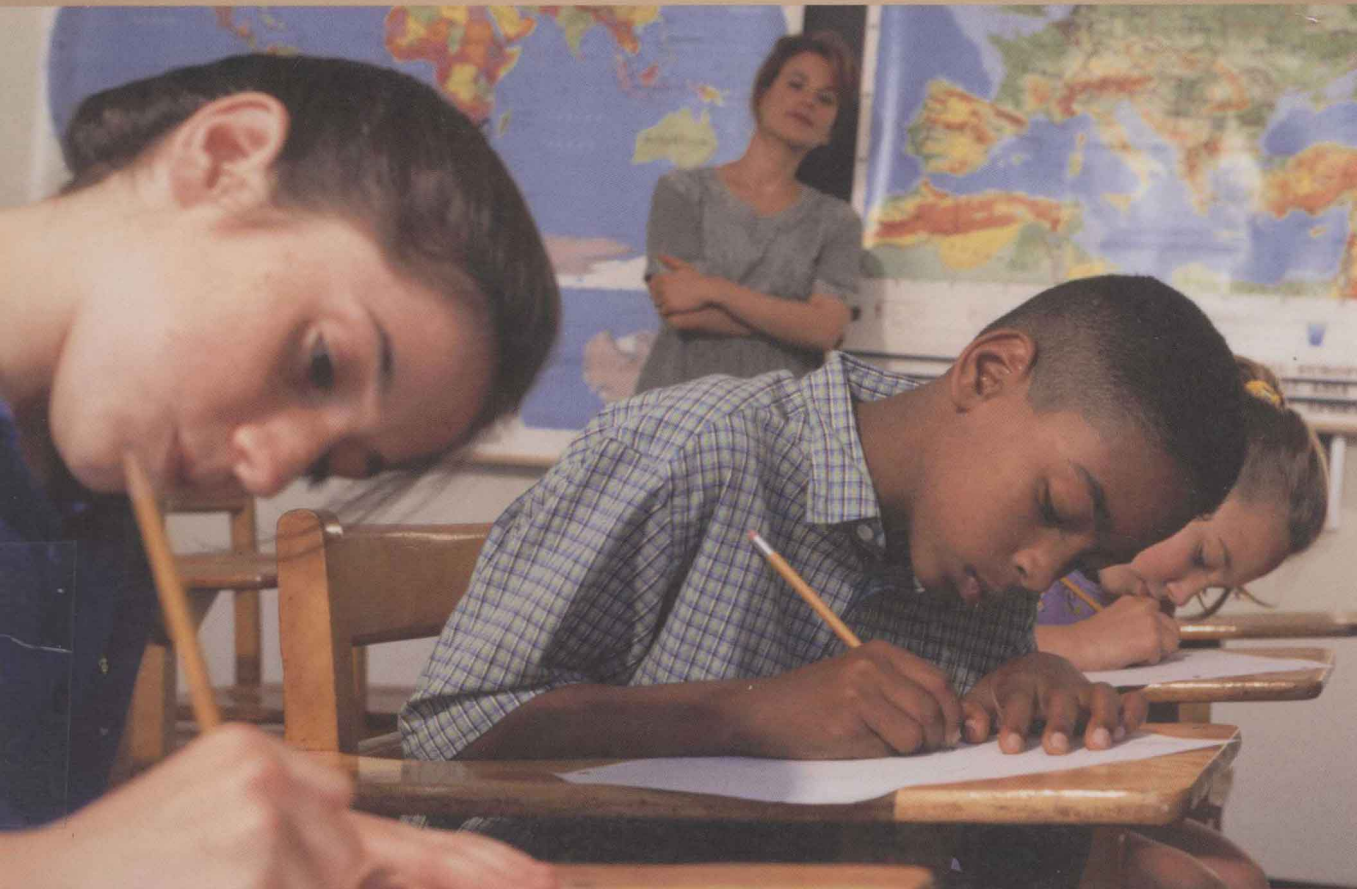


Successful
**CLASSROOM
MANAGEMENT *and*
DISCIPLINE** Teaching Self-Control
and Responsibility

3rd
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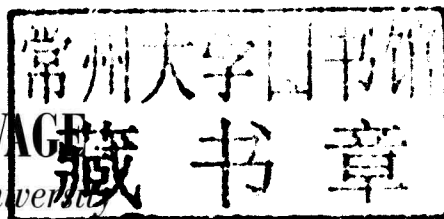
TOM V. SAVAGE ■ MARSHA K. SAVAGE



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PREFACE

We are living in a historic time in education. There is widespread concern about the quality of education, and there is no shortage of proposals for change. However, these proposals often neglect some of the most important educational variables. The first variable is the students. Students are humans with real needs and aspirations. If their needs are not taken into account, significant improvement is unlikely. A second variable is the purpose of education. Many proposals for educational improvement focus on how to get more content into the heads of students so they will do better on standardized tests of achievement. This focus ignores the historic thrust of American education to prepare individuals for productive roles in society. It has long been recognized that knowledge alone does not produce productive citizens.

This edition of *Successful Classroom Management and Discipline* focuses on two perspectives. First, we believe that there is an educational goal for classroom management and discipline that goes beyond facilitating content learning. That goal is the development of self-control. We believe that development of self-control is one of the most important educational objectives. If members of society do not have self-control, society is in grave trouble. Understanding that management and discipline has a goal of self-control assists educators in making decisions about how to manage classrooms and respond to problems. If students are not developing self-control as the school year unfolds, then the management and discipline plan is not working.

Helping individuals develop self-control as well as achieving educational objectives requires that the needs of students be taken into account. No two students are the same, so a single approach to all problems simply will not work. In this edition, we have provided some basic principles as well as a number of options that can be chosen in managing the classroom and responding to problems. The effectiveness of these options is related to the needs of the students and the values and beliefs of the teacher.

We believe that the two dimensions of management and discipline are related. Management is defined as developing an environment that takes into account

individual needs in a way that facilitates their learning and the development of self-control. This dimension is the preventive dimension. Many problems are prevented through the implementation of effective management principles. Discipline is the response to behavioral problems. Because students are human, they will misbehave. Effective discipline respects the dignity of students and helps them learn from their mistakes.

In this edition, we have included some additional content. Bullying has become a major international concern. Clearly, bullying can have adverse consequences for both those who are bullied and for those who bully. It is time that educators recognize that bullying is not just harmless acts that are a part of growing up. We all need to take action to prevent bullying and create an environment where bullying is neither reinforced nor tolerated.

Another new chapter focuses on the legal issues relating to management and discipline. Unfortunately, many teachers are unaware of the legal principles that guide decisions about teacher and student rights. Ignorance of these principles can be personally and professionally devastating for teachers. Therefore, we believe that it is important for teachers to understand this important dimension of being a professional educator.

Together, we have several decades of experience in both elementary and secondary schools. We have observed the tragedy that occurs when teachers do not understand how to manage the classroom and respond to misbehavior. On the other hand, we have observed the pleasure that can accompany positive and well-managed classrooms. We believe that this ability can be learned, and that there are some principles and skills that can be used to achieve success. We have attempted to present those principles and perspectives in this edition with the hope that more educators can experience the joy and excitement that accompanies a successful classroom.

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Chapter 1

MANAGING THE CONTEMPORARY CLASSROOM

CLASSROOM SCENARIO

It was the first day of teaching for Merrill. He had completed student teaching and had been employed to teach middle school social studies. He was eager to start even though his head was swimming with all the information that had been given at the new teacher orientation sessions. He didn't know there was so much that a teacher had to think about. Last week, he had met the faculty of the school at the beginning-of-the-year faculty meeting. The principal distributed another set of procedures that needed to be followed for everything from ordering materials to contacting parents. These were certainly not things he had learned in student teaching.

He had not slept very well last night, worrying about whether he had all the material he needed to begin and whether he remembered all the things that had to be done the first day. What was he supposed to do if someone was not on his class roster? He had arrived at the school in what he thought was plenty of time. However, distractions started the minute he went to the faculty mailboxes. The school secretary reminded him that he had some forms to complete and another teacher asked him about serving on a committee.

He made his way to the classroom and made sure he had a class roster for each of the classes he was teaching. He quickly checked to make sure he had enough books. He organized the material he needed for the first lesson, and suddenly, the bell rang! Students immediately started entering the classroom. Some were boisterous, some were quiet. A couple of the girls smiled at him. Others were shy and avoided his eyes. He noticed one boy with a sullen look on his face who sank into a desk at the back of

the room. A couple of students were shoving each other and joking around. Then, they were all sitting at their desks and 35 sets of eyes were looking at him expectantly. He knew he needed to do something to get the first day started. However, his mind was blank. He could feel his pulse quicken and his anxiety start to rise. There was no one else to help him or get things started. With a growing sense of panic, he started talking about the first things that came to mind. "I'm Mr. Johnson and I have a dog."



CHAPTER OBJECTIVES

After completing this chapter you should be able to:

- State the importance of good management and discipline
 - Define management and discipline
 - Identify the primary goal of management and discipline
 - Define teacher attitudes that are important in establishing a successful classroom
 - State the elements of classrooms that make them complex environments
 - Define basic principles or recurring themes that should be applied to establishing successful management and discipline in the classroom
-

Teaching can be an exciting and rewarding profession. There is no greater feeling than the satisfaction of helping students grow and learn. It is rewarding to see their eyes light up when a concept is understood and the door of comprehension opens. Teaching is also exciting because every day is different. Each student is unique, and each class of students is different. Because of this, every lesson is a new experience. Those who like variety and the challenge of working with impressionable and excitable young people find teaching exciting and rewarding. As one teacher stated, "I can't believe I'm paid to do this!"

However, teaching can also be frustrating and discouraging. Every year, thousands of new teachers enter teaching only to become discouraged and stressed. They soon leave for other occupations. For them, teaching did not meet their expectations, and they felt unfulfilled and even threatened. Some of these teachers find students who are unmotivated, apathetic, and maybe downright hostile. One teacher wrote a letter to the editor of a local newspaper in response to an article on

the teacher shortage. She indicated that she had found students bored and apathetic. Some acted as if they hated her and were hostile. There simply was not enough time to deal with 30 students five periods a day. Teaching was not the noble profession she was expecting, so she chose to “leave the battle of teaching.” Indeed, for some, the classroom is a battlefield where it seems there is constant conflict and teachers suffer emotional disturbances close to what has been labeled “battle fatigue.”

What makes the difference? Are there actions teachers can take to create successful classrooms where both students and teachers want to be? While there are individual challenges resulting from the wide range of education settings across the nation, we believe there are actions teachers can take to help them move toward the goal of a successful and rewarding teaching experience.

As we reflect on Merrill in the opening scenario, we wonder which path his career will take. Will it be rewarding and personally satisfying or will it be threatening and unfulfilling? Is there anything he can do to influence the direction of his career? We believe there is.

Years of experience, as well as summaries of research, indicate that one of the key components in achieving a successful and productive classroom is management and discipline. Experienced teachers identify the establishment of good management and discipline as one of the major goals that needs to be accomplished in the first weeks of the year. Beginning teachers cite management and discipline as one of their most serious challenges. School administrators indicate poor management and discipline is a major reason for low evaluations as well as a primary reason why teachers are not rehired (Good & Brophy, 2003). They note that if teachers cannot manage the classroom and exercise control, learning cannot take place. Surveys of public attitudes toward education indicate that the public views student discipline as one of the most serious problems facing education.

Effective management and discipline are crucial to teachers' sense of satisfaction and well-being. Management and discipline problems lead to increased teacher reports of stress and anxiety (Good & Brophy, 2003). The inability to resolve the challenges posed by these anxieties is a major cause of job dissatisfaction and teacher burnout (Evertson & Weinstein, 2006). Many of these teachers eventually leave teaching. However, the more tragic story might be those who stay on in the classroom because they feel trapped. Their continued presence does harm to themselves and to the students they teach.

Given the importance of management and discipline, one might expect that the management and discipline domain would receive considerable attention in teacher preparation programs and in research. However, this is not the case.

Classroom management and discipline tends to receive minor emphasis in teacher preparation programs. For example, one survey found that only 37% of education professors thought that it was absolutely essential to prepare teachers to handle management and discipline problems in the classroom (Farkas & Johnson, 1997). What explains this neglect?

One major reason is that management and discipline has been poorly defined. Although there are numerous books and articles that contain tips and insights, few have attempted to clearly define the management and discipline domain in a systematic way. As a result, many higher education professors view management and discipline as little more than the passing on of “conventional wisdom and myths.” Lacking a clearly defined field of study, and with an absence of solid evidence, many professors have little to say other than “This is what I did” (Good & Brophy, 2003).

Some examples of the simplistic conventional wisdom and myths include advice to “love and trust” the students and the problems will disappear. Others urge students of teaching to be “tough,” “show the students you are the boss,” and “don’t smile until Christmas.” These myths have great appeal to many because they have an element of reality and appear to be believable. For example, teachers who do enjoy and respect students have fewer problems than those who do not, and it is important to establish teacher authority in the classroom. However, these well-intentioned bits of advice certainly do not address the complexity of the classroom environment or provide guidance for identifying why things go wrong and what can be done about it. Even those who really like students discover that students still may not respond in desired ways. Those who attempt to be tough discover that they are engaged in constant power struggles with students. Table 1.1 lists some conventional wisdom that is often provided to new teachers.

Although some of the conventional wisdom contains excellent advice, it needs to be submitted to critical appraisal. It is only then that these bits of advice can be

Table 1.1 Conventional Wisdom About Management and Discipline

-
- Just communicate to the students that you care about them. That will prevent problems.
 - Keep the students busy so that they do not have time to misbehave.
 - Start the first day by showing them that you are the boss and you will not tolerate inappropriate behavior.
 - Don’t smile until Christmas.
 - Remember that you are the teacher, not a friend.
 - Overplan and overprepare. Avoid times when students have nothing to do.
 - Begin the first day by establishing the rules and regulations. Keep your rules simple and focus on what they should be doing rather than what they should not be doing.
 - Be consistent and follow through. Do what you say you will do.
 - Be assertive from the first day and let them know you expect to be treated with respect.
-

put into a proper perspective and become useful in actually managing a classroom. The sobering fact is that there is no “quick fix” to management and discipline problems. If there were, this would not be such a source of frustration for beginning and seasoned educators alike.

Another contributing factor in the lack of emphasis on management and discipline has been the view that success in management and discipline is basically related to the personality of the teacher and therefore cannot be taught. Again, there is an element of reality to this perception. For, example, Hoover and Kindsvetter (1997) claim that teacher personality is probably the most important factor in determining success in classroom management and discipline. Some individuals do have personality variables that predispose them to work with students in ways that facilitate success. However, although certain personality traits may be useful, they are not the whole story. A number of variables help all teachers achieve success, even those who possess undesirable personality traits.

A third perception that has hindered the development of a systematic and realistic approach to management and discipline is the view that learning to control the classroom can be learned only through experience and the school of “hard knocks.” Although experience is important and does make a difference, this view condemns many teachers to failure while the lessons of “experience” are learned. In addition, experience is much more effective when there is a framework within which that experience can be placed and interpreted.

This text will provide a framework for the management and discipline domain. This framework can help teachers identify the relationship between different dimensions that can be addressed in creating a successful and rewarding classroom.

This framework includes two major components: (a) the prevention of problems and (b) responses when problems do occur. Research indicates that one of the key variables in successful classrooms is an emphasis on preventive, rather than reactive, management techniques (Emmer & Stough, 2001). Many new teachers want to know what they should do when faced with a problem, but they would be better served to consider what to do to prevent the problem in the first place. However, even with the best prevention, problems will occur in the classroom because students (and teachers) are simply imperfect human beings who sometimes make poor choices.

DEFINING MANAGEMENT AND DISCIPLINE

Over the years, teachers have attached different definitions to the terms *management* and *discipline*. What you view as appropriate practice is related to how you define

Schools are complex and diverse environments.



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these two terms. To give us some common ground for discussion throughout the book, we offer the following definitions. These can assist us in our recommendations for professional practice.

Management

Management refers to your role as a teacher in creating a classroom environment where success is possible. It refers to how order is established and maintained in the classroom. Bringing order to complex classrooms includes arranging the physical environment, organizing lessons that have a logical flow, making productive use of time, motivating students to strive toward educational goals, and establishing teacher leadership and authority.

Classroom management is the prevention dimension. Attending to good principles of classroom management helps prevent many problems. Some teachers, when asked about discipline problems in their classroom, respond that they have few discipline problems. This is generally an indication that the teacher has applied good classroom management techniques.