Chapter 1

Introduction to Proactive Classroom Management

Chapter Outline

Key Terms

⬦ Chapter Objectives

After you finish reading this chapter you will be able to:

- Describe the relationship between classroom management and educational goals
- Explain the meaning and relevance of social competence
- Discuss how reflection improves teaching
- Explain how theories, mini theories, and models of human behavior influence teacher practice
- Compare and contrast biophysical, psychodynamic, behaviorist, and developmental theory
- Illustrate the proactive classroom management pyramid
- Explain how structure, instruction, and discipline support proactive practices
- Outline the organization of this text

Introduction

Classroom management is the essential teaching skill. Teachers cannot teach and students cannot learn in a classroom plagued with disruptions. How proactive teachers maintain control of their classrooms is the central theme of this text. Proactive classroom management is based on organizing the classroom in ways that create a positive physical and emotional environment. Proactive teachers establish routines, lessons, and disciplinary strategies that teach students self-control. As students take more responsibility for their learning and behavior, teachers spend less time correcting misbehavior. Less attention to discipline concerns translates into more time for teaching and learning.

Proactive classroom management is the art and science of transforming a collection of young people into a cohesive group of learners. Just as an artist combines paint, brush, and blank canvas to create a memorable painting, a classroom teacher crafts a learning environment from the raw tools of books, paper, and curriculum. While artists are noted for their style of painting, teachers express themselves through their style of classroom management. The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) defines *classroom management* as a gestalt combining several teacher traits, including reflection, skill in problem solving, skill in managing student behavior, and the ability to provide engaging instruction (Hansen & Childs, 1998).

A *gestalt* is a pattern or integrated structure that exceeds the sum of its parts. Coaches understand the meaning of *gestalt* when they attempt to mold individual players into a championship team. A gardener creates a gestalt by cultivating individual plants into a beautiful landscape. A poet selects individual words and composes verses; this, too, is a gestalt. Proactive teachers structure classroom interactions, routines, and activities so that all students, despite their strengths, weaknesses, and individual differences, become an integral part of a productive classroom *community*.

This text provides beginning educators with the tools they will need to create a learning environment that is both productive and harmonious. Although each teacher is alone in the classroom, his or her efforts are sustained by insights garnered by myriad education researchers. The emphasis is on applied principles; however, application is worthwhile only when it is built on verified theory and principles of effective teaching. Throughout this text, the principles of classroom management are embedded in a sturdy theoretical and empirical foundation.
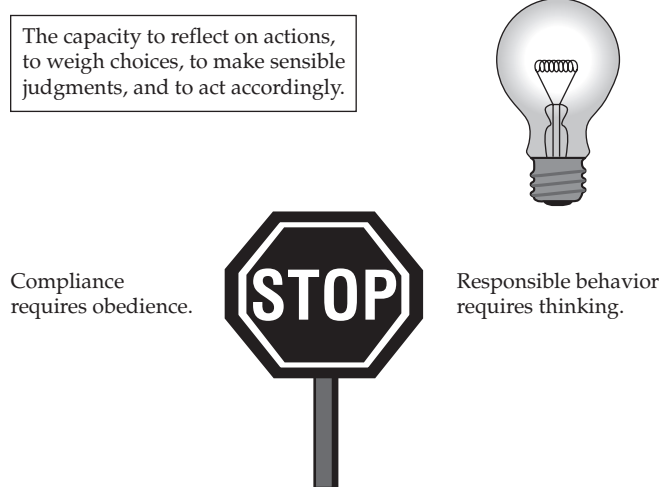
THE PURPOSE OF EDUCATION

How a teacher approaches classroom management—the priorities and techniques he or she uses—depends on his or her goals. If the purpose of classroom management is to elicit *compliance*, the methods chosen will reflect this choice. For example, the military requires behavior rooted in obedience. The methods used to foster compliant behavior include intimidation, drills, routine, and loyalty oaths. These methods are appropriate because the military needs to train soldiers and sailors who will follow commands unquestioningly.

The purpose of education is to teach students to be responsible citizens (Langdon, 1996). However, the word *responsible* is an abstract term that has different meanings for different people. To some, responsible behavior means obedience to authority. To others, responsible behavior means exercising self-control, without the need for constant supervision. The definition of *responsibility* that guides the organization of this text is as follows: *Responsible behavior* is self-directed and is characterized by the ability to make socially appropriate choices, care for others, and be accountable for personal action. Figure 1.1 illustrates the difference between compliance and responsibility. Marzano said the following about responsibility in the classroom:

> Ample evidence indicates that teaching responsibility is a high priority in U.S. education. Speaking of self-discipline, Bear (1998) explains that "the American public's belief that schools should play a role in teaching self-discipline has never been greater than it is today" (p. 15). He cites the 1996 Gallup study (Elam, Rose, & Gallup, 1996) indicating that 98 percent of the public believes that the primary purpose of public schools should be to prepare students to be responsible citizens. (2003, p. 77)

If educators want students to be responsible rather than compliant, they must think carefully about how they can achieve their goal. The means used to manage students, the structures developed, and the disciplinary techniques used must be considered in view of end results (Charles, 2000). For instance, trying to teach students to make good choices while

FIGURE 1.1   Definition of *Responsibility*

The capacity to reflect on actions, to weigh choices, to make sensible judgments, and to act accordingly.

Compliance requires obedience.

Responsible behavior requires thinking.

using overbearing tactics to force obedience would be counterproductive (Good & Brophy, 2000). The teacher who extols virtues of student personal responsibility as he or she controls students through rewards and punishments is preaching one set of values and exercising another. Kohn (2002) argued that teachers who "try to have it both ways" send mixed messages that undercut the value of each. To teach responsible behavior teachers should structure classroom practices that invite participation and use disciplinary approaches that promote self-control.

PROACTIVE CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

Proactive teachers do not avoid problems in learning or problems with behavior. These teachers accept responsibility for their students' successes and their students' failures (Brophy, 1983). Such teachers take pride in their ability to stand by all the students in their class, not just those who succeed. Proactive teachers understand that each student comes with strengths and weaknesses. Their challenge is to bring out the best in all students. When students present problems, proactive teachers accept responsibility for finding solutions. They recognize that schools are awash in explanations for students' difficulties, but they do not use these explanations as excuses. Table 1.1 summarizes variables that contribute to problem behaviors in classrooms.

Proactive teachers are distinguished by their positive approach to dealing with disciplinary problems. Rather than waiting for problems to develop and then reacting, proactive teachers organize their classrooms to promote positive behavior. Such teachers think about problems with behavior in the same way they deal with problems in academics. They recognize that just as academic skills can be taught, so can appropriate social skills. These teachers incorporate social skills lessons into their daily activities and routines. They emphasize civility, and they model the qualities they want to develop in their students.

TABLE 1.1   *Variables That Contribute to Behavioral Problems*

Student Temperament	Teacher Behavior
Dysfunctional family	Boring lessons
Neurological problems	Disorganized lessons
Emotional problems	Overreaction to misbehavior
Heredity	Stereotyping
Toxins or drug abuse	Burnout
Social skills deficits	Overreliance on punishment
Group Dynamics	**Classroom Organization**
Peer approval	Inconsistent routines
Dysfunctional group roles	Uncomfortable physical setting
Bullying and teasing	Irrelevant curriculum
Cliques	Inadequate materials
Student apathy or hostility	Obliviousness to cultural differences

Rather than looking for a quick fix to behavioral problems, proactive teachers make a commitment to long-term behavioral change. Brophy (1983) listed three principles that guide the proactive teacher's approach to classroom management:

1. Rather than blaming students or families for behavioral problems, the teacher accepts responsibility for classroom control.
2. The teacher seeks long-term solutions to problem behaviors, rather than using short-term compliance strategies (i.e., overemphasis on rewards and punishment).
3. The teacher analyzes behavioral problems for possible causes, including developmental, emotional, and family factors.

Proactive teachers have three main characteristics. First, they have a "can-do" attitude; second, they enable the growth of students at risk; and third, they adopt an *accept-no-excuses motto.*

Can-Do Attitude

Proactive teachers do not pass their classroom difficulties to someone else, nor do they give up on students labeled with such terms as disadvantaged, learning disabled, or hyperactive. Students note their teachers' *can-do attitude*. In an informal survey of education undergraduates, the following statements were representative of the reported characteristics of "best" teachers:

"He believed in me."
"She challenged me."
"He was always enthusiastic."
"She had a great sense of humor."
"He cared about me as a person."

Of a sample of 53 undergraduates, every respondent talked about personal qualities; no mention was made of specific instructional methods. The positive nature of the person mattered most (Henley, 2000).

Students are equally concerned about teachers who have difficulty maintaining order. One urban middle school student said:

The kids don't do the work. The teacher is hollering and screaming, "Do your work and sit down!" This makes the ones that want to learn go slower. It makes your grade sink down. It just messes it up for you. The teacher is trying to handle everybody and can't. (Corbett & Wilson, 2002, p. 19)

After comparing two junior high schools, Stanford (2000) found that successful and unsuccessful outcomes were directly related to teachers' and administrators' attitudes. Within Granite, the successful junior high school, were both a firm belief in students' abilities and a "no-excuses" attitude toward learning. The teachers at this school believed they were responsible for creating conditions within the school that fostered success. The notion of responsibility was reciprocal; that is, teachers also believed students should assume responsibility for their learning. High standards were anchored in supportive relationships between students and teachers.

Teachers at the less successful junior high had a poor attitude toward learners who had problems. Students' language and culture were widely viewed as insurmountable obstacles to learning, and "blaming the victim" was rampant. Thinking about students in terms of what is

wrong with them is called the "*deficit model.*" Teachers who subscribe to this deficit model see students through the myopic lens of stereotypes, which provide ready excuses for failure. Once the deficit model takes hold in a teacher's mind, it is not easily eradicated. The assumption is that because the student is "flawed," improvement will occur only if the student is "fixed" (Brendtro & Ness, 1995).

Problems in learning are interactional. Dull teaching, uninspired curricula, and a diffident administration contribute to behavioral and learning problems as surely as characteristics of individual students do (Blankstein & Guetzloe, 2000; Larrivee, 2005; Morse, 1987; Thorson, 2003). Proactive teaching is built on aspiration. If a student is struggling with mathematics, the first instructional step is to determine what calculation skills the student has. Dealing with problems with behavior is similar. All youths have strengths that can be used to move them toward constructive behavior. Consider the case study of Sylvia.

Turnaround Teachers

Benard (1997) studied characteristics of what she termed *turnaround teachers*. These teachers facilitate the self-righting mechanism of youths. According to Benard, teachers who enable the growth of students at risk establish a nurturing classroom environment. Specifically, turnaround teachers demonstrate the following attributes:

- Turnaround teachers provide emotional support, and when necessary, they provide basic necessities, such as snacks, hats, and personal hygiene items. In demeanor and action, they communicate the fundamental message "You matter."
- Turnaround teachers challenge students. They see possibilities by recognizing competencies that have gone undetected, often by the students themselves. These instructors teach students to understand themselves by understanding how their thoughts and feelings control their behavior.
- Turnaround teachers give students responsibilities. They cultivate and nourish outlets for students' contributions. They emphasize learning activities that encourage helpfulness and cooperation.

Underlying the qualities of turnaround teachers is the belief that all youths can grow and change. In his study on school effectiveness, Edmonds (1982) concluded that teachers can create a coherent environment, more potent than any combination of negative factors, and that for

Case Study: Sylvia

Sylvia, a bright but temperamental 12-year-old, had developed a reputation as one of the most difficult students in her elementary school. Her temper tantrums were well known throughout the school. Despite constantly being rebuffed by Sylvia, the resource room teacher, Ms. Stanley, persevered. She talked with Sylvia at every opportunity—in the hallway, during lunch, at recess. Slowly, Sylvia's icy disposition began to thaw. She became more open about her feelings. She agreed to help tutor younger students in the resource room, and her temper tantrums decreased. Her sixth-grade teacher, who had experienced serious difficulties with Sylvia, began to remark about positive changes in her behavior. By the end of the year, Ms. Stanley concluded that Sylvia had turned a corner. For Sylvia, conversation as an alternative to acting out emotions had begun to take hold.

at least 6 hours a day, school can override negative outside-school factors. Building on capacities to redirect youths has a rich, but overlooked, history among caregivers. Brendtro and Ness (1995) provided the following examples:

- Jane Adams saw delinquency as a spirit of adventure displayed by youth condemned to dreary existence on dead-end streets.
- Maria Montessori developed inner discipline in slum children at a time when others defined discipline as obedience training.
- Sylvia Ashton-Warner transformed unruly and unmotivated Maori students using competence and creativity as antidotes for aggression.
- Karl Wilker taught responsibility to youth in Berlin's youth prison and then gave them hacksaws to cut off the bars.
- In South Africa, Alan Paton transformed a wretched prison for black youth into a laboratory for positive moral development and gained worldwide recognition as a correctional performer. (p. 4)

Turnaround teachers possess a combination of behavioral and attitudinal qualities that enhance their ability to manage their classrooms and bring out the best in their students. In a turnaround teacher's classroom, the following are usually true:

- Most behavioral problems are handled within the classroom.
- Learning is viewed as a lifelong endeavor.
- Professional development and the acquisition of new skills are prized.
- Students are respected as individuals first. Success in school-based activities is secondary to the young person's overall welfare.

Accept-No-Excuses Motto

An apt motto to place over proactive educators' classroom doors would be "Accept No Excuses." Ginny Green, former principal at Stege Elementary School in Richmond, California, epitomizes a proactive administrator (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 2000). When she took over leadership of Stege in 1997, it was one of the lowest scoring schools in one of the Bay Area's most impoverished neighborhoods. The school had no librarian, no computer room, and no field trips were taken. High teacher turnover rates plagued the school, no faculty meetings were held, and seagulls had invaded the playground with a voracity usually reserved for landfills. Even the flagpole had no flag.

Ginny Green directed her efforts toward restoring school pride and a sense of educational purpose. She set up teacher meetings so that teachers could share strategies, she put African cloth runners in the faculty room, and she cleaned the moldy bathrooms. She set her educational sights first on reading. She established a special reading room, which she helped staff with volunteers from the University of Berkeley. Teachers were instructed to tailor individual reading programs for students. Pride slowly replaced despair. Ginny Green's methods were unrelenting, and within 3 years, Stege showed triple-digit gains on the annual statewide Academic Performance Index. Students' scores in reading increased 37 points in the second grade, 18 points in the fourth grade, and 8 points in the fifth grade.

In many other schools and classrooms throughout the public school system, dedicated educators who do not shirk educational problems have replicated the Stege success.

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT AND ACHIEVEMENT

The renewed vigor with which educators are attempting to improve *school achievement* underscores the importance of classroom management. Students cannot learn in a classroom marred by disciplinary problems. A survey of 118 school districts revealed that poor classroom management skills and disruptive students were the major reasons new teachers struggled in the classroom (D. T. Gordon, 1999). In many studies, researchers have identified a safe and orderly classroom as a prerequisite for academic success (Marzano, 2003).

Wang, Haertel, and Walberg (1993) asked 134 education experts to rank variables of student achievement in order of importance. Skill in classroom management was ranked first. According to Marzano (2003), effective teachers perform three interdependent functions: They make wise choices about instructional strategies, they design the classroom curriculum to facilitate learning, and they use classroom management techniques effectively.

Social Competence

Social competence is the ability to maintain peer relationships and exhibit pro-social behavior in school. According to H. Patrick (1997), "A substantial body of evidence suggests that a positive association exists between students' social competence and their academic performance, including achievement, school adjustment, and motivation for schoolwork" (p. 209). Students who are rejected or isolated are at risk of low social competence, as are students who exhibit regular behavioral problems. Conversely, student behavior is enhanced by positive relationships.

All students, not just those who lack social competence, are negatively affected when lessons are interrupted. Researchers at WestEd, a nonprofit educational research and development institute, found that the detrimental effect of problem behaviors multiplied with teachers who lacked classroom management skills (Aronson, Zimmerman, & Carlos, 1998):

> Several studies found that poor classroom management resulted in teachers and students losing considerable amounts of instructional time to student disruptions, waiting, long breaks between activities, student tardiness and various management and discipline activities. One of the studies found that more than half of elementary school class time was occupied by non-learning activities, such as waiting, general management activities and other non-instructional activities. By one estimate, 70 percent of teachers need to improve their classroom management skills. (Aronson, Zimmerman, & Carlos, 1998)

Bryk and Schneider (2003) identified relational trust as a critical factor in students' academic success in several low-income Chicago schools. The researchers coined the term *relational trust* to describe a school climate based on mutual respect, competence, integrity, and personal regard for others. The researchers reported that the Chicago schools in which students scored in the top 25% on standardized tests recorded higher levels of relational trust than those of the schools with lower scores. Virtually every action within the classroom—from distribution of materials to the tone students use when they are talking to one another—is influenced by the teacher's approach to classroom management.

SCHOOL DISCIPLINE

The educational organization Phi Delta Kappa has conducted several polls of teachers' attitudes toward school (Langdon & Vesper, 2000). Since the polls were initiated in 1984, Phi Delta Kappa has compared teachers' and the general public's opinions about school discipline. Although both the public and teachers believe that maintaining student discipline is important, the findings indicate that, with regard to specifics, the general public and teachers have different views about school discipline priorities.

According to the Sixth Phi Delta Kappa Poll of Teachers' Attitudes Toward the Public Schools (Langdon & Vesper, 2000), nearly twice as many teachers (43%) as members of the public (24%) believe schools are safe and orderly. Whereas the public rated stricter discipline and control in schools as its first priority, this factor ranked fourth with teachers, who ranked parental involvement as their main concern. When teachers were asked how serious a problem discipline was in their school, only 13% reported a "very serious" problem. Forty-three percent of the general public rated student discipline a "very serious" problem. One possible explanation for the differences in perception between teachers and the public is that teachers have direct experience in school, whereas the public's perception may be shaped by media reports.

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2002c), principals rated student tardiness, student absenteeism, and class cutting as their top disciplinary concerns. These factors were followed by physical conflicts between students and tobacco use. Student possession of weapons, physical abuse of teachers, and sale of drugs on school grounds were the last three ranked items. Teacher rankings of disciplinary problems centered on behaviors that interfered with instruction time. Incomplete schoolwork and homework, back talk, and noncompliance were the first three disciplinary priorities (Langdon, 1997). Teachers ranked drug use last. The National Center for Education Statistics (2002b) surveyed 10th graders about misbehavior. The students agreed that misbehavior that interferes with instruction is most problematic. Common misbehaviors cited by students included getting to class late, cutting class, and breaking school rules.

Two important ideas can be gleaned from these research studies: First, with regard to classroom management, one priority is getting students to participate more fully in their studies. School needs to be inviting so that students strive to do well. Second, teachers must find ways to enhance cooperation among themselves, the administration, and students. If each group pulls in a different direction, problems that could be solved will seem intractable. It is for this reason that it is important for educators to reflect on their beliefs and stay flexible in their behavior.

REFLECTION

Socrates said, "The unexamined life is not worth living." When teachers reflect on their belief systems they enhance their ability to respond to students in a flexible and supportive manner. Reflection is the process of honestly appraising beliefs and actions. Reflection enables teachers to examine their disposition toward the differences they encounter in their students. Unreflective

teachers stagnate. Year after year unreflective teachers manage their classrooms the same way. About unreflective teachers Mendler (1992) said, "We have all heard and used the expression 'People are creatures of habit'. This is why people continue to do things even after all the feedback suggests that what they are doing is ineffective" (p. 35). Some examples of unreflective teachers follow:

- Timeout for 11-year-old Carlos is a daily event. Mrs. Franklin continues to use timeout when Franklin acts up, yet after 6 months there has been no change in Carlos's behavior.
- Mr. Everett, the principal of an urban high school has a sign over his office door: "My Way or the Highway."
- The first week of class Mrs. Johnson lays down the rules for her first-grade students. She emphasizes her commandments with the dictum: "This is the way things are done in *my* classroom."
- Mr. Albert teaches art in an alternative high school. His art cabinets are stocked with many art materials such as clay, paint, and easels. However, he does not allow students to use these materials because he says they are too immature. Instead his students spend their time tracing cartoons. During each class, Mr. Albert sends a steady stream of students to the principal's office.

Dealing with classroom management issues requires thoughtful consideration (Gates, 2001). Classrooms are busy places, and teachers must make decisions on the spot. At any given time, a decision can either conclude or prolong a disciplinary problem. Thus, high on the list of teacher competencies is the ability to think through options before acting. To manage classrooms effectively, reflective teachers must take two important factors into account: their emotions and their personal needs. These factors are discussed next.

Emotional Restraint

When managing disruptive behavior, teachers must control their emotions. They must model the same restraint they seek to develop in their students. Thus, teaching requires emotional intelligence. *Emotional intelligence* is the ability to perceive a situation as stressful, reflect on the best course of action, and choose a reasonable action (Goleman, 1995). Teachers who are quick to judge are unreflective. Impulsive judgments have a serious drawback—they can be wrong. A thoughtless response to student behavior can make a difficult situation worse. In the short term, a student may be embarrassed or humiliated. Over time student antipathy will grow with each unpleasant encounter (Long, Morse, Fecser, & Newman, 2007).

Personal Needs

Reflective teachers understand that their personal psychological needs influence their behavior (Costa & Kallick, 2000). The need for control, the need for success, and the need to be appreciated are some of the needs experienced by all professionals, including teachers. When these needs are frustrated, the unreflective teacher risks projecting these needs onto his or her students. Each frustrated need has a negative result: a frustrated need to be appreciated can lead to cynicism, a frustrated need for control can lead to an overbearing demand for obedience, and a frustrated need for success can lead to resignation and diminished creativity.

The teacher who engages in *reflection* takes a periodic personal inventory, and understands that students are not sitting in classrooms to meet his or her personal psychological needs. Costa and Kallick (2000) suggested that journal writing can help a teacher develop a reflective inner voice. Other recommendations for fostering a reflective attitude include participating in continuing education programs, presenting at professional conferences, partnering with a mentor teacher, surfing the Web for new ideas, and talking over issues with a trusted friend or colleague.

Mini Theories

Albert Camus, the French philosopher, said, "An intellectual is someone whose mind watches itself." Student problem behaviors require more than tough, inflexible policies. Reflective teachers look for causes. They understand that what they believe about student behavior will influence how they treat students. When dealing with students, teachers develop personal theories to explain misbehavior. These *mini theories* are collective bits and pieces of information derived from "common sense," study, direct experience, and personal preference. Although mini theories operate in the background of teachers' consciousness, they play a major role in teachers' decisions about how to manage students' behavior.

The teacher who considers an expression of anger in the classroom "inappropriate" will respond to a distraught youngster in a substantially different manner than will a teacher who encourages students to get in touch with their feelings. Proactive teachers continually reassess the alignment of their mini theories with validated theory on human behavior. Brian Sheehy (2002), a third-grade teacher in an urban school, said

> I like the idea of choosing an approach that is compatible with your philosophy of education. Of course, this is valid only to the extent that your philosophy is based on an open minded trial and error and honest rumination and reflection. If your philosophy is nothing more than a justification of your own, personal biases and preconceived ideas, then this is an awful place to start. (p. 3)

THEORIES AND MODELS

Theory guides thought and action. A teacher who subscribes to behaviorist theory will respond to misbehavior differently than a teacher who values a developmental viewpoint. No single theory of human behavior is correct. Various *theories* highlight different aspects of human behavior. Furthermore, theories of human behavior are never static but always evolving.

Likewise, no theory is totally "objective." Theories are influenced as much by culture as by science. For example, the theory of genetic intelligence outlined by the French physician Paul Broca helped justify, on "scientific" grounds, the colonization of Africa and Asia (Sagan, 1979). Western theories rely on analysis and rationality; Eastern theories are holistic and intuitive.

No theory stands alone. Each informs the other by expanding our understanding of the complex nature of human behavior. An ancient Indian parable told the story of three blind men who felt the ear, leg, and trunk of an elephant and pronounced them, respectively, a fan, a tree trunk, and a snake. As with the blind men different interpretations of behavior only partially hit the mark, and this myopia leads to false conclusions. The better we understand behavior

from a variety of points of view the more effective we can be in analysis and problem solving. The following is a brief summary of four theories that have been influential in framing principles of proactive classroom management. The reader is encouraged to reflect on how each theory might influence his or her approach to understanding students.

Biophysical Theory

Biophysical theory explains human behavior through an analysis of metabolic, genetic, and neurological factors. Recent research on brain chemistry and function has provided tantalizing new evidence of genetic causes for schizophrenia and Asperger's syndrome. Lead poisoning, allergies, and neurological impairments are three widely accepted biophysical explanations for student behavior problems. Infections, lack of sleep, poor diet, and vision problems are also common biophysical explanations for attention problems in children. Other biophysical explanations for behavior problems such as excessive sugar intake and food preservatives are widely accepted. Many treatments for behavioral and emotional problems are based on biophysical theory. For example, lithium is prescribed for schizophrenia and amphetamines are used to treat attention deficit hyperactive disorder. Mood disorders such as depression and anxiety are treated by prescription drugs. Sylwester (1995) describes how brain research has uncovered the impact of emotional state on learning. Such biophysical insights provide a platform for understanding the deep connections between student feelings and their learning readiness.

Psychodynamic Theory

The Austrian psychiatrist Sigmund Freud is the originator of psychodynamic theory. Freud used his "talking cure" to help his clients gain insight into their behavior. According to Freud, unaltered, repressed emotions cause neurosis, a functional disorder of the mind that leads to fears, anxieties and phobias. Freud postulated that emotional stability depended on a harmonious balance of three hypothetical constructs: id, ego, and superego.

According to *psychodynamic theory*, the id is the pleasure-seeking element of the personality. The id is propelled by the impulse for immediate gratification. The superego represents one's conscience. It is the center of one's ethical and moral decisions. The ego mediates between the id and superego. The ego guides actions by calculating consequences for behavior. Henley, Ramsey, and Algozzine (2009) describe the interaction of id, ego, and superego with the following example:

> A teenager walks through a shopping mall and sees a Swiss Army knife on a counter. His impulse (id) is to pick it up and stick it in his pocket. His conscience (superego) tells him it is wrong to steal, but his id is winning the battle. "I'll go to church and I will be forgiven," he rationalizes. Meanwhile his reality testing instinct (ego) tells him to look around. He sees several mirrors along the wall behind the counter and he realizes that someone could be watching him. The teenager decides that stealing the knife is not worth the risk of getting caught. (p. 137)

Many important thinkers of the twentieth century were influenced by psychodynamic theory. Included among these preeminent thinkers are Carl Jung, Anna Freud, Erik Erikson, and Erich Fromm. As time went by so-called "ego psychologists" focused less on the unconscious and more on helping individuals learn effective adapting skills. The pursuit of practical

application of ego psychology to the classroom evolved into a variety of psychoeducational interventions including social skill curricula, crisis management, and group dynamics. (Long, Morse, Fecser, and Newman, 2007).

Behaviorism Theory

In contrast to the insight emphasis of psychodynamic theory, behaviorism ascribes behavior change to the manipulation of environmental factors. *Behaviorism* is a general term that encompasses a number of psychological approaches. The common element in behaviorist psychologies is that only observable actions can be scientifically studied. Such phenomena as feelings, mind, and unconscious are considered "hypothetical constructs." Behaviorists dismiss hypothetical constructs because they cannot be observed and analyzed as data.

Many classroom management techniques are based on a type of behaviorism known as *behavior modification.* Punishment, positive reinforcement, and negative reinforcement are frequently used with the intention to influence student behavior. A primary school child is rewarded with a sticker for good work. A high school student is punished with detention. A special education student is positively rewarded with points that can later be traded for special privileges. An elementary teacher uses negative reinforcement by excusing students from homework over the weekend if they complete Monday through Thursday homework assignments.

While standard behavior modification practices such as grades and rewards for good behavior are widely accepted, other behavior modification approaches are more controversial. For instance, the Washington, DC school system set aside $2.7 million to pay students at 14 middle schools for appropriate behavior. A student could earn up to 50 points per month at a rate of $2 a point for such behaviors as turning in homework and attending class on time (Haynes & Birnbaum, 2008). Kohn (1996) maintains that rewards used as positive reinforcement actually punish because many students who feel they deserve rewards don't get them. He adds that rewards detract from educational goals by misplacing priorities—for example, when students value the rewards over the intellectual activity. Another misuse is the continued use of positive reinforcement and punishment without collecting data to determine if the interventions are having the desired effect.

Developmental Theory

Developmental theory explains the observable differences in children's thoughts and actions as they mature. The major areas of development are motor, cognitive, language, and social-emotional. Healthy children go through predictable phases, moving from simple to more complex skills. Disturbances, either environmental or physical, can impede normal development and in some instances lead to lifelong difficulties. Basic needs of *belonging* and *acceptance* are common threads woven through the developmental theories of Adler (1939), Erikson (1950), Maslow (1971), and Glasser (1986). Each theorist highlighted, in a slightly different manner, the key role that affiliations play in human development. Adler (1939) emphasized the primacy of community and feeling connected to others.

Erikson, in particular, provides teachers with a blueprint for understanding how social and emotional needs of schoolchildren transform as they mature. Erikson reported that infants, children, and adults proceed through eight stages of psychosocial development. Within

TABLE 1.2   *Reasons for Misbehavior: Four Theoretical Explanations*

Behavior: Sixth-grader Manuel frequently disrupts class by using attention-seeking behaviors, such as making sarcastic remarks and telling inappropriate jokes.

Theoretical Perspective	Hypothetical Explanation
Developmental theory	Manuel is frustrated by his attempts to develop friendships. His attention-seeking behavior is an awkward attempt to gain other students' acceptance. This socio-emotional conflict typically surfaces during adolescence in students who are insecure.
Behaviorist theory	Each time Manuel makes a wisecrack, the other students laugh and snicker. Their response provides positive reinforcement for his disruptive behavior.
Biophysical theory	Manuel lives in a run-down area of town. The state freeway bridge runs almost directly over his subsidized public housing unit. During the years, lead has gradually accumulated in Manuel's nervous system. Manuel's impulsivity is caused by lead poisoning.
Psychodynamic theory	Manuel's self-control problems are triggered by situations that remind him of past failures. Most of his inappropriate remarks occur in situations in which he is expected to read. He is insecure about his weak reading skills. This insecurity increases his anxiety, which he acts out through impulsive behavior.

each phase of Erikson's theory the individual is confronted with polarities of outcome, such as trust versus mistrust, intimacy versus isolation, and generativity versus stagnation. Successful movement through a stage is marked by the emergence of a developmental strength. Conversely, difficulties in resolving a stage can lead to emotional and social difficulties.

Erikson points out that when students are beginning school, they are confronted with the psychosocial crisis of industry versus inferiority. The result can be either a sense of competence or inertia. Students who experience early school failure face a difficult road, which is complicated by their sense that they cannot succeed.

Table 1.2 illustrates how the same behavior can be interpreted differently depending on which theoretical explanation is used.

Subscribing to educational journals, attending professional conferences, and engaging in professional discourse are some of the ways teachers continue to review their theoretical perspective and grow as professionals. Teachers not dedicated to their professional development invite stagnation. Teachers who examine their practices allow themselves the opportunity to change. Dedication to self-improvement is the cornerstone of proactive teaching.

Models

While theories present abstract principles of human behavior, *models* describe practical guidelines. Many well-known classroom management models are based on a single theme that gives each a distinctive identity, such as "assertive discipline" (Canter & Canter, 1992), "discipline with dignity" (Curwin & Mendler, 1988a), "and win–win discipline" (Kyle, Scott, & Kagan, 2001).

Classroom management models such as these combine insights and principles from two or more theories. Curwin and Mendler's (1988a) discipline-with-dignity model emphasizes respecting students' basic needs (i.e., developmental), developing relationships with youth (i.e., psychodynamic), and implementing logical consequences (i.e., behaviorisim). "Assertive discipline,*"* which highlights rules, supportive feedback, and corrective action, incorporates a number of behavior modification principles (Canter & Canter, 1992).

Classrooms are complex social environments. To be effective, models of classroom management must provide practical guidelines on a number of overlapping classroom issues. The value of a model rests in its usefulness. Therefore, classroom management models need to respond to the teacher's primary concern: how to promote constructive and productive behavior in the classroom. When misbehavior occurs, factors other than "what is 'wrong' with the student" must be considered. Dull lessons, disorganized classrooms, peer pressure, and overbearing disciplinary tactics contribute to disciplinary problems as much as an individual student's temperament does. Teachers who rely solely on a single model or a one-dimensional method of classroom management (i.e., "My way or the highway!") will, sooner or later, encounter a student who does not "fit" the system.

An Interactional Perspective

Many overlapping factors influence student behavior, including perception, temperament, developmental level, and physical well-being. The environment plays an equally essential role. Imagine an enthusiastic, healthy, and well-adjusted 6-year-old in a cheerless classroom where students are expected to sit quietly at their desks while the teacher doles out endless workbook assignments. Before long, the eager learner will either wilt into a compliant automaton, mindlessly finishing one task after another, or start to goof off in a vain search for stimulation.

In this case, if the student becomes a "disciplinary problem," the teacher is just as accountable as the student, because a lack of imagination in lesson preparation set the stage for the student's misbehavior. This interactional point of view does not diminish the student's responsibility for his or her actions, but it does highlight the significant role that teacher organization and teacher attitude play in determining student behavior.

When teachers incorporate a variety of classroom models and theoretical viewpoints into their thinking about student behavior, they increase their options. Armed with knowledge about a range of approaches for understanding student behavior, a teacher becomes a proactive problem solver. When one system or idea does not work, instead of blaming the student, the proactive teacher moves on to another approach. The classroom is an ecosystem comprising physical and social environmental variables. Physical factors include schedules, space, chairs, color, sound, and lighting. Social characteristics include group dynamics, teacher disposition, rules for behavior, family involvement, and cultural differences.

Changes in physical or social characteristics will change individual behavior. Imagine trying to concentrate in a noisy or an overheated college classroom. Now consider how other elements of the college experience—such as quality of lectures, professors' enthusiasm, and anxiety about tests—affect learning.

The ecosystem that supports learning also spreads beyond the classroom door. Events outside the classroom have a significant effect on behavior within the classroom. Although you as a teacher can control only the variables within your classroom, knowledge about your students' lives outside school will broaden your understanding and enhance your ability to communicate with them.

STRUCTURE, INSTRUCTION, AND DISCIPLINE

Proactive classroom management comprises three interactive classroom features: structure, instruction, and discipline (Figure 1.2). How teachers structure their daily classroom program, the way they communicate with students, and the creativity they put into their lessons has as much to do with student behavior as the characteristics of individual students.

The Beginning Teacher

The New York Times chronicled the first weeks of school for Donna Moffett, a legal secretary who left her comfortable job to fulfill her dream of becoming a teacher (Goodnough, 2003). After completing a crash course in teacher preparation and passing an 8-hour certification examination, Ms. Moffett began teaching in a Brooklyn elementary school. Like many newcomers to teaching, Ms. Moffett quickly discovered how structure, instruction, and discipline affected her ability to manage her classroom. According to Goodnough:

> In these first few weeks of school Ms. Moffett is learning that teaching is only a small part of her job description—for now an achingly small part. She is already grappling with tardiness, and discipline problems, often spending far more time on "classroom management" as veteran teachers call it, than lessons. (p. A25)

In one month, Ms. Moffett did more learning than teaching. She discovered the interactive dynamics of structure, instruction, and discipline. She saw that reading cannot progress when students are not paying attention. She observed that "manipulatives" can be distractions as well as tools for teaching mathematics. She found that holding all the students back from lunch when one misbehaved was a mistake.

Like Ms. Moffett, many new teachers struggle to find their way. Success is built on the teacher's ability to manage a classroom productively. Creating such a climate requires mutual respect and engaging lessons. These commodities are generated in the thousands of person-to-person interactions that compose each school day. How daily interactions are carried out—the

FIGURE 1.2 Interaction of
Classroom Variables
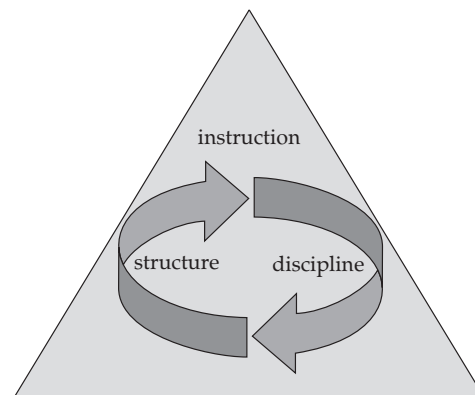
nature of how students relate to one another and their teacher—is a crucial element in determining whether school is a successful experience. Three core teacher activities comprise each classroom day: structure, instruction, and discipline.

Structure

Structure refers to organizational practices, routines, and procedures that form a platform for daily activities. Structure involves such concrete issues as how desks are arranged and influences such abstract concerns as group dynamics (Gunter & Denny, 1996; Hewett, 1968). Structure evolves with time. It is flexible and responsive to learners' needs. Flexibility allows for changes that will improve the learning climate. For example, a teacher notes that the formation of cliques in the classroom is leading to a spate of teasing and bullying. In response, the teacher reorganizes the structure of the classroom activities by emphasizing cooperative learning and de-emphasizing competitive group activities.

Instruction

When students are engaged in their lessons, disruptions are minimal. Conversely, monotonous, dull lessons create boredom, which in turn leads students to seek out distractions. Effective classroom managers are enthusiastic, they know their curriculum, they take their students' needs and interests into account when planning, and they use a variety of teaching methods.

Instruction begins with a sound grounding in curriculum and human development. An elementary teacher who subjects students to a steady diet of drills and lectures is clearly unaware that the students' cognitive development requires regular doses of concrete learning experiences accented by learning centers and other activity-based methods. A secondary teacher who insists that students work in isolation overlooks the strong learning potential of instructional methods such as cooperative learning and brainstorming, which build on students' social developmental needs for affiliation and independence.

Discipline

Discipline refers to the approaches and strategies teachers use to guide and promote constructive student behavior. Discipline is as immediate as correcting misbehavior and as far-reaching as developing a trusting relationship. Discipline is often misunderstood. Some people think of discipline as punishment. For example, Maria pushes a student in the hallway, and she is "disciplined" with extra homework. Discipline involves more than simply reacting to misbehavior and punishing recalcitrant students; discipline is proactive and educational.

The purpose of discipline is to teach students social skills they need for success both in and out of school. Social skills instruction involves more than students' sitting quietly in their seats and raising their hands. We as teachers want students to follow classroom rules, but we also want them to be cooperative and accountable for their behavior (Gaustad, 1992). Effective disciplinary practices teach students how to manage their feelings, behave appropriately, and respect others' rights. Table 1.3 lists the main points gleaned from 22 research reports on the classroom management skills of effective teachers.

TABLE 1.3   *Research on Effective Classroom Management*

Effective classroom managers do the following:

Structure
- Establish routines for all daily tasks and needs
- Orchestrate smooth transitions and continuity of momentum throughout the day
- Multitask

Instruction
- Strike a balance between variety and challenge in student activities
- Increase student engagement in learning and make good use of every instructional moment

Discipline
- Use consistent, proactive disciplinary practices
- Have a heightened awareness of all actions and activities in the classroom
- Include the use of space and proximity or movement around the classroom for nearness to trouble spots and to encourage attention
- Anticipate potential problems to limit disruptions
- Resolve minor inattention and disruptions before they become major problems

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Note. Information taken from *Qualities of Effective Teachers,* by J. H. Stronge, 2002, Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Combined structure, instruction, and discipline have a dynamic effect on classroom management (Shores, Gunter, & Jack, 1993). Everything that transpires in a classroom—moment to moment, day to day, and week to week—is influenced by the teacher's approach to these three factors. In fact, the beginning teacher will quickly learn how structure, instruction, and discipline overlap.

TEXTBOOK ORGANIZATION

The information presented in this textbook is derived from theory and research that support a proactive approach to classroom management. Throughout, the emphasis is on positive practices that make school a more enjoyable and productive setting for both students and teachers.

Classroom Management: A Proactive Approach is divided into three parts: Community, *Prevention,* and Positive Behavior Supports. Each of these elements of proactive classroom management complements the others. For example, a positive classroom climate (i.e., Part I, Community) provides a framework for preventing disciplinary problems (i.e., Part II, Prevention). Likewise, dealing with problem behaviors in a nonjudgmental and constructive fashion (i.e., Part III, Positive Behavioral Supports) helps prevent future behavioral problems from occurring (i.e., Part II, Prevention). Figure 1.3, the proactive classroom management pyramid illustrates how the three priorities of proactive teaching—community, prevention, and positive behavioral supports—are linked by the three key features of classroom management—structure, instruction, and discipline.

FIGURE 1.3   Proactive
Classroom Management
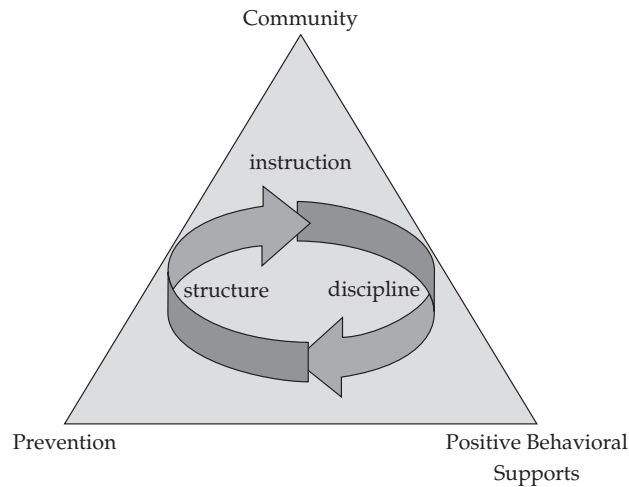
Part I: Community

Proactive classroom management is built on a foundation of respect and rapport. Ask a third grader how he or she likes school, and you will probably hear "My teacher's nice" or "My teacher's mean." This response is more than an immature conclusion. It is a concise consumer statement about the classroom atmosphere. A classroom needs an inviting ambience. Student diversity requires teachers to find ways to expand interpersonal connections. Morale grows when teachers use principles of group process, listen to their students, empower students, and provide a nurturing environment. When respect and rapport are firmly in place, churlish behavior gives way to cohesiveness, dialogue supplants dissent, and enthusiasm overcomes apathy.

Part II: Prevention

Many disciplinary problems can be prevented in the classroom by attention to such features as group dynamics, motivation, and quality of instruction. Students who are engaged in their schoolwork are less likely to be disruptive. Conversely, disorganized lessons and listless instruction incite classroom disturbances. Identifying classroom events and routines that contribute to disciplinary problems and making necessary modifications are elements of preventive discipline. Teachers who practice preventive discipline look for causes of behavioral problems. They recognize that group dynamics influence individual behavior, and they establish a classroom structure and disciplinary practices that promote group cohesiveness.

Part III: Positive Behavioral Supports

Despite teachers' best efforts, some students will have difficulty adapting to classroom routines. The purpose of behavioral supports is to respond to student behavior with confidence and flexibility. Teachers who use *positive behavioral supports* search for causes of behavioral problems and design proactive classroom interventions. Specific features of positive behavioral supports include identifying classroom events that trigger misbehavior, teaching constructive

behavior, and defusing the potential spiral of misbehavior through de-escalation strategies (Sugai et al., 1999). How teachers think about students determines how they treat their students. In this part of the book, an attitudinal template for proactive behavioral intervention is provided, along with such best practices for supporting behavioral change as functional behavior assessment and behavior management plans.

Personal change is difficult. The slow and circuitous process of behavioral change requires student participation and empowerment to be successful. Readers are encouraged to depersonalize discipline problems, collect data, and select the best approach for promoting behavioral change. An emphasis on problem solving, evaluation, and research-based interventions are outlined in this section of the text.

What You Should Know

Classroom management is the process of establishing an orderly, productive, and harmonious educational setting. If the teacher's goals are compliant, the methods used to achieve that goal will differ from proactive methods, which emphasize student responsibility. Proactive classroom management aims to help students become self-directed in their learning and behavior. Proactive teachers are reflective. They continually examine and renew their mini-theories about how to bring out the best in their students. While educational researchers and practitioners borrow from many theories, psychodynamic, behaviorism, biophysical, and developmental theories are the most influential. Proactive teachers use classroom structure, instruction, and discipline methods to promote student responsibility. To achieve these ends, proactive teachers structure procedures and routines that build community. They understand the power of group dynamics to influence individual behavior, and they recognize that the best way to prevent problem behaviors is to motivate and engage their students. Finally, proactive teachers practice positive behavior supports. They teach students with persistent discipline problems new, constructive social skills.

Applying the Concepts

1. Write a paragraph describing your favorite teacher in elementary or secondary school. List features of the teacher that were appealing and that you would like to emulate. Using the list as a guide, have a classroom brainstorming session about the qualities of "best" teachers. How many of the listed qualities relate to disciplining students?

2. Interview a classroom teacher about classroom management. Ask the teacher to describe his or her philosophy of classroom management. Ask the teacher how he or she thinks the following influence classroom management practices: discipline, classroom routines, and instruction.

3. Using the Internet, search for the phrase "proactive classroom management." How many "hits" did you get? List the Web sites that discuss classroom management. Look for differences between and similarities in how the Web sites describe proactive classroom management.

4. In a cooperative learning group, list methods that teachers use to get their students to be compliant. List methods used to teach students to be responsible. Group members should reach a consensus on the following questions: How does a teacher's goals for behavior affect the way he or she sets up classroom routines? How does a teacher's goals for behavior affect his or her disciplinary practices? How does a teacher's goals for behavior affect lesson organization? Share your responses with the entire class.

5. Interview a classroom teacher about his or her first year of teaching. What were this teacher's primary concerns? What kinds of tips did veteran teachers provide him or her? What differences existed between what the teacher learned in college and the reality of the classroom? What types of disciplinary problems developed? What did the teacher learn about discipline the first year? How did the first year influence his or her current classroom management practices?

6. Observe a classroom and identify ways that the teacher interacts with students who are off task. Describe a few incidents, then analyze each in terms of how much the off-task behavior was related to student temperament and how much was related to the lesson quality.

7. What is the difference between a theory and a model? Give some examples of how educators translate theory into practice. Name and give examples of how a specific theory influences classroom management practices.