

Audio Transcripts - Effective Classroom Management

INTRODUCTION:

Hello and welcome to the first in a series of interactive professional development programs for educators. I'm Carol Weinstein, a professor at the Rutgers University Graduate School of Education, and I've been working to synthesize and disseminate research-based information on effective classroom management.

Each year, thousands of new educators begin their professional careers. They begin with enthusiasm and idealism; they want to care for students and to make a difference in their lives. They envision classrooms where everyone is excited about learning and where people treat one another with respect and trust.

For too many educators, this vision never materializes. For too many, the classroom becomes a battleground rather than a caring community. Students act up; they seem more interested in socializing than in learning; and they interpret teacher friendliness as license to misbehave.

When that happens, the desire to care for students conflicts with the need to control.

Some teachers actually begin to think that the two (caring and order) are mutually exclusive.

It's not a case of either/or. The truly masterful educator can establish an orderly classroom AND create warm, nurturing relationships with students. But it takes knowledge, reflection, planning, and practice. This interactive professional development program about effective classroom management techniques provides the tools to help you begin this process.

I urge you to take the opportunities the disk provides for practice and reflection. It may be tempting to focus on the seminars and skip over the case studies and the reflective journals. Don't.

Classroom management is not about memorizing a set of recipes or formulae.

Classroom management is about thoughtful planning and decision-making -- and the whole value of an interactive disk lies in opportunity it provides for these kinds of activities.

Let me tell you a little more about the contents and order of this disk. We have organized the four seminars in a sequence that makes sense to us: for example, the seminar on establishing classroom norms comes before the seminar on what to do when students violate those norms.

We suggest that you follow this sequence when using this disk as an instructional tool.

Later, if you want to review sections or use the program as a reference tool, you have the ability to move throughout the disk in any order you wish.

I want to make one more final comment. As you watch the seminar segments, complete the reflective journals, and analyze the case studies, keep in mind why it's important to become an effective classroom manager. Your goal is not to create order for order's sake; rather, it's to create a classroom environment in which learning and teaching can take place. Your job is to maximize your students' achievement and to help them become responsible, self-disciplined individuals.

INTRODUCTION 2

Pop quizzes, homework assignments... doesn't it sometimes seem like they'll never all be graded?

Actually, keeping up with paper work is relatively easy compared to the other daily challenges we have as teachers. Often, our best-laid lesson plans are pre-empted by unpredictable factors such as student behavior problems. It's easy to get frustrated and demoralized.

Sometimes, it helps to take a step back from the daily classroom routine and analyze how we manage our classrooms. Are there

strategies we could employ to make our teaching more effective and our classrooms more conducive to learning?

This program is designed to encourage us to give an objective look at our classroom management styles, and to help us find better ways to perform as teachers in our... most valued profession.

First, we will participate in four interactive seminars conducted by Dr. Carol Weinstein in which she will present findings from highly regarded research on classroom management strategies.

In addition we use a series of actual teacher case studies developed by Dr. Rita Silverman and colleagues to examine and discuss specific problems experienced in the classroom.

Using the material learned in the seminar we will interactively discuss and brainstorm viable solutions to these problems.

We will also be keeping a reflection journal as we progress through the program. This will be a place to record thoughts, ideas and questions raised by the presentations.

It will be helpful to discuss reflection journal ideas with peers and mentors who are also dealing with classroom management issues.

It will help us reflect on and digest the material presented in this program. It will also help to serve as a bridge from this CD-ROM to our own classrooms.

It will be helpful to discuss reflection journal ideas with peers and mentors who are also dealing with classroom management issues.

The goal of this program is to have the opportunity to study and learn how to expand and improve our own classroom management techniques, and apply them in our own classrooms. It is time now to turn to the reflection journal and answer some preliminary questions - So, let's begin.

SEMINAR 1:

Welcome to Seminar One – The Physical Environment of the Classroom. As teachers, we spend a lot of time thinking about what we'll teach and how we'll teach it. We plan lessons and units and reflect on the latest innovative instructional approaches, yet we often overlook one of the basic elements of a constructive learning environment - the design of the physical classroom space. This can be a serious oversight because, SPACE MATTERS, both directly and indirectly. Let's look at a couple of examples.

A secondary teacher - at the beginning of the year – envisions a classroom full of lively discussions among her students.

Yet when she arrives, the desks are set up in rows.

She leaves the desks in rows, and as the year progresses, she finds it difficult to engage her students in discussions as she had hoped.

Can you see how this might stifle interaction - desks in straight rows, students facing each other's backs, teacher front and center?

The design of the room may be directly hindering students' participation in discussion because they can't hear each other very well. It's also not comfortable talking to people's backs.

Indirectly, students may infer from the structure of the seating arrangement that they are not supposed to interact with each other, but only to the teacher who is in the front and center of the classroom.

Another example deals with an elementary school teacher who decides he doesn't want much interaction among his student. He's afraid they'll do too much socializing.

But, he arranges the desks in clusters of four because it seems like a more innovative arrangement.

Besides, that's the way other teachers at his school have their classrooms arranged.

Because his students are seated in such close proximity, they are in a position to interact easily.

The indirect or symbolic effect? Students assume it's OK to interact, since the teacher put them so close together.

The bottom-line? We as teachers have to think carefully about the physical environment of the classroom. In fact, research indicates that effective classroom managers plan spatial arrangements to support their instructional goals.

To do this, we need to

- ❑ be sensitive to the messages communicated to our students by the physical setting
- ❑ be able to evaluate the effectiveness of a classroom environment,
- ❑ be alert to times when a poor physical arrangement may be causing problems, and
- ❑ Be able and willing to modify the environment when and if the need arises.

So, what do we do in our own classrooms? We should plan an environment that supports our instructional goals. Let's look at some general principles that will help us in planning our classroom environment.

First, the physical environment of the classroom should support the tasks that will be carried out there.

We need to think carefully about what will be happening in our classrooms,

And design the space accordingly.

Will students be working alone at their desks on seatwork assignments?

Or will they work cooperatively on projects?

Will instruction be for the whole class from the chalkboard, or in small groups?

Will students be doing research with encyclopedias, in learning centers?

Or on computers?

For each task, we need to think about how we design the physical space.

Let's say I want to meet with a small reading group, I need to be near the chalkboard,

But I don't want to be distracting to students who are working independently.

Of course I need to be in a position where I can monitor the rest of the class, and still work with the smaller group. So what do I do? Sound like a familiar challenge?

Here are some of the guidelines for a sensitive, well thought-out physical classroom environment:

- Frequently used classroom materials are accessible to students at all times
- Shelves and storage areas are well organized so it's clear where materials and equipment belong.
- Pathways throughout the room, such as those to the pencil sharpener, water fountain or trash can, are designed to avoid congestion.

- Seating arrangements allow students a clear view of instructional presentations
- And, seating arrangements are consistent with the amount of contact among students desired {by the teacher}

We spend a lot of time in our classrooms, and we want them to be safe, comfortable, pleasurable places to be. This is especially important in a world where more and more of our students live in impoverished, unstable sometimes unsafe home environments.

The second principle...the physical environment of the classroom provides security and pleasure.

One way to enhance feelings of security and pleasure is to make sure our classroom contains some softness.

Many classrooms are great examples of “hard architecture”

Featuring materials such as linoleum, concrete, metal, wood and hard plastics.

But people feel more comfortable in more secure and comfortable environments,

With soft or responsive things to touch.

A soft classroom pet, a beanbag chair, comfortable pillows or cushions, carpet, and plants.

Warm colors also contribute to a comfortable environment...

...whether on a bulletin board, a mobile, or a banner on the wall.

I know, we often feel overworked and really aren't looking for anything else to take up our time. But a little time spent softening our classrooms, making them safe, comfortable places to be, will be well worth the time spent. And for some students, it may be the only safe place they have.

The third general principle recommends the physical environment provide information about the people who teach and learn there.

A personalized classroom reflects the interests, cultural backgrounds and activities of the students, as well as the teacher's values, preferences, and educational philosophy.

We who come here to learn and teach can make it our own by posting personal photographs, artwork, stories, and information about our countries of origin.

Try posting birthday charts, or bulletin boards for graffiti, be creative. Just tune in to the students and make it a personal learning environment for all.

And don't forget we have to personalize it for ourselves too.

This concludes our first seminar. Please go to your reflection journal now for some questions and discussion. Now's the time to explore how you can apply some of the general principles presented here to your physical classroom environment. After that, please join us for Seminar 2.

SEMINAR 2:

Hello. In Seminar 1, we examined the importance of planning the physical environment in a way that supports our instructional goals. Now we turn to our next topic, establishing and teaching rules and procedures.

Before the first student enters the classroom, the teacher should think about expectations for behavior.

When students enter the classroom in the morning, where do they go first?

Are they allowed to talk, or are they required to sit quietly?

How about handing out materials, collecting homework or issuing bathroom passes?

If a teacher's expectations about rules and procedures are not clearly defined and communicated to students, the result can be anything from class disruption to all out pandemonium.

In this seminar, we will discuss guidelines for establishing and teaching rules and procedures. As you will see, developing clear rules and procedures will help minimize confusion and prevent the loss of instructional time.

Rules and routines may vary from class to class, but without them, no class can function smoothly.

First we need to clarify what we mean by these terms.

Rules define general conduct: Most effective managers have 3-6 rules which describe the necessary behaviors for a healthy classroom environment.

Examples include "Respect others" and "Follow Directions."

Routines describe methods for carrying out specific tasks.

Examples of routines include: “Going to the restroom” and “Handing in homework.”

First let’s discuss rules. There are four principles to keep in mind when planning rules.

Principle number one... “Rules must be reasonable and necessary.”

Rules can only be effective if they are appropriate for the characteristics and ages of the students.

For instance, it’s unreasonable to ask kindergartners to sit quietly at their desks all day

Given the need young children have to move, this rule is inappropriate for the age of the children.

Likewise, it would be unreasonable for a teacher to expect her high school students to carry out their art projects without talking to each other.

Given adolescents’ natural need to socialize, this would only result in resentment and frustration, and would probably stifle their creative juices for the art projects. Again, an unrealistic expectation.

Why not establish a more sensible, age appropriate rule for interaction among the students in each of these examples, like, it’s OK to talk, but do so quietly.

This specifies how the talk is to occur, and lets the students know what the teacher’s expectation is.

Another consideration is whether the rule is really necessary. It’s important to examine each rule to make this determination. Is there a compelling reason for the rule? Do the students understand the rationale for it, and if so, do they accept it? Requiring students to be in class when the bell rings may be easier to justify than requiring that all tests be taken in black ink, which may seem arbitrary and silly.

Now for the second principle for establishing rules and regulations...
“Rules must be meaningful and understandable.”

For example, specifically, telling a second grade student to “Be Courteous” might not be as meaningful as spelling it out for them in terms of real behaviors they can understand, such as:

- Listen politely when someone is speaking
- Don't tease or call people names
- Always say please and thank you
- Keep hands and feet to yourself

At the secondary level, if the ground rule is “Always Be Prepared”, the teacher's definition of preparation for class needs to be clearly delineated.

Rules must be consistent with instructional goals and sensitive to how people learn. This is the third principle.

As classroom rules are developed, we need to think about whether they will facilitate or hinder the learning process. The need for order should not supersede the need for meaningful instruction. Here are some examples.

A second-grade teacher had a “no-erasures” rule in her class. Her reason? Erasing creates holes in the paper, making them messy and hard to read.

But the rule created a lot of anxiety for some of her students who became more fixated on not making mistakes, than on what they were writing.

The rule got in the way of their learning.

At the secondary level, some teachers prohibit talking during in-class assignments.

Although this may be necessary at times, research indicates that rather than eliminate interaction, teaching students how to interact appropriately facilitates learning.

The fourth and final principle in this seminar is: Classroom rules need to be consistent with school rules.

It is important that all teachers be familiar with their school's student handbook. Consult with office staff and other teachers concerning school rules, policies and procedures. Find out about behaviors expected during assemblies, in the cafeteria and library, and in hallways.

Reviewing the student handbook with the students is a good way to show students how the school rules align with classroom rules.

Now let's discuss planning routines for specific behavior. To make the process of thinking about routines easier, let's categorize the routines into three types: class-running routines, lesson-running routines and interaction routines. Let's look at class-running routines first.

Classroom-running routines are non-academic routines that enable teachers to keep the classroom running smoothly.

Class-running routines involve daily, mundane activities such as taking role, lining up for fire drills, sharpening pencils, cleaning lab tables, watering plants, maintaining storage of commonly used materials,

Many of these tasks can be assigned to students, freeing the teacher to focus on instruction.

The upside to developing a multi-task team approach to a class-running routine is, teachers have more time to teach,

And students learn to contribute to running the classroom.

Lesson-running routines describe what items students are to have on hand when a lesson begins,

How materials are to be distributed and collected, what kind of paper or writing instrument is to be used,

And what format should be followed for the assignment. These routines directly support instruction by specifying the behaviors that are necessary for teaching and learning to take place.

Pre-determining and communicating lesson-running routines eliminates unnecessary, time-consuming questions such as “how do I number the pages” or “what do I do if I finish early?” It lets students know precisely what behavior is expected of them to prepare for the lesson.

Finally, interaction routines are the rules for talk - talk between teachers and students,

And talk among students and themselves. These routines specify when talk is permitted, and how it is to occur.

We all have our own styles and comfort level when it comes to talking in class. Some teachers are comfortable allowing a certain amount of free interaction among students during seat work, free time, transitions, or when a visitor comes to speak to the teacher. Some prefer to “keep a lid on it” most of the time while in class. Whatever the talking policy, It’s important to communicate to students what’s expected of them when it comes to talking.

Interaction routines during whole class discussions are also a matter of individual style for teachers.

What is important is to make sure all students feel equally involved in class discussions.

Creating a subtle pattern for calling on students is one good way to assure equal participation.

Or, try putting names in a cup and drawing them out until everyone has had a chance to speak.

For some discussions, allowing students to respond chorally may work best.

Whatever the policy, establishing a sort of default setting for interaction routine in the classroom,

And then allowing some flexibility when it seems appropriate seems to work best.

During the first few days of school, if routines are introduced to the students - defining terms clearly,

Providing examples and giving rationale and expectations for each specific routine - students will know how to comply.

Reinforcement and re-teaching of routines may be required several times, but once they get it, things are bound to run more smoothly for all.

That's it for seminar #2. I hope the information presented here has been helpful. Remember, developing clear, concise classroom rules and routines helps set up a predictable, safe classroom environment where students understand how they are expected to behave – an environment where learning can take place and achievement is maximized.

Please go to your reflection journal now for some questions and discussion. Then, when you're ready, move on to Seminar 3, for an in depth discussion of setting up a positive classroom climate.

SEMINAR 3:

Welcome to Seminar 3 - Classroom Climate. Too often, teachers equate classroom management with rules and procedures, rewards and penalties, order and control. But classroom management is more than that.

It's about creating an environment:

- Where people treat each other with courtesy and respect;
- Where students follow rules, not out of fear, but because they feel ownership for them;
- Where the teacher's goal is not so much to control students' behavior, but to create opportunities for students to develop and exercise control over their own behavior.

This can be a daunting task. Especially for secondary teachers who meet with several different classes a day.

And yet, we all know teachers who have been masterful at creating this kind of environment.

How do they do it?

In this seminar, we will examine four approaches to creating a warm, respectful classroom climate.

The first approach focuses on establishing a positive relationship with each student.

Second, we'll examine the teaching of social skills, such as listening, encouraging, sharing and solving conflicts.

Third, we'll discuss the importance of encouraging students to support one another's learning by providing opportunities for peer assistance and cooperative activities.

Finally, we'll discuss strategies for sharing responsibility with students, based on the premise that those empowered to make decisions about their own behavior will be more committed to acting responsibly.

It's always difficult to get everyone to agree on a comfortable temperature in the classroom. It seems like somebody's always too hot or too cold. And, in most classrooms, we have no individual control over the thermostat anyway.

But, as Dr. Weinstein suggests, we can have control over our classroom climate in another more important way.

Our primary goal is creating a desirable classroom climate in which everyone is comfortable.

We begin by establishing a positive relationship with each student from the beginning of the school year...

...showing them you respect and care about them as individuals, and giving them some insight into who you are as a person.

How do we show students we respect and care for them?

Research shows that conveying individual concerns from the beginning of the teacher-student relationship is key...

greeting students at the door,

working hard to learn and pronounce their names,

being sensitive to students anxieties and needs

And showing interest in who they are as people.

For instance, planning a "getting to know you" activity the first day is a good way to break the ice.

Let's move on to the next approach... Teaching Social Skills.

We often complain that students are not learning courtesy, civility and self-control at home.

They put one another down, use racial and ethnic slurs, and ridicule those who are different or defenseless...

And when they become angry, they strike out instead of trying to solve conflicts constructively and peacefully.

Our tendency is to blame lack of training at home for these problems, but that won't help to create a harmonious classroom environment.

Let's face it, if students aren't learning interpersonal skills at home, we can help by teaching social values and skills at school.

The trick is to find the time and mechanism to teach these basic social skills and still have time to teach the course work we were hired to teach.

One researcher found some teachers were teaching basic social skills to their students, but were poor models themselves... showing favoritism to certain students, not listening well, and generally being disrespectful of students.

Teachers who model the social behavior they teach are successful in teaching values to their students, teaching respect by being respectful, and in the process, earning the respect of their students.

In addition to modeling positive social values and behaviors, teachers need to teach social skills directly.

Here is a chart that might be helpful in direct teaching of this particular skill This T-chart gives students some specific examples of the desired behavior, in THEIR language

Providing opportunities to learn and work together.

"We're all in this together." We've all heard that expression, but how often do we apply it to our teaching strategies? Let's explore how teaching students to work together positively affects our classroom climate.

If we can communicate to our students the importance of helping and supporting each other in the classroom, we will have taught them an important life skill.

Getting away from the “Me against you” competitiveness in the classroom

And moving toward the “working together” model brings us closer to creating a caring classroom community.

Collaborative learning activities have numerous academic benefits, as well as opportunities for social payoffs.

When students work in heterogeneous groups, they can develop relationships across gender, racial, and ethnic boundaries, as well as integrating students with disabilities.

These “differences” fall into the background of the students’ consciousness as they become more focused on the work they are doing together.

An added benefit is that students become concerned about the success of their peers as well as with their own success.

Now, getting your students to succeed at this may not be easy at first. Successful group work will not just happen. We must plan the groups and tasks carefully, teach students the rules and procedures, and provide opportunities for them to practice behaviors conducive to working in a group.

Otherwise, the group may disintegrate into arguing or socializing instead of being on task.

And, as is natural in any group, some students may dominate the activity while others sit by passively uninvolved.

If you are trying this group work for the first time, keep the following general principles in mind:

- Keep groups small
- Think carefully about who works with whom

- Keep tasks and format simple
- Teach students rules and routines for working together

Go slow, take it one step at a time, continue to learn more about the group learning process, and the benefits will gradually become apparent. For more information on this topic, consult the text files in this program.

Sharing responsibilities with students is the final approach to creating a positive classroom climate.

No one likes to feel controlled or manipulated. Furthermore, if we want kids to be responsible, we must give them opportunities to act responsibly, and teach them how to do it.

School is an appropriate setting teaching students how to be responsible for their own behavior. If we empower them to take responsibility for seeing that classroom norms are enforced, they will feel a sense of ownership of that environment.... Another way of achieving that sense of community we've been talking about.

In addition to deciding about rules and procedures at the beginning of the year,

Students can help determine the lay out of the classroom, how the chairs or desks should be arranged and where they are to sit.

Students may enjoy giving input into the daily schedule,

Or, choosing which assignments they will do in class and which they will do as homework.

They may be able to decide whether to work alone or with a partner on a particular assignment, or even determine what the assignment will be,

Students can help in choosing which novel they will read, the topic they will write about,

Or which medium of communication they will use to present a report.... A traditional written report, a poster, or maybe even a video.

Research indicates that students who are given the opportunity to exercise judgment and make some of their own decisions,

Exhibit greater independence, self-control and socially responsible behavior.

This concludes seminar 3. Please go to your reflection journal now for questions and discussion. It's time to investigate how you can apply some of the ideas we've explored here to enhance your classroom climate. After that, please join us for Seminar 4.

SEMINAR 4:

In the first three seminars on this disk, we've focused on the proactive strategies that teachers can use to prevent misbehavior:

- carefully designing the physical environment of the classroom,
- developing and teaching rules and routines, and
- creating a caring, respectful classroom climate.

But let's face it: No matter how hard teachers work to prevent problems, sooner or later, someone will do something that you find inappropriate and unacceptable.

And then what? What do you do when prevention fails? In this seminar, we examine a variety of strategies for dealing with misbehavior.

First, let's consider four principles that guide our discussion.

Principle number one - keep the instructional program going with a minimum of disruption. Our main job is to teach, and we can't do that if students' behavior is distracting or disruptive.

But sometimes, teachers' disciplinary interventions are so loud, intrusive, and longwinded that they waste more time than the initial problem!

In order to avoid this situation, we need to anticipate potential problems and head them off; if it is necessary to intervene, be as unobtrusive as possible so that teaching and learning are not interrupted.

Second, remember that whether or not a particular action constitutes misbehavior depends on the context in which it occurs. There are obvious exceptions --punching another student and stealing property are obviously unacceptable no matter where or when they occur.

But other behaviors are not so clear cut. For example, in some classes, wearing a hat and sitting on your desk are perfectly acceptable; in others, they're not.

When defining misbehavior, we must ask ourselves these questions: Is this behavior disrupting the ongoing instructional activity?

Is it hurtful to other students?

Does it violate established rules?

If the answer to these questions is no, it may be unnecessary to intervene.

Third, disciplinary strategies must preserve students' dignity. . Students will go to extreme lengths to save face in front of their peers--especially at the upper grades. For this reason, try to avoid public power struggles that may cause students to be embarrassed or humiliated.

Speak with misbehaving students calmly and quietly, even privately, if possible.

Take care to separate students' character from their behavior; instead of "You're lazy," say, "You haven't done the last two homework assignments."

Give students an opportunity to assume some responsibility for correcting their own behavior.

Finally, our fourth principle stresses the importance of making sure that a disciplinary strategy matches the misbehavior that we are trying to eliminate.

We wouldn't give a lengthy detention for whispering, just as we wouldn't merely express mild disappointment if a student rips up a peer's notebook.

In order to make sure that the "punishment fits the crime," use a hierarchy of consequences--a set of responses that build in terms of

seriousness and severity. Then choose a consequence that is appropriate for the severity of the misbehavior.

Let's turn now to some actual strategies that can be used when students behave in ways considered unacceptable. Keeping in mind the hierarchy of consequences, we'll consider first some unobtrusive, mild consequences for minor misbehavior.

Minor misbehavior can often be “nipped in the bud” before it becomes a problem. One proactive measure is to circulate the room, using proximity to get students back on task.

Often giving “the look” while moving closer to the student is all that is needed for minor misbehavior. Many teachers also make use of facial expressions, eye contact or hand signals.

Sometimes, verbal interventions are necessary, such as directing the student to the task at hand.

Or if the misbehavior occurs while a group discussion or recitation is going on, calling on a student to answer a question may draw him back in.

For older students, it is sometimes more effective to use a nondirective verbal intervention.

This allows for prompting the appropriate behavior, while leaving the student who is misbehaving the responsibility for figuring out what to do.

Often, simply saying the student's name might be enough to get the student back on task.

Using “I” messages is another way to verbally prompt appropriate behavior without giving a direct command. “I” messages contain three components. First, the teacher describes the unacceptable behavior in a nonblaming, nonjudgmental way.

[“When people talk while I’m giving directions . . .”]

The second component describes the tangible effect on the teacher: ["I have to repeat the directions and that wastes time.

Finally, the third part of the message states the teacher's feelings about the tangible effect: [and I get frustrated."]

"I" messages foster and preserve a positive relationship between people. They instill a sense of self-responsibility and autonomy. Because "I" messages don't put students on the defensive, students may be more willing to change their behavior.

At times, it may be appropriate to ignore the misbehavior if intervention is going to obstruct the lesson flow. For example, during a discussion a student may be so eager to comment that she forgets to raise her hand;

Or someone becomes momentarily distracted and inattentive; or two students quietly exchange a comment while the teacher is giving directions.

In cases like these, an intervention can be more disruptive than the students' behavior.

Be cautious when using this strategy. Ignoring minor misbehavior may indicate to students that the teacher is unaware of what is going on.

Just keep in mind the main goal. That is to deal with misbehavior in the least disruptive way possible.

When nonverbal cues or verbal reminders are not enough, teachers may find it necessary to impose a penalty or consequence.

Many effective classroom managers discuss penalties when rules and procedures are taught so students understand from the start the consequences of violating a rule.

The selection of penalties will vary according to grade level. Generally teachers' penalties fall into categories.

Loss of privileges

Exclusion from the group

Written reflections on the problem

Detentions

Private conferences

Visits to the principal's office

Contacting families

Whenever possible, penalties should logically relate to the misbehavior. Consider the example of a student who calls out during class discussion when the rule requires her to raise her hand.

Instead of giving her an F for the day, a more suitable consequence would be to not allow her to participate in the discussion. Or, suggest that she self-monitor by having a cue-card posted on her desk reading, "I won't call out."

Keep in mind these other important tips when imposing penalties.

First, in a highly emotional situation, delay discussion until neither the teacher nor student is angry.

Secondly, impose penalties privately, calmly, and quietly. Many effective classroom managers involve the student when imposing penalties. This helps to show the student he is responsible for his own behavior.

Finally, after imposing a penalty, it is a good idea to get back to the student and reestablish a positive relationship.

So many times, educators' time is diverted to the few who have problems of misbehavior and those who follow the rules and routines are sometimes ignored. That is why we should consider strategies of

positive reinforcement for those many students who consistently follow the rules.

Teachers should intentionally plan to recognize these students in positive ways. This will help to reinforce the value of following classroom rules and routines. Some easy ways to show appreciation of good student behavior and performance include:

- A personal comment
- A written note
- A positive phone call home

There are times when we have to acknowledge that an individual's problem is so deeply rooted that interventions discussed throughout this seminar just don't work.

In that case, seek assistance through a guidance counselor or school mediator.

In most cases, though, effective teachers can use these strategies to deal effectively with misbehavior that occurs in the classroom. This will help to maintain a productive learning environment –
A learning environment where high expectations for classroom behavior and performance lead to increased student achievement gains - for every student.

This concludes seminar 4. Please go to your reflection journal now for questions and discussion. It's time to explore how to apply some of these ideas into our own classrooms. After that, please proceed to the case studies.