovative or creative teaching that supports student learning may refer to:

- introducing or applying successful or proven practices or approaches new to a classroom or a school;
- adapting approaches advocated in the literature or elsewhere for specific contexts of teaching and learning;
- championing a successful or proven approach throughout a school or school district/division;
- developing teacher resources or materials that complement an existing approach

(taken from Excellence in Teaching Awards, Alberta Learning, 2003)

Each nominee receives a certificate in recognition of his/her nomination. From over 400 nominees, the selection committee will identify 125 teachers to be honored as finalists for an Alberta Excellence in Teaching Award. All finalists are honored at a school or community event and are presented with a finalist certificate. Twenty of these finalists are later honored at a special province-wide ceremony and receive a

commemorative pin and award as a Provincial Recipient of an Excellence in Teaching Award.

The six participants in this study were all selected as finalists for an Alberta Excellence in Teaching Award. They were all employed by a large urban school district in the province. Their names and contact numbers were provided to me by the personnel services department of the school district employing them. Participants were selected for my research on the basis of their availability and willingness to participate in the study.

Profiles of the Participants

To maintain as much anonymity for the six excellent teachers who agreed to participate in this study, I have described their profiles (Table 3.1) in a way that will protect their identities.

Table 3.1

Teacher Pseudonym	Experience in Teaching	Grade Levels Taught	Subjects Taught
Sam	14 years	Gr. 1-6 Seg. Spec. Needs (Gr. 4-6) Gr. 3, 4	Phys. Ed. LA, Math, SS, Sci.
Trudy	14 years	Gr. 1-6 Pull-out Learning Assistance Gr. 1, 3, 4 Gr. 4-6 Seg. Spec. Nds Class	LA, Math LA, Math, SS, Sci LA, Math, SS,Sci
Henry	10 years	Gr, 7, 8, 9 Grade 7	LA, SS, Otd. Ed., Med. Stds. Phys. Ed.

Teacher Pseudonym	Experience in Teaching	Grade Levels Taught	Subjects Taught
Nancy	26 years	Gr. 1-3 Spec Nds Class Gr. 3 Gr. 4, 5, 6 Gr. 7, 8, 9 Pull-out Learning Assistance Gr. 7, 8, 9 Seg, Spec. Nds Class Gr. 7	LA, Math, SS, Sci, Phys. Ed, Music SS Phys. Ed. LA, Math LA, Math Health
Brian	30 years	Gr. 1-6 Gr. 4 Gr. 4, 5, 6 Gr. 7, 8, 9 Gr. 7 Gr. 8 Gr. 10, 11, 12 Gr. 11	Music Math Science Math, Sci Phys. Ed., Drama SS Sci, Phys. Math, Chem
Sonia	27 years	Gr. 8-12 Gr. 10, 11, 12	Math Phys. Ed.

Legend:

LA	Language Arts	Otd. Ed.	Outdoor Education
Math	Mathematics	Med. Stds.	Media Studies
SS	Social Studies	Seg. Spec. Nds.	Segregated Special Needs
Sci	Science	Phys.	Physics
Chem	Chemistry	Phys. Ed.	Physical Education

Data Collection, Analysis, and Presentation

I conducted the interviews with six teachers in a location of their choosing and during a timeframe on which we mutually agreed and collected data from an initial semi-structured interview that ranged from 60 to 90 minutes in length. Several days later I arranged to observe the teacher conducting a regular instructional class with his/her students. This observation was scheduled for an entire instructional block, which ranged from 50 to 80 minutes in length. During the observation I did not interact or become formally involved with either the teacher or the students. Immediately following this

observation, I again interviewed the participant for approximately 30-60 minutes to dialogue any observed disciplinary dynamics that could provide additional insights and understandings of the teacher's beliefs surrounding student discipline. I also made additional telephone contact with the participants to discuss and gain further clarification and understanding of previous dialogue. No formal involvement of students or other school personnel was required.

To provide an accurate and accessible means of reviewing the data, I tape-recorded all of the interviews with the participants, hired a transcriber to transcribe the tapes (Appendix E) and analyzed the data for understandings, commonalities, contrasts, patterns, and/or emergent themes.

I provided all of the participants with copies of their interview transcripts. Following their review, I made changes or edits at their request. Each transcript included a cautionary note that the transcriptions are an accurate record of oral-language communication and therefore may not necessarily be grammatically correct. Following the completion of this research, I will send an executive summary to each participant.

Methodology

The question of methodology, according to Guba and Lincoln (1994), is, "How can the inquirer (would-be knower) go about finding out whatever he or she believes can be known?" (p. 108). From the paradigm of constructivism, methodology is hermeneutical and dialectical. "The variable and personal (intramental) nature of social constructions suggests that individual constructions can be elicited and refined only through interaction between and among investigator and respondents" (p. 111). These varying constructions are interpreted, compared, and contrasted through dialectical

interchange between investigator and respondent, as well as through the researcher's conversations, reflections, and analysis with him-/herself (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Lambert, 2002).

The data collection for my research project involved the methodology of semi-structured interviews. As Denzin and Lincoln (1994) noted:

> The interview is the favourite methodological tool of the qualitative researcher. . . . The interview is a conversation, the art of asking questions and listening. It is not a neutral tool, for the interviewer creates the reality of the interview situation. . . . Thus the interview produces situated understandings grounded in specific interactional episodes. (p. 353)

It is my belief that semi-structured interviews provide a rich balance of responses from participants. The series of open-ended questions provided a general structure to the interviews but did not restrict or prevent the use of further probing questions to obtain even broader and/or more in-depth responses from the participants. As Schwandt (1997; as cited in Fontana & Frey, 2000) stated, "It has become increasingly common in qualitative studies to view the interview as a . . . linguistic event in which the meanings of questions and responses are contextually grounded and jointly constructed by interviewer and respondent" (p. 663). Fontana and Frey added:

> There is a growing realization that interviews are not the mythical, neutral tools envisioned by survey research. . . . More scholars are realizing that to pit one type of interview against another is futile, a leftover from the paradigmatic quantitative/qualitative hostility of past generations. . . . It is time to consider the interview as a practical production, the meaning of which is accomplished at the intersection of the interaction of interviewer and respondent. (pp. 663-668)

Trustworthiness and Authenticity Criteria

The paradigm of constructivism uses the terms *trustworthiness* and *authenticity* to replace the traditional positivist criteria of *internal* and *external validity* (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Trustworthiness includes the criteria of

> credibility (paralleling internal validity), transferability (paralleling external validity), dependability (paralleling reliability), and confirmability (paralleling objectivity) (Guba, 1981; Lincoln & Guba, 1985); and the *authenticity* criteria of fairness, ontological authenticity (enlarges personal constructions), educative authenticity (leads to improved understanding of constructions of others), catalytic authenticity (stimulates to action), and tactical authenticity (empowers action) (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 114)

Guba and Lincoln (1994) indicated that, although the above criteria have been well received, "the issue of quality criteria in constructivism is nevertheless not well resolved and further critique is needed" (p. 114). Recommended strategies to enhance the criteria of trustworthiness and authenticity include member checks, fairness, and peer debriefing.

I ensured member checks by providing the participants with their interview transcripts to review and edit for additions and/or deletions. Sharing the data with the participants ensured the highest level of accuracy and credibility of the findings. As Rudestam and Newton (2001) reported, "It is common in qualitative research to return to informants and present the entire written narrative, as well as interpretations derived from the information, with the intention of confirming the accuracy and credibility of the findings" (p. 99). In addition, I made a conscious and deliberate attempt to highlight the criterion of fairness throughout the writing of my results. Guba and Lincoln (1989; as cited in Denzin & Lincoln, 2000) defined *fairness* as a deliberate attempt

> to prevent marginalization, to act affirmatively with respect to inclusion, and to act with energy to ensure that all voices in the inquiry effort had a chance to be represented in any texts and to have their stories treated fairly and with balance. (p. 180).

Peer debriefing was ongoing and achieved through interactive dialogue with my supervisory committee and educational colleagues. I also reviewed my findings with a small group of nonparticipating educators to seek additional feedback.

Ethical Considerations and Protection of Participants

Prior to commencing this research, I completed a Faculties of Education and Extension Research Ethics Board Graduate Student Application for Ethics Review, and it was approved. I then completed a Cooperative Activities Program Research Project Application, and it was approved by the participating school district. I also informed all of the participants in the research study in writing of the nature and purpose of the project (see Appendixes B, C, and D). Participation in the project was strictly on a voluntary basis. I informed the participants that they could withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. All participants completed consent forms prior to data gathering (Appendixes B, C, and D).

During the gathering and reporting of the data, I assured the participants of their confidentiality and anonymity and that their names and schools would not be used in the publication of the study's results (Appendix F). I guaranteed their anonymity in the interviews and observations by allowing them to review and amend their transcribed comments prior to publication. In consultation with my faculty advisor, I addressed any issues or concerns that might arise from the research. Following the conclusion of the research project and my convocation, I will destroy all of the data that I collected.

Initial Interview Process

For the purpose of field-testing the clarity of the semi-structured interview format and questions from the interview guide (Appendix G), I selected a participant/excellent teacher for an initial interview. I used this interview to obtain preliminary data for analysis as well as to identify any potential problems in conducting it, and it enabled me to determine whether my initial questions provided enough data to gain reasonable insight and understanding of the beliefs and practices of excellent teachers on the topic of student discipline. I then revised the interview questions to determine their suitability and effectiveness in gathering high-quality data. Also, if the anticipated time of one hour for the initial interview was found not to be enough time to work through the question guide, I informed other participants to reconfirm their commitment to the additional requirements for involvement in the research study.

Through conversational dialogue I asked each participant the open-ended questions listed below during their scheduled interviews. These questions also provide a framework for the organization and categorization of the data. I found that further insights that flowed from the discussions that followed classroom observations fitted well within these categorical question areas as well. As Zimmerman (2002) pointed out, in the constructivist context, failing to frame meaningful questions confuses the process of acquiring new professional understandings. Exploring the contexts and boundaries of a concept through carefully selected questions is an important aspect of the meaning-making process, she suggested.

The research questions were as follows:

1. What is student discipline, and how do you define it?

2. How do you describe, organize, and manage student discipline in your classroom?
3. How do you most often respond to appropriate student behavior in your classroom, and how do you most often respond to inappropriate student behavior?
4. What are the most common types of inappropriate behavior that occur in your classroom, and are there more extreme and/or severe inappropriate behavior that sometimes occur in your classroom?
5. What do you do to limit the occurrence of misbehavior and to help students to actually want to behave appropriately and responsible?
6. What are the classroom factors that contribute most to the success of student discipline, and does any single factor contribute significantly more than the rest?
7. What are the factors outside the classroom that contribute most to student discipline, and does any single factor contribute significantly more than the rest?
8. What story or vignette would you share that accurately represents student discipline in your classroom?
9. What are the educational benefits of student discipline?
10. What role do others play that supports student discipline in your classroom—that is, colleagues, school administrator, parents?
11. What are the professional development needs of teachers regarding student discipline?

12. Do you view student discipline differently at the various levels of schooling—that is, elementary, junior high, senior high?

Summary

Goodman (1988; as cited in Schwandt, 1994) forwarded the position that our cognitive quest and goal should be to constantly advance our understanding of the world around us. Rather than seeking to "*arrive at the truth,*" we should seek to advance from what is "currently adopted and proceed to integrate and organize, weed-out and supplement, . . . to construct something that works cognitively, that fits together and handles new cases, that may implement further inquiry and invention" (p. 127). Guba and Lincoln (1994) reinforced this constructivist paradigm of thought: "Individual constructions can be elicited and refined only through interaction between and among investigator and respondents" (p. 111). Through this dialectical interchange, varying constructions can be interpreted, compared, and contrasted. The goal was to establish a consensus construction that was more informed, insightful, and meaningful than previous constructions held (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

My main goal as a researcher was to enhance my understanding of excellent teachers' beliefs and practices regarding the subject of student discipline. Through an interactive exchange with willing research participants, I was able to gain new understandings on this important area of focus. I believe that the constructed beliefs and practices of excellent teachers with regard to student discipline directly impact the success of the teaching/learning process. These constructions play an important role in how students respond to the many daily dynamics in their classrooms. I believe that every teacher is as unique as his/her fingerprint and may think quite differently from his/her

colleagues. However, because of the accepted need for classroom safety, security, order, and harmony, excellent teachers may have some common thoughts and practices surrounding student discipline. By analyzing the thoughts and beliefs of six excellent teachers, I gained new constructions and understandings of student discipline that are meaningful and useful both to me and, I hope, to others in education.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH FINDINGS

The purpose of the following chapter is to present the findings related to the main research question, "What is student discipline, and what are the thoughts, beliefs, and classroom practices of excellent teachers with regard to student discipline?" The chapter presents the findings from interviews and discussions with each of the six participants in the study.

Participant narratives to support the findings of each subquestion are also included in this chapter to ensure that the "voice" of each participant is heard as accurately as possible.

Defining Student Discipline

Sam

Sam referred to discipline as students' knowing what the behavioral expectations are in the school environment and staff's ensuring that students conduct themselves accordingly. He felt that good discipline exists when teachers and learning are not hampered by behavioral disturbance:

> *Student discipline to me is students knowing what rules and regulations are in a school and in a classroom and in the staff of that school making sure that those rules and regulations are followed both for the organization of the school, smooth running of the school, and for the safety. . . . Student discipline is being able to stand up in front of a class, being able to teach your curriculum without numbers of disturbances and having the students . . . want to learn the curriculum as hard as you want to teach it. . . . I don't want my teaching hampered, [and] their learning shouldn't be hampered. If you have that situation, I think you have good discipline in your classroom.*

Trudy

Trudy saw student discipline as the process of teaching students how to behave in society and modeling for them how this is done. She strongly affirmed that it is not about punishing students for misbehaviors, but rather about teaching and demonstrating for students the differences between right and wrong:

> *Student discipline to me is actually student teaching. It's not punishment or punishing the child for misbehaviors; . . . it's showing them the ways that we are to behave in society and what the expectations are in the classroom and showing them how a person goes about doing that.. . . . My own brand [of discipline] is . . . the teaching, showing the kids right from wrong, a lot of modeling.*

Henry

Henry submitted that student discipline is students' behaving appropriately and acting like an effective citizen in the classroom. He affirmed that this means students' contributing to their own learning by following the classroom rules and being respectful of the teacher and other members of the class:

> *Student discipline is basically having the students act like, I guess, effective citizens, being respectful to everyone, being respectful to myself and them, and basically being in class, doing what their job as a student is. Doing is learning and contributing to that learning, . . . behaving appropriately, . . . speaking when it's their turn. They are allowed to contribute anytime they want, but hands go up. Listening to other people speak, not speaking when I am speaking as I don't speak when they are speaking.*

Nancy

Nancy assertively stated that discipline is often unfortunately used synonymously with punishment. She emphasized that, for her, it is being involved with students to help them meet classroom expectations:

> *Well, I think first of all I need to say that I think the word* discipline *itself is sometimes mistakenly used synonymously with punishment, and I clearly believe*

> *that's a mistake. . . . Discipline isn't punishment. I think it is meeting expectations. So student discipline . . . for myself is having expectations, . . . and so, if it's me being involved in [the] discipline of somebody else, it's helping them to meet expectations.*

Brian

Brian explained that student discipline refers to allowing everyone in the class the opportunity to learn and that it is not about students' pleasing the teacher, but rather about students' recognizing that they have a job to do, which is to learn the curricular material that they need to know. To do this, students must not let distractions get in the way of their learning. They also must not create distractions for others:

> *It's a bunch of things, I guess. From the standpoint of the teacher, it's having a class that will let everyone in the class learn. . . . From the standpoint of a student, it's realizing that you are not there to please the teacher, that you are there to get some inherent good for yourself, so why would you fool around when you are just taking that away from yourself? . . . It's realizing that you have to get a job done and not letting distractions get in your way and not creating distractions for other people. . . . So if you buy into that message, then by and large you will buy into what the teachers wants you to do in order to learn the stuff that you have to learn.*

Sonia

Sonia simply maintained that student discipline refers to students' ability to manage their behavior in ways that allow them to learn successfully: *"Student discipline! The ability to manage yourself so that you can focus and stay on task and learn. . . . Just, students being able to manage themselves so that they can get the most out of learning."*

Organizing and Managing Student Discipline

Sam

Sam described his approach to student discipline as being *"organized and very straightforward for the students. . . . The students need to know what my expectations are*

from the second they walk into that room and actually even before I'm in the room." Sam has taught different groups of students in two separate and distant locations of the school. As a result, his math students are already in the classroom prior to his arrival. *"So I have set up in that classroom a situation where before I'm even in there, the students are engaged in their work; and to me, having them engaged in the work is part of discipline."* As part of Sam's student-discipline program, a preselected weekly student monitor is responsible for putting on the board 6-10 review questions on which the students are to work as soon as the math period begins, which is usually a few minutes prior to his arrival after his previous class:

> *By the time I walk in the classroom, my entire math classroom will be sitting down, working on those 6 to 10 problems already on a piece of scrap paper, getting their answers prepared for me because they know the first thing I'm going to do when I get in there is ask the questions. They know . . . nobody needs to be up; . . . nobody needs to be engaged in conversation with anybody else; they know what their task is. So for me, it is discipline . . . because they are not doing other things that I might not want to hear or see.*

Sam has organized his classes to include activities in which students routinely engage. He believed that these routines are very important to the effectiveness of student discipline:

> *I believe it is very important because, again, if they have something they need to be doing, they will be on task. . . . They are children; they are going to get distracted by things if you don't have them engaged in something.*

Sam has also incorporated an incentive system into his classroom discipline plan: *"When I have come in and I'm very impressed with how they have been waiting for me, the math books are out, the questions are on the board, . . . they do get a bonus [point] for that."* After they have accumulated a standard number of points, they earn an extra gym class to play one of their favorite games. Points can also be withdrawn if students

are not on task and/or are late coming in from recess. Sam acknowledged that the incentive system is very popular with his students. At the beginning of the year he makes the criteria for earning an extra gym class easier, and as the year progresses, "I will get a little tougher," and he raises the task bar for the students.

In describing his discipline management, Sam stated, *"You must be consistent."* He stressed the importance of being

> *firm yet fair. Unless there is a real safety issue right at that second, I will let the students say their piece; . . . they will get a chance to say their side. . . . There are always two sides to an issue, . . . and you need to try to sort through that as much as possible.*

Sam involves his students in creating the expectations of the classroom:

> *It definitely gives them a sense of ownership. . . . I found in my 13 years of experience that 95% of what I need to see on a rule chart, for example, . . . comes from students because they are bright; they have had experiences in a school before; . . . [they] inherently know what some of these rules should be.*

The following is a typical list of rules in Sam's classes:

1. Respect others.
2. Respect other people's property.
3. Raise your hand to ask a question.
4. There is no answer that is so wrong that you will be laughed at or ridiculed.
5. When you hear the "freeze" command, stop what you are doing; your mouth is now quiet, and you are looking at the teacher.

Sam has also taught physical education, and he commented, *"I am a little bit more of in a dictatorship, I guess, when I am in the gymnasium situation, . . . simply because of the safety issues."* Some of the gymnasium rules that he has posted are generic to all activities. A sampling of the gymnasium rules includes the following:

1. Nobody in the gym without teacher supervision.
2. Everyone must wear proper running shoes.
3. Never climb higher than halfway up the Canadian Climber.
4. Never raise your floor-hockey stick above your knees.
5. When jumping, always plan to land on two feet.
6. Maintain a comfortable personal-space distance between yourself and others.
7. Warm up and/or stretch before the main activity.
8. When you hear the "freeze" command, stop what you are doing; your mouth is now quiet, and you are looking at the teacher.

Sam believed that it is very important to keep students busy and the transition time between activities short: *"When I have their minds and their hands busy, that really helps behavior-wise because I don't have, again, students with idle time on their hands and not doing anything."* Keeping students focused and busy is a regular part of Sam's disciplinary plan: *"If your assignment's done, here is what I want you to do next."*

Trudy

Trudy described the student discipline in her classroom as being very demonstrative and instructional:

> *I'm a big believer in teacher modeling. . . . I think for effective behavior or effective discipline you have to, number one, model it yourself. . . . I'm showing the kids the respect, the manners, the day-to-day things that people do to get along. . . . I don't think that kids just naturally know what to do; . . . I model that. I think that that is very, very important.*

Trudy stressed that students *"need structure and routine. You need to teach them the appropriate ways to respond in a class."* She felt that teaching students various signals helps to get them focused or back on task. She has used signals consistently with

her students throughout the year: *"One that I've always used is 'Give me five.' . . . I'll say, 'Give me five,' and the kids know to look at me."* This results from teaching and reinforcing to students that "Give me five" means that (a) eyes are watching the teacher, (b) ears are listening to the teacher, (c) mouth is closed, (d) hands are quiet, and (e) feet are still.

Trudy has found the use of signals to be an effective technique across the grade levels: *"I've done this in Grade 1 and I've done it in Grade 6; it doesn't matter to the kids. We think that kids don't like these rules, but they do."*

Highlighting and reinforcing behavioral expectations at the beginning of the year is essential to the smooth running of her class:

> *September is such a big month where you get your classroom expectations, you're practicing it, you're modeling it, you are consistent with it. You don't let off ever. You sort of train your students, and they come to know what your expectations are. It's getting those structures in place and making sure the kids know those structures. To me that's the first thing that you do.*

Trudy stressed the importance of immediately dealing with human conflicts or problems that arise. She referred to these as *"teachable moments"* in the lives of her students:

> *I believe that when something happens, if you can stop it right then and there, that's the time to do it. The other stuff will come, but the teachable moments, you don't want to lose that time. If you don't get to them, the learning won't happen anyway.*

Trudy has also incorporated regular classroom meetings to celebrate student progress as well as to work through and resolve behavioral conflicts. *"Sometimes the class meetings would come out of a teachable moment when the kids were having*

difficulties at recess. . . . I would try to guide them as to how would be the best way to handle that."

Trudy explained that her discipline with students takes place in an atmosphere of friendly cohesiveness and bonding:

> *I foster team spirit and we're all a team. . . . It's a whole process that happens. . . . I have strict expectations; there are structures and limits in place. However, I still have this wonderful rapport with my kids. I learn with them; I have fun with them.*

Trudy attributed much of her disciplinary success to being well organized and preparing interesting lessons for her students. When she plans her lessons,

> *I'm always trying to anticipate what will little guys do with this. . . . If you are motivating kids and they are excited about what you are doing, then they are less likely to start, you know, losing their attention and acting out.*

Trudy further explained that *"if kids are bored, they are going to act out. If they don't understand, they're going to act out. So you have to set the stage for the kids to be successful."* She emphasized the importance of proactive planning: *"If you are prepared, if you are organized, if you have been proactive in anticipating what could possibly happen and even something as simple as, okay having those materials ready for the kids to go."* All of this, according to Trudy, pays off big behavioral dividends. She shared an example of how a simple strategy that she has used to assign students to work stations prevents unnecessary confusion and disruption. Her students accept, without question, her randomly selecting Popsicle sticks and calling out the students' names written on them as a fair and efficient way of directing students to different work stations in the room. Trudy stated that if you just tell students to find a table at which to work, *"there would be fighting, there would be kids running, and it would be chaos."* Trudy believed

that this type of advanced organizer greatly assists in transitioning students from one activity to another.

Trudy acknowledged that to some degree students are stimulation junkies and become bored easily. *"When I teach I think in a way that I can hook these kids: How am I going to keep them interested? If kids are bored, they are going to act out."* To enhance student interest, teachers need to be upbeat and excited about what they are teaching. Trudy used the example of motivational speakers: *"Why are they so successful? Because they've got some spunk!"* To capture the attention of students, teachers need to be excited about the curriculum that they are teaching. Trudy believed that teachers need to make students *"want to watch you, that you have something that's fun and interesting. . . . They know when you are interested in the curriculum."*

To increase the fun of learning, Trudy has also incorporated a token incentive system into her discipline model:

> *They can earn [play] money through anything I decide that I need them to work on: . . . "You earn money through your good behaviors. So if you are ready when I say 'Give me five' and you automatically do give me five, you've earned a dollar."*

Utilizing a visible recording chart, Trudy continuously records and displays positive student earnings. Each misbehavior results in an X being charged against the student's total earnings. At week's end each student receives a bank deposit slip of earnings accrued. After a few months a student store full of collected and/or donated *"garage-sale type items"* are sold or auctioned off to students. Trudy enthusiastically stated, *"They love it!"*

To add variety and to keep students' interest high, Trudy regularly changes the earning outcome of her token incentive model. For example, over the course of the year

the students trade in incentive points for popcorn parties, candy "Smartee Student" awards, or tickets that are placed in a draw box for a *"weekly mystery gift"* that is wrapped and placed on display throughout the week.

Trudy affirmed that her incentive system is used to enhance and strengthen the recognition of appropriate student behavior, in conjunction with providing specific praise and feedback to students. Trudy shared an example of this:

> *I am so impressed with you! Do you realize that you have been working for the past 20 minutes nonstop? Look at the work you've done! This is excellent! You know what? I am so proud of you; here's a [point] ticket.*

Trudy's disciplinary approach is directed at guiding and encouraging students to

> *want to do the positive things rather than punishing them for doing the negative things. . . . Sometimes they need some extra support and some extra incentives to help them and motivate them to want to do this, . . . so this is a way that everybody sort of wins from it.*

Henry

Henry prided himself on creating an exciting and competitive learning environment that has behaviorally resulted in not having to *"send a student out of the classroom in probably six years."* He described his disciplinary model as revolving around a series of behavioral standards and curricular games in which students are constantly earning or losing points through exciting team competitions with each other:

> *I've taken the curriculum and made it to the point where everything they see is a game. Everything ties into a game. . . ..Even getting here on time is a game. Some kids like to dawdle in the hallways. Well, if they are all here on time they are going to be rewarded. It . . . becomes a competition that they are in their seats before the bell rings. It's something that they have helped to create.*

Henry's goal with students is to make learning fun. He affirmed that one fundamental component of fun in his classroom is curriculum-related team competitions.

Like most competitions, some teams will win and some will lose. He quickly confirmed, however, that *"everybody has a chance to win,"* and there has never been a time when anyone *"has gone through the year without winning."*

Teams are comprised of up to five students who are organized by rows. *"I haven't had a seating plan in about six years."* Students *"get to choose the team, and that team's a row they are sitting in."* A few basic classroom rules and expectation help to shape the structure and expectations in the room:

- Nobody talks while the teacher's talking.
- No making fun of other students.
- Don't disrupt other students.
- No inappropriate use of language; i.e. profanity.
- Don't go behind the teacher's desk.
- Homework has to be done.
- Be in class on time.

At the beginning of the year Henry reviews the rules very thoroughly:

> *Whenever they break a rule, I'll stop and say, "Okay, what are we doing wrong here?" . . . And they learn pretty quick. . . . I make learning the goal of all the students. . . . Everything is built around fun and the discipline of that is if someone stops [following the rules], we are taking away from the fun. It's hard to explain; it's just that everything is tied into being active and having fun.*

During every period, team rows are awarded points or paper money for being in class on time, completing homework, and answering questions right during the instructional block. If someone is talking out of turn, the team row may lose a point: *"I'll just make a check mark, and they know that someone was misbehaving in their row."* Students assist with the discipline of other members of their team:

> *They know if they mess up, . . . act up, cause any problems, it's going to affect their budget, it's going to affect everything on their side, so they police themselves. A lot of them will tell them to be quiet: "Shh! Sit down and get going!"*

Henry admitted that he usually does not

> *take very much away from anyone; it's basically a warning if someone is talking. I look at them and say, "Shh, shh!" I won't ever say a student's name, and usually one warning is enough. It's rare that you have to take anything away unless someone is having a real bad day.*

Henry believed that the key to his model of instruction and discipline is his ability to channel student learning through high-interest themes that involve curriculum content in a game-competition format. His first attempt at this a number of years ago was modeled on the popular television show *Jeopardy*. Since then Henry has elaborated and extended his themes to include many varieties of competitive races and wars: *"I can't even imagine how many games I've done; . . . I've probably tried over 100."*

To be competitive, each team member senses an obligation to learn and complete all curricular assignments. Henry reported that student interest and buy-in to this approach is very high, as is evidenced by the fact that it is only on rare occasions that students do not complete their homework or assignments. Each year more students than can be accommodated request to be placed in Henry's classes.

For students to earn points for their team, they must hand in their assigned work on time. A portion of every class is dedicated to reviewing curricular material and awarding team points for correct answers to review questions. If reading material is assigned for homework, *"We will have a review the next day on it."* A regular mini competitive review of curricular material happens *"every second day."*

Each day team points or play money is earned and recorded on a visible blackboard chart. These recorded points will later be traded in to purchase the necessary pieces, components, or equipment to play an up-and-coming competition (e.g., soldiers, cannons, tanks, and jet planes). *"At the end of each unit we'll have a massive battle. It usually takes about two periods of just review time."* Students, of course, must study their course material at home in preparation for team competition. *"To win the war, they have to study. . . . [On] the day of the review, everyone's on the same footing. If you can't answer questions, you are not going to be able to move your soldiers or fire the cannon."*

The set-up of the game goes well beyond getting the right answer to a question. Getting the right answer simply gives a team the opportunity to advance a move in the game. As in any board game, excitement and interest are heightened because each team needs to decide on the strategy that it will use to win the battle or defeat the opposition. Henry predetermines the rules of engagement for each game and shares these with the students before the battle begins. For example, infantry can destroy infantry and move one square at a time, cannons cannot be destroyed unless there are no soldiers around them, tanks can move two squares at a time and must be hit three times by soldiers or twice by a cannon, and planes can destroy an entire square and everything in it with one hit.

I had an opportunity to observe one of these review competitions, and I was immediately impressed by the excitement and support that each team extended to its members as they went through a series of questions and answers. The teams were well prepared and motivated to do their best. I recall one student who showed strong disappointment and dejection on his face after realizing that the answer he had given was

wrong. Immediately, other team members consoled him with, "Oh, we'll get it back, we'll get it back, don't worry." This support seemed to work as the student quickly got back into the flow of the game.

Throughout the entire period of competition, spirits were high and lively as opposing teams jockeyed to take the lead. There were never any signs of resentment or poor sportsmanship. At times students held hands, squealed with excitement, "Yes, yes!" and hugged each other after scoring a correct answer. The overall atmosphere in the room resembled more of a Stanley Cup final than it did a curriculum review of the economy of Brazil. I remember thinking, "A spoonful of sugar makes the medicine go down." Besides a game-winning team receiving the occasional Coke or Kool-Aid treat, the students hope to get their name on the "Turkey Cup" that is presented annually to the best review team of the year.

Henry reported that on common mid-term and final exams, his students generally perform slightly higher than other classes in the school do. He attributed this to the constant review of curricular material that this model of learning and discipline management offers: *"You give them a reason to learn. If you incorporate into learning a little bit of competition, . . . a little bit of the things that make it fun for them, . . . they will buy into it, and they will love it."*

Nancy

Nancy described the discipline in her classroom as centering on respect for all. Discipline is *"handled with complete respect. I have respect for myself; I have respect for everyone around me."* The discipline in her room focuses on her belief that students are capable of meeting the everyday classroom expectations for learning: *"I have respect for*

the students in my class that they are capable of meeting those expectations and helping them to realize. . . . what is expected of them." Her general expectation of all students is that they demonstrate

> *an honest effort to get along with the person sitting beside them, an honest effort with the work that they are doing here, and an honest effort to be a friend in this school. . . . If you're not paying attention in class, then you're not respecting the people around you, and you're not respecting your own education. . . . I don't operate with a seating plan in the classroom, but with that there is the expectation that you're going to be doing what you need to do to be successful sitting there. [If not,] I need you to find a better place to sit.*

Nancy believed that teaching students how to behave in class is an ongoing teacher responsibility. A teacher must

> *communicate with them on an absolute daily basis whenever they're not meeting what you have set as an expectation of the class. It has to be stopped and explained to them so that it's like learning-on-the-spot kind of thing.*

Nancy asserted that teachers are important role models for students. Through daily interactions, teachers help students understand *"what respect really looks like, feels like, [and] is all about."* To accomplish this, Nancy believes teachers need to be very well prepared and know where they are going with the lesson and that, at the same time, they must be flexible to change with the dynamics of the moment:

> *I think for me it is being completely aware of what needs to be done, what are the needs of the students. And like you say, where do you have to turn up the heat a little bit? What needs my attention most at this minute? And being able to give that attention, but not forgetting . . . the potential for some kind of behavior to skyrocket because you're not giving it the attention it might need at this moment.*

Nancy explained that students often act out as a result of frustration and confusion. *"Confusion about, How am I supposed to behave when I don't know how to do this? How am I supposed to know how to do this when I don't know how to do this? So*

that leads to defiant behavior in some cases." Nancy saw her role as a teacher to help students through these moments of confusion: *"If they are off task, my role becomes to remind them and refocus them and get them back on task with the lesson or assignment."*

Nancy explained how she has used an individual goal-setting behavioral checklist to assist students in understanding and following through with classroom expectations. Through dialogue and discussion with her students, they have created a list of important behavioral components of learning. Each identified behavior is awarded a mark of one or two points for a total value of (usually) seven points a period. Over the course of a month, a behavioral profile begins to surface that provides encouraging feedback to students, as well as assisting them in setting specific targets for improvement. The following is a typical checklist that Nancy has used:

1.	Be on time for class.	/1
2.	Come prepared to class with your class binder, writing tools and paper.	/1
3.	Bring homework back to class and/or confirm mins. of home reading (30 mins./day).	/1
4.	Stay on task by focusing on your work.	/2
5.	Show respect to yourself and others.	/2
		/7

Daily and accumulated point totals for each student are recorded on a sideboard chart. At the end of each month the points are transferred to an individual monthly report that the students take home to share with their parents. Also at the end of the month Nancy reviews each student's progress and asks them to set realistic goals for

improvement or maintaining high standards. The checklist provides students with an *"intrinsic reward on a daily basis: 'Hey, I got seven [points] today'"* and helps them feel good about their learning progress. Sometimes (when the school budget permits), she will add the additional incentive of earning a paperback book for students who have achieved their behavioral goals.

Nancy explained that most of her daily discipline involves a *"low-key kind of way of dealing with kids when they [are] getting off task in class or not meeting expectations."* Some low-key interactions include physical proximity to students, making eye contact with students and tilting her head ('the look'), tapping on a student's desk, and/or giving them verbal reminders: *"You're off focus."* If these strategies fail to get the student back on track, Nancy bumps up the interaction to a one-on-one conference: *"I do a lot of one-on-one conferencing. You know, if someone is sort of acting inappropriately, it needs to be dealt with. . . . I take them out in the hall and just have a private dialogue with them."* Following this, the student returns to class to reengage with the assignment or lesson at hand. Nancy believed that speaking to students outside the classroom this way maintains privacy and confidentiality and is not viewed as punitive by her students.

One-on-one student-teacher interaction is not limited to dealing with only disciplinary issues outside the class. Nancy uses one-on-one engagement as a primary instructional and disciplinary strategy: *"The one-on-one conferencing teaching, that's where the bulk of the work goes on . . . I'm constantly [moving] from one [student] to the other to the other."* If a student falls off task or avoids getting started, Nancy moves to the student to assist him/her. As she approached an off-task student, I heard her say, *"Amanda, I'm here to help you. We can do this together; let's just stay focused."* After a

brief one-on-one with Amanda, Nancy moved on, and Amanda seemed to be able to work on her own. When I later asked Nancy to comment on this observation, she replied:

> *I don't think she [Amanda] ever realized that there was any discipline or classroom management going on. . . . Amanda was just trying to avoid the work that she needed to do in here because it was hard, . . . so then I needed to allow her to maintain her, you know, integrity and respect for herself [yet get her back on track].*

Brian

Brian's typical science classroom is *"noisy; we are not quiet,"* because of the way that he structures and manages his classes for learning. A closer examination of student activity, according to Brian, would reveal that student behavior and conversation *"would be around what we were doing. If kids are up and around, it's because they'd be looking for some . . . equipment, . . . because they are finishing up a lab."* Brian believed that his model of instruction and classroom management helps students to develop a sense of ownership and responsibility for their learning:

> *Rather than yell at kids like a boss, I'm going to let the rope out a bit and let the kids see what effect it [their behavior] has on their [subject] mark. . . . It hits them: "The less I'm off task, the better I'm going to do."*

During the first month of school, Brian engages his students in three styles of instruction that he called *command mode*, *task mode*, and *self-directed mode*. After he provides his students with the experience of all three modes, they have an opportunity to choose for themselves as individuals which they prefer for the remainder of the year. Brian described command-mode instruction as being under the complete control of the teacher, *"where the teacher calls all the shots,. . . . controls all the decisions."* Task-mode instruction gives students some input and decisions into how they will learn. For example:

> *"There are twenty-four questions at the end of the chapter on what I've talked about today. I want you to do any twelve, okay? . . . In physics there are two ways you can do this: You can do this lab with this equipment, or we can set up those four things and see how the demos work."*

Brian explained that in the self-directed mode a pupil-teacher contract is signed based on now a student wishes to learn a unit of study.

> *You are telling the kid, "You tell me what you are going to do to learn this [unit], but put it down on paper and I'll read it, and if I sign it, my signature is your guarantee that what you are planning on doing is appropriate."*

Brian commented that, currently, in terms of student choice, *"You tend to get a fifty-fifty split between task mode . . . and self-directed."* Students rarely choose the command mode: *"They hate it. . . . The kids are sick to death of being told everything."*

Brian believed that his approach to learning and discipline helps students to better understand the connection between *"choice, actions, and outcomes."* He has rarely had to

> *go to the point of kicking a kid out. . . . I tend to be more of a nice-guy approach than a nasty guy. I will go over and try and convince them that their positive energies are not going quite in the right place and stuff.*

He stated that *"99% of kids respond well to good treatment: . . . I'll treat you well, and hopefully you will do that back. . . . It doesn't work with everybody, but it works with almost everybody."*

Brian believed that part of his success is that he expects students to respect the lesson that is being taught and the right of other students to learn. In return, he accepts and respect students if they are somewhat wayward and off task as long as it is not interfering with the lesson at hand. He indicated that, if a student is off task and not pestering anyone else, he will leave them alone. He strongly emphasized:

> *The one thing no teacher can allow is a kid to prevent other kids from learning something. That's the number one thing that you can't let happen. Now if a kid is off task a bit, and not hurting anybody but themselves, that is one issue and my preference for that issue is to let them see in terms of how well they do [on follow-up quizzes and exams].*

Brian believed in giving students more choices over their learning behaviors, including arriving in class on time:

> *Promise not to tell anybody in my school? My opinion is if you come in late, you come in quietly, you sit down, and you get to work; and honest, really, it doesn't really bug anybody else.. . . . As long as a kid is not abusing that, that's my thing. . . . If a kid is being obnoxious and being late . . . I may choose to do something, but I don't shut my door at the bell and tell kids to wait outside or anything else like that. Just don't bug the rest of us when you come in.*

While I observed one of Brian's classes, I noted that when student came in late for class, they came in very quietly and politely took their seats and got into their studies. This occurred with three separate students, and each time there was no observable disruption of the class. Regarding this observation, Brian stated:

> *In this class we had three kids show up late. Well, the one boy, I talked to him later, and he'd had a bleeding nose and he has got a pounding headache, so that was why he was late. The few times that I've got kind of upset and jumped on a kid for being late or something like that and then they tell me why, and I really feel awful because they had a really good reason.*

Brian regularly monitors on-task behavior and student progress by constantly circulating around the room *"while they are doing a lab or doing schoolwork."* By asking questions such as *"Does this stuff make sense to you?"* Brian is able to ascertain who needs assistance and who does not: *"There are always the kids that don't ask questions but if you go to them, they will tell you, "No, I don't know how to do this."* Through watching his students work and constantly circulating around the room, Brian is able to keep off-task behavior down to a minimum level:

[It's] just a case of watching and keeping moving and that sort of thing. . . . If someone is not paying attention, you know, you can sort of wander over near them. If they are talking [off task], sometimes you have to stop and ask them to be quiet. It's kind of one of those things."

Sonia

Much of Sonia's success in classroom discipline is the result of well-organized lessons and routines:

There is a routine in the classroom that there is no time for kids to fool around because you're [as a teacher] on task and you're making sure they are on task. So first get yourself organized, make sure you have a plan, a good lesson plan. Make sure everybody's listening before you start talking. If there is any disruption, well, I'd kind of walk over to where the disruption is and try to deal with it and still continue the lesson. If anyone gets too disruptive then you have to talk to them and if that doesn't stop you have to remove them so others can learn. You have to make sure kids have lots to do so there isn't time for them to do other things if they are focused on their lesson.

In Sonia's opinion she was not a strict disciplinarian in the sense that students continuously have to be quiet throughout the lesson. She stressed that she is more interested in students' becoming actively involved in the lesson than she is in keeping her students constantly quiet. When they do get somewhat loud or chatty, she relies on facial gestures, verbal prompts, humor, or reseating the students to bring them back to a tighter focus:

I want to encourage the interaction, I want to encourage them to talk, . . . and I encourage the questions. I like when they have some fun with things too. . . . I would rather have a more animated group then one that sits and says nothing.

Sonia asserted that most student conversation in her room is on task and lesson related:

I know they are talking to each other, but I think generally it's comments on what's happening in the class. . . . I know they are listening because they get into

> *asking questions and they make comments. . . . If the noise level gets too high, . . . then I have to bring it down.*

By regularly using common and regular disciplinary strategies such as low-key verbal prompts—for example, *"Shhhh"* and *"Quiet, please"*—Sonia is able to easily lower student conversation and the noise level. Sonia proudly reported that *"most kids are mostly on task; . . . it isn't very often I have to send them out."* She believed that most student disruptiveness can be overcome through low-key, nonabrasive interaction:

> *I have had people say, "You are always smiling; don't you ever get mad?" . . . Usually just talking to them or moving them, and sometimes, with a sense of humor, they come around. . . . Sometimes I just pull them out of the class and talk to them out in the hall and just tell them they have to settle down and usually that's enough. There have been a couple of times I've had to send them to the office or have them removed from class until I come to speak to them.*

Sonia suggested that her classroom discipline is supported by her friendly and flexible relationship with her students and using humor whenever she can:

> *There are all these studies about Mozart being good for learning so there are occasions when I bring the CD player in, put on some Mozart and tell them I'm going to improve their minds, and we listen to Mozart for awhile. [Sonia laughs] And then they ask, "Can we put our music in?" I'll say, "No." [Sonia laughs again] If they want their own music, they have to bring their own earphones.*

Sonia added that many students like to listen to the radio or music CDs while they are doing seatwork assignments in class: *"I don't have a problem with that as long as they are working [on their assignments] . . . and wearing headphones with the cassette player or Discman volume at a level that can't be heard by other students."* Sonia believed that being open and flexible to student suggestions helps to strengthen classroom cooperation between teacher and students and results in less disciplinary friction.

Responding to Appropriate and Inappropriate Student Behavior

Sam

To Sam it is *"very, very important"* for students to hear encouraging comments and positive feedback in response to their appropriate behaviors and supportive efforts: *"If they don't hear it from me . . . they may decide that it is not even worth their while to try."* Sam stated that discipline problems often arise after students give up on themselves and decide *"to bother a classmate. . . . From a discipline viewpoint, now they are just getting in somebody's way."*

Sam liberally showers his students with positive feedback:

> *If somebody came and counted the amount of time in the gym I said out loud, . . . "Great play, a great catch, a great throw, a great kick" or whatever, I think you would see a count pretty high. Verbal, verbal, verbal, lots of times. . . . A simple thumbs up, nod of the head; and again, I do that again and again and again.*
>
> *In a classroom situation it's the same sort of thing. If there has been somebody who has attempted to make an answer, . . . I will give them a compliment. . . . The point is that they have sort of stepped out of their comfort ability zone and they are doing something in my classroom that I want them to take a bit of a chance on, I'll compliment them in front of the whole class. . . . If I gauge the situation where...I know that in that situation they would not necessarily want to have a verbal confirmation in front of everybody, I have pulled students like that into my office or just aside as people are leaving. Sometimes I believe you need to do an individual thing like that based on the student.*

Sam stressed that it is important for students to learn how to both give and receive positive feedback. He regularly encourages his students to give each other compliments when they deserve them. *"It's inherent in how I set up my whole discipline with the class to start with."* He proudly stated that when he asks his class *"'How many have praised their partners on something they have done well?' you will usually see half the class hands go up. That did not occur when I first came here."* Sam saw himself as an

important role model for his students: If they observe him encouraging and praising others often, they will learn to do the same.

Sam believed that a high rate and frequency of praise and encouraging feedback helps to reinforce students to respond appropriately and take an active part in class instruction: *"Right at the start of the year I tell my students there is never a wrong question, there is never a bad question, there is never a bad answer, and it is okay to make a mistake."*

When students give an incorrect response, Sam is careful to respond sensitively to encourage future student engagement. I observed an example of this. After a student raised his hand and gave an incorrect answer, Sam responded with, *"Not quite, but I like the way you continue to raise your hand."* The expression on the student's face immediately turned into a smile.

Sam uses a hierarchy of interventions in response to inappropriate student behavior. The first is in the auditory signal *"Freeze"* to get the immediate attention of his students: *"My freeze command, that is the number one command that I use."* Sam teaches both physical education and math to students, and he uses varying volume levels to draw the attention of his students. Safety in a gymnasium situation is always on his mind. He teaches his physical education students that *"there will be an immediate class shutdown with my freeze command."* If a student has acted inappropriately or dangerously,

> *everybody will sit [and] we will chat about what I saw. . . . If I happen to see somebody doing an inappropriate spring on a box horse, that is an incredible safety issue and we need to know right now as a class, not only that individual, but the class, that that move is never [to be] tried again.*

Sam does not use a whistle in the gym to make his students stop and come to attention:

> *I will use [a] whistle to referee. . . . I find it very shrill, and I want students to know the difference between my whistle for a line change in floor hockey, which is important but not [as] incredibly important as my vocal [freeze] command.*

Sam also uses the freeze command in his math class but stressed that he does not have to use it as often as he does in the gymnasium.

Sam pointed out that if the inappropriate student behavior is not a significant safety issue that needs to be drawn to the attention of the whole class, he will give individual students 'the look' to get their attention: *"They know what my look means."* If the look does not cause an immediate change in the behavior of the student, *"I'll do a proximity-type thing"* and move physically close to the inappropriately acting student. If that still does not prompt an appropriate change in the student's behavior, Sam will have *"a little chat"* with the student and specifically outline what needs to change: *"It will be something simple, just to them, very low key, not so that anyone else has to hear. Ninety percent of the situations that's going to work for me."*

In addition to these low-key interventions, Sam uses time-outs or written assignments to deal with students who need a stronger message to change. The length of the time-out *"will differ from student to student because there are some students I know that ten seconds and it is not going to happen again. If it happens again in three months, I would be surprised."* For other students the length of a time-out could be one entire activity or period.

> *One last thing. . . . I will give students written assignments at times; for example, let's say a sit-down didn't work, so I give them a time out and they have to come to my office at recess time to see me. . . . I will try and make [the written assignment] meaningful. . . . I wasn't getting across to [a student] what these gymnastic rules needed to be, so by the time he copied those out for me, he had his own copy. He obviously read them over numerous times as he had to write them out. He knows I'm serious about it, and I didn't have to take him out of gymnastics class again. I believe we made some kind of connection there.*

When questioned as to whether or not this could be perceived as punishment, Sam replied that, in his view, it was not punishment and he most definitely did not intend it to be so. He further indicated that giving students time-out to review their behavior and, in some cases, calling them to his office to write out the rules of the classroom or gymnasium, was simply one method of getting the student to draw a tight focus on what happened. More importantly, it was a reminder of what the standards are and why they exist in the first place. Following an assignment such as writing out the rules of the gymnasium, Sam always enters a dialogue with the student so that a meaningful understanding of the rules can be shared, i.e., "Do not jump off gymnastic equipment that is higher than your shoulders."

Trudy

Trudy stressed that praise, specific feedback, and positive reinforcers are the key to supporting appropriate student behavior: *"It's the praising and saying, 'Wow!' and giving examples, and even like I do a lot of 'earnings.' The kids can earn things; for example, extra learning center time, etc."* Trudy believed that it is important that a teacher recognize and constantly point out to students the appropriate and responsible things that they do. They need to know that *"I've noticed that and I think that's wonderful."* She also discussed the strength of calling students at home and sharing the positive praise with parents as well. She shared an example of a child's response to a phone call to her home:

> *I said, "Are you wondering why I'm calling?" and they'd say, "Yes." And I'd say, "I just wanted to tell you that you're a super kid and that I just appreciate you so much. I appreciate what happened today. I know that you were so responsible, and I want you to know that I am so proud of you; and, you know, I'd like to talk to your mom and tell her the same things." So she called her mom, and her mom*

> *said, "Well, what does Mrs. Pepper want?" and she said, "She wants to tell you what a great kid I am."*

Trudy felt that regular teacher-student praise and supportive phone calls home help to create *"positive ties between the parents, too. The kids go home feeling positive."* She also identified the importance of being animated and expressive in recognizing and complimenting students:

> *With the little guys you have to be a half actress because you have to be so motivating and enticing them to do the right thing. . . . If you are straight faced, the kids wouldn't pick up those cues, but because you are very expressive, . . . you are making a connection with the child. They are going to respond better to you.*

Trudy most often responds to inappropriate behavior through a serious of *"low-key interventions."* She explained, *"If little Lou is causing problems, I'm going to go stand behind him. If he continues, I'm going to put my hand on his shoulder or I'm going to give him 'the look.'"* If these interventions do not result in a change in behavior, Trudy will continue to seek out an intervention until she finds one that works. These include speaking directly to the child about correcting his/her behavior to sending the student to a designated 'time-out' area for a brief period of time: *"'You just need to go and sit there and think about what you're doing, and when you are ready you can come back.'"* She asserted that these interventions have worked well for her over the years.

Trudy stressed the importance of responding to inappropriate behavior in such a manner that the child still believes that the teacher cares about them:

> *If the child does something inappropriate, you don't keep holding it against them; you deal with the behavior. You let them know that this behavior is unacceptable: . . . "But I still like you, I still care about you. If I didn't, I wouldn't waste my time talking to you."*

Once the inappropriate behavior is addressed, *"You start fresh again. It's a new day, and my kids know that. They know that they come back . . . and I wouldn't be angry with them. It's a fresh start."*

Trudy uses *"twisted praise"* as well to correct inappropriate behavior, and I had the opportunity to observe such an interaction. Trudy's students were all sitting on a carpeted floor in a tight grouping in front of her, listening to a story reading. For no apparent reason one of the students (Russell) began to scratch the carpet repeatedly. Trudy responded in a polite and friendly tone, *"Thank you, Russell, for not making any noise."* Russell immediately stopped scratching the carpet. Later, when I asked Trudy to comment on this, she said:

> *Well, I think if you twist it around like that they are going to rise to the occasion because they are getting praised for something. . . . I knew that if I said, "Russell, stop what you are doing," it wouldn't have had the same effect as "Russell, thank you for . . . ." They want that positive praise. They want that feeling. . . . It just distracted him from what he was doing. . . . He probably didn't realize that he was making a noise that would be inappropriate for that time, so just redirect him [with praise].*

Henry

Henry's classroom discipline is largely structured around a game format that requires student teams to adhere to classroom rules and compete against each other while learning and mastering the curriculum. Henry utilizes a *"point system"* that rewards students for acting appropriately and learning curricular content. Points that students earn are recorded and added to their team total. *"When we are doing reviews they have to put their hand up, and if they do it right, I'll take their answer."* Henry usually lets them know in advance whether a question is worth one or more points. If a student's response is *"really good,"* Henry may double the point award on the spot. *"If the question was to*

move in a pickle race two squares, I'll say, 'Wow, that was a great answer! Go and pick up four [points].'"

In addition to Henry's students being recognized by the classroom teacher and awarded points for appropriate learning behavior, Henry reported that his students are proudly recognized and encouraged by their team: *"The [team] row recognizes them. . . . Everybody is excited that they got that answer right for them. It's more the class rewarding them as opposed to me."*

Henry was very open about how he *"manipulates"* the process of earning points. After he asks a question, the students

> *[put] their hands up and, of course, they are all looking at me. They don't have a clue who went first. And I usually will go, "Okay, the first three people with their hands up." Well, I can choose the three people. If I think someone needs a little more recognition or if one row is not doing as well as the others, they are going to get more opportunities to catch up sort of thing and they buy into it because they don't know. They can't tell who went first. . . . I can manipulate who goes first and who goes second. If it's a student I know who is going to get the answer and they are a bit weaker, they get it right and everyone just cheers for them. They got an advantage for the row and it puts a smile on their face, and it's an easy way to reward them.*

Henry's students do not often argue with him about the awarding of team points:

> *If they do, I just point to my sign up there saying "No whining," and they know right away they don't do that. I'll move [their team] back to the beginning of the race if they whine, . . . and it only has to happen once and they are pretty good. I'll let that student that caused the problem eventually get a question worth four points, they'll get it back, but at the beginning they go right back to the beginning.*

In addition to awarding points for positive behavior, Henry selects appropriately behaving students to assist him with instructional demonstrations: *"They like to volunteer and do things. . . . I'll bring them up and they can be the person that's going to be in front of the class. . . . They get to be the person on center stage, and they like that."*

If the entire class has been working well, Henry will often say, *"Great, we'll do this extra activity"* as a reward.

> *Sometimes I'll bring Cokes in, and if someone has been great for a long time, they get a Coke in front of the class. Or sometimes if the class has been great, I'll bring Coke for the entire class. . . . With the Cokes, it's not too often I'll do that because I don't want to get to the point where I'm spending a lot on Coke.*

Henry stated that he has not had a situation in years that has required that he send a student *"out of class to the office"* for behaving inappropriately:

> *I'll just look at the student, . . . and they know and they'll be quiet. . . . If it's something minor, I'll make a joke out of it, but also the students know and I tell them from the beginning of the year, "If I joke with you when you are doing something wrong, it's my way of telling you to stop," and it gives the class a laugh and we go on with it. It doesn't make the student feel bad about it.*

If the general noise level in the room climbs too high, Henry responds with his five-second silence rule. He verbally announces *"Too much noise,"* raises his open hand, and silently signals to his students by curling in his fingers to the count of one to five. I had an opportunity to witness this and noted that, after Henry's hand closed, the room was silent. When I asked him to comment on this, Henry said:

> *At the beginning of the year . . . I'll say one rule: "When I'm talking, you are quiet." . . . On the first review [of the year] I count down on my hand, and they get it pretty quick. And when I get to five I just look at their team, and I go to the board and I rip off a soldier or I rip off a tank or I rip off everything, and they know real fast. The second time I start to count down it's quick, and then it is just habit to them.*

Henry reported that if a student acts very inappropriately, he will request that the student sit in a time-out area in the room and says, *"I'll come talk to you in a minute. . . . The student figures they are in trouble. They are thinking about it, and they usually apologize to me right away and it is over with."*

Nancy

Nancy uses a great deal of *"very, very positive reinforcement"* in responding to appropriate student behavior. She believed that this is really important in assisting her students to *"build . . . an intrinsic kind of motivation to do well."* She stressed the importance of *"using positive vocabulary to let them know that what they have done is very appropriate."* She always attempts to follow a praising comment such as *"Good answer"* with a sentence that specifically states *"what was good about it"*: *"Sally, I really like the way you've got your book open and you're paying attention." Or "Johnny, thanks for putting your pencil down," so that it's not interrupting."* By responding to students in this way, Nancy believed that a classroom teacher is *"coaching . . . appropriate behavior."* She also identified the strength of positive facial gestures: *"I smile a lot. . . . That in itself is very powerful."*

In the past Nancy taught younger elementary students with special learning handicaps and used a 'token economy' reinforcing system that involved awarding cards for demonstrated appropriate behavior. The cards were later traded for a *"little box of toys"* with which the students were allowed to play during their free time. *"That worked very well with very special needs students that were five and six years old."* With older students Nancy attempts to use as much verbal recognition and praise as possible.

In responding to inappropriate student behavior, Nancy intervenes with *"low-key kinds of responses." "Moving closer to the student"* or *"one-on-one dialogue with the student"* and reminding him/her that *"you've got to get back to what you're doing here"* generally works well for her. If that fails to get the student back on track, she will step out into the hallway with the student to *"have a private one-on-one kind of conversation."* In

communicating with inappropriately behaving students, Nancy discussed the importance of explaining to them that *"I'm feeling frustrated, not at you as a person, but what you did here."* She also stressed, *"I am not a yeller."* In many of the students' homes *"that's all that they hear is yelling, . . . and I don't want to be that kind of person for them at school."*

Nancy lamented that some junior high–aged special-needs students "struggle all day with trying to learn." What a regular student *"would have picked up in five minutes [may take a special-needs student] fifty minutes"* to comprehend. A proactive strategy that Nancy has found useful with special-needs students is to suggest that they may need *"to go get a drink, just walk, clear [their] head, whatever, . . . but with the understanding they know that when they come back, then it's time to work.."* Some of Nancy's special-needs students will

> *walk to the furthest drinking fountain in the school, but that's okay. . . . They need those kind of natural breaks in their day, and I'm absolutely trying to give [them] the message that I understand. . . . I think it's a huge way of showing them the amount of respect I have for them as people and as learners.*

Brian

Brian stated that "when I interact with kids, it's very positive." He believed that at the high school level it is more important to acknowledge a student's understanding of and insight into curricular content than it is to highlight expected behavioral conduct:

> *I don't go out of my way to say, "Hey, good job. You really behaved today," because they don't need to hear that. . . . When kids answer questions . . . with any kind of insightful answer, I'll make a point of saying, "Wow, that's a really good thing! Did you guys hear that?" . . . Some kids don't want praise, at least not in front of everybody else, but if you praise an answer, it's not the kids, it's the answer.*

Brian expects all of his students to arrive in class with the intent to learn the curriculum. The amount of effort and enthusiasm that they bring each day, however, may vary from student to student. A key expectation that Brian has of all students is that they not interfere or disrupt the learning of others. As long as they support and adhere to this, *"I'm not going to say much."* Through ongoing discussion and dialogue with students, Brian is able to determine how much effort individual students are applying to their studies: *"'Okay, let's look at your numbers. What was the mass of the object?"... I would probably know when I asked that kind of question, they are going to find out they haven't done it."* Through supportive interaction such as this, Brian avoids confrontation with students and gets them back on track: *"They will go back and set the stuff [lab] up again."*

During a visit to one of Brian's classes, I observed a student putting on her mascara and applying lip gloss. When she finished this, she very quietly put her mirror back in her purse and went back to working on the science material that Brian had assigned. She was involved in her cosmetic application for approximately 2 minutes and 10 seconds. When I later asked Brian to comment on this, he replied, *"If she is not bugging anybody else, I'm not going to say much.... Girls are the ultimate multitaskers, right? They are the ones that are supposed to be able to do that. [Brian laughs.]"*

Brian stated that *"if the inappropriate behavior is a kid just not doing any work, and it's going to hurt that kid, that's the toughest thing to deal with, I think."* Brian struggles with knowing when to let students experience the natural outcome of their efforts:

> *At the end of high school, kids are supposed to be able to work for themselves, and if they can't, they go to first-year university and their marks just tank on*

them. . . . If I've got a kid who's not doing work, do I allow him to not do that, let him get a poor mark on a quiz and see the error of his ways? Or do I go over there and lean on him and ask to see his homework the next day and ask to see his book, and if I do that he will get a better mark? . . . In junior high I would lean more towards correcting homework, checking homework, keeping them in after school, that kind of stuff. . . . I lean towards letting them fall in high school because that's the safest place to fall. . . . Now, I don't just cut anybody loose and say "You can fail." . . . As part of [my] classroom management we do a section of work and [then] we have a quiz. [With each quiz] they set a goal for themselves and if they don't make the goal, they have an opportunity to write a second quiz [in two days] . . . and take the second mark, so there are safety nets for these kids. But some kids are going to fall through however many safety nets you put up for them. . . . Not every kid that I teach passes. I've had years where in a class of thirty there might be four who fail the course. Now, would they have passed if I had really done all this stuff for them in terms of checking their homework and this? They might have failed anyway; I don't know. On the other hand, I've had the kids who bought into [my] self-directed [model] and they come back to me from university and say, "Whatever you do, do not go away from it. All my friends are getting killed the first year and I'm just having a breeze, and they did better than me in high school." So you know, I don't know when a kid fails whether I could have dragged him through or not. You always wonder.

Sonia

Sonia maintained that it is *"better to reward than punish."* She most often responds to appropriate student behavior by *"just saying encouraging things. . . . If somebody answers a question I say, 'Good' or 'Thanks.'"* She also tries to *"think of positive things to reward them with."* She affirmed that it's *"amazing"* how effective store-bought stickers have been for her considering the fact that she teaches high school: *"It's a big thing to them. . . . If I forget to put a sticker on a test, they're right away, 'How come I didn't get a sticker?'"* Sonia uses stickers *"all the time"* to recognize students for *"improved work or honors . . . or that they have done really well."*

Oh yeah, it's a big thing to them. . . . Kids always like stickers. . . . They like the smelly ones, so I buy the scratch-and-sniff. I have been doing that for years, and the kids really like that.

With a lower-functioning class of students with whom *"attendance and lateness was a problem,"* she incorporated a reward system that recognized students *"who were in attendance all week and not late. They got to pick from a grab bag, and maybe they would get some homemade cookies or maybe you would get a free class."* This worked well, and the students who were attending regularly appreciated it; but it did not seem to have much of an effect on improving the attendance of those with more chronic and serious attendance problems.

In responding to inappropriate student behavior, Sonia stressed that it is always important to be polite and courteous to students:

> *I think lots of times if you ask somebody nicely, you don't get a big confrontation. It doesn't get bumped up, and it is dealt with; whereas if you are yelling and mad, they tend to do the same thing, and you've got a worse problem.*

Sonia reported that most of the time she is able to respond successfully to inappropriateness by dealing with it right away in a nonconfrontational manner: *"If I speak to them just quietly right away— . . . usually with bad behavior you just politely ask them to respect your wishes; usually they will."* If that does not work, Sonia will take the student aside and talk to him/her. Sometimes if a student talks to others too often, she will strategically seat the student somewhere else in the room. To maintain privacy of conversation, Sonia will, if necessary, move into the hallway with the student to resolve the conflict. After she deals with it, both she and the student return to the classroom and get back on task as quickly as possible. *"I just want to not draw so much attention to it. Just, let's fix it and move on, kind of thing."* Sonia stated that, although it does not happen very often, the *"odd time"* she has *"had to bump it up a notch and actually take*

[a student] down to the office" to seek administrative assistance. *"But that is very rare,"* she said.

Sonia suggested that when students use inappropriate language, most often *"they don't even think about what they are saying, and it just comes out."* Students are usually very apologetic to her after she draws it to their attention in a courteous way: *"'I don't know if you realized this, but you were saying some inappropriate things.'" "Usually that is enough"* to get the student to change.

Types of Inappropriate Student Behavior

Sam

Sam reported that the most common inappropriate conduct in his classroom is off-task behaviors in which the students are not *"focused on me [or] on their work"*:

- talking out loud
- visiting with each other
- going for drinks at inappropriate times
- not completing homework
- playing with gymnastics equipment after the "freeze" command is given

Occasionally students have

- thrown something (e.g., a shoe) out of frustration
- screamed or yelled at each other

Trudy

Trudy found the most common inappropriate student behaviors to be those that interfere with instruction *"when you're trying to teach [or when students are] supposed to be working on a project"*:

- calling out
- passing notes to one another
- talking behind your back
- goofing around
- wrestling in the corner
- rude defiance (e.g., "Why do I have to do this? I'm not going to do it")

More extreme or severe misconduct sometimes occurs in her class *"thankfully not as often"*:

- swearing and cursing
- throwing things
- running away from school

Henry

The most common occurrences of inappropriate student behavior in Henry's class are *"really low-level things"*:

- being late for class
- talking when they should not
- high-volume outbursts of game-related enthusiastic excitement

Occasionally students have

- sworn in class
- been physically aggressive with one another because of an outside-the-classroom conflict
- demonstrated extreme, moody behavior over a romantic breakup
- come to class drunk or high on drugs

Nancy

Nancy stated, *"I do feel without sounding arrogant that classroom management is definitely a strength of mine, and so things that could occur I think in a lot of cases don't because of intervention before it might become inappropriate."* In spite of preventive intervention, she reported that the most common occurrences of inappropriate student conduct surround off-task behaviors:

- talking (socializing) with another student
- attending to something other than the given assignment (e.g., reading an unrelated book)
- "bugging" a fellow student with inappropriate putdown comments
- wasting time walking around the room
- coming to class late

More extreme or severe behavior sometimes occurs:

- swearing at other students and/or the teacher in class
- striking another student
- demonstrating outright defiance and refusal
- tipping over furniture out of anger

Brian

Brian thought that the most common inappropriate behaviors with which he has had to deal are related to students being off task and *"not doing the work."* Specifically:

- talking to each other during teacher instruction time
- having social conversations during focused work time
- playing with lab equipment in unrelated ways to the assignment

- wasting time by not working on the assigned task when classroom time is provided

Brian felt that he has been *"really, really lucky"* in not having many extreme or severe inappropriate behaviors to deal with. Occasionally, however, he has had to deal with

- a student swearing at the teacher
- two students physically fighting each other in class

Sonia

The most common inappropriate behavior in Sonia's classroom *"would be noise, kids being noisy,"* among other inappropriate student behaviors:

- having social conversations unrelated to the assignment
- using inappropriate language (e.g., profanity)
- throwing items in class (e.g., paper balls)
- coming to class late

Sonia had not had extreme or severe behavior issues to deal with inside her class:

> *The worst I have had [was] not in my class, but a student outside of class [whom I didn't know] refused to leave the hallway and [was] rude to me, and [I had to take him] to the office and deal with it.*

Limiting Misbehavior and Encouraging Appropriate Behavior

Sam

Sam saw *"consistency, being fair, [and] staying on top"* of the interpersonal dynamics of the classroom as key to limiting dysfunctional behavior: *"If I see inappropriate behavior, I do try to do my steps. Whether it's 'the look,' whether it's proximity, whether it's actually having a chat, I try to do that every case."*

Sam has come to expect that certain students will constantly test the expectations, rules, and routines of the classroom:

> *It's natural for some students to want to test. . . . I've had year one students test, I've had year six test. . . . There are some students who will test that on a weekly basis. . . . They see . . . maybe they can push Mr. T. to see maybe that is not one of his expectations anymore or maybe he will forget it used to be one of his. So staying on top of that every day, every class as best you can as a teacher, that goes a long way [in limiting the occurrence of inappropriate conduct].*

Sam also believed that creating a culture of "fun" in the classroom helps students to want to behave appropriately and responsibly:

> *I try to have as much fun as I can with regards to activities we are doing or how I handle myself in a classroom. . . . Keeping the whole thing light, but yet again within the framework of our rules, I think, is important. . . . If you came in and watch, say, a math class or a phys. ed. class, . . . I think you would get a couple of giggles somewhere out of the situation. . . . I think they [the students] need to know that a funny situation is funny for everybody—again, as long as it's not just lasered in at somebody as something that is derogatory.. . . . I have a sense of humor, and I let the students have a sense of humor back with me.*

Trudy

Trudy creates a classroom environment for students that is fun and interesting, which helps to significantly reduce inappropriate behavior and motivate students to behave responsibly:

> *Sounds like a surreal world, but you know what? Basically that's what it is. They're having fun learning. . . . You find all these [inappropriate] behaviors kind of just moving off to the side because they're feeling good about themselves, and they're enjoying their day. So why would they want to misbehave and go out? . . . I'm a very creative teacher; I'm a hands-on type of teacher. We do fun things; we do a lot of neat learning; the kids want to be there. I find that if kids are bored they don't focus, and then that's when the [inappropriate] behavior happens. And they don't care if they get kicked out of class. That's great; they don't have to do this boring assignment.*

Trudy explained that every subject area can be interesting for students if teachers introduce creative elements into the instructional plan:

> *I choose things that the kids are interested in. When I do, let's say, a social studies unit, I do it hands on, so when we're learning about the native Indians it's not just a paper-and-pencil type of thing. We're sewing moccasins, we're making bannock, we're making teepees, we're writing in descriptive paragraphs, and we're doing it together, and it's just learning where they're not bored. They're so interested in coming [to class].*

Henry

Henry remarked that keeping students actively involved in learning activities that are fun and interesting helps to reduce inappropriate behavior and increases responsible student support:

> *Just being active where they know that we are going to be doing all these activities. . . . And just having them buy into that where all the things that are fun that are related to the curriculum and things that are extra. They earn those sort of things by being well behaved and they buy into it, and that's how I will control them.*

Every second day Henry has a general review of instructional material, and he awards everyone participation marks for their active involvement in the reviews. In addition,

> *the class sing[s] a song for them [the team that wins], [or] sometimes we will do a dance out in the hallway. The winners get a dance done for them by the entire class and myself. Little things like that where it's not a lot, but it's just something they want. Or having their pictures put on the wall as the victors.*

If a small group of students temporarily goes off task, Henry quickly announces to the class that the fun activity will stop if everyone does not get back on track. In most cases that is all that is required to bring the students' focus back. *"So it's all related; everything is tied into the activities that we are doing and keeping it fun for them."*

Nancy

Reducing the occurrence of inappropriate behavior and increasing responsible student conduct *"doesn't happen overnight,"* according to Nancy, but it happens through showing students *"that you believe that they're capable of behaving. You believe that they're a good person. You help them develop this 'I can' kind of attitude."* Creating a *"warm, accepting, positive atmosphere [in the classroom] is, I think, the biggest thing I do to make kids feel they are worthy of learning and they're capable of staying focused."* In working with at-risk students with special learning needs, Nancy believed that *"you have to absolutely want to help this kind of student. You have to believe that you can help them."*

"First and foremost" Nancy extends assistance to her students by *"constantly being that support to them that they can be successful."* She gave an example of a leaning strategy that she uses called the *"I can't funeral."* Students list all of the things that they think they cannot do, and they later hold a funeral service where the lists are laid to a final rest. Following this funeral activity, if a student says, "I can't do this," Nancy reminds him/her that those *"words are gone from our classroom."* She also says to her students, *"I'll explain something to you a hundred times if you're working with me."* In a sensitive and supportive way she lets students know that they *"have my attention: 'I'm willing to work with you. I'm giving you all this, but you're not giving it back. In this situation, I shouldn't be doing more of the work than you are.'"*

Nancy asserted that through supportive *"private dialogue"* she helps students to learn to respect themselves and *"grasp some ownership for their learning."* When the

need arises, she points out to her students *"the difference between a babysitter and a teacher"* and requests, *"Remember, I'm not your babysitter."*

Brian

Brian promoted the need for teachers to *"build up the interest level in the class"* to raise the level of student responsibility and lower the incidence of inappropriate behavior: *"I present this climate in the classroom that I hope they buy into. . . . It comes down to interest in your classroom; . . . you develop interest by doing things in a novel way."*

Brian stated that teachers run into trouble if they *"talk the same way every day. You know, 'Blah, blah, blah, do your work,' day after day after day. Well, kids are going to get bored, and when they are bored they are going to look for other things to do."* As a science teacher, Brian has found many ways to spice up the instructional interest level:

> *You show them the really cool things they [bugs] do. If you can actually bring the bugs in, 'Look at this thing. Wow!' . . . You talk about what worms can do when they get in your body. A foot-long worm coming out of a lactating female breast because that is where it is going to come out, and kids just cringe, right? . . . In physics you can relate things to sports sometimes, to cars sometimes, to this sometimes, to that, and hopefully you'll get enough things that the kids might be interested enough to do. . . . I'll sing or I'll tell a joke, . . . anything like that, and they are going to challenge you less often.*

Brian also highlighted the importance of giving students as much feedback on their progress as possible:

> *I do a lot of marking. I constantly get that stuff back to them so they see the results of what they are doing and doing all kinds of different stuff. You get fewer problems that way. . . . Computer games, they are popular; the feedback is instantaneous. Well, feedback is everything, so the quicker you can turn stuff back to them, the more of an impact it will have.*

Sonia

According to Sonia, *"Keeping the students busy and reminding them to stay on task"* helps to limit the occurrence of inappropriate conduct and encourages responsible student behavior. She will move students if she thinks that *"they are in a place where they are going to be disruptive." "Ultimately, kids are interested in marks"* at the high school level, and she stresses to her students that *"part of being on task is, you will learn material and will do better on tests."* She also reminds her students that those who work hard are the ones who are *"getting good marks. 'Maybe there is a correlation; maybe we should focus on that.'"*

Classroom Factors That Contribute to Successful Student Discipline

Sam

Sam identified the following factors that contribute most to the success of student discipline in his classroom:

1. Posting and confirming clear expectations for classroom behavior:

   If it is an expectation that is important enough that it is going to be happening on a daily basis it needs to be on the list. . . . Like expectations: When is it okay to simply leave your desk?. . . . My expectations are that you do not go up and sharpen a pencil when I am in the middle of discussing a certain concept. You do not go out and get a drink just because you happen to be thirsty. There are times and places to do that. Those sorts of behaviors may seem like smaller things . . . but can dictate a big part of your day in a negative way if you haven't set that up really early on how you do that.

2. Arranging a seating plan that supports a cooperative coexistence amongst the students:

   I don't have a regular classroom. I'm not a homeroom teacher, so the homeroom teacher is the one that is always setting up—whether she has rows, groups of four, who is sitting with whom, that sort of thing. . . . One

thing that I would look at very seriously, that really helps or hinders a teacher, I believe, [is] the physicality of the classroom set-up. . . . I have gone to the homeroom teachers and said, "Is there a specific reason you have these four students together, because it's causing me some difficulty and would you mind making some changes?" . . . The classroom teachers that I have been most involved with are very good at being flexible with that sort of thing. So that set-up is very important.

3. Providing easy access to instructional material:

   Where students have their materials can be a big factor. If I always have students needing to go out in the hallway to go grab their materials, that can cause some discipline problems. And then, of course, you are not in sight of all the students all the time.

4. Being consistent with behavioral interventions: Sam affirmed that this classroom factor contributes to the successfulness of student discipline more than the rest do:

   Consistency in how I handle situations. If I walk in and there is a student who is not sitting at their desk and doing one of these six brain warm-ups, and instead they are running around the room, I need to be consistent in what consequence may be for that. If one student three times in a row is doing that and I just ask them to sit back [down in their seat] again, but yet another student gets up and does it and I end up giving them time out, there is a situation where it is not consistent, and I think the students need to know where I am coming from. . . . I keep . . . consistent in what the consequence may or may not be; I also keep consistent in actually enforcing it.

Trudy

In Trudy's classroom several factors contribute to the success of discipline. One that significantly stands out is getting to know her students and establishing a rapport with them. Trudy spoke about the importance of teachers' demonstrating to students that they care about them and see them as being special in some way:

The number one factor for me is rapport with the students. . . . I have high expectations for them, but they also feel comfortable in coming to me. They know I really care about them; I'm not just pretending that I care. It's not only showing

them that I care in their academia and [that] I support them and [will] be there for them . . . if [they] need some extra help. It's also in other areas, showing them that I care about what they're interested in. . . . I will go to their hockey games; I will go to their baseball games; I've been to ballet dance recitals and piano recitals. To me it's taking that extra hour out of my life [and I'm saying "Go, go!"]. I'm showing them that I care, . . . making the child feel special, that there is something about them that I see that is important and that they have a special gift, and I'm interested in that gift and I value it.

During the first two months of the year Trudy works on identifying which students have strong self-discipline and those who will need additional time and attention. She believed that the benefits of *"getting to know and training"* her students to work cooperatively and constructively are well worth the time and effort that they take:

Get to know your kids. . . . Who are your children who have very good classroom behavior? Who don't really need to be guided? Then there are those children that soon stand out to you. This child experiences problems this way. This one cannot sit beside this type of person because they aren't able to focus. Or these two together are not a good combination. You start to get to know your kids, and you have to live with them a little while to know that. Once [you know your kids], then you start with your physical environment and make sure that you have them [placed] in the right way.

I do a lot of group things, so I spend two months working on, "How do you work in a group?". . . . It's a training session, takes time, takes energy. . . . I also explain to them why we need it. . . . I need to be able to hear what they're saying and that no one else needs to be distracted. We talk through all of that, the reasons why they have to work the way that I want them to work. . . . I've had people come in . . . and my kids won't even look up because they've been trained [not to].

Henry

Henry strongly reinforced the importance of keeping students proactively involved in interesting curriculum-related activities as a factor in supporting student discipline. He creatively uses well-behaving students in his instructional examples and demonstrations and has found that many discipline problems disappear as a result of

students' wanting to be included. If he, as the teacher, becomes excited and enthusiastic about an activity, the students will quickly *"buy into it"*:

> *Keeping them active. . . . It just all works in a discipline sense that they want to do the activities. . . . If we are going to do something on the Civil War, I just won't talk about it; I will show a demonstration. We are doing businesses in Grade 9. Instead of reading about it, they're going to create the business. They are going to run a real business where they're to sell items to Grade 8s. They are going to have a profit. They're going to have to pay for commercials. So instead of just "reading" about it, they are doing it, and if they miss something in class, then it hurts their business. . . . Once everyone buys into it, you just don't have discipline problems.*

> *It's basically the enthusiasm and keeping them busy, always active. . . . They know that I love what I'm doing; . . . I get excited about it; [and then] the kids are going to get excited about it. . . . I always have student examples or student pictures on things just so they are always looking to see what is coming next. . . . I only [include] students that are well-behaved and aren't a problem in class, and they all try to get into these things. Just getting them involved in every way I can keeps them on task. . . . Bringing them up for demonstrations in front of the class, having groups sing songs for projects that we are doing, anything that gets them involved and they want to do it. Being involved is being quiet, putting up your hand if you want to [be included].*

Henry reported that if the class becomes too noisy or off task, all he needs to do is to threaten to end a fun activity or demonstration: *"All I really have to say is, 'I guess I can't do this if you guys are going to act up,' and they buckle down pretty fast."*

Teacher movement in the class is an important factor that Henry believed also contributes to student discipline:

> *I'm all over the place. I keep a lot of students off balance in the sense that I could be talking anywhere. Or if I'm doing poetry I may talk right into their face. I'll come down and sit beside them or involve them. They are always involved in what I'm doing.*

Nancy

Nancy identified caring and mutual respect as highly significant factors in the success of student discipline in her classroom. The beginning of the year is the most challenging time for her as she begins to form supportive relationships with new students. She emphasized the importance of letting her students know over and over that she believes in their abilities to be successful and will assist them in overcoming any difficulties that they may encounter, however major or minor they may be. She shared an example of letting students know that she is aware of their efforts to improve their behavior and academic success. These communications, she believed, help to form the bond of mutual respect and caring between teacher and student:

> *Showing that you care [is a factor that contributes more to successful student discipline than the rest]. . . . I let them know over and over and over, and it's how we start the whole year off. It's how much I believe in them, I believe they can learn. And yeah, there might be some struggling along the way, but I really, really believe in them, and no matter what happens, [we'll work it out]. . . . I walk the talk. It's in everything I do, in every interaction with the kids. I truly do respect them as a person, and [they know] that I believe that they can be successful.*

> *September is always a really, really challenging time for me as a teacher working with at-risk kids because you haven't established that relationship yet. They don't know me; they don't know that I care about them and that I want to help them learn. So they're using all the kinds of [behaviors] that they've used in the past, and so I need to help them to see that I care about them, that we have respect. . . . What I do is, you know, focusing in on the positives in them and you can always find some. . . . An example is a student who has really poor attendance, . . . and I'm not talking about a student who has been ill. We're talking your habitual skipper. When they show up for school for whatever reason they got themselves to school that day, I might really be angry that they haven't been coming, but I've got to tell them that "it's great you're here today." . . . So for that student, when they walk in I say, "I'm glad you're here. It's good to see you," and we move forward. My belief is, How can they not buy into this? "This [teacher] wants me to be here, and so I'm going to put some effort into it while I'm here." So I think that's huge.*

Nancy identified teacher enthusiasm as an important factor in successful student discipline. She believed that, if a teacher shows a passionate interest in the lesson and materials being taught, students are more apt to buy into the lesson and behave. She also encourages her students to ask questions if they do not understand the reason for or the importance of the material on which they are expected to work:

> *I'm very passionate about what I do and enthusiastic so that when, you know, I'm doing a class lesson, . . . it just exudes from me the enthusiasm of it. . . . I say to them very often that "one thing you have to know about me is, I will never give you anything to do in here that isn't valuable learning. I'll never have you doing anything that isn't important to your educational achievement or [to] bettering yourself as a person. . . . If there's ever anything that we're doing and you don't understand why, ask me the question." So I'm really trying to develop that relationship that "I care so much and it's going to be valuable, so you gotta be there with me. When I'm into it, you've gotta be into it too."*

Brian

For Brian, certain classroom factors have a more significant supportive effect on student discipline than others. He believed that a positive tone set by the classroom teacher keeps challenging negativity down. Class size is another factor of concern. If a class is either too large or too small, it affects the dynamics of interpersonal interaction. With classes under 22 students, the pool of engagement and ideas generated by students is diminished, Brian said. With over 30 students in the room a sense of anonymity starts to play a role. The interpersonal connection between the students and the teacher is reduced, and a greater amount of teacher time is generally spent lecturing to the larger group. As the interpersonal contact with students declines, they tend to engage more often in off-task behavior:

> *I think the feeling tone in the class [contributes significantly to the success of student discipline]. [In my classes] it is very warm. Nobody says anything negative about anybody else. I don't think I've ever rolled my eyes or made a*

student feel bad at all. . . . Kids are going to challenge you, and it's how you deal with the day-to-day challenges as they come up; for example, the way I talk to them if someone comes in late. I say, "Good morning. Have a seat" or "Was it the roads today?" . . . If you get the kid who asks the question that you just answered 10 seconds ago, I'll say something like, "Why don't you just ask anybody in the next row?" And then what you are saying to the kid is, "You should have been listening to that, and you didn't." But even then it's not a really nasty kind of thing; it's very, very positive.

If a class starts to get too big, then a sense of anonymity is going to creep in. . . . I can't imagine teaching 36 to 40 kids in a class because at that point now you almost have to step back and become a lecturer, at which point now you've lost a fair amount of connection with your kids, and also you are liable to have a little bit more twittering in the background. And so you might be stopping more often to say or walking back to say, "You guys shouldn't be doing that" or whatever it happens to be. . . . [With 22 students or fewer] you start to notice that there is nobody around in the class, and I wouldn't want to go much less than that because you run out of ideas. You need a pool of ideas from the students to keep things happening.

One thing we find though is, the difference between 25 and 30 is huge when it comes time to mark. . . . The more you can keep up to the marking and get the stuff back in the kids' hands, the better. . . . For high schools, 24 [students], that's a beautiful size. Less than that I kind of start not liking it. Thirty is about as big as I would want to get, I think.

Sonia

The factors that contribute most to student discipline in Sonia's classroom are her high behavioral expectations and an atmosphere of care and respect. She shares her expectations with her students the first day of school and continues to remind them and reinforce the expectations over the year. Sonia stated that she demonstrates her care for students by constantly providing one-on-one support and assistance to them both during and after class. This approach, she believed, helps to create a classroom atmosphere of appreciation and mutual respect:

Students know off the bat my expectations. I set high expectations, and they know they are expected to be in class on time, and they know that their homework has

to be done. And I keep stressing the importance of paying attention and doing work. The expectations are there, and they know them. I also must talk about them [expectations]. and then I remind them lots. . . . If kids start to talk, I just remind them, "Come on guys, the work has to get done." [I] let kids know that I care about them and there is a mutual respect. I think that is important. I go around and help them at their desk. If a student does not do well on a test, I encourage them to ask questions a lot. When they ask questions, I don't make them feel bad. I don't joke back at them, I explain it. I think kids feel comfortable. I encourage them to go for tutorials which are run at lunch hour. I offer my time for extra help.

If someone is doing really poorly, I will approach them and say, "Why don't you come and we'll sit down and go through this test and see where you went wrong? When is a good time for you?" Most of the time they will come. . . . There are some I actually set up a time with.

Factors Outside the Classroom that Contribute to Successful Student Discipline

Sam

Sam contended that it is very important for a teacher to be available and approachable to students outside the classroom. Quality relationships with students can be formed as a result of contact that he has had with other members of the student's family such as older brothers and sisters, parents, and so on. He stressed, however, that a friendly outside-the-classroom relationship with a student must not become so informal that the student consciously or unconsciously takes advantage of it:

I'm an approachable individual as a teacher. I'm in my office 99% . . . if I'm not on supervision because I know students are often coming to me. . . . They know that I am accessible here, [and] I truly believe [outside the classroom is] a little more of a relaxed situation. . . . Now, they also need to know outside the classroom that there is a cut-off line there. . . . There is a time and a place for us joking around. . . . It is important to build up the relationship, [but] not to a point where some students might take it wrong.

Other things outside the classroom? Again, if I'm on recess supervision, I know I am still enforcing the rules to a T out on the playground. They may be totally different than my math rules, they may be totally different than my gym rules, but I think they[students] still need to know that I am a teacher, I'm still going to be enforcing what our school rules are, because if I'm seen as somebody that is in a certain situation, because if it is not as formal as in a classroom or the gym, that I'm backing off on that, on any of my discipline issues at all or how I handle it, then I think that some students may take advantage of that in a classroom situation.

Sam stressed that the one factor outside the classroom that he viewed as contributing most to the success of student discipline is the respect that students have for him as a teacher:

Respect. I believe for some of the reasons I just said that firm but fair—but the students know that if it is a rule, I am going to enforce it, but yet if somebody has stretched that rule, bent that rule, broke that rule for any reason, that I'm at least going to listen to them. I believe they respect that, and I think they respect me more as a teacher if I am more consistent than if I am just letting them get away with things. That respect carries itself in the hallways and carries itself in the playground.

Trudy

Trudy's number one factor outside the classroom that contributes positively to student discipline is parental support. It is important for her to establish a trusting and cooperative rapport with parents because working supportively together works best in helping children to change their behavior. Engaging parents to assist her with disciplinary matters has been very successful for her.

Trudy has also found that students who are actively involved with their parents as well as in organized activities such as sports and music often bring a more mature and responsible attitude to school than students who are left alone a great deal do:

One of the things I do with all my students is get to know their parents as much as possible, having that rapport with the parents so that they trust me, that they respect me, so that when there is difficulty I can phone them and discuss it. . . . I

> *want them to feel like they can come to me, that I'm not attacking them, . . . that we need a partnership, we need to do this together. "I can't change your child's behavior by myself. I need you to come and help me." . . . I've always had success [with this approach]. I've never had that head bashing with parents because I've let them know that I'm on their side and I want to support them, and let's do whatever we need to do to help little John. . . . The parental involvement, the amount that their parents are involved with them at home and their attitude and their support with me I would include as most important.*

Henry

Henry believed that the relationships that he builds and reinforces outside the classroom with students significantly impact the way his students respond to him and their supportive behavior in class. He consciously makes an effort to interact with his students regularly by socializing in the hallway at lunch, shooting baskets, playing dodge ball, or lifting weights with them in the gym. He also attends and participates in their school dances. By making himself available to his students outside of the classroom in a nonthreatening way, Henry felt that he has become an approachable adult role model. The strength of his relationship with students is further evidenced by the many students who come back to visit him after they have graduated from junior high.

Strong support from both school administration and parents at home also contributes to the success of discipline in Henry's classroom. Although he has not needed to send a student to the office for disciplinary assistance in six years, his students know that that is always a possibility, as is a call home to their parents:

> *Just being sort of a role model, almost a parent figure, where it's just a warm relationship where they can come around and joke or ask questions or they can approach me. . . . The door is always open; they can always come in and talk to me. . . . Getting out into the weight room. I'll go out in the gym and play with them. Basketball, whatever they are doing. Just getting involved, actively involved by seeing them all over the place. . . . I'll go out and play dodge ball, or I'll go when they are doing dancing and do some dances so they see that I am human outside the class. . . . That helps a lot. . . . Being out in the hallway for me at noon*

hour all the time, in the hallway, seeing if they do something, and then I correct them if it's wrong. And at the same time if they are doing something good, I'll let them know that it is a good job.

Students know that [if] they act up in class, they are going to the office. I use the office in the sense that I tell kids that I have not sent anyone in six years. So if I send, it is going to be pretty serious. That tends to really send a message to them. . . . The kids don't want to be the first one sent down. . . . The idea of excluding them from some of the activities, they get really upset about it. So I guess in that sense it helps me: "If you are really going to be a pain, I guess we have to send you down."

The parents are important. They buy into what I'm doing as well. I can phone home and say, "So and so is not cooperating."

Nancy

Parents and other significant adults in a child's life play a major role in how a student behaves in Nancy's classroom. She asserted that good parents raise their children to have respect, self-worth, and confidence and that children from such homes generally come to school ready and willing to learn. Sometimes, she said, the significant mentor or role model is a big brother, a big sister, a teacher, or community group affiliation. Understanding respect for self and others is a key factor in influencing a student's behavior:

I always say, you know, a good family life is huge now to the success that I have with kids. If they [the parents] have enabled their child to have experiences and develop confidence and self-worth and [the child] knows when they go home that there's going to be food, there's going to be a family there, they've got love in their life, then when that child comes into my class, they're coming with the head set [of] respect. . . . They walk into the classroom, they feel good about themselves, they feel confident, they feel liked, they're capable of learning, they feel like they are worthy of learning. . . . I just have to work with them.

Brian

Brian was convinced that parents play an important role in supporting or not supporting student discipline. If parents believe that they have a responsibility to assist their child's teacher, behavior issues and conflicts can be taken care of much more easily. Brian stated that, even if parents expect the teacher to *"deal with the problem,"* that can be interpreted as support in that the parent is not interfering with the way that the teacher is handling the student conflict. It is when the parents make excuses or attempt to dismiss their child's responsibility for their actions that a teacher has a more difficult time in dealing with discipline. According to Brian, other outside factors such as family poverty, drug addiction, or pampered child rearing also affect a teacher's success with student discipline:

> *If the parents buy into [your] system, you are most of the way there. If you phone a parent and say, "Look, I've got a problem with your kid. He's not doing this and this," and the parent goes, "Thanks, I'll straighten his halo for you," that's perfect. If a parent says "Look, I work hard at my job and I don't phone you for help when I need help. Now, if you've got a problem with my kid, deal with it!" that is actually a good attitude too because then if you have to deal with the kid, the parent is going to back you because you are doing your job. If you get the 'me' generation parent, then you've got issues that are going to get in your way. "What do you mean you are going to discipline my kid? Even if my kid did something wrong, he's not a leader; he's a follower. Blame this [other] guy." If you've got parents who buy into what you are doing, . . . that is the biggest thing you could ask for.*

> *[Other outside factors:] If a kid's poor and he is coming to school hungry, he is not going to learn. . . . If the kid is going out at noon and smoking dope and coming back, they are not going to learn. . . . If they are depressed or if they are extremely angry because something is going on, they are liable to snap or something like that. . . . If Mom and Dad have given them everything always, then the attitude is, "The teachers will give me everything too; I don't have to do anything for myself." That [attitude] is not going to help you at all.*

Sonia

Sonia stressed the importance of having both the school administration and parents as back-up support on matters relating to student discipline, but she was not sure whether one played a greater role than the other and concluded that it is probably a combination of both:

> *The few times I've had to send students down and out of class, admin is always very supportive, and if I need them to speak to the student, they will. I guess the big thing is administrative support. I had an incident this year where a student was cheating, and I talked to the administration and he was real good about it. He called the student out of class to meet with me right then, and we sat down and handled it. So I have good support. It is important that parents are on your side [as well], . . . and most of the time they are. There is the odd time they will say, "Why are you bothering me?" But usually parents are right there. . . . I make [phone calls home to parents] if I find that the student is doing poorly and not attending regularly or whatever.*
>
> *The school itself has a system where if students are not attending regularly, I'll phone parents, and if nothing changes, there is a commitment form that the school has that formalizes things. So the student has to sign this thing saying that they will attend regularly, and if they don't, they can be removed from the class. This just bumps things up a notch if you have tried talking to the student and talking to the parents.*
>
> *[Regarding which contributes more,] I don't know if it is more administrative support or if I would like to say parental. . . . I guess it is a combination of parents and administration.*

Stories of Student Discipline

Sam

Sam cited an example of how he handled an interaction with a Grade 6 student who was sitting beside him and inappropriately whispered to him "You idiot" after both he and the student discovered that Sam was using the wrong evaluation sheet to rate a

classroom performance that they were both watching. He was proud of the way in which he dealt with the incident:

> *She whispers, "You idiot," so, of course, I stop and I look at her, and it really didn't click with her what she had said. . . . I guess what I could have done is stopped everything right there, hauled her out, and had quite a discussion; but I just looked at her and said, "I'd like you to think about what you just said to me and what would happen to you if you would have called your homeroom teacher an idiot." Then it dawned on her what would happen, and you could see her turn quite red, and her expression totally changed, And she started whispering all kinds of apologies, and I said, "Fine, we will talk about it later." . . . After class everybody had left and I called her over, and she was still apologizing and I said, "That is fine. I appreciate your apology, and I know it just slipped out, but I also need a written apology from you as well." The written apology came the next day, just like that. . . . This is not a girl that I have ever had that situation with. Even with other students, she doesn't talk to other students like that. It was just one of those moments; she just blurted it out.*
>
> *I was proud of how I handled it. . . . I didn't want her to be terribly upset about it, but yet I needed her to know how inappropriate it was and there was going to be a consequence besides just a verbal apology, because that can go pretty quickly. So she had to take the time that night to go home and write me this apology and so forth. You know, I felt that I handled that well.*

Trudy

It is important to Trudy that students know that teachers still love and care for them even when they act out and let the teachers down. She shared a story of a little boy in her room who lost control and smashed another student's Mother's Day flower pot by throwing it to the floor, which was a result of the little boy's becoming angry after a piece of potting dirt hit him in the face as the other student was pulling off her rubber gloves. Trudy immediately moved the little boy off to the side and sat him down on the classroom couch as she calmed down the little girl, who was demonstrably upset. Later she helped the boy to realize how inappropriate his behavior was.

She felt that anyone who would act that way must have a lot of anger inside him about other things, which, as it turned out, was correct. At home the boy's older brother

was constantly telling him that he was a loser and an idiot, and he had a poor image of himself and lacked self-esteem. Trudy made it clear to the boy that he was not the problem. The problem was his angry behavior and the damage and grief that it had caused. After discussion and follow-up with the boy, Trudy was able to make him understand this and bring the incident to closure with a sincere apology to the little girl.

> *I had a little boy who had trouble with his anger. . . . We were making these flower pots . . . for Mother's Day. . . . One little girl had taken off her rubber gloves, and some of the grout spit out and flew off right into this little boy's face. . . . He just lost it, absolutely lost it, and he picked up her pot . . . and slammed it on the ground. I asked him to go sit for a few minutes off to the couch. He knew from the look on my face that I was not impressed. I needed to get this little girl set up and take care of her needs first and calm [myself] down. [Later] we had a very long discussion on why this happened and how inappropriate it was. I really think when a child goes off like that there's something there. He's saying, "I need help. I'm angry about something; please dig deep enough to find out what's going on." . . . So we had a long chat, and it turned out that he was carrying so much baggage inside about his big brother [who] was calling him a loser and "You're not cool, and, you know, you're just an idiot," and was making him feel like two inches high all the time. . . . I started to get a clearer picture of why this child was doing this [acting out]. . . . I made it clear to him that it wasn't him that I had a problem with him; the problem was the grief he had caused this girl and that he had no right to do that. I needed to help him to learn you can't go around doing that kind of behavior. . . . So then we had some follow-up with that, and he sincerely apologized to the little girl. It also gave me a chance to find out what caused this.*

Henry

Henry viewed student discipline in his classroom as best represented by the willingness of his students to enthusiastically and cooperatively participate in instructional activities. His students regularly complete their assignments and homework so that they have more time during the class to compete in review competitions. Often his students will give up their snack break to prolong these competitions:

> *I like when they come to class and they want to be here. They want to learn, they will be asking questions. . . . They will go home and study and come in the next*

day and say "Oh, are we having a review today? I studied. Are we having a review?" Just watching them want to learn, getting excited about Canadian history. [The students] know I don't give a lot of time in class for homework. . . . If their homework is not done, we don't' do an activity [or review competition].

[Sometimes when the bell rings during a review competition, the students remain] during their snack break to continue the review, giving up that 10-minute [break]. . . . One time I said to them, "Okay, you guys, we can either do review or homework in class right now," and most kids would [rather] do their homework. Well, these kids wanted review and to do their homework after school.

Nancy

Nancy commented that it is very important that her students get the message that she cares about them and will assist them in handling or resolving any problem or conflict that arises. She also attempts to use low-key intervention strategies or diffusing techniques to avoid a conflict's escalating out of control. She then gave an example of an incident that morning when she dealt with a special-needs student who was experiencing difficulties staying on task with an assignment:

I think the biggest thing . . . is letting the kids see that I care and that I'm going to stick with [them]. No matter how much effort that it takes, we're going to get through this. . . . This morning with Amy, how I handled student discipline was, number one, low-key kinds of responses, one-on-one conferencing. So she was off task in here for awhile, . . . so just reminding her that she's off focus and giving her the opportunity to leave the class and go and get a drink of water to refocus rather than her sitting there and struggling, and then her behavior starts to escalate. So, I guess, diffusing a situation that way.

Brian

Brian considered it important to monitor the engagement and interest of his students throughout the class period. If students begin to lose interest in the activity or instruction, it is important that he add variety or do something different before too many students fall off task. On the day of our interview he gave an example of how he had

changed the instructional focus for a group of his students, and he indicated that this type of adjustment is quite typical in his classes:

> *Well today, for example, the kids were [in the lab]. There were four or five stations where they had to go and they had to try and do a little experiment with static electricity. . . . After about 20 or 25 minutes you could tell they were beginning to lose it [interest]; they had gone about as far as they could. . . . I wasn't going to do this next experiment until the day after tomorrow, but I said, "Hey, everybody, that is enough time. Come on up here now." So everybody came back to their desk and I said, "Look, we may not get a day as good as this for static again [sparks on a Van de Graaff generator], and I was going to do this in a couple of days." So I set up the experiment, and they watched me [with interest] get some data—data that we are going to use for another experiment. . . . So you notice when the group is losing focus [and] you do something different. . . . I would say that is kind of typical [in my classes].*

Sonia

Sonia likes to have *"a bit of fun"* with her students. Even in handling disciplinary concerns, she attempts to use humor in novel ways. She shared a story about using *"a twist of truth"* in a humorous way to bring a student back on task:

> *A student was talking a lot, and when I moved him he still talked; wherever I moved him he talked. So he was talking to this James, and I said to James, "Now James, you have to quit bothering Delrosh because he is not working," and [it was really] Delrosh who was doing all the talking [teacher laughs]. "Now Delrosh wants to do his work, so you have to leave him alone." And James kind of did a double take, and then he clues in and freaks out and he says, "Okay, Mrs. Smith, I'll get to work." So I kind of had some fun with him, but it made Delrosh settle down and do a little bit of work.*

Educational Benefits of Student Discipline

Sam

Sam split the educational benefits of student discipline into two categories, teacher benefits and student benefits. From the classroom teacher's perspective, with good discipline in place, he/she is able to use most of the instructional time teaching the

curriculum. From the student's perspective, Sam believed that good discipline provides a learning environment where students feel safe, comfortable, and productive:

> *From a teaching perspective it benefits when you've got a [discipline] system in place. . . . The teacher can get a lot of really good quality teaching time in. . . . If there is no discipline, or very little discipline, I believe that the curriculum itself, and the teaching of that curriculum, really, really suffers. You will spend a lot more time during the day with stoppages; you will spend a lot more time during the school day with, you know, having to have meetings with students individually or in groups, possibly with administrators, possibly with parents because of discipline issues.*

> *From the students' viewpoint, . . . if they know the rules, they know the expectations, I think they are going to learn a lot more. They will feel comfortable, they will feel safe, and I believe feeling safe for a student in any grade, whether it's Grade 1 or in high school, you've got to feel safe to learn.*

Trudy

Trudy also separated the benefits of student discipline into benefits for both students and teachers. In both cases the benefits is an enhanced teaching and learning process. She observed that, if time is not being spent dealing with disciplinary issues, students will have the opportunity to learn more because the teacher is able to spend more time teaching the curriculum:

> *If a child can't behave or is having difficulty behaving and they're spending more time dealing with teachers and then problems and being corrected on their problems, it's taking away from instructional time in the classroom, and they're not learning. . . . I see too often kids being sent out in the hallway or sent to the office or sent home. . . . With teachers, if they're having to deal with behavior after behavior, they aren't given the time to work with their children. It becomes more of a management thing instead of a teaching situation. . . . The teacher's spending so much time lecturing the kids or dealing with this child doing whatever instead of being able to teach [the curriculum].*

Henry

Henry stated that his students understand that if they follow the rules and support classroom discipline, more instructional time will be used for interesting activities and demonstrations. This, he believed, is a benefit to everyone's learning and allows him the opportunity to cover more curricular material with his students:

> *My students know that we are going to be active all the time, but there has got to be discipline. You have to follow the rules, and they know that will lead to something better each time. . . . I bring in extra things, more demonstrations, more activities rather than seat work. . . . They buy into it. You don't spend a lot of time talking to students about it [discipline]. You are not interrupting classes; you are not taking time out of class. The more discipline [classroom order] you have, the more you can do in the classroom, the more you get through, the quicker you can get through it and do some other things.*

Nancy

The main benefit of student discipline to Nancy is, of course, student achievement:

> *Well, obviously achievement, because if students themselves are disciplined, they're going to be meeting expectations that are set and that they set for themselves. If we look at it as far as school discipline then, if everybody is meeting the expectations that are created at the school or [by] themselves, then we're going to have achievement in every aspect.*

Brian

Brian identified the benefits of student discipline as *"everything."* He added that if several students are creating a disturbance in the classroom, other students will simply not be able to learn and that a teacher needs to create a climate in the classroom where students who wish to learn will not be prevented from doing so by those who do not want to learn:

Well, it's everything. . . . I mean if you are in a class where there are enough kids creating enough of a disturbance that other kids can't learn, then you got nothing. I mean, it is everything, so you need to create a climate in the classroom where kids can learn if they want to, and then they will. Now, the world not being a perfect place, there are always some kids that won't learn and aren't going to do what they should do. You've got to make sure that those kids aren't dragging people down with them.

Sonia

Sonia pointed out that the benefits of discipline are twofold: If students are self-disciplined, they will remain focused on the task of learning and getting an education; and if all students are focused on their learning, no one will be disrupting the learning process. She emphasized that students cannot be allowed to interfere with the learning of others:

I guess [discipline] means disciplining yourself to do the work and concentrate and to be on time and in attendance all the time. You cannot learn if you aren't doing all those things. . . . That students can hear and are paying attention to the lesson. They are focused and getting the most out of it. They are attentive. . . . The bottom line is, you need to learn. . . . If students aren't focused and aren't able to focus for themselves, . . . they can't be disrupting other people's learning!

Role of Others in Supporting Student Discipline

Sam

Sam felt that staff consistency is very important to establish supportive student discipline, that all staff need not have the same classroom rules as long as students know what they are and what the consequences are, and that all staff follow through. This helps to create a whole-school climate of disciplinary support. If this is not the case, Sam's experience has been that some students will try to get away with various rule violations because they believe that they will not be enforced. In Sam's opinion, both students and

staff truly appreciate follow-through. It breeds a culture of schoolwide discipline that highlights responsive and respectful behavior from all students:

> *There is nothing more important than consistency between all the staff. . . . That doesn't mean that you have to have the exact same rules posted on your wall; however, the general theme throughout the school [must be the same] and the students knowing what the consequences are going to be. At our school here, we try to handle things as teachers one-on-one with the student when we can, but students know that time-outs are the next step over and above that [the administration's becoming involved]. . . . So the consistency starting right from the administration and right to all the teachers has to be there. . . . It's not only staff that appreciate that; I believe that students appreciate that. So consistency from everybody is of utmost importance.*

> *I have been in a school situation before where everybody was on board with the administration with how discipline had to be handled. I've been in that same school with the same clientele where those expectations were not followed by all staff because the [new] administration did not necessarily—I guess I'm making an assumption here—didn't see that as a priority at the time in that school. Those of us who were in that situation and used to, for a number of years, all being consistent with each other, our jobs were made threefold more difficult. . . . The whole school climate, in my opinion, and the whole discipline process in that school, while still being good, was not anywhere near where it needed to be for that situation.*

Trudy

Trudy emphasized the strength and leadership that principals can demonstrate in bringing a schoolwide focus to student discipline. She stressed the importance of having her principal support her disciplinary decisions and be available to assist her when necessary. Teacher stress, she contended, occurs when teachers feel that they have no support from the administration. With strong administrative leadership, a schoolwide approach to discipline is more likely to emerge, which helps to increase the level of staff consistency in dealing with behavioral concerns and conflicts. Trudy also noted that character education programs supported by the school administration and staff can also have a positive impact on student behavior:

The administration—principal and vice principal—play a big role. They set the whole scene for how the school is run and how the kids perceive the school. . . . If I know I can go to my principal, . . . who will support me, it makes it much easier for me— . . . support me if I've decided that this child needs to be dealt with in this way; . . . support me in dealing with parents if there are difficulties. I need that support. . . . If I feel like I'm not qualified or don't have the ideas or the means to support a child, that he or she [the principal] will come and say, "Here are some options we have; here's how we can support you." . . . You need someone who is strong in their behavior management to help you because it all filters down. If you don't have that strength and that support, it gets wishy-washy. There has to be that consistency, there has to be that "This is the way it is." All the teachers have to be on the same track. . . . We're not going to have parents say, "Well, how come my child got away with it in this class, but not in that class? What are your rules? How come they're not consistent?" So I think the principal—that strength, that support, [connecting] that thread with all the teachers [to] pull together so that we work as a team.

I think that it's important for me as a teacher to know that if I'm having difficulty I'm going to have some supports within the school, that I'm not alone, because that's where the stress comes in if I think I've got these kids and I don't know what to do and I'm going to lose it, I have no support, I'm by myself.

In our school we're really, really pushing character education. I think that's really important that the kids see the teachers modeling that, living it [and] teaching it. . . . I think that if the kids are learning this character ed. type respect, responsibility, caring, and kindness, they become more focused on that in the classroom, and they're not as tempted to misbehave.

Henry

Henry confirmed that he has the support of the school administration and most parents to assist him if necessary with disciplinary concerns. Fortunately, he has rarely had to call on others for assistance. He believed that student discipline is a teacher responsibility, and therefore each is expected to look after his/her own:

I don't expect my colleagues to do what I do. . . . I just expect them in their class to do their own [discipline], just as I do mine. I tend to look out for what they [colleagues] are doing in other classes, but I don't expect them to check up with me.

Nancy

Nancy maintained that staff can greatly assist each other by being consistent with disciplinary matters and drawing conflicts to closure before sending students to their next class. It is very important, she pointed out, that students know what is expected of them in their classes and that all teachers set students up for success and interact with them in friendly and respectful ways. If students leave a class upset or angry, it immediately handicaps the success that the next teacher can have with that student:

> *The biggest thing is caring about the kids . . . enough to take the time to explain something. The other thing is [staff] being consistent, so that when students go into their class, they know what is expected in that class, [and] they are set up for success. "I can do this" sort of mode, and . . . they know what is expected of them and they're treated consistently. When a student walks into a classroom where they're unclear and it's one day things are handled this way and the next day it's handled this way, I think that's just completely unfair to them. . . . Then they come to me, and they're coming to me out of an unsuccessful situation, and that makes my job more difficult. . . . If they walk [into my class] and they're angry, . . . their head is not in the space to learn [my instructional lesson]. There's no way, you know, I could stand on my head up here, and that's not going to grab their attention if there is that kind of anger built up. So the biggest thing they would need would be a cool-down time. Sometimes, I mean, . . . it takes a whole class [for them to cool down]. But that time is better spent [that way] than me trying to . . . just keep pushing and pushing, . . . because I'm probably going to escalate the anger. . . . I would absolutely give them the opportunity to cool down, whether that meant in here in my class sitting quietly . . . or go get a drink of water, . . . and then when there was an opportunity, I would just privately ask them if there's something that they need to talk about. . . . I would say, you know, "We can help you work through what happened." . . . I'll let them know that "when you have a problem like that, that there are strategies and things and people that you can talk to that will help you."*

Brian

Brian, fortunately, had not had a great need to have others involved in assisting him with disciplinary concerns: *"I don't think I've sent a kid to an administrator since*

I've got to this school [eight years ago]. [If] you need help from an administrator, you hope the administrator will help you."

Sonia

Sonia considered support from others (such as the school administration) the same as outside classroom factors that affect student discipline. She added, however, that other students in the classroom at times also play a support role:

> *Well, I mentioned before that there are things in place with the administration. You always get support. Other kids in class will too say, if some kids are being noisy they will say, "Be quiet!" They will tell each other to be quiet if they think it is getting too noisy.*

Professional Development Needs of Teachers Regarding Student Discipline

Sam

Sam believed that a teacher's PD needs with regard to student discipline may vary extensively from school to school and that it is highly dependent on the student clientele who attend a particular school. Staff with many high-needs students may require more PD than would staff with fewer at-risk students. Sam remarked that it is important that the school administration understand the disciplinary needs of students in the school and provide staff with PD opportunities to support these needs. This is especially important when school board policies change in the areas of student safety and conduct and crisis intervention.

Sam also stated that, as a teacher, he would not be afraid to approach a school administrator and request PD support in an area of discipline in which he felt weak:

> *The clientele I had at my first school was quite a bit different from the clientele at my [present] school. I needed to have more assistance with things like . . . crisis intervention. . . . At this school, I may never need that. . . . I do feel a lot of it is*

pretty specific to the situation that you are in. . . . You would hope to have a strong enough administrator to realize what your clientele's needs are and to maybe help gear the PD development a little bit for both new teachers or teachers that have been teachers for awhile but may have been just sent into that school. . . . I wouldn't be afraid . . . to go to the administrator and say, . . . "Here is where I feel weak, and I need some help in this area."

Trudy

Trudy strongly endorsed PD opportunities for teachers in the area of student discipline. When she began her teaching career, she attended many inservices on discipline that had been sponsored by her school district, and she solicited the support of a behavior consultant to come into her class and assist her in learning more about discipline. She stressed, however, that the best PD opportunity that she has is observing other good, experienced teachers interacting with students:

I think that it's really important that [teachers] do get professional development. They need to know so many different factors. For instance, I've taken inservices on how to deal with a child that gets totally out of hand, like crisis intervention, those kinds of things. I think that's important because you never know when things like that get out of hand.

I think it's really important especially for new teachers to get a lot of PD on being proactive, things like your classroom structure, . . . some of the behavior management things. When I started teaching . . . I didn't know what would be the most appropriate thing to do, so I needed to have a behavior consultant come in and show me and observe. I went to a lot of the different inservices that were being put on by my school district. They helped me so much.

To me the biggest professional development is not so much going to an inservice, but observing other good teachers. For me, I went and observed teachers that I thought, How do you do this? how does Mr. Smith get those kids to sit still? So I'll go and watch, because I think the biggest PD is intervisitations, learning from people with experience.

Henry

Henry focused on the opportunity to observe *"what works"* in other colleagues' classrooms as the best PD that teachers can receive on student discipline. Through intervisitations, especially early in one's career, a teacher can learn a great deal about different approaches to discipline. He stated that what works well for one teacher may not comfortably suit another teacher so easily, but by observing several different approaches to discipline, teachers are better able to develop their own styles:

> *I think really good PD development would be to go to classrooms and just see how it is done rather than reading about it, . . . especially when you are just starting out. A lot of stuff I learned at university, it doesn't apply. . . . Intervisitations give that opportunity to see what works [in] different situations. . . . The many opportunities to see different types [of discipline approaches] would be real development. . . . What works for me may not work for somebody else, and what works for someone else may not work for me.*

Nancy

Nancy found having taken specific PD training in the area of student discipline of great benefit. In her first year of teaching she had the opportunity to take a series of inservices on classroom discipline that her school district had offered. From this she collected a *"teacher toolkit"* of strategies, techniques, and ideas on how to handle a wide range of disciplinary scenarios. She recommended similar PD training for others:

> *I think that people need to be doing professional development on their classroom management strategies. . . . I took in my first year. I think it was called classroom discipline, and it was a series of inservices that took you through situations, and you shared scenarios and how it was handled. I just grabbed so much from that. There was all the classroom management techniques that . . . should be part of a teacher's toolkit. . . . I find that as I go into teachers' classrooms and observe, things that I just take for granted as part of who I am as teacher are not part of what everybody has in their toolkit.*

Brian

Brian advocated an intervisitation model of PD to assist teachers in strengthening their skills and knowledge with regard to student discipline. He believed that observing teachers working with students of similar age and grade is best and that, by observing the talent and techniques of other colleagues, a teacher will learn what disciplinary interventions work best with students in a variety of settings:

> *I really think if you could get around to other people's classrooms, if we had the time without having to use our spares to do it, if we actually had the time to spend a day or two with other teachers and you watch how they do it and they watch you, and you watch a bunch of other people, you know, you get a sense of what works by watching stuff that does and doesn't work. . . . But I wouldn't go too many grades away [to observe] because I really don't believe that [a high school teacher] is going to pick up much from a Grade 4 teacher.*

Sonia

Sonia concurred that intervisitations are the best form of PD for teachers. If a teacher is experiencing problems with student discipline, she suggested that the best thing to do is to see what other teachers are doing. She recommended that teachers visit each other's classrooms and ask questions surrounding areas of difficulty with students:

> *A good thing is the "best practices." If you can go visit. Teachers are taught by other teachers about what they do in the classroom. If you are having trouble, probably the best thing to do is what other teachers are doing. Ask them about it.*

Views on Student Discipline Across Divisional Levels

Sam

Sam warned that teachers must focus on student discipline at all levels of schooling. Although the rules and routines may differ, there is still a need for it. He saw

staff consistency in handling disciplinary concerns as the key to enforcement. There will always be a student pushing the limits, he said:

> *Discipline, if you are looking at it from a viewpoint of needing rules and needing the routines to be followed, you need that at every level. . . . It doesn't matter if I'm in a Grade 1 class or Grade 12, you have got to be consistent, because I do believe that, again, there are students in all years that will never try to push anything and students in all years that will. I believe that you need that consistency from administration throughout the entire school staff, . . . consistency to the rules and regulations and how you are going to enforce them. . . . The bottom line of discipline [is] consistency and fairness. I think it needs to be there for all grades.*

Trudy

According to Trudy, disciplinary engagement with students remains much the same regardless of the age and stage of the students. Other than the obvious maturity adjustments, she indicated that she would still focus on demonstrating respect to her students, making the learning fun for them, and showing them that she cares about them as individuals by taking an interest in them and going to activities in which they are involved:

> *As far as the discipline, I would do the same thing in any grade. . . . I mean, there are differences, of course, with maturity and where they are in their life. . . . There would be some adjustments that I would make, but I would do the same types of things. . . . I would still be showing them respect and making learning fun and would still be going to their basketball games and just showing them that there's somebody out there that they can trust and that they care. To me what's important is, . . . I want them . . . to look back and say, "There was someone who really cared about me, about my education, about the way I was, the way I behaved."*

Henry

Henry was uncertain about his views on discipline across different levels of schooling. He felt there would probably be a need for a few different expectations and

less leniency at the high school level, but he did not think that he would change most of his practices with students:

> *I really don't know much about the dynamics of a high school classroom. . . . I don't think I would change this type of classroom [structure], the types of things that I do. I would probably add more expectations. They are used to being in their desk, they know what is expected of them, rather than having to start with a clean slate. . . . I would be less lenient if I was with older students.*

Nancy

Nancy did not view discipline as much different at the various levels of schooling. She thought that a teacher's choice of vocabulary might vary, but the strategies that she has used at the elementary level compared to those used at the secondary level are not much different:

> *I don't really think [of student discipline differently at different levels] because my definition of discipline is helping a person to change behavior. And so some of the strategies that I use here [at the secondary level] aren't that much different than what I used in elementary. Your choice of vocabulary might be different, those kinds of things, but because conversation is such a big part of what my view of discipline is, I don't really see it as different at the different divisions.*

Brian

Because students are maturationally different in elementary than they are in high school, Brian argued that student discipline at these two levels must be viewed differently as well. Because of the immaturity of elementary students, teachers must be willing to intervene behaviorally more often than would be necessary with high school students. He cautioned that *"big kids"* (high school students) can have big problems that need to be handled carefully. Teacher safety in handling discipline in a tough high school can also be an issue for staff:

You don't treat little kids the same as you treat big kids. . . . I think as a teacher you have to be willing to do more intervention with kids the younger they are than the older they are. . . . I think that the older the kids get, the more mature they are getting, and they begin to want to do things for themselves. Junior highs think they are adults, . . . [whereas] Grade 12s are adults. I keep reminding them they can vote in the next provincial election. . . . Big kids have big problems, and if you've got a big problem, you deal with it in a totally different way than a big problem with a little kid. . . [In] a tough high school [if you] say a certain thing to a kid, he'll drop you.

Sonia

Sonia regarded discipline differently at the various levels of schooling. Although she has never taught elementary students, she believed that they need to be kept busy all the time. Older students, she said, are somewhat more mature and self-disciplined to work on their own. Junior high school students need more guidance than senior high students do and also need to be kept busy. However, even within the senior high school population that she has taught, there are disciplinary differences. Lower functioning students (Math 14) tend to have more problems with attendance, being late, and doing their work. Higher functioning students (Math 10 International Baccalaureate) attend and do their work, but they are usually the noisy ones, she said:

For sure at different levels it is a different type of discipline. . . . I have never taught elementary, but . . . certainly keeping them busy would be even more applicable. You can't have any downtime with younger students, I would think. These older kids, you give them a bit of time, and they are a little more self-disciplined and can work. But with elementary I would think you would have to overplan to make sure you always had activities for them to be doing. . . . [At the junior high school level] I think kids need a little more guidance and, again, need to be busy all the time. . . . Even [at the senior high school level]—I taught Math 14, Math 10 Pure, and Math 10 IB [International Baccalaureate]—there is different levels of discipline at those levels. My IBs, there is never a problem with attendance or doing work, but usually they are the noisy ones. The Math 14s, there are lots of problems with attendance and lateness and doing work. So different kinds of things.

Summary

The interview-based data that stemmed from the thoughts, beliefs, and practices of six excellent teachers provided insights into the topic of student discipline. The findings indicate that these teachers consider student discipline to be an integral part of the teaching and learning process. The participants believed that the dynamics of prosocial student discipline greatly help in creating a classroom environment that supports cooperative citizenship.

The participants viewed student discipline as the process of teaching and assisting students to become responsible and respectful members of a classroom learning community. They clearly distinguished the difference between *discipline* and *punishment.* These teachers believed that successful student discipline highlights the instruction of expectations and standards that lead to the development of cooperative conduct and interdependent respect for others. This perspective is in sharp contrast to the traditional view of discipline that narrowly focuses on authoritative compliance and punishment for behavior misconduct.

The findings indicate that thoughtful planning and organization are essential to successful student discipline. The participants stressed the importance of establishing classroom structures and routines that are clearly articulated and well understood. When conflicts arise, students need to know that they will be dealt with fairly and equitably. Throughout the resolution process, the teachers model and mindfully maintain dignity and respect.

The participants also emphasized the importance of quality curriculum in keeping students actively involved and interested in their learning. Well-planned lessons and

carefully chosen materials contribute greatly to keeping students focused and on task. The teachers considered ongoing recognition and specific feedback to students for appropriate action, effort, and quality work of prime importance and the key to encouraging students to do their best. Positive acknowledgements coupled with ongoing supportive assistance demonstrate to students that their teachers care for them.

The participants also pointed out the value of incorporating incentives into their disciplinary model. Introducing novel activities, group competitions, and earned access to preferred-activities time were all seen as positively affecting student behavior and learning.

Establishing good rapport with both parents and school administration is critical. Through the development of a strong working partnership between home and school, educators and parents can work proactively together in helping at-risk students with their behavior.

Professional development training and outside consultant support can also be a benefit to teachers in teaching them how to work through the many challenges of student discipline. The participants highlighted the value of intervisitations with experienced colleagues in learning how to deal with student discipline. Some felt that this is the best form of PD training.

Finally, all of the participants felt that student discipline is a concern for teachers at all divisional levels. Most were of the opinion that although students are developmentally different at the various ages and stages of schooling, prosocial care and support to students remain philosophically the same.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND REFLECTIONS

Chapter 5 examines the findings of this study and discusses six areas of focus related to the main research question and subquestions. Throughout the discussion I make relevant comparisons to portions of the literature review and other educational research. The findings are discussed under the following headings: defining student discipline, setting the classroom conditions for successful student discipline, disciplinary interaction and intervention, factors affecting student discipline, stories from the field, and PD support. The chapter ends with the research conclusions and recommendations for practice and theory.

Defining Student Discipline

Each participant defined student discipline in his or her own unique way. A strong common theme that emerged, however, was that discipline and punishment are not one and the same. This finding supports the position of other educational writers and researchers (Charles, 2005; Fields & Boesser, 2002; Gootman, 2001; Marzano, 2003). One participant strongly believed that it is a *"mistake"* to use discipline and punishment synonymously. The participants firmly agreed that discipline entails the act of instruction and assisting students in learning how to meet the prosocial expectations of the classroom, whereas punishment simply focuses on misbehavior.

Disassociating discipline from punishment is not only a far cry from the traditional notion of "spare the rod, spoil the child," but also incongruent with much

contemporary practice. Research indicates that punishment is still the most common way to deal with discipline problems in school. Englander (1986) had found in a study that 80% to 90% of the rule violations in schools are dealt with punitively. Rather than changing behavior for the better, punishment can often cause students to avoid contact with whoever has punished them and, instead, engage in other behaviors such as lying, cheating, and skipping class.

As previously indicated, the word *discipline* comes from the Latin word *disciplina*, which means "instruction" (Allen, 1984). The participants in this study supported the belief in teaching students how to act and behave in the classroom as part of good citizenship. Gootman (2001) pointed out that the goal of discipline should be to teach students how to do the right things in class and that this goal "is accomplished by setting limits, giving students responsibility, helping them develop confidence in their abilities and teaching them how to solve problems and make good judgments as well as correcting misbehavior" (p. 3).

The goal of teaching students to become effective citizens in the classroom also supports the aim of discipline that Beauchamp and Parsons (2000) affirmed: The goal of discipline "should be to help the student grow intellectually and learn to handle personal behavior more maturely" (p. 46).

Learning to manage one's behavior and practice self-control in the classroom is all part of the developmental process of becoming a mature, responsible, and contributing member of society. "Ideally the goal of discipline is to reduce the need for teacher intervention over time by helping students become self-disciplined, that is, able to control their own behavior appropriately" (Charles, 2002, p. 3). The participants shared this

perspective and indicated that discipline is not about students' acting in ways to simply please their teachers, but rather teaching students to understand and appreciate how their behavior affects their own learning as well as the learning of others.

As Walch (1984) stated earlier, discipline is the process that strengthens, molds, and corrects students through a program of teaching and supervision. The participants affirmed that discipline is a major part of their role and responsibilities as classroom teachers. The goal of discipline for them was to help their students to become contributing members of a cooperative learning community. They did not view student discipline narrowly through the lens of obedience and/or punishing consequences, but rather as an expanded instructional process that assists students in gaining productive and cooperative control over their learning and social behavior. The participants unanimously agreed that the advantages and outcomes of effective student discipline are the creation of a learning milieu that supports a rich interactive culture of teaching and learning. Only in such an environment, Canter and Canter (1992) pointed out, will teachers be able to exercise their right to teach, and students, their right to learn, free from unnecessary disruptions.

Overall, the participants in this study viewed discipline through the lens of prosocial enhancement. Their quest is to support students in learning about themselves and others in a social culture called the *classroom*. Using the thoughts, beliefs, and perspectives on discipline of the participants and myself, I constructed the following definition. After I shared it with the participants, they unanimously accepted and affirmed it.

Discipline is the process of teaching prosocial behavior to students in a school classroom setting. It entails the instruction and learning of behaviors that will enhance the ability of a student and empower him/her to exist interdependently in constructive, productive, and cooperative ways with others. The process of student discipline is guided by an ongoing interplay of direct instruction, signals, gestures, encouraging feedback, incentives, problem solving, and reasonable age-appropriate consequences. Discipline promotes the development of self-control, tolerance, acceptance of individual differences, moral autonomy, and responsible group membership. Student discipline assists in creating an enriched educational milieu that allows teachers to instruct and students to learn in a classroom environment free of unnecessary interruption, disruption, chaotic disorder, or violations of Charter rights and freedoms.

The participants' responses to the definition above included the following:

It's perfect. As I'm listening to it [the definition] I'm sort of envisioning my classroom, and that's exactly how I— . . . absolutely everything I do with my kids is based on how you have put it together. . . . It fits; it's awesome, perfect.

I wish I had said it like that. . . . Putting one together from all this information you have is not an easy thing. It's not a seven-word definition; there is so much entailed. For me to read a definition like that, that's great. . . . I love that definition.

Wow, that's awesome! "So it fits for you?" Yes it does.

Yeah, I'd agree with all of that. Yeah.

Well, yeah. Well, sure. It's a little technical in terms of the language, but I mean, yeah, that's basically it. I'd go along with it.

That fits good [with me], fits well. That's a well-done coverage of it.

Setting the Classroom Conditions for Successful Student Discipline

Planning and preparation are the key to most successful ventures. Likewise, effective teachers commit a great deal of time and effort to setting the classroom conditions necessary for successful student discipline.

Structure and Routine

The participants in this study indicated that student learning thrives best in a classroom environment supported by sufficient structure and routines. With adequate procedures in place, a sense of standards and stability emerges. Students come to expect "a way of living" in the classroom that is productive, caring, nurturing, and meaningful. Without established structures and routines, each new day begins with confusion and unpredictability, which often leads to chaos.

The participants spoke with confidence and conviction about creating classroom conditions that proactively support student discipline. One teacher strongly believed in getting students on task the moment they enter the class. Establishing an instructional activity of several review questions in which students engage as soon as they enter the room immediately focuses student energy and attention on the task of learning. Jones (1987a) highly recommended that teachers establish opening routines that get students quickly involved and focused. With students engaged early in a learning task, the classroom teacher is free to take attendance or interact with students who might need immediate assistance.

Excellent teachers have found that some classroom routines can be very simple yet highly effective in supporting transitional movement. For example, every teacher knows the problems associated with organizing students into groupings for a new

learning activity. By establishing a classroom routine of "Popsicle-stick selection," whereby the teacher randomly draws Popsicle sticks from a set labeled with the students' names, many grouping problems simply disappear. One participant shared this technique and acknowledged that, once in place, her students found this process to be a fair method of grouping and accepted it without complaint. She indicated that it has greatly assisted her in transitioning students from one activity to another.

Classroom Expectations/Rules

The participants spoke strongly about the importance of establishing and implementing reasonable expectations that are clear and understood by all. Emmer, Evertson, and Worsham (2003; as cited in Marzano, 2003) stated, "It is just not possible for a teacher to conduct instruction or for students to work productively if they have no guidelines for how to behave" (p. 3).

Some participants highlighted the benefit of involving students in the process of setting classroom expectations. They have found that, in most cases, students inherently know what expectations are needed and, by involving them in the process, they create a sense of "buy-in" ownership. Other writers in the field have also supported soliciting student input into classroom rules (Canter & Canter, 1992; Coloroso, 1983; Kohn, 1996). On the other hand, Glasser (1969) cautioned teachers that "children should have some part in making the rules. . . . [But] they do not decide, however, whether or not rules, once established, should be enforced" (p. 232).

According to the participants, in addition to simply listing rules and expectations, it is important that they explain and teach students the reasons for having such guidelines and standards. By acting as a positive role model for students, the classroom teacher

gives children an everyday example of the benefits behind acceptable standards of conduct.

Jones (1987a) warned that, as much as rules *define* limits, they do not *establish* limits. The participants stressed the importance of teaching students how to behave rather than simply listing to the rules of how to behave. Ongoing communication and instruction help root the necessary standards and routines in place. Students must know and understand the full range of expectations from how to ask for assistance in class—that is, "Raise your hand and wait for the teacher to acknowledge your need for assistance"—to how to properly clean up a lab table so that it is ready for the next class. If instructional time is not devoted to teaching expectations and standards, they will surely arise as a classroom conflict as the year progresses and the worst behavior that a teacher accepts becomes the standard of discipline in the class.

The beginning of the year is obviously the best time to introduce and reinforce appropriate classroom standards; however, to ensure best results, expectations must be constantly reviewed and reinforced as the year progresses. Marzano (2003) reported that "the average number of disruptions in classes where rules and procedures were effectively implemented was 28 percentile points lower than the average number of disruptions in classes where that was not the case" (p. 14).

Keeping Students Busy

The participants stressed the importance of keeping students busy and the transition time between activities short. Well-planned lessons help to keep inappropriate student behavior in check. Often when catastrophe does occur, it can be traced back to poor planning and insufficient preparation. Kounin (1977) found that, because of the high

number of transitions that regularly occur each day (33.2 per day), moving the instructional lessons along is highly correlated with student behavior and control. Moreover, the techniques that teachers use in moving the lesson along are more significant in controlling deviancy than are techniques of deviancy management by themselves.

Quality Curriculum and Teacher Enthusiasm

The participants strongly believed that well-selected curricular activities support student behavior: If students are bored or frustrated with the work, there is a high likelihood that they will seek out other stimulation. Kohn (1996) identified the materials that teachers ask students to learn as one of the most significant instigators of misbehavior. The problem in most of these cases is that

> tasks they've been given are so simple as to be boring or more commonly too difficult (at least for a given child). It's hard for someone to admit she [*sic*] isn't smart enough to succeed at something; it's a great deal easier to displace that fear of being a failure or to noisily distract oneself with others from the cause of the problem. (pp. 18-19)

Canter and Canter (1992) agreed: "The better your curriculum and the more motivating, exciting and academically appropriate it is, the fewer behavior problems you will have" (pp. 10-11).

All of the participants described the benefits of creating a classroom culture that makes learning challenging and fun. A spirit of *"interesting and joyful learning"* holds the attention of students and keeps them from drifting off and creating their own diversions. They concurred that when students find their learning *"fun,"* they will most often stay on task and complete their work without disruption.

To capture the attention of students, the participants felt, teachers need to be excited about the curriculum they are teaching. One participant referred to students as *"stimulation junkies"* who get bored easily and pointed out that, like a motivational speaker, teachers can hook the attention of students by expressing emotional enthusiasm for the curriculum and using interesting examples.

Another participant reported that the key to his model of instruction and discipline is to channel cooperative team learning through high-interest themes that weave curricular content into a game-like format similar to the television show *Jeopardy*. This teacher proudly remarked that, as a result of the keen interest in the curriculum that this approach generates with students, he has not had a serious off-task disruption episode in his classroom for the past six years.

Building a spirited and enjoyable learning culture can go a long way to diverting the problems associated with boredom and frustration. As Ralph Waldo Emerson (as cited in Jones, 1996 ed.) stated, "Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm" (p. 376).

Incentive Systems

Half of the participants in this study referred, to a greater or lesser degree, to the use of an incentive system in their disciplinary model. Sometimes referred to as *point systems* or *token economies* based on the awarding of points or tangible tokens for appropriate behavior, incentive systems have their roots in the principles of behavior modification and the foundational work of B. F. Skinner. Widely used in education, incentive systems are popular with teachers as a result of their overall success with students at all grade levels. Jones (1987a) stated that "formal incentive systems, whether

simple or complex are based on one simple principal known as . . . 'Grandma's rule: You have to finish your dinner before you get your dessert'" (p. 153). He highly recommended the use of classroom incentive systems, but emphasized for practical purposes the use of group incentives over a collection of individual ones.

The participants found the use of incentive systems popular with their students. They described the successful use of both group and individual incentive systems in motivating their students to behave cooperatively and stay on task. They use preferred-activity time (e.g., extra gym activity, curricular game competitions, and class parties), as well as earned token points, in exchange for tangible *"garage-sale and dollar-store items"* most frequently as the incentives. At week's end each student receives a bank deposit slip of earnings accrued. After a few months a student store full of collected and/or donated *"garage-sale type items"* are sold or auctioned off to students. One participant who regularly uses incentives enthusiastically commented that her students *"love it."*

Glasser (1986) cautioned that teachers should not "depend on any discipline program that demands that they do something, to or for, students to get them to stop behaving badly in unsatisfying classes. Only a discipline program that is also concerned with classroom satisfaction will work" (p. 56). I would agree with Glasser's perspective if the only support for cooperative, on-task behavior was an incentive system approach. However, when it is used with an array of other classroom dynamics that include a satisfying curriculum and a caring and nurturing teacher, incentives can be used very effectively to spice up the learning environment.

Disciplinary Interaction and Intervention

Ken Weber (1982) asserted, "Teachers affect eternity, for no one knows where their influence ends" (p. 14). As significant as we know parents are to the development of children, we must always be mindful of the interactive impact of teachers in shaping the learning and behavioral outcomes of students.

Prosocial Development Through Encouraging Feedback

The participants in this study strongly viewed discipline through the lens of prosocial enhancement. Their aim is to support students to learn about themselves and others in a social culture called the *classroom*. Through encouraging and reflective feedback, teachers can assist students in understanding how their behavior affects their own learning and the learning of others.

The participants stressed the importance of students' constantly hearing supportive comments and positive feedback. As one stated, *"If they don't hear it from me, . . . they may decide that it is not even worth their while to try."* Whereas high-achieving students regularly receive recognition through quality grades and test scores, low-achieving students struggle much more and often find school work frustrating and difficult. It should be no surprise that it is low-achieving students who create much of the disruption and conflict in our classrooms. They often give up on themselves and, as one participant said, *"decide to bother a classmate. . . . From a discipline viewpoint, now they are just getting in somebody's way."* To counteract this, effective teachers must constantly look for prosocial behaviors to reinforce.

Dreikurs et al. (1971) stated that "all children need approval, and all seek approbation, regardless of the status they occupy in the group. Lack of appreciation may

easily discourage even a very gifted child and he [*sic*] may withdraw from participation" (p. 74). Dreikurs et al. concluded," If the child has been helped to have the courage to take chances, even at the risk of failure, he [*sic*] will probably do better than he [*sic*] expected" (p. 74). One participant said that he constantly reminds students to ask questions in class and that it is perfectly natural and normal to make mistakes along the way.

Ginott (1972) differentiated between two kinds of praise—evaluative and productive. Evaluative praise, he said, is destructive because it evaluates character traits—for example, "Terrific, Richard"—whereas productive praise directs attention to the student's efforts or accomplishments—for example, "I enjoy looking at your picture, Richard. It has so many wonderful autumn colors in it." Ginott concluded that

> productive praise describes a child's efforts and accomplishments and our feelings about them. It does not evaluate personality or judge character. The cardinal rule in praising is: Describe without evaluation. Report—don't judge. Leave the evaluation of the child to him [*sic*]. (p. 37)

We have all heard the expression "Catch 'em being good." By moving around the room, instructing, monitoring, and assisting students, a classroom teacher can observe and reinforce more behavior than he/she would be able to do by simply teaching from the front of the room or sitting at his/her desk. This mode of interaction is sometimes called *working the room*. It provides many opportunities for the teacher to praise and encourage students through specific feedback comments.

For many teachers it is almost a natural tendency to use praise (e.g., "Excellent," "Wonderful") when they see something of which they approve. Rather than attempting to prevent themselves from using praise in this limited way, Ginott (1972) recommended that teachers train themselves to use a praising statement as a prompt to share with the

student more specific information as to what was excellent or wonderful—for example, "Wonderful, Richard! In the last 15 minutes I noticed you were working on your math assignment the whole time and have completed six of the ten questions I assigned. I appreciate your hard work and concentration today."

Used in this way, praise and specific feedback can be powerful influences in reinforcing appropriate behavior. Canter and Canter (1992) believed that the best way to build responsible student behavior is by providing frequent positive recognition of and praise to those students who are on task and that effective praise should be personal, genuine, descriptive, and age appropriate. They recommended that teachers' praise be the most consistent positive reinforcement technique of use in the classroom.

The effects of positive recognition can be further enhanced by contacting parents through supportive phone calls or written notes that are sent home. The participants affirmed that this not only helps to build a strong communication bond with parents, but also, more important, it sends students home feeling positive and excited about their accomplishments and behavior.

Facial Expressions

Facial expressions can also be very influential when teachers use them effectively. A smile and a nod can mean approval, appreciation, enthusiasm, and joy—all of which encourage appropriate behavior. A tightly drawn lip and a slow, gentle headshake can mean, "No, stop that. I'm not impressed." By being consciously aware of using facial gestures and body language, teachers can effectively communicate a great deal to students. Obviously, the more smiles, nods, and winks, the better.

> A smile is often the key thing.
> One is paid with a smile.

> One is rewarded with a smile.
> One is brightened with a smile.
> (Antoine de Saint-Exupéry; as cited in Jones, ed., 1996, p. 837)

Most people would agree that it is easier to feel comfortable in a setting where the people around you smile often: "Since . . . emotions are contagious, you will get exactly what you give" (Jones, 1987a, p. 92). Classroom teachers can enhance their relationships with students just by being aware of their nonverbal body language. I noticed that the participants smiled frequently in a friendly manner throughout our interviews as well as during the time that I observed them teaching their students. Two participants appeared to wear a smile constantly. When I asked them whether or not they were aware of this, one replied that other people have pointed that out to her as well. The other strongly emphasized the strength of positive facial gestures. She stated that her smile is an expression of the enthusiasm and enjoyment that she gets from teaching students and that her students know that she is smiling at them, which is powerful in and of itself.

The role of facial expressions in student discipline is not fully understood or well researched. It would be an interesting domain to study in further depth. The literature used in this study did not shed much light on this area. Suffice to say, however, that a smile usually brightens the moment for all of us.

Motivational Incentives

As discussed in the section on Setting the Classroom Conditions for Successful Student Discipline, incentive systems have proven to be effective in reinforcing appropriate behavior with students of all ages. Half of the participants in this study incorporated motivational incentives into their disciplinary model and spoke highly of their use. The key to a conditional incentive is that students find it meaningful and

desirable—for example, "If you get your work done, without disruption, before the bell goes, you can have the remainder of the period as PAT [preferred-activity time]." Many teachers who use PAT incentives ensure that the activities have some educational value, such as free reading, art work, chess, or other relevant board games.

Teacher Reaction, Tangible Recognition, and Direct Cost

Marzano (2003) conducted a literature review and concluded that the disciplinary practices of "teacher reaction, tangible recognition and direct cost" (p. 30) are effective strategies in reducing classroom disruptions by a percentile of 34, 29, and 21, respectively. They described teacher reaction as verbal and physical behaviors of teachers that indicate to students that their behavior is either appropriate or inappropriate. Teacher reactions include positive praise and feedback recognition, a thumbs-up signal of approval, shaking of the head to indicate disapproval, finger to the lips to signal the need to be quiet, eye contact with offending students, and proximity control by moving closer to the offending student. Tangible recognition involves the use and provision of concrete token incentives for appropriate behavior or the cessation of inappropriate behavior. Tokens are later traded in for privileges, activities, or items. Direct-cost techniques are oriented toward direct consequences for inappropriate behavior. Isolated time out is a primary example of direct cost.

Marzano (2003) reported that their research and the research of others strongly supported a balanced approach to disciplinary interventions that employ a wide variety of techniques, which results in a reduction of disruptive behavior. They also cited group contingency and home contingency intervention strategies as effectively reducing disruptive behavior.

Inappropriate Student Behaviors

As students grow and develop, they are bound to make mistakes and periodically use poor judgment. Surrounded by a social setting of peers, students in any classroom are likely to be stimulated by a variety of things other than the standard curriculum. Often we hear the sensationalized stories of pandemonium and chaos that can occur in classrooms. It is regrettable that examples of students fist fighting, knocking over furniture, and swearing at their teachers occur from time to time in classrooms across the nation. Without ignoring these major concerns, however, we must ask ourselves, what are the more "common" day-to-day behavioral problems that teachers commonly face? According to Jones (1987a):

> The most persistent 'misconception' about discipline is that the most important problems in discipline management are the biggest problems, the crises. Certainly, they are the most memorable. When teachers look back over the year, they will certainly remember the time the fight broke out or the time a student told them to do an unnatural act. . . . Parents as well share a crisis orientation because crises make news. . . . While big problems can occur in isolation, they rarely do. Although they can occur as a result of things that happen outside school, they usually occur as a result of things that happen at school. Big problems usually grow from little problems. Small disruptions usually become big disruptions when they are allowed to escalate or become chronic. . . .
>
> The most important and costly type of discipline problem in any classroom is the small disruption. In a typical classroom, be it secondary or elementary, suburb or inner city, roughly 80 percent of the disruptions are 'talking to neighbors.' Fifteen percent of the disruptions in a typical classroom are simply the two most convenient forms of goofing off and taking a break from work. Most of the remaining 5 percent of disruptions fall into the 'nickel and dime' category. Pencil tapping, note passing, or playing with an object smuggled into class, comprise most of the remaining 'crimes of the classroom.'
>
> You can watch a typical classroom for months without seeing a fight break out. Yet, during an independent work period in an average classroom, the students will generate between 0.6 and 0.8 disruptions per student per minute, with 3 being the maximum obtainable on the data system. In a typical classroom, between a quarter and a third of the class engages in goofing off during any given minute of the day. . . .
>
> Ironically, therefore, the most important discipline problem in the classroom is the small disruption, not the crisis. It is the small disruption by its

> very 'frequency' that destroys learning by the minute. Big crises, while they have a major impact on the memory, are sufficiently rare so that they have a relatively minor impact on time on task on the moment-to-moment learning atmosphere of the classroom. (pp. 27-28)

The participants in this study reinforced many of Jones's (1987a) comments. When I asked them, "What are the most common types of inappropriate behaviors that occur in your classroom?" they reported the following:

- talking out loud
- having a social conversation unrelated to [instructional] assignment
- talking behind the teacher's back
- calling out
- "bugging" someone with putdown comments
- passing notes to one another
- visiting with each other
- wasting time walking around the room
- going for drinks at inappropriate times
- attending to something other than the assigned work (e.g., reading an unrelated book)
- playing with equipment after the teacher calls for attention
- making high-volume outbursts of excitement
- being noisy
- goofing around
- being late for class
- not completing homework

- wrestling [play fighting] in the corner
- being rudely defiant
- using inappropriate language (e.g., profanity)
- throwing items in class (e.g., paper balls)

As Jones (1987a) contended, most of the above inappropriate behaviors would not be considered a crisis and therefore would fall into a minor-problem category. The participants did, however, remark that sometimes more extreme problems do occur, albeit not very often. These include the following:

- two students' physically fighting each other in the classroom
- aggressive physical fighting as a result of an outside-class conflict
- striking another student
- tipping furniture over in anger
- throwing something (e.g., a shoe) out of frustration
- swearing at other students and/or the teacher
- swearing and cursing
- screaming and yelling at each other
- displaying extreme, moody behavior as a result of a romantic breakup
- coming to class drunk or high on drugs
- demonstrating outright defiance and refusal
- running away from school

It is fairly easy to follow the line of logic that most big problems do not suddenly appear out of nowhere. If "bugging" someone through a series of demeaning putdowns is allowed to continue, it is quite conceivable that the target of such abuse will eventually

retaliate. When this happens, emotions often flare and sometimes escalate into a full-blown fist fight. At this point order in the classroom can quickly move out of control. However, in hindsight, early low-key intervention may have prevented the whole matter from turning into a major crisis. Teachers must not only understand this, but also take precautions to prevent these possibilities from occurring.

Managing Misbehavior

Regardless of the amount of instructional planning, preparation, and motivational delivery, sooner or later student misbehavior will occur. When this happens the classroom teacher must be prepared to deal with the problem or face the possibility of contagious escalation. Discipline intervention should be designed with the goal in mind to "eliminate the problem quickly and with minimal distraction of other students" (Good & Brophy, 2003, p. 153).

By being alert and consciously aware of the ongoing behavioral dynamics in the classroom, teachers can most often "nip the problem in the bud." If they fail to notice or choose not to intervene, minor problems often escalate and spread to include other students. Teachers who do not recognize this pattern or choose not to respond to minor disruptions leave their students with the belief that "the teacher doesn't know what's happening in the room." Kounin (1970) defined *withitness* as a teacher's communication to students that he/she is, in fact, aware of how the students are behaving in the class. Furthermore, withitness is significantly related to managing behavioral success; therefore it is very important that teachers know who is on task and who is not.

Most misbehavior begins as a minor problem and as such can generally be extinguished through low-key intervention. The participants reported continually using a range of low-key intervention strategies to overcome minor misbehaviors:

- maintaining direct eye contact with the offending student
- maintaining direct eye contact with a headshake and/or finger pointing to the instructional material on task
- moving in close physical proximity to offending student
- tapping on the student's desk or assignment material
- cueing verbally; (e.g., "Shhh," "Quiet, please")
- expressing a previously mastered signal command (e.g., "Five, please. 1. Eyes are watching; 2. Ears are open; 3. Mouth is closed; 4. Hands are quiet; 5. Feet are still. Thank you")
- offering proximity praise—praising an on-task peer who is physically close to the offending student
- offering cautious, low-volume personal reminders to the offending student (e.g., "Richard, please stay focused on your work. Thank you")

Handling problems in a friendly, efficient, and nonabrasive manner helps to create an atmosphere of "invisible discipline." One participant noted that most students respond supportively to a teacher who treats them with dignity and respect. The participants believed that, in most cases, low-key interventions are all that are needed to get off-task students refocused. However, they emphasized the importance of keeping a watchful eye on students and constantly moving throughout the room. This also strategically positions

the teacher closer to the students, thereby making it easier for them to assist students who need help.

Redl and Wattenberg (1951) introduced many of the low-key interventions listed above over half a century ago. It would appear that several "golden oldies" have maintained their effectiveness over several decades of time.

Enhancing Intervention

If low-key interventions fail to reverse the tide of misbehavior, teachers must more directly address the problem. The participants preferred the general course of action when this occurs of starting a firm, yet supportive, one-on-one problem-solving dialogue with the student. If the classroom environment at that moment is not conducive to a private, focused communication, the participants believed, it is best to speak with the offending student in the hallway outside the room.

The goal of the conversation is to alert the offending student to the effects of his/her behavior on the teaching/learning process and to quickly problem-solve for committed closure. It is important for the teacher to avoid lecturing, blaming, or belittling the student; students only harbor resentment and defensiveness, which reduces the chances of a success outcome.

Glasser (1990), Wubbolding (1994), and Coloroso (1994) offered some problem-solving guidelines that can be effectively employed at this point: (a) Are you aware of what you are doing? (b) What do you want to accomplish this period? (c) Is what you're doing getting your needs (goals) met? (d) What can you do to make things better? (e) What's your plan and next step? If the offending student wishes to argue and blame others for misbehaviors, it is best to negotiate an alternative time to further discuss the

problem. This helps to avoid a prolonged instructional delay for the other students in the class. At a later meeting time the teachers can support the student by helping to

- identify and define the problem
- list viable options for solving the problem
- evaluate options
- choose one option
- make a plan and do it
- follow up and evaluate the solution

Through assisting students in this way, the classroom teacher demonstrates an ongoing commitment of care and support.

The participants generally agreed that some form of "time-out" intervention needs to be employed if the student is uncooperative and resistant to problem solving, because this offers the student an opportunity to calm down and reconsider a sincere commitment to change. Time-out can be a relocation within the classroom, to the hallway outside the room, or to an area so designated within the school.

The participants recognized the importance of dealing with misbehavior as quickly as possible. They saw holding classroom meetings as constructive ways to assist students in working through and resolving their social conflicts. Glasser (1969, 1992) and Kohn (1996) both supported the use of classroom meetings to help students to make cooperative decisions and work out any daily problems that arise. During such meetings the students have an opportunity to reflect on the culture of their classroom: "How should we treat each other? What can we do when we don't agree, or when somebody says or does something unpleasant?" (Kohn, 1996, p. 89).

Rapport With Parents

The participants acknowledged the importance of early parental contact and involvement. Establishing a collaborative rapport with parents can help to build a supportive partnership. Teachers who establish a cooperative working relationship with parents prior to a crisis conflict can generally expect to have parents as allies if and when major problems occur. Parents are often anxious and defensive when the teacher's only contact is the result of a major misconduct at school. This tension is further heightened if the teacher reports that the misbehavior has occurred frequently in the past. A courteous conference call to parents when the problem is still minor can constructively lay the groundwork for support should the problem get worse or continue over time. As Good and Brophy (2003) explained:

> Sometimes those inquiries will yield information about stress factors in the child's life (an impending divorce, a death or serious illness in the family, etc.). Such information might help put the child's classroom behavior into perspective (e.g., seeing it as preoccupation with or defense against fears and, indirectly, a cry for help). This knowledge would make the teacher more informed and more able to express concern directly in private interactions with the student ("Sarah, I understand that your brother is sick. I wonder if sometimes you think about this instead of working on your assignments"). (p. 190)

When they communicate with each other, both parents and teachers should always keep in mind that the communication will go much smoother if the goal of the conversation is to find a solution to the problem rather than simply recycling the blame.

Handling Recurring Misbehavior and Major Misconduct

In cases of chronic repetition or major misconduct that threatens the safety, welfare, and order of the classroom, the participants identified a need to involve school administration. After a clear understanding of the problem is confirmed, school

administrators generally decide on a consequence in keeping with school policy and practice. As Jones (1987a) noted, a well-developed school policy or "back-up system" typically consists of a clearly defined hierarchy of steps and sanctions for dealing with severe or recurring misbehavior. He shared the following as an example:

- Warning
- Conference with student
- Time-out, being sent to the office
- Conference with parent
- Conference with teacher, parent, and principal or vice principal
- In-school suspension
- [Out of school] suspension (1 day)
- [Out of school] suspension (3 days)
- Expulsion and/or special program such as "continuation school. (p. 258)

Jones cautioned, however, that any back-up system will be overstressed if it stands by itself: "It cannot serve as a teacher's accustomed response to [student] hassle" (p. 269). A back-up system is a short-term stop-gap measure that temporarily contains a sudden crisis or a repetitive provocation: "You can visit your back-up system, but you cannot live there" (p. 270). Jones argued that, for a back-up system to serve its proper function, it must be embedded within the context of an overall behavioral support system that includes adequate staff resources to assist students with limit setting and responsibility training.

Jones (1987a) further cautioned that school authorities not overextend their jurisdiction when student misconduct is, in fact, a violation of the law (e.g., physical assault, possession and/or trafficking of illegal substances). In such cases the police and legal authorities should be contacted.

Finally, as Redl and Wattenberg (1951) wrote:

> Much misbehavior is not really motivated by deep desires to be disagreeable. It often results simply from temporary lapses of the individual's control systems. There are a number of techniques which are designed to support young people in regaining the ability to fit in with the desired classroom pattern. . . . No single one [technique] can honestly be called the best. The trick of the teaching trade is to learn to use all and in each situation to choose the combination most likely to be most effective and safest to youngsters' emotional development. (pp. 238, 312)

Factors That Affect Student Discipline

It can be debated that all factors related to a process, condition, or relationship affect the whole to some degree, regardless of whether or not the multitude of factors is clearly known or understood. The factors that influence the behavior of students in a classroom are so numerous and diverse that is would be a major research challenge to even accurately *list* them all, let alone confirm their actual effects. Caution must be taken in reviewing cause and effect because we sometimes casually assume that a strong relationship exists when in fact it either does not exist or, at best, is very difficult to prove. For example, poverty is often cited as a social condition that affects children and education in a negative way; yet, when challenged, it cannot be a satisfactory explanation for disruptive classroom behavior because not all students from impoverished backgrounds act out disruptively any more than students from high-income families all behave cooperatively and responsibly.

As Marzano (2003) pointed out, public school teachers must deal with all children regardless of their backgrounds: "These students enter the classroom with a staggering array of serious issues in their lives" (p. 45). Thompson and Wyatt (1999; as cited in Marzano, 2003, p. 47) reported that as many as 60% to 70% of students referred for behavioral or conduct problems in school have a history of physical or sexual abuse. Adelman and Taylor (2002; as cited in Marzano, 2003, p. 47) also reported that between

12% and 22% of students in school suffer from mental, emotional or behavioral disorders but that, unfortunately, few are receiving any mental health service support.

Problems That Students Face

As shown in Table 1, Marzano's (2003, pp. 46-47) research findings revealed severe problems that students in America face. Although these findings address the US condition, they certainly would be found to exist to some degree in any country in the world.

Questions regarding the relationship between student classroom conduct and factors of influence are both numerous and challenging. The participants in the current study identified several factors that they believed have significantly contributed to the success of student discipline in their classrooms. Building a respectful teacher-student relationship, support from parents, and support from school administration were the top three that they identified. Other factors ranged from interesting and challenging curricula activities to seating plan arrangements that support cooperative coexistence amongst students.

Table 1

Categories of Severe Problems That Students Face

Category	Statistics
Homelessness	On any given night, 700,000 people are homeless. Two million people are homeless annually. Twelve million people are homeless at some point in their lives. Forty percent of the homeless have homeless children *(National Center on Homelessness and Poverty; as cited in Crespi 2001).*
Depression	About 8% of all adolescents are depressed in any given year *(U.S. Department of Health and Human Services [1991], in Stanard, 2000).* Five percent of youth between 9 and 17 years old are depressed, and only a minority of youth is treated *(Shafer, 1998; as cited in Stanard, 2000).*
Suicide	Among youth 15 to 19 years old, suicide is responsible for more deaths than any disease.
Violent students	A majority of violent and aggressive students who have been suspended or expelled have identifiable substance abuse or mental health disorders. *(Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 1999; as cited in Luongo, 2000)* For more than 56% of youth who are victims of violence, the emotional and physical assault occurred on school grounds *(Porter, Epp, & Bryant, 2000).* More than 50% of all boys and 25% of all girls report that they have been physically assaulted in school *(Centers for Disease Control, 1992; as cited in Porter et al., 2000).* Twenty percent of all children and youth, or approximately 11 million, have diagnosable developmental, behavioral, and/or emotional problems that increase their risk of becoming victims and/or perpetrators of violence *(Porter et al., 2000).*
Eating disorders	Fifteen to 18% of high school students manifest bulimic symptoms *(Crago, Shisslak, & Estes, 1996).* Five to 10% of cases of anorexia nervosa are males *(Crosscope-Happel, Hutchins, Getz, & Hayes, 2000).*
Alcoholism	Twenty percent of children in the United States grow up in alcoholic families *(National Institute on Drug Abuse, 1998; as cited in Johnson, 2001).* Alcoholic families exhibit greater levels of openly expressed anger and lower levels of warmth, cohesion, and direct communication than nonalcoholic families *(Johnson, 2001).* Alcohol is a significant factor in approximately 81% of child abuse cases *(Johnson, 2001).*

(table continues)

Category	Statistics
Attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder	Three to 7% of school-aged children, mostly males, experience ADHD disorder *(American Psychiatric Association, 2000).* Approximately 50% of the 1.6 million elementary school-aged children with ADHD also have learning disorders *(Centers for Disease Control, 1997-98; as cited in "CDC Study Confirms ADHD/Learning Disability Link," n.d.).* The predominantly inattentive subtype of ADHD has a prevalence rate of 3% to 5% *(Erk, 2000).* Nearly 70% of those with ADHD simultaneously cope with other conditions such as learning disabilities, mood disorders, anxiety, and more *(Ross, 2002).*
Sexual orientation	Six percent of students described themselves as homosexual or bisexual, and 13% are uncertain about their sexual orientation. Homosexual and bisexual students have higher than average rates of mental health problems and eating disorders and are more concerned about sexual victimization *(Harvard Medical Newsletter, 2000).*
Incarcerated parents	One and a half million children have an incarcerated parent. Ten million young people have had a mother or father or both behind bars at some point in their lives *(Kleiner, 2002).*
Poverty	Approximately 15.7 million children live in households with incomes below the poverty line. Almost 50% of all children in mother-only families are impoverished. More than 4 million children are latch-key children *(Herr, 2002).* Fifty percent of urban and rural poor students manifest learning, behavioral, and emotional problems *(Adelman & Taylor, 2002).*
Sexual and physical abuse	In 1993, 1.55 million children were reported as maltreated, and another 1.22 million were in imminent danger, reflecting a near doubling of the abuse rate between 1986 and 1993 *(U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1996; as cited in Thompson & Wyatt, 1999).* On average, more than 5 children die every day from injuries or prolonged deprivation suffered from their caregivers *(U.S. Advisory Board on Child Abuse and Neglect, 1995; as cited in Thompson & Wyatt, 1999).*

(Marzano, 2003, pp. 46,47)

Quality Teacher-Student Relationship

Sheets and Gay (1996) pointed out that many disciplinary problems arise from the ultimate breakdown in teacher-student relationships. "The causes of many classroom behaviors labeled and punished as rule infractions are, in fact, problems of students and teachers relating to each other interpersonally" (pp. 86-87). In reporting this and other research findings on effective classroom discipline, Marzano (2003) stated:

> If a teacher has a good relationship with students, then students more readily accept the rules and procedures and the disciplinary actions that follow their violations. Without the foundation of a good relationship, students commonly resist rules and procedures along with the consequent disciplinary actions. (p. 41)

Marzano (2003) found, in reviewing other research in this area, that a quality teacher-student relationship can significantly decrease classroom disruptions by 31 percentile points. This should not be surprising considering that, as reported earlier, many students come to school each day emotionally empty of love, care, and concern.

The participant teachers spoke clearly and compassionately about the need to build a strong, bonded relationship with students. According to one participant, demonstrating to students that they care for them is the number one factor that contributes to successful student discipline. Something as simple as greeting students as they come through the classroom door is one way to begin building a relationship with them.

The participants agreed that the beginning of the year is always a challenge for teachers, especially with at-risk students, because they do not know the teachers well and vice versa. By helping students with their problems and taking a special interest in at-risk students, a teacher can establish a relationship of mutual respect that greatly helps to alleviate resistance and tension when problems do arise. By talking to students about their interests, goals, and dreams, teachers can learn much about them. One participant commented that students feel special when their teacher takes the time to talk to them about nonacademic things. This can be compounded significantly if teachers are able to attend activities in which their students are involved, such as hockey games, soccer matches, piano recitals, or dance performances.

Support From Parents

The participants also identified the important role that parents play in supporting student discipline. As one stated, *"If you've got parents who buy into what you are doing . . . that is the biggest thing you could ask for."* If parents believe that they have a responsibility to assist their child's teacher, behavior issues and conflicts can be handled very quickly. Another participant expressed the belief that good parents raise their children to have respect, self-worth, and confidence and that children from such homes generally come to school ready and willing to learn. Sometimes the surrogate parent is a big brother, a big sister, or a community member such as a team coach.

Getting parents involved is a matter of communication. As Charles (1999) stressed, "Teachers have a responsibility to communicate with parents" (p. 49). If this is done on a regular basis through sending positive notes and informative newsletters home or making encouraging phone calls, a strong and supportive relationship with parents can be established. Regular proactive communication demonstrates to parents that teachers are interested in their children's progress and are not simply calling to report problems when they arise. Building a home-school relationship through regular communication results in parents' holding teachers in high regard.

Charles (1999) further pointed out that

> it helps to remember that the purpose of parent [contact] is to improve the overall success of the child. If you keep that essential point in mind, and if you prepare adequately for the [contact or communication], you will find that most [communications] with parents are pleasant and productive. (p. 49)

Support From School Administration

The participant teachers affirmed that support from the school administrator is a key factor in successful student discipline. It is important that teachers feel that they are not alone as they struggle to deal with difficult students. Strong administrative leadership can bring an important schoolwide focus to discipline. Having a sense of a partnership of support further energizes teachers in taking on the behavioral challenges of the day.

The participants reported that they handled most of the behavioral difficulties with students themselves. Only if the problem was chronically repetitious or serious in nature did they require administrative support. They believed that, when it is necessary, school administration plays a vital role in assisting teachers in bringing difficult behavioral matters to closure.

They identified other factors that they felt contribute to the success of student discipline:

- posting and confirming clear expectations for classroom behavior
- arranging a seating plan that supports a cooperative coexistence amongst students
- maintaining consistency with behavioral interventions
- planning interesting curricular activities
- providing easy access to instruction materials
- holding class sizes to between 22 and 30 students

Stories From the Field

First-person accounts of experiences help form a rich narrative text and allow researchers to better understand the many ways that humans experience their world (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, 1994; Merriam, 1998):

> One theory in educational research holds that humans are storytelling organisms who, individually and socially, lead storied lives. . . . This general concept is refined into the view that education and educational research is the construction and reconstruction of personal and social stories. (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 2)

Through the stories that people tell and the language that they use, a great deal of insightful data can be collected. Coffey and Atkinson (1996; as cited in Merriam, 1998) stated:

> There are no formulae or recipes for the 'best' way to analyze the stories we elicit and collect. Indeed, one of the strengths of thinking about our data of narrative is that this opens up the possibilities for a variety of analytic strategies. (pp. 157-158)

In a comparison of the story vignettes that the participants shared, three dominant themes emerged.

Insightful Resolution vs. Thoughtless Conformity

The participants discussed the importance of using an insightful resolution process in dealing with discipline problems. The goal of resolution intervention is to help students to accept ownership and responsibility for their behavior and to better understand themselves in a social context. The teacher extends an opportunity to the student to openly discuss the problem and/or options to resolve it. The participants believed that, depending on the severity of an infraction, the matter can be brought quickly to closure on the spot for minor misbehavior (sometimes even through the use of

humor) or following a sufficient cool-down/time-out period for more major misconduct. The latter allows a student the necessary "think" time to collect his/her thoughts and sort through the details of the event. The teacher continually maintains compassion for the student throughout the resolution process. Meaningful understanding of self and situation versus thoughtless conformity (Kohn, 1996) is the goal of resolution intervention.

Programming Adjustments to Avoid Potential Conflict

We have all heard the phrase "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." If teachers are able to forecast student interest, boredom, tension, or conflict in advance, they can strategically and timely intervene to thwart its escalation. As reported earlier in the literature review, Jacob Kounin (1970) identified "programming to avoid satiation" (p. 125) as a key element that has a supportive effect in inducing on-task behavior and preventing deviancy. He believed that students become tired and restless if they get too much of something or find an activity too easy or frustratingly difficult. By being keenly aware of the concentration and interest levels of students throughout the lesson, a teacher can adjust instructional programming and/or student expectations to avoid potential conflicts. The participants cautioned that this requires that teachers accept the responsibility for adjusting their thinking and behavior to better support the overall working conditions in the classroom.

One participant observed that reframing and adjusting her thinking on time-out intervention has led to her use of temporary time-out water breaks in a positive way to help struggling, off-task students become refocused on their work.

This participant had remarked earlier that it is extremely important that teachers constantly let their students know that they care about them and will not give up on them.

As Ginott (1972) said, "Good discipline is a series of little victories in which a teacher, thorough small decencies, reaches a child's heart" (p. 148).

According to the participants, teachers often find it difficult to accept that their lessons might be fatiguing or boring for their students. Critically assessing the quality of their lessons and accepting that some of the behavioral issues that arise in class could be avoided by making lessons more interesting and exciting for students require confidence and open-mindedness. Perhaps oversimplifying this point, Glasser (1986) stated, "There are no discipline problems in any class where the students believe that if they make an effort to learn, they will gain some immediate satisfaction" (p. 12). Glasser (1992) stressed that quality curriculum consists of learning materials that the students find both enjoyable and useful.

Common sense would tell us that if students are interested in the lesson at hand, they are more apt to pay attention and work cooperatively and constructively with their teacher and fellow students. The participants saw creating curricular materials and activities that students find interesting as a powerful catalyst in supporting behavioral harmony. One participant spends a great deal of time planning lessons that students will "buy into," which he believed has had a major impact on student discipline in his classes because his students come to class each day eager to learn and cooperatively participate in the instructional activities that he has planned.

Teacher Commitment to Care and Support

The participants emphasized the importance of continually letting students know that teachers care for them, even when the students let them down by acting inappropriately. Following an act of misconduct, students need to be held accountable for

their behavior. However, the participants felt that this must be done in a caring and supportive manner that does not jeopardize the effective bond and relationship that teachers develop with their students. This humanistic approach that several participants supported is similar to Ginott's (1972) disciplinary model, which highlights the importance of teachers' being careful to always preserve the dignity of and respect for children in dealing with behavioral infractions. For this to happen, teachers must take caution to address the situation and not the character of the child.

Professional Development Support

In his book on the qualities of effective teachers, Stronge (2002) reported:

> An important facet of professionalism and of effectiveness in the classroom is a teacher's dedication to students and to the job of teaching. . . . Effective teachers invest in their own education. . . . High quality professional development activities are necessary tools for improving teacher effectiveness. . . . Professional development training must be tailored to the individual teacher within a particular school to support both the individual and organizational needs as they exist within a particular context. . . . Effective teachers also work collaboratively with other staff members. They are willing to share their ideas and assist other teachers with difficulties. (pp. 19-20, 64)

Professional development opportunities to enhance professional growth are important to the participants in this study. Some related that it was especially important during the beginning phase of their careers. In her first year of teaching, one participant had enrolled in a series of inservice training sessions on student discipline that were sponsored by her school district. From these sessions she collected a *"teacher toolkit"* of valuable strategies, techniques, and ideas on how to handle a wide range of disciplinary challenges. Years later she continues to use many of these ideas daily, but she has surprisingly found that many of her colleagues do not seem to be aware of the same strategies and techniques that she has used for years.

The above comments highlight an important point for school districts to consider regarding inservice training: Early career training in the area of student discipline maintains its strength and value for many years. Testimonials from excellent teachers who are well into their careers are powerful examples of the importance and value of inservice training on student discipline.

Wheldall and Merrett (as cited in Wheldall, 1992) identified that (a) teachers regard the ability to control a class as a matter of prime importance and (b) teachers clearly believe that the training that they receive from training institutions does not prepare them sufficiently for classroom behavior management and report that they have had to learn to manage their classes 'on the job' (p. 16). Further to that, approximately 80% of the teachers in the study said that they would attend an inservice course on positive ways of improving classroom behavior management if it were offered.

The PD needs of teachers regarding student discipline vary from school to school. One participant that that it is highly dependent on the student clientele in a particular school. Because teachers typically move through several schools over the course of their careers, it is important that they have ongoing access to training and development in the area of student discipline. Most of the participants indicated that *"one of the best'* PD experiences that a teacher can have is the opportunity to observe *"what works."* Through observing master teachers, a fellow colleague can view a variety of practices that can assist them in developing an approach to discipline that suits their individual style.

For beginning teachers, a mentoring relationship with a seasoned colleague has the potential to be a beneficial experience. Research on the effects of teacher mentoring has shed some optimistic light on the probability of successful outcomes. As Sawchuk

(1999) reported, "Feedback from participants on mentorship programs provides evidence that beginning teachers believed that they improved in their ability to provide better instruction and use more effective management techniques as a result of participating in such programs" (p. 3). Observing colleagues in action and having the opportunity to collaborate and dialogue with master teachers can be of great value to teachers at any point in their careers.

Conclusions

The following statements and generalizations are the conclusions that I reached from the findings of this study, coupled with my own experiences as a professional educator and administrator for the past 30 years.

Conclusion 1

Discipline is the process of teaching prosocial behavior to students in a school classroom setting. It entails the instruction and learning of behaviors that will enhance and empower a student to exist interdependently in constructive, productive, and cooperative ways with others. The process of student discipline is guided by an ongoing interplay of direct instruction, signals, gestures, encouraging feedback, incentives, problem solving, and reasonable age-appropriate consequences. Discipline promotes the development of self-control, tolerance, acceptance of individual differences, moral autonomy, and responsible group membership. Student discipline assists in creating an enriched educational milieu that allows teachers to instruct and students to learn in a classroom environment free of unnecessary interruption, disruption, chaotic disorder, or violations of Charter rights and freedoms.

Conclusion 2

Establishing effective student discipline requires a great deal of planning and preparation. Teachers must take the time to create the classroom learning conditions necessary to capture the attention of students in cooperative and meaningful ways. Clearly established rules, standards, and routines assist in creating expected protocols of behavior. Student involvement in generating classroom expectations helps to develop a bond of committed ownership. Acting as a role model, the classroom teacher is a daily example of prosocial behavior (e.g., patience, tolerance, courtesy, responsibility, and respect).

Well-planned curricular materials and instructional activities assist in sustaining the prolonged attention of students. Interesting and meaningful lessons keep students engaged and on task and thus help to avoid the disruptions often associated with boredom and frustration. A sense of excitement and fun is woven into the instructional fabric when teachers wisely choose examples and activities that appeal to students. Incorporating incentives into the classroom discipline model helps to raise interest in and enthusiasm for cooperative learning and behavior.

Conclusion 3

Proactive communication is the growth hormone for the development of effective student discipline. Through instructional and reflective feedback, teachers can assist students in understanding how their behavior affects their own learning as well as the learning of others. Encouraging comments and positive feedback play a significant role in reinforcing appropriate social/learning behavior. Teachers must be careful to describe the effort and accomplishments of a student's behavior rather than simply evaluating or

judging the child's character with a maudlin praising statement (e.g., "Awesome, Richard!" vs. "You're working hard and steady, Richard. In the last 20 minutes you have finished 6 of the 10 assignment questions. Stay focused, and you'll have them done before the end of the period").

By continually being on the lookout for examples of appropriate behavior, teachers can maintain a high level of supportive student recognition. Nonverbal signals, gestures, and preferred-activity incentives have also proven to be successful reinforcers of appropriate student behavior.

Conclusion 4

The findings from this study support those of other educational research that indicate that the most common classroom problems that teachers face are minor infractions rather than major crises. Minor problems, however, can quickly escalate into major problems if left unattended. Teachers must constantly monitor the interpersonal dynamics of the classroom and quickly defuse minor infractions through the use of low-key interventions such as 'the look'—establishing direct and prolonged eye contact with student—proximity control, moving and standing close to the student, and verbal prompting of appropriate behavior. If low-key interventions prove unsuccessful with an offending student, teachers must step up the intervention to include supportive, yet firmly voiced problem-solving dialogue. If a student continues to resist correcting his/her behavior, a temporary time-out may be necessary and/or seeking support from school administration and parents. At all times the teacher's goal is to resolve the behavioral conflict and reengage the student in the classroom as quickly as possible. The teacher must always be mindful not to belittle, berate, or be emotionally abusive to the student.

Not only is this morally and professionally wrong, but it also most often results in the student's being resentful and defensive in return.

Conclusion 5

Factors that influence the behavior and discipline of students in a classroom are both numerous and challenging to confirm. The direct cause-and-effect relationship of one student's poking another student, who responds by striking the first student back, is easier to understand than the effect that attention deficit disorder, inadequate sleep, poor nutrition, depression, or alcoholic parents have on the behavior of students. It was not my intent in this study to exhaustively list or confirm all factors of influence, but rather to seek information from teachers on what they believe are salient factors that affect the behavior and discipline of students in their classrooms. This study identified three primary factors of influence and six secondary factors.

Primary factors.

- respectful teacher/student relationship
- teacher support from parents
- teacher support from school administration

Secondary factors.

- confirmed, clear expectations for classroom behavior
- timely and consistent behavioral interventions
- interesting and meaningful curricular lessons
- a seating-plan arrangement that supports a cooperative coexistence amongst students
- easy access to instructional materials

Conclusion 6

From the stories that the teachers shared with regard to student discipline in their classrooms, three dominant themes emerged:

1. Meaningful consequences vs. authoritative punishment

   In managing misbehavior, it is important for teachers to apply meaningful consequences rather than authoritative punishment. The goal of a meaningful consequence is to help students to better understand themselves in a social context and gain an insightful appreciation of the effects of their behavior on themselves and others.

2. Program adjustments to avoid potential conflicts

   Students grow tired and restless if they become bored or find an activity too difficult. By paying attention to the concentration and engagement levels of students, teachers can adjust instructional programming to avoid potential conflicts. When students find curricular material and activities interesting and meaningful, they are more apt to pay attention and work constructively and cooperatively with each other.

3. Teacher commitment to continuous care and support

   Students must have the impression that their teacher respects and cares for them. Throughout episodes of intervention, compassion and support for the student must always be effectively maintained. In managing student misbehaviors, teachers must be mindful of addressing the problematic behavior and not the student's personality or character.

Conclusion 7

High quality professional development (PD) is necessary to enhance as well as to sustain effective teaching practices. PD in the area of student discipline must begin with defining the term itself. Until a teacher understands and accepts that student discipline is the ongoing instruction that targets pro-social development, he/she will continually slip into the reactive quagmire of administering punishment as a consequence for behavioral misconduct. A series of quality PD sessions must provide the opportunity for teachers to review and dialogue definitions of discipline, how to interface core values as common classroom expectations (i.e. truth and honesty, responsibility, cooperation and respect, care and compassion, justice), the pro-active effects of recognition and specific feedback, the benefits of quality curriculum, establishing structures and routines, using low-key interventions effectively, correction through kind direction, guiding change through a problem-solving process, implementing logical and meaningful consequences, how to use incentives effectively and when to ask for help or to involve others. If these sessions are led by or, at least, include excellent teachers as co-presenters, participants attending the session are much more likely to drop their defensive guard at the door.

The importance of PD opportunities to nourish growth and improvement is well supported by teachers and researchers in the field of education. They believe that PD opportunities must be ongoing and are especially valuable at the beginning of one's career. Participants indicated that student discipline–related PD early in their careers provided them with knowledge and skills that continue to be part of their practice to this day.

As student clientele varies from school to school, so do the PD needs of teachers. It is therefore important that school districts provide ongoing discipline-related PD because teachers often transfer to several different campus locations over the course of their careers. The teachers in this study believed that *"one of the best"* PD activities is observing excellent teachers working with students similar to their own. They viewed observing colleagues in action and having the opportunity to collaborate with master teachers as having great value for continuous professional growth.

Recommendations for Practice and Theory

The conclusions drawn from this study have led to the following recommendations for practice and theory:

1. Within the education community there does not appear to be a commonly accepted definition of student discipline held by all or even most. Definitions of student discipline range from a system or process to mold and cultivate appropriate student behavior to a means of controlling, correcting, and consequencing inappropriate behavior. Conclusion 1 articulates a wider ranging description of student discipline that has more universal application than most. It is recommended that the Alberta Teachers' Association provide its members with an updated version of student discipline that would assist its members in maintaining a commonly held and accepted point of view. A clearly articulated definition would also act as a guiding light for daily practice as well as serve as a standard for parents and others to consult.
2. As issues surrounding student discipline continue to be a concern for teachers throughout their careers, adequate resource and PD supports must be made

available. Conclusion 7 identified the need for professional inservice supports to be ongoing throughout a teacher's career. It is recommended that the Alberta Teachers' Association, in collaboration with the Alberta School Boards Association, sponsor an ongoing series of inservices for teachers in this area. In addition, it is recommended that a province-wide phone-in help hotline be set up to provide teachers with immediate access to consultant support should an urgent or stressful concern arise.

3. It is recommended that undergraduate programs in education continue to provide quality instruction and course material related to student discipline. As some practicing teachers indicated, they do not feel that they received sufficient undergraduate training in student discipline. It is recommended that undergraduate education programs periodically sample former graduates to determine whether modifications to existing program delivery are required.
4. This study focused on the beliefs and practices of excellent teachers related to student discipline. Conclusions 1-6 focused on the ways in which excellent teachers interact with their students with regard to discipline. It would be informative and meaningful to conduct a similar study with teachers who are experiencing significant difficulty with their teaching practices and that those data be compared for analysis with the results from this study.
5. Conclusion 4 identified school administration and parental support as being significant factors of influence in successful student discipline. It would be worthwhile to explore the thoughts, opinions, and experiences of both of these groups to determine whether they concur with this view. It might also be

useful to examine what role administrators and parents believe that they play and what recommendations they might have for teachers and for each other.

6. In this study I did not directly seek to understand discipline from the perspective of the student. However, it would be meaningful to research how students view the topic of discipline as members of their own classroom. Additional insights could come from a research design that compares students who are members of classes led by excellent teachers to students who are members of classes led by teachers are experiencing significant difficulties in managing student behavior.
7. Conclusion 6 highlighted the importance of PD support to teachers, and especially to those at the beginning of their careers. It would be valuable to the study of student discipline to research the impact of mentorship pairing on a beginning teacher's development of student disciplinary practice when he/she is coached by a master teacher mentor.

Personal Reflections and Reconstructions

> The first idea that the child must acquire in order to be actively disciplined is that of the difference between good and evil; and the task of the educator lies in seeing that the child does not confound good with immobility, and evil with activity. (Maria Montessori; as cited in Sennett, 2004, p. 119)

Experiences in life help us to construct the way that we view the world around us. Sometimes our experiences are significant and affect the way that we view something for years to come. As Purkey and Novak (1984) stated, "From the moment students first make contact with school, the inviting and disinviting actions of school personnel—coupled with the physical environments, the official policies and the instructional

programs--dominate their education" (p. 28). I suspect that my early understandings or misunderstandings of student discipline go back to the year that I started school. I do not remember much detail about specific academic lessons taught in the beginning years, but nearly half a century later I can still recall the first day that I received "the strap."

It was the mid-1950s, and I was one of the young post-war baby boomers in primary school. During a regular recess break in the fall, my friend Billy invited me to join him in search of some abandoned birds' nests. He suggested with eager anticipation that, once we found them, we could bring them back to class for "show and tell" (a regular feature in our classroom for students who had something interesting to share). A forest of bushes and trees was close at hand because the school that I attended was on the outskirts of a western-Canadian city adjacent to a parcel of agricultural land.

I am sure that the two of us must have been bubbling with excitement as we slipped under the barbed wire fence at the outer edge of the school grounds and entered a forest of adventure. After a hunt of unknown length (probably an hour or so), we surfaced from the woods with treasures in hand. Billy, who was bigger and stronger than I, managed to retrieve two birds' nests, and I had collected one. As young boys would be, I am sure that we were both beaming with pride and looking forward to showing off our prized possessions. The school yard would have been empty of students as we slipped under the fence again and made our way back to the main building.

I do not recall the empty schoolyard or being concerned that it was, which perhaps suggests that Billy and I, as young primary students, did not sense that we had done anything wrong to this point. I am sure that we naïvely thought that we would be met with celebration and welcomed as we opened the door to our classroom with newly

found treasures to share. To our sudden surprise, as best I recall, our teacher, Mrs. A., erupted and shouted, "Where have you been? We have been looking all over for you!"

Before we could explain, we were abruptly escorted to the school principal, who confronted us in a reprimanding voice. I do not remember his words exactly, but the image that I recall is that he shouted at us for quite some time. I remember being frightened. After repeatedly making it clear that we were never to do this again, he pulled out a red and black strap from one of his desk drawers. I am sure that I was paralyzed stiff with fear as the strap was first exposed. He then grabbed one of Billy's wrists, pulled it forward, and turned Billy's palm to face the ceiling. With an upward and downward pendulum swing, the strap came smacking down across Billy's open hand.

The single clapping/snapping sound of this binder belt across Billy's exposed palm caused him to instantly scream out in pain and burst into tears. I am sure that I started to cry at this moment too. After belting Billy twice on each hand, the principal turned to me and grabbed one of my wrists. If I was not bawling by then, I likely started as soon as he gripped my wrist. The fear of the moment was suddenly broken by the stinging pain of the first blow across my little hand.

All I remember was a massive wave of pain shooting through my body. It was like an electric shock that rips through and traumatizes every cell. After receiving two blows of the strap on each hand, Billy and I were bluntly excused: "Now get back to your room!" Whether or not those were the exact words that our principal used, I remember that he dismissed us with a terse military-like command. This first and frightening experience with "student discipline" has remained with me for nearly 50 years.

Following this incident, I remember being very afraid of my principal and avoiding any contact with him. I also recall that this single experience haunted me for quite some time. Long after the physical pain had disappeared, I was confused and resentful about what had happened. Although I am sure that I could not articulate it well at the time, I know that I felt angry. Two things bothered me about this incident. First, we meant no harm and caused no pain to anyone. I sense to this day that this is what I felt. Billy and I surely believed that we were going to make a contribution to the "show and tell learning experience," albeit for self-gratifying reasons. We must have been confused about the true nature of our wrongdoing.

Second, as odd as it might seem to some, I also recall being puzzled and resentful about the number of punishing blows I received. I recall that I felt it unfair that I was given the same punishment as Billy (two blows of the strap on each hand). Strange as it might sound (or perhaps not so strange for a primary student), I thought that I should have received only one belting on each hand because I came back with only one bird's nest and Billy came back with two.

In some naïve way I felt that the punishment did not fit the crime, and I know that this bothered me for some time. This mindset of thought is perhaps just another indication that I did not truly understand my wrongdoing or the direct connection to the punishment that I had received. I know that I carried a confused image about what happened that day for years to come. On a final note of disappointment, the prized birds' nests just disappeared without discussion. Billy and I never did get the opportunity, to "show and tell" about them.

Many years later, after graduating from the Faculty of Education as a young professional, I was both eager and excited about the opportunities to work with children and youth. Although some of my undergraduate studies briefly covered student discipline, I did not feel that I had a settled and satisfactory understanding of it. After reading a variety of books and articles on the subject and talking to other colleagues about student discipline, I began to construct and reconstruct an understanding of it. To my surprise, I also discovered that I was not alone in my search. I found that many teachers, both rookies and experienced, were also confused and frustrated with student discipline. They too wished for a better understanding of this important area of education.

Today, after a career spanning three decades as a regular/special education teacher, school counselor, special education consultant/psychologist, and school principal at the elementary, junior high, and senior high school levels, I have sampled and seen many different approaches to student discipline. Experience has taught me to be open minded and to review different theories and models without conscious bias.

My constructed and continuously reconstructed belief of student discipline is that it involves the act and art of teaching—teaching students prosocial behavior. Regardless of the age, stage, or grade of the child, I have found that students wish to be in a classroom that radiates a sense of safety, security, order, and harmony. Establishing and putting into place age-appropriate expectations can result in an element of purpose and cooperative industry threading itself throughout the classroom. Clearly communicated standards help students to define their learning environment. Even if students disagree with some of "the rules," they wish to know what the rules are and what is and what is not acceptable behavior. As much as students detest the thought of being controlled by

others, I have found that they readily support the notion that rules of order are essential to protect the rights and freedoms of everyone.

Students look for behavioral expectations and supportive guidance to assist them in understanding the world around them. In a very real sense each classroom becomes its own unique mini-social society. Through a well-communicated classroom discipline plan, students can learn to live and work interdependently with each other. A daily learning and living experience that incorporates group cooperation can be one of the most valuable lessons that students receive from their public school education.

For this to happen, however, classroom teachers must first take the time to consciously seek a balanced understanding of student discipline for themselves. Through examining their own beliefs and related practices, teachers can create and implement a model of student discipline that fits well with their individual instructional style. The result may resemble a management system similar to one of the many models identified in the literature, or it may be a unique approach generated from years of trial-and-error experience.

Many times I have heard teachers say, "I do a Glasser kind of thing with my student discipline" or "I went to a Barbara Coloroso workshop and use some of her discipline stuff" or "I use a combination of Canter and Canter's assertive discipline and some things that I have picked up over time that just simply work for me." Whichever way a teacher arrives upon an approach to student discipline, it can be measured against its ability to support well-meaning (respectful) social order, individual and group cooperation, and on-task curricular engagement. The goal of student discipline should not be simply to minimize student contact with each other, and certainly never merely to

elicit blind obedience. I support the general ideas of Jones and Jones (1986, 1990) in their description of the five teacher skills and general functions that serve as the basis for comprehensive classroom discipline:

1. an understanding of research and theory related to classroom management and the psychological and learning needs of students
2. the creation and establishment of positive teacher-student and student-student peer relationships
3. the use of meaningful instructional material and methods that facilitate optimal learning by responding to the academic (and behavioral) needs of individual students and the classroom group as a whole
4. the use of organizational and group management methods that maximize on-task behavior.
5. the ability to use a range of counseling and behavioral methods to assist students who demonstrate persistent and/or serious behavior problems

Just as every family exists in unique yet similar ways within a neighborhood, each classroom exists in similar yet different ways within the school community. When students come into a classroom, they enter an environment that is a unique collection of personalities and personal experiences. Like individual fingerprints, each student is original and different from everyone else. It should be no surprise that one of the first things that a teacher needs to address with a class of students is the social needs and purpose of the group. By identifying and communicating clear expectations and cultural norms, the teacher can alleviate a great deal of uncertainty about classroom learning behavior.

When students sense that their teachers care about and respect them, they are less likely to resist the requests that their teachers make. As a school principal I have generally found far fewer behavior problems occurring in classrooms where students believe that their teachers care for them and will go out of their way to assist them with academic and behavioral conflicts. In such classrooms a sense of bonded family can be felt and the students believe that the classroom expectations are fair and reasonable for all.

A positive teacher-student relationship plays a significant role in creating a classroom culture of mutual respect, cooperative membership, and productive student engagement. As members of a mini-classroom society, students have the opportunity to learn and develop the skills of social interdependence. Through the establishment of cohesive group norms, students can learn a great deal about themselves as members of a cooperative learning community. Good and Brophy (1991) pointed out that a well-planned learning environment promotes "friendship choices and prosocial patterns of interaction among students who differ in achievement, sex, race or ethnicity, and [promotes] the acceptance of mainstreamed handicapped students by their nonhandicapped classmates" (p. 416).Most world tensions, racial conflicts, domestic disputes, spousal battery, child abuse, and playground fights are not related to whether or not people can read, write, or calculate numbers, but rather to our repeated inability to get along and coexist interdependently with each other. I believe that it is sensible and reasonable that we in education should use the school classroom as a training ground to teach students how to cooperatively and productively interact with each other. By establishing a learning environment that is safe, secure, and meaningful for students, we

also create a social milieu that is pleasant and enjoyable. Viewed in this way, student discipline can be the catalyst that promotes interdependent respect and responsibility—a most necessary and important social condition.

Greater research emphasis needs to be placed on the goals of education and how our classrooms and learning curriculum can be used to better reinforce group collaboration and social harmony. If student discipline is viewed as the instruction of cooperative and interdependent prosocial behavior, it can be taught and reinforced in every classroom. Thus the classroom teacher becomes a social learning coach who is guiding students to take on more and more control of their behavior. Once fully explained and defined, the issue of "Who's in control?" becomes a nonexistent problem. I have long believed that far too much time and effort are wasted on this philosophical point. Quite clearly, if students are to become productive and contributing members of our society, we must give them as much control over their behavior as possible, and the sooner the better. If students are treated as capable and influential members of the classroom, they can be held (within reasonable developmental limits) accountable for their contribution to the learning harmony of the room.

I believe that students greatly benefit when they are taught that they are the ones in control of their behavior. It is not the student sitting next to them or the classroom teacher who controls how they will act or behave. Once that is carefully explained and discussed and students are given control for their behavior, they can and will learn to accept responsibility for the action or inaction that they choose. Appropriate, responsible, and respectful action is viewed as appropriate, responsible, and respectful control. Likewise, inappropriate, irresponsible, and disrespectful action is viewed as

inappropriate, irresponsible, and disrespectful control. The "Who's in control?" issue also helps to clarify the difference between the obedience and responsibility approaches to discipline as well as the distinction between logical consequences and punishment. As alluded to earlier, the obedience model of student discipline has dominated school classrooms for centuries. Essentially, it holds that teachers and other school officials are in control of students, and students are simply expected to obey and be in compliance with the rules and directives of their supervisors. Students behave the right way because they have to and are punished if they behave the wrong way.

This was pretty much the case that led to my first strapping many years ago. Sad as it may sound, there are still teachers today who strongly support this approach. They believe that students should enter their classrooms and not speak unless given permission to do so. Students are expected to remain quietly on task all period and refrain from any conversation or interaction with their neighbors. Any off-task student behavior is met with a terse reprimand. If off-task behavior continually repeats itself, teachers of the obedience persuasion will often dismiss the student from the class and may further recommend suspension as a penalty.

At the high school level I have found that authoritarian teachers are impatient and quick to recommend that offending students be removed from their class lists as soon as possible. They are generally not interested in meeting with the student, parents, and administration to work at resolving the issues of concern. I have also found followers of the obedience model to be defensive and highly offended if reference is made to their instructional skills or mundane delivery of the curriculum. I have further found disciplinary concerns in such classrooms to exceed the norm of the rest of the school.

The responsibility model of student discipline, in contrast, seeks to reinforce the idea that coaching students to accept ownership of their behavior will eventually empower them with the confidence of responsible self-control. Students will do the right thing because they want to do the right thing. The key difference between the two models is ownership: student choice and control versus teacher choice and control. If responsible self-control is explained and dialogued well with students, they will generally accept it enthusiastically out of a desire to have more autonomy in their lives.

Over the years I have found that, once teachers truly understand the difference between the responsibility and obedience approaches to discipline, they will eventually choose the former over the latter. This does not mean that their students will suddenly behave responsibly and stop acting in challenging or disruptive ways. Much like the psychology behind the "wet paint" sign, seemingly responsible students eventually challenge rules just to confirm that they are really there. Teachers engaged in the responsibility model of discipline must be prepared to play an active role in providing continuous feedback to students as well as working through problem-solving dialogue when conflicts do arise. They also need to humbly accept that, when a lesson goes on too long or is rather boring in nature, even our best students soon lose interest and look to other stimulation to hold their attention.

The challenge of student behavior will forever be with us. Children do not choose their parents, families, neighborhoods, or other conditions that have an influential impact on their lives. Many students come to school each day carrying serious emotional and behavioral deficiencies. Teachers will find such students needy, demanding, and at times fatiguing. The expression "children need our patience when they least deserve it" is

certainly true when dealing with student discipline. To assist with the day-to-day demands of discipline, every teacher needs a range of intervention strategies and skills.

A question that many beginning teachers ask is, "Where do I start?" The most effective practice that I have found in working with students is genuine praise and specific feedback. In my view, the place to start to focus on student discipline is with the positive: What is right with a student's behavior versus what is wrong with it? We have all heard the expression "seeing is believing." When it comes to positive student behavior, I have come to accept that teachers must first "believe it before they will see it." If teachers firmly believe that students wish to and do act more positively than negatively, they are more apt to notice appropriate behavior and reinforce it on an ongoing basis. As a result, students will constantly hear references being made to prosocial and prolearning behavior. These will assist in promoting a more pleasant learning atmosphere for everyone. When praise and specific feedback are further coupled with interesting and meaningful curriculum, levels of on-task cooperative behavior will rise and off-task disruption will surely fall.

When inappropriate behavior does occur, the classroom teacher must be prepared to intervene as quickly as possible. I have found that low-key prompting strategies such as shaking the head, walking toward the student, or correcting by direction (politely directing the student back on task) work most of the time. If the inappropriate behavior is more intense, a short time-out talk at the teacher's desk or a meeting in the hallway to address the problem will usually work as a temporary measure. However, follow-up intervention after class or at another suitable time is necessary to resolve repetitious or more serious misconduct.

I have found that if teachers do not engage in follow-up meetings with students and include, if necessary, parents and administrative staff, persistent behavioral issues will not only continue, but in most cases will also get worse. I have further found that problem-solving sessions with students are much more successful when the goal is to establish greater social understanding and a commitment to change rather than simply replaying the incident and targeting the blame. With more difficult cases I have found behavioral contracting, personal counseling, and formalized social-skills training to be successful. In extreme cases an alternative behavioral-program placement may be necessary to effect and support change.

One approach that I have not found effective is any intervention meant to punish a student. Whether this is a harsh, embarrassing reprimand in front of peers or involves having students serve aimless hours of detention time after school, punishment as an imposed penalty for inappropriate conduct does not result in motivating students to correct their behavior. At best it gives the short-lived appearance of working because the misconduct stops momentarily. However, as many educators have found, it can spark anger and hostility in a student and ignite further emotional escalation. Because nobody likes to be punished, resentment toward the person issuing the punishment is often a natural outcome, and the offender may look for ways of getting even. When punishment appears to work for longer periods of times, it is generally the result of fear. The offender corrects his/her behavior out of the fear of getting caught and punished again rather than a remorseful recognition of a need to change. This leads some offenders to think of better ways to misbehave without being identified.

Constructive lines of thought to follow in deciding on consequences involving asking, What will the student learn from this? Will the student have a better understanding on how his/her behavior affects his/her own learning, as well as the people and events that surround the learning? Will the student better understand that although his/her right to learn is important, so is the right to learn of other classmates? With rights come responsibilities. Every member of the class has a responsibility to support the teaching and learning of everyone else. If students have their behavior reflected back to them, it leaves them with the understanding that their behavioral influence is felt well beyond their own personal space. Viewed in this way, a suspension awarded to a repeat offender is not seen as punishment, but rather as a logical consequence that supports the rights of others to learn without being repeatedly interrupted.

Finally, educators should ask, "Would I be happy and proud of the way that this incident was handled if the offending student was my own child?" Reflecting on the personal example that I shared at the beginning of this section, it is hard to imagine that any primary teachers or school principals would wish their own children to be strapped, with no opportunity to explain their behavior, for entering a forest of enchantment in search of abandoned birds' nests to bring back for "show and tell."

Conclusion

Although in this study I did not discover a quantum-leap model or formula for student discipline, it did replicate and agree with many of the findings from previous research. The findings from this study help us to realize that student discipline is a very complex construct. Student discipline is a woven fabric that contains many interpersonal and intrapersonal dynamics that often involve potent and possibly explosive emotions. As

a result, a great deal of care and attention must go into forming a model and design that works for each individual teacher in keeping with his/her unique classroom population. Teachers cannot simply expect to master student discipline by reading through this research study or any other written source. What teachers can learn from this research, however, is how some of their experienced and celebrated colleagues have come to think about and adapt their professional practice to meet the discipline needs of their students.

This research study has been a most interesting and meaningful journey for me. After 30 years of service in publicly funded education, I continue to truly enjoy my daily involvement with students and staff. Throughout my career I have found student discipline to be an ongoing area of interest and challenge. Over the years I have struggled to thoroughly understand the complexities of student discipline. The best teaching of this subject, for me, has come from the many master teachers whom I have met along the way. The current research study provided me with the opportunity to hear the voices of six excellent teachers on the topic of student discipline and to learn from their thoughts, beliefs, and practices.

All six participants highlighted the importance of student discipline to the teaching and learning in their classrooms. Nowhere in the literature that I reviewed was this as strongly emphasized. The participants not only identified the instrumental role that student discipline plays in the classroom, but strongly held themselves responsible for ensuring its success.

In constructing a definition of student discipline, the participants affirmed that it involves the process of teaching prosocial behaviors to students. They felt that classroom discipline plays a central role in their day-to-day "instructional involvement" with

students. It is not something that they simply *do* to students, but rather it involves the process of working with students to understand the social value of interdependent living and learning. Some participants stated that classroom discipline is the single most important instructional exchange that they share with their students.

As a researcher I was surprised to learn that something so strongly felt and appreciated by teachers was not better understood and defined in the literature. In order for educators to maximize success with students, a commonly adopted definition would surely serve the professional well. The definition of discipline that I constructed in this study can serve as an example for future discussion and research that will, I hope, bring about a more widely accepted understanding of this important educational construct.

One of the findings from this study that I was surprised to discover was that the major discipline problems that the participants have faced were, in fact, minor problems. Considering the impact that managing discipline problems appears to have on teachers, it was at first also surprising to me that the participants shared this view. Other than in the work of Jones (1987a), this perspective is not strongly addressed in related educational literature. Most often when we hear of the discipline problems that teachers face, images and examples of chaos and crisis abound. However, although the participants acknowledged that explosive and aggressive behavior does occur at times, its occurrence is more rare than common.

The participants agreed that through careful and constant monitoring of the classroom, most minor problems can be dealt with long before they escalate out of control. They affirmed their overall success in using low-key interventions to maintain supportive classroom order and harmony. It was comforting to hear the confidence in

their voices as they shared their successes in using these interventions over the years. As in maintaining a garden, a little fertilizing, watering, weeding, and hoeing each day is usually all that is needed to yield a proud and productive crop. The participants believed that ignoring or failing to deal with minor concerns is the best way to invite trouble into the classroom.

The educational literature on student discipline in general alluded to the normal behavioral development of students. It did not, however, sufficiently address the awkward organizational dynamic in which we place our children at school each day. Watching "children in the wild," as in a community park setting, one soon becomes aware that normal children are not all interested in the same thing at the same time. As any tour-bus operator knows, it takes a great deal of organization and attending to the small details to keep even a group of mature adults (let alone energetic children) together, focused, and on time. The dynamics of human behavior are very complex. As a result, teachers at every grade level must consciously be aware of what is normal and what is not.

The participants in this study know that it is normal for students to enter their classrooms with a mind full of thoughts, interests, and ideas that are not centered on the curriculum they are about to study, but they have openly accepted the responsibility to communicate and alert the students to the "construction ahead." Like a road or traffic controller, these participants use signs, signals, expectations, and communications that are designed to "capture" the immediate interest and attention of their students. Through deliberate, proactive communication, they set the tone and direction for the period ahead. As common sense as this may sound, many teachers often forget that students are not

self-prepped or programmed to be excited about school curriculum. Previous recess activity, social conversations, and youth-culture interests can be expected to capture the mindset interests of students throughout the day. Although the literature alluded to this point, it is not stressed enough. The participants in this study expect to deal with the wayward minds of some or all of their students on a daily basis. Whining about the immature, ridiculous, or pop-culture interests of students is not a frustration or focus of any of them. On the contrary, they spoke of the need to show an interest in students beyond the curriculum. By demonstrating an interest in a student's out-of-class world, they felt that they are better able to relate to their students and give the impression that they care for them as fellow human beings.

The participants further stressed the importance of building respectful relationships with students. Mutual respect, they believed, in and of itself helps to create a cooperative bond with students. When teachers take the time and in a nonthreatening way assist students with academic or behavioral difficulties, they are demonstrating to the students that they care for and respect them. By creating the opportunity to assist students before problems become a major concern, teachers effectively reduce tensions that would otherwise get in the way. The participants confirmed that this is especially true with at-risk students and those known to have poor emotional or impulse control problems.

Although the literature on student discipline generally recommended attitudes of professional care and concern, the participants in this study referred to them as extremely important. All agreed that the time spent in forging a caring relationship with students helps to create a pleasant learning environment and keep discipline-related problems to a minimum.

The participants also highlighted the importance of focusing on the positive as the key to keeping negative behaviors down. With encouraging comments and specific feedback that recognize cooperative learning and academic gain, students are much less inclined to act out in disruptive or deviant ways. The participants in this study not only concurred with this, but also held themselves responsible and accountable for ensuring that they provide their students with high levels of supportive encouragement and recognition for learning.

Another finding from this study that I was surprised to hear was the strong sense of ownership that the participants place upon themselves for creating interesting and meaningful lessons for their students. Simply teaching the curriculum was a minimal requirement that teachers in this study expected of themselves. They argued that students will act out much more often if they are frustrated or bored with a lesson and emphasized with pride their constant quest to create lessons that students *"will enjoy engaging in."* Although the literature highlighted "quality curriculum" as contributing to supportive classroom behavior, it is not often that I have found that practicing teachers admit that their students were off task because of boredom with the lesson or that a student was acting out because of his/her frustration with a difficult assignment. The participants in this study not only stressed the connection between quality curriculum and supportive student behavior, but also shared examples of times when they knew that their lessons were having a negative impact on some, or all, of the students in class. These participants' confidence in and honesty about their daily practice was reassuring and demonstrated their pride and commitment to both their students and their chosen profession.

They also stressed the impact of early PD and the importance of receiving PD training early in their career that is focused on discipline. They maintained that this not only affected the way that they began to view student discipline, but also influenced many of the ideas and strategies with which they experimented at the beginning of their career. When these strategies were successful, they became practices that these teachers continued to use. It is well accepted within the circles of education that high-quality PD often leads to improved teacher effectiveness. Testimonies from the participants in this study help us to appreciate the importance of PD training, especially in an area that affects the health and welfare of our staff and students.

In addition to the traditional model of PD that is organized around an expert/consultant's sharing information in a training-session format, the participants also spoke highly of the benefits of observing *"master teachers at work."* The opportunity to observe how master teachers successfully interact with 'like' students is one of the best ways to enhance professional training, according to these participants. This method of PD was promoted in the literature, but perhaps not as strongly as it should have been. My experience of over 30 years has demonstrated that teachers rarely take the opportunity to observe the practice of their colleagues even when it is suggested and financially supported by the school administration. Like a gold reserve in a vault, we will never see the luster of the metal until we unlock and open the door. Perhaps we as educators need to shift our thinking to the paradigm of a jewelry store where the gold and gems of our profession are on proud display for everyone to see, enjoy, and learn from them.

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APPENDIX A:

LETTER OF INTENT TO PARTICIPATE IN DOCTORAL RESEARCH

Appendix A: Letter of Intent to Participate in Doctoral Research

To: Lou Yaniw

Please be advised that I, _____do hereby agree to participate in your Doctoral Research Study entitled *STUDENT DISCIPLINE: Excellent Teachers Share their Thoughts, Beliefs and Classroom Practices.* This agreement is made subject to the following terms and conditions:

> That the research is to be conducted as per the Ethics of Research as developed by the University of Alberta as per the material found within the approved Ethics Review Application which has been included with your letter of request. Specifically, the following points are included in this approval:

- As a participant, I am guaranteed of confidentiality and any comments which are excerpted from the interview data for use in the Dissertation will be attributed to a pseudonym and the connection of such a pseudonym to me will be known only to myself and the researcher.

- I may at any time, without consequences, decide to opt out of the study despite my initial agreement to participate;

- Arrangements for interviews can be made to suit my schedule and commitments.

- Should I determine, after examination and reflection of transcribed data, that information which has been described might be potentially damaging, I may exercise

the right to have any reference to the information deleted from the data analysis and the reporting of the data;

- Approval is given subject to a signed guarantee of confidentiality noted at the bottom of this letter;

- An executive summary of the final dissertation will be provided to me in recognition of my assistance in this research study if so requested;

- The interviews will be tape recorded to facilitate transcription and data analysis;

- Copies of the transcribed data will be provided to me as soon as possible after the conclusion of the first interview and if applicable, after subsequent interviews;

- This study has been reviewed and approved by the Research Ethics Board of the Faculties of Education and Extension at the University of Alberta. For questions regarding participant rights and ethical conduct of research, contact the Chair of the Research Ethics Board at (780) 492-3751.

Date: _____

Signed: _____

Should you have any questions, concerns or complaints regarding the study, please do not hesitate to contact any of the following:

Researcher: Lou Yaniw

Telephone:

e-mail

Research Advisor: Dr. Larry Beauchamp

Telephone: 492-3751

e-mail larry.beauchamp@ualberta.ca

APPENDIX B:

CONTACT LETTER: SUPERINTENDENT

Appendix B: Contact Letter: Superintendent

Date

Dear Superintendent:

I am currently enrolled in a doctoral program in the Faculty of Education at the University of Alberta. It is my intent to commence research associated with the practices and procedures that teachers employ surrounding the area of student discipline in their classrooms. The purpose of this study is to have educators who are recognized as being "excellent teachers," identify and define the classroom factors and practices specific to student discipline that contribute to successful teaching and learning in their classes. Please find enclosed an overview of my proposed research project.

As with most research, those conducting it must seek participants to provide data. I would like to work with six (6) excellent teachers from your school district—two (2) providing instruction at the elementary school level, two (2) at the junior high school level and two (2) at the senior high school level. Qualitative inquiry with six (6) teachers with a minimum of five (5) years of experience who, in addition, have been awarded the distinction of "finalist" for a provincial "Excellence in Teaching Award" will be selected to gather information and understanding of their discourse specific to the topic of student discipline. Through the data collection methods of semi-structured interviews and non-participant observation, I believe that a deep and meaningful understanding of the participating teachers' discourse on student discipline will be established.

The interviews will vary in length depending on the issues and views that emerge. The initial interview will last approximately one hour and will be recorded to allow for transcription of the interview and subsequent analysis of data. Non-participant observations of the teachers' classroom management dynamics will also be employed to obtain a more complete understanding of the teachers' practice specific to discipline. By observing teachers interacting with students, a researcher is able to gather additional information, insights and questions surrounding student discipline. When observations are immediately followed-up with a brief teacher/researcher interview (also recorded) to share and discuss perceptions of the lesson observed, an opportunity for enriched understanding can be created. The total time of the observation will be approximately one hour with a follow-up interview of about one-half hour. Additional interviews will be at the participants' convenience and participation is on a strictly volunteer basis.

All research will be governed by the Ethics Research Standard developed by the University of Alberta. Participants are guaranteed confidentiality. Pseudonyms and non-specific identifiers will be used in the dissertation report to protect the identity and/or location of all parties referenced in the interview data. Participants may opt out of the study at anytime without consequence. Enclosed for your information is a copy of the ethics review application and the signed approval.

I would like to begin interviewing participants in April 2003 and would make arrangements to do so at their convenience. Should participants determine after examining the transcribed data that any information they have shared might be potentially damaging, they may exercise their right to have any reference to that information deleted from the data analysis and the reporting of the data. A signed guarantee of confidentiality will be provided for each participant. An executive summary of the final dissertation will be provided to your and each participant if so requested The data from the research will be used to complete a doctoral dissertation in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Doctorate of Education degree and may be used in future presentations or in a journal article. Confidentiality will be maintained in all uses of the data collected in this research.

I sincerely hope that you view this research focus as both meaningful and worthwhile and agree to participate in this study. I would greatly appreciate your involvement as a participant. Should you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me by telephone at home . My advisor is Dr. Larry Beauchamp who can be reached at 492-3751 or larry.beauchamp@ualberta.ca.

Sincerely,

Lou Yaniw
EdD Provisional Candidate
Faculty of Education
Department of Secondary Education
University of Alberta

Please sign below and return this letter if you are willing to participate in this study.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Upon receiving your consent to participate, I will contact you in the near future to arrange a convenient date for an interview.

APPENDIX C:

CONTACT LETTER—PRINCIPAL

Appendix C: Contact Letter: Principal

Date

Dear Principal:

I am currently enrolled in a doctoral program in the Faculty of Education at the University of Alberta. It is my intent to commence research associated with the practices and procedures that teachers employ surrounding the area of student discipline in their classrooms. The purpose of this study is to have educators who are recognized as being "excellent teachers," identify and define the classroom factors and practices specific to student discipline that contribute to successful teaching and learning in their classes. Please find enclosed an overview of my proposed research project.

As with most research, those conducting it must seek participants to provide data. I would like to work with six (6) excellent teachers from your school district—two (2) providing instruction at the elementary school level, two (2) at the junior high school level and two (2) at the senior high school level. Qualitative inquiry with six (6) teachers with a minimum of five (5) years of experience who, in addition, have been awarded the distinction of "finalist" for a provincial "Excellence in Teaching Award" will be selected to gather information and understanding of their discourse specific to the topic of student discipline. Through the data collection methods of semi-structured interviews and non-participant observation, I believe that a deep and meaningful understanding of the participating teachers' discourse on student discipline will be established.

The interviews will vary in length depending on the issues and views that emerge. The initial interview will last approximately one hour and will be recorded to allow for transcription of the interview and subsequent analysis of data. Non-participant observations of the teachers' classroom management dynamics will also be employed to obtain a more complete understanding of the teachers' practice specific to discipline. By observing teachers interacting with students, a researcher is able to gather additional information, insights and questions surrounding student discipline. When observations are immediately followed-up with a brief teacher/researcher interview (also recorded) to share and discuss perceptions of the lesson observed, an opportunity for enriched understanding can be created. The total time of the observation will be approximately one hour with a follow-up interview of about one-half hour. Additional interviews will be at the participants' convenience and participation is on a strictly volunteer basis.

All research will be governed by the Ethics Research Standard developed by the University of Alberta. Participants are guaranteed confidentiality. Pseudonyms and non-specific identifiers will be used in the dissertation report to protect the identity and/or location of all parties referenced in the interview data. Participants may opt out of the study at anytime without consequence. Enclosed for your information is a copy of the ethics review application and the signed approval.

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I sincerely hope that you view this research focus as both meaningful and worthwhile and agree to participate in this study. I would greatly appreciate your involvement as a participant. Should you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me by telephone at home .. My advisor is Dr. Larry Beauchamp who can be reached at 492-3751 or larry.beauchamp@ualberta.ca.

Sincerely,

Lou Yaniw
EdD Provisional Candidate
Faculty of Education
Department of Secondary Education
University of Alberta

Please sign below and return this letter if you are willing to participate in this study.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Upon receiving your consent to participate, I will contact you in the near future to arrange a convenient date for an interview.

APPENDIX D:

CONTACT LETTER—TEACHER

Appendix D: Contact Letter: Teacher

Date

Dear Teacher:

I am currently enrolled in a doctoral program in the Faculty of Education at the University of Alberta. It is my intent to commence research associated with the practices and procedures that teachers employ surrounding the area of student discipline in their classrooms. The purpose of this study is to have educators who are recognized as being "excellent teachers," identify and define the classroom factors and practices specific to student discipline that contribute to successful teaching and learning in their classes. Please find enclosed an overview of my proposed research project.

As with most research, those conducting it must seek participants to provide data. I would like to work with six (6) excellent teachers from your school district—two (2) providing instruction at the elementary school level, two (2) at the junior high school level and two (2) at the senior high school level. Qualitative inquiry with six (6) teachers with a minimum of five (5) years of experience who, in addition, have been awarded the distinction of "finalist" for a provincial "Excellence in Teaching Award" will be selected to gather information and understanding of their discourse specific to the topic of student discipline. Through the data collection methods of semi-structured interviews and non-participant observation, I believe that a deep and meaningful understanding of the participating teachers' discourse on student discipline will be established.

The interviews will vary in length depending on the issues and views that emerge. The initial interview will last approximately one hour and will be recorded to allow for transcription of the interview and subsequent analysis of data. Non-participant observations of the teachers' classroom management dynamics will also be employed to obtain a more complete understanding of the teachers' practice specific to discipline. By observing teachers interacting with students, a researcher is able to gather additional information, insights and questions surrounding student discipline. When observations are immediately followed-up with a brief teacher/researcher interview (also recorded) to share and discuss perceptions of the lesson observed, an opportunity for enriched understanding can be created. The total time of the observation will be approximately one hour with a follow-up interview of about one-half hour. Additional interviews will be at the participants' convenience and participation is on a strictly volunteer basis.

All research will be governed by the Ethics Research Standard developed by the University of Alberta. Participants are guaranteed confidentiality. Pseudonyms and non-specific identifiers will be used in the dissertation report to protect the identity and/or location of all parties referenced in the interview data. Participants may opt out of the study at anytime without consequence. Enclosed for your information is a copy of the ethics review application and the signed approval.

I would like to begin interviewing participants in April 2003 and would make arrangements to do so at their convenience. Should participants determine after examining the transcribed data that any information they have shared might be potentially damaging, they may exercise their right to have any reference to that information deleted from the data analysis and the reporting of the data. A signed guarantee of confidentiality will be provided for each participant. An executive summary of the final dissertation will be provided to your and each participant if so requested The data from the research will be used to complete a doctoral dissertation in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Doctorate of Education degree and may be used in future presentations or in a journal article. Confidentiality will be maintained in all uses of the data collected in this research.

I sincerely hope that you view this research focus as both meaningful and worthwhile and agree to participate in this study. I would greatly appreciate your involvement as a participant. Should you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me by telephone at home

My advisor is Dr. Larry Beauchamp who can be reached at 492-3751 or larry.beauchamp@ualberta.ca.

Sincerely,

Lou Yaniw
EdD Provisional Candidate
Faculty of Education
Department of Secondary Education
University of Alberta

Please sign below and return this letter if you are willing to participate in this study.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Upon receiving your consent to participate, I will contact you in the near future to arrange a convenient date for an interview.

APPENDIX E:

RESEARCH ASSISTANT/TRANSCRIBER

CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

Appendix E: Research Assistant/Transcriber Confidentiality Agreement

(revised June 11 02)

Project title: WHAT IS STUDENT DISCIPLINE: Excellent Teachers Discourse Their Disciplinary Practice

I, _____, the *Research Assistant/Transcriber*, agree to:

1. keep all the research information shared with me confidential by not discussing or sharing the research information in any form or format (e.g., disks, tapes, transcripts) with anyone other than the *Researcher(s)*.

2. keep all research information in any form or format (e.g., disks, tapes, transcripts) secure while it is in my possession.

3. return all research information in any form or format (e.g., disks, tapes, transcripts) to the *Researcher(s)* when I have completed the research tasks.

4. after consulting with the *Researcher(s)*, erase or destroy all research information in any form or format regarding this research project that is not returnable to the *Researcher(s)* (e.g., information stored on computer hard drive).

Research Assistant/Transcriber

_____	_____	_____
(print name)	(signature)	(date)

Researcher(s)

_____	_____	_____
(print name)	(signature)	(date)

APPENDIX F:

GUARANTEE OF CONFIDENTIALITY

Appendix F: Guarantee of Confidentiality

I, Lou Yaniw, guarantee confidentiality to _____with respect to interview data associated with a Doctoral Dissertation entitled *STUDENT DISCIPLINE: Excellent Teachers Share their Thoughts, Beliefs and Classroom Practices* and that no reference will be made to location or jurisdiction in the attribution of excerpted responses. It is further guaranteed that any comments excerpted from the interviews will be assigned a pseudonym and that the participant reserves the final right to approve the inclusion of excerpted data from the Doctoral Dissertation.

Date: _____

Signed: _____

APPENDIX G:

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Appendix G: Interview Guide

1. What is student discipline and how do you define it?
2. How do you describe, organize and manage student discipline in your classroom?
3. How do you most often respond to appropriate student behaviour in your classroom and how do you most often respond to inappropriate student behavior?
4. What are the most common types of inappropriate behaviour that occur in your classroom and are there more extreme and/or severe inappropriate behaviour that sometimes occur in your classroom?
5. What do you do to limit the occurrence of misbehaviour and to help students to actually want to behave appropriately and responsibly?
6. What are the classroom factors that contribute most to the success of student discipline and does any single factor contribute significantly more than the rest?
7. What are the factors outside the classroom that contribute most to student discipline and does any single factor contribute significantly more than the rest?
8. What story or vignette would you share that accurately represents student discipline in your classroom?
9. What are the educational benefits of student discipline?
10. What role do others play that support student discipline in your classroom—i.e. colleagues, school administrator, parents?
11. What are the professional development needs of teachers regarding student discipline?
12. Do you view student discipline differently at the various levels of schooling—i.e. elementary, junior high, senior high?