Chapter 14

Prevention and Management of Behavior Problems in Secondary Schools

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INTRODUCTION

Secondary educators often express concerns about student discipline. Unfortunately, there is a paucity of empirically validated procedures for effective management of students’ behavior in secondary classrooms. Disciplinary procedures employed at middle and high school levels seem to primarily consist of reactive administrative interventions, such as removal of problem students, rather than proactive educational and behavioral procedures.

Suspension and detention have commonly been identified as the most frequent form of discipline used in secondary schools (Skiba, Peterson, & Williams, 1997; Uchitelle, Bartz, & Hillman, 1989). Unfortunately, such exclusionary discipline methods have not been found to improve school outcomes, and may even have negative consequences on students, such as lost learning time in the classroom and increased risk of school dropout (Eckstrom, Goertz, Pollack, & Rock, 1986; Wehlage & Rutter, 1986). Also, the amendments to the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) passed in 1997 have greatly restricted the extent to which schools may use suspension or expulsion with students who have Individual Educational Plans (IEPs) (Yell, 1998). Suspension or expulsion would be viewed as a change in placement—and must be approved by an IEP team. Students on IEPs may not be out of placement for more than 10 days during an entire school year. Furthermore, the team must verify that the reason a student has been suspended or expelled is not a manifestation of the student’s disability (Hartwig & Ruesch, 2000).
We believe that the use of effective instructional and classroom management practices can prevent many disciplinary problems that occur in secondary classrooms and significantly decrease the use of exclusionary discipline methods. This chapter reviews these management strategies, which can be employed by secondary classroom teachers. Some of the techniques described are documented in the research literature, some are extrapolations from research in the elementary grades, and some are based on the experiences of the authors.

Creating a Successful School Climate

There are many risk factors that may adversely affect a child’s behavior in school, some of which are substance abuse, crisis situations, dysfunctional family life, and physiological problems. However, in spite of these external risk factors, school may, in fact, be a protective factor and make a difference in a child’s social development. In studying high school students’ perceptions of the impact of social versus school factors on their motivation to be successful, researchers at the Center for Research on the Context of Secondary School Teaching (CRC) have noted:

Of most importance to practitioner and policy makers is the fact that many of the forces students mention are not objective constraints but factors under the control of teachers and principals. Furthermore, these young people present a view of themselves that may be surprising to those who are convinced that the plethora of social problems precludes effective responses through school improvement efforts. We find that despite negative outside influences, students from all achievement levels and sociocultural backgrounds want to succeed and want to be in an environment in which it is possible to do so. (Phelan, Davidson, & Cao, 1992, p. 696)

The overarching policies and climate of the school can serve as a powerful antecedent, prompting either responsible or irresponsible student behavior (Sprick, Garrison, & Howard, 1998; Sprick, Sprick & Garrison, 1992). Some of the factors at a schoolwide level that have an impact on student behavior include (a) clearly defined expectations for academic and social behavior, (b) direct instruction of expectations, (c) effective staff supervision of common areas, (d) clearly defined procedures for responding to misbehavior, (e) procedures for providing age-appropriate positive feedback, and (f) effective classroom organization and management (Sprick, Howard, Wise, Marcum, & Haykin, 1998; Sprick et al., 1992; Sugai & Horner, 1999). Because school personnel have more control over their own management practices than they do over the child’s home life or physiology, it is our position that management of behavioral contingencies should always be one of the first interventions implemented to help a child improve his or her behavior. This position was emphasized in a recent article by the Committee on Preventative Psychiatry (1999) in which the authors stated, “... good schools, foster-
ing academic success, responsibility, and self-discipline are associated with diminished risk for conduct disorders” (p. 238). This chapter will examine those classroom procedures that have a high probability of improving student behavior in secondary settings.

**The Role of the School Psychologist**

The procedures presented in this chapter are based on the premise that school psychologists can function (in a consultative role) as a resource to general education secondary teachers to intervene with discipline-related problems before a referral for special services becomes necessary. A major advantage that accrues when school psychologists assume a proactive role as a first step in problem solving is that teachers may be more receptive to intervention suggestions if the problem has not been occurring over a long period of time. To be most effective, the school psychologist must cultivate a relationship with teachers in which he or she is viewed as a nonthreatening resource person rather than a gatekeeper whose primary role is to facilitate removal of problem students from the classroom (Sprick & Garrison, 1993).

In developing this collaborative relationship, the psychologist may be involved in classroom observations, student progress monitoring, intervention planning with staff, and in-service teacher training. Fundamental to the relationship is the establishment of the school psychologist’s credibility as someone who has skills and expertise to offer teachers in the design of secondary classroom interventions. Hence, school psychologists need to know about procedures that contribute to effective instruction and classroom management at the secondary level. The goal of this chapter is to provide school psychologists with some of this precise information. Other chapters in this volume (e.g., Schumaker, Deschler, & McKnight; Higgins, Boone, & Lovitt) offer additional critical information.

This chapter has three sections. The first section presents strategies for managing classrooms to prevent misbehavior. The second presents strategies for reducing unacceptable behaviors and increasing desired behaviors. These first two sections consist of procedures that are to be implemented by the classroom teacher; it is assumed that the psychologist is serving as a consultant in helping a teacher implement these procedures. The final section presents a variety of strategies that can be implemented by either the teacher or the psychologist in working with individual students with chronic problems.

**PREVENTING MISBEHAVIOR**

A key to effective behavior management at the secondary level is preventing problems before they have a chance to start. The most effective management techniques involve “not merely responding effectively when problems occur but preventing problems from occurring frequently” (Brophy & Evertson, 1983, p. 263). Effective managers know how they want each activity in the classroom to look, and they spend time teaching students to behave in appropriate ways (Darch, Miller, & Shippen, 1998; Emmer & Evertson, 1996; Jones & Jones, 1998; Sprick, 1985; Sprick, Garrison, &
Critical features of these skills include (a) rules and behavioral expectations, (b) routines and habits, (c) scanning, (d) scheduling, (e) student involvement in the lesson, and (f) effective evaluation and grading policies, which are discussed below.

**Rules and Behavioral Expectations**

The expectations a teacher has regarding students’ possibilities for success can have a significant effect on student learning. Good (1987) summarizes two types of teacher expectations. The first is self-fulfilling prophecy: A teacher’s beliefs about students’ performance, in fact, influence that performance in a direction consistent with the teacher’s beliefs. The second type is referred to as sustaining expectations: A teacher fails to see some students’ potential and thus does not respond to those students in ways that would encourage them to fulfill their potential. Given these potential effects of teachers’ expectations, teachers must strive to view every student as capable. More important, teachers must behave in a manner that clearly communicates expectations of good performance as well as behavior.

Classroom rules can effectively communicate to students that teachers have specific expectations about student behavior (Emmer & Evertson, 1996). Although high school teachers may not wish to post rules in a prominent place, as may be the practice in lower grades, rules can nevertheless be communicated in a “get acquainted” letter handed to students at the beginning of each year or quarter or through frequent class discussions or as part of a class syllabus.

In general, positively stated rules have advantages over negatively stated rules. Positively stated rules (e.g., “Arrive on time with all materials,” “Stay on task”) communicate a positive expectation and let students know what is important to the teacher. When presented to students, a set of positively stated rules allows teachers to conduct an invitational optimistic discussion regarding classroom behavior. Negatively stated rules (e.g., “Don’t talk to your neighbor,” “No cheating”) insinuate an expectation of inappropriate behavior, and may even invite some of the students to challenge the rules. Also, a long list of negatively stated rules may force the teacher to spend valuable instructional time policing all the misbehaviors listed in the rules.

In most cases, the teacher can get by with three to eight rules. It is possible that a few of these may be negatively stated for the sake of clarity. For example, the rule, “No food or drink in the computer room” is clear and communicates important information.

Many people like to involve the students in the development of the rules, but this practice may be very difficult for a teacher with six different classes of students. At the secondary level, the best way to involve the students is to get them into a discussion of why the rules are important and how the rules relate to success in the subject of the class.

While positively stated rules are generally more desirable than negative ones, a disadvantage with the use of positive rules is that they are more broad and general than a list of “don’ts”. For example, the positively stated rule, “Students are expected to make appropriate contributions to class discussions,” is more general than the negatively stated rule, “No talking without raising your hand.” Consequently, the teachers need to
spend time in the first week of a semester teaching students how the positively stated rules relate to the specific procedures and routines in the classroom.

To communicate how the rules relate to specific classroom procedures, teachers first must know exactly how they expect classes of students to behave during every activity and then successfully communicate this information to their students. Teachers who are unclear about their expectations for student behavior will be inconsistent in their interactions with students (Evertson & Emmer, 1982). For example, the teacher may sometimes expect students to raise their hands to speak in class and at other times the teacher may not follow this expectation and respond to call-outs; or a teacher may sometimes allow students to talk during independent work periods and other times become angry with them for doing so. Secondary classroom teachers need to be unequivocal about (a) what students should do when they enter the room before the bell rings; (b) where students should go and what they should have with them at the beginning of class; (c) what students should be doing during the time the teacher is taking attendance or dealing with other administrative duties; and (d) how students are expected to behave in a variety of situations—such as lectures, discussions, independent work periods, films, and so on. A school psychologist working with a teacher who is experiencing difficulty managing student behavior could start by assisting the teacher in clarifying expectations for student behavior during each activity.

When teachers know how each activity and corresponding student behavior should look, they can communicate this information to students. A faulty assumption made by some teachers is that students in the secondary grades automatically know how to behave in every classroom setting. These teachers do not recognize that each teacher is slightly different in the way he or she conducts class and expects students to behave. In the absence of explicitly communicated expectations, students are forced to guess how each teacher wants them to act.

Teaching clear rules and expectations allows teachers to start their classroom off positively. Evertson and Emmer (1982) found that teacher behavior and classroom management during the first weeks of the school year are instrumental in determining the tone of a classroom for the remainder of the year. Teachers should enter the classroom on the first day of school with a clear plan so that they can quickly establish a consistent routine and a clear understanding of rules, behavioral expectations, and consequences among their students.

Teaching students to behave appropriately requires that the teacher discuss and clarify specific expectations for part of the class period throughout the entire first week of each new semester (Darch et al., 1998). Presenting all of this information only one time when going over the classroom rules on the first day may overwhelm some students. Thus, it is recommended that for the first five days of school, before beginning any new activity teachers should present information to the students on behavioral expectations for the upcoming activity. Students should be involved in discussions about how the expectations relate to the classroom rules and why the expectations are important for increasing every student’s opportunity for success.
Table 1

Examples of Providing Specific Feedback About Meeting Expectations

If behavior during the activity went well, the teacher might say:

“During today’s lecture, whenever anyone had anything to say you remembered to raise your hand, and all the questions and comments were very pertinent to the subject of the lecture. Hand raising is important if everyone in the room is to get an opportunity to participate when they wish to.”

If an activity did not go well, the teacher might say:

“During our independent work period, there were three or four times that I had to say, ‘It’s too loud. Please quiet down.’ Getting to work together on your assignments is useful because you can learn by working together. However, if I have to keep reminding you to keep the noise down and to talk only about the assignment, I may need to say that no talking will be allowed. Tomorrow, work a little harder on managing the noise level.”

Also during the first week, at the conclusion of each activity, teachers should provide students with specific feedback about how well expectations were met. Table 1 shows examples of how this information can be communicated to students.

Introducing each activity with a reminder of expectations and concluding it with feedback about how well those expectations were met allows teachers to calmly and assertively communicate to students how they want the classroom to run. The goal for teachers is to create the impression that they are confident that each student will behave appropriately when given clear information about expectations.

Routines and Habits

Many classroom behavior problems can be prevented through the use of established daily classroom routines and habits. For example, daily routines provide an efficient structure for keeping students actively engaged in academic tasks. Effective teachers use consistent routines and monitoring to establish expectations that class time will be used for classwork (Evertson & Emmer, 1982). These effective secondary teachers have routines for beginning class, assigning and collecting homework and classwork,
arranging for makeup work for students who are absent, taking roll, correcting papers in class, dealing with students who do not have necessary materials, dealing with late assignments, allowing or not allowing the students to leave the classroom during class, having students clean up after labs, and excusing the class at the end of the period. These routines create an efficient, businesslike atmosphere in the classroom, where student attention is focused on academic tasks.

A crucial time for setting up effective routines is at the beginning of each class period. Without a routine for engaging students in academic tasks as soon as they enter the room, the teacher may be required to begin the period by quieting them down and getting them in their seats. An inefficient class beginning may result in 2 or 3 minutes—at best, and often more—wasted every day. If students are allowed to sit and do nothing for 2 minutes while the teacher completes administrative duties, some students will misbehave in order to have something to do. The sheer task of getting a disorganized class ready to work also provides increased opportunity for defiance and getting negative attention.

Here is an example of what a secondary teacher could say to establish a routine for getting class started and for dealing with any students who are late to class:

Each day when you come into class, there will be a challenge problem on the overhead. Come into class, put your homework on your desk, and then get started on the challenge problem. You may work quietly with one or two other students on the problem. When the bell rings, continue to work on the problem, and I will take roll and collect your homework. If you finish the problem, you may talk quietly to your neighbor, but only after you have worked out the solution to the problem. In my class if you are not in the room with all your materials by the time the bell rings, you are considered tardy. If you are late, sign your name on the clipboard by the door. If you have a blue slip from another staff member or the office giving you permission to be late, simply attach the slip to the clipboard when you sign in. When you are late, please do not disrupt class or interrupt me, just sign the clipboard.

Notice that this teacher has students engaged in an academic task even while attendance is being taken. The teacher has outlined what students can do when they have finished the problem and has specified that until the problem is completed, students are expected to continue working. In short, the teacher has (a) communicated the expectation that students will be on time to class, and (b) provided clear information about what students should do when they are late.

Teachers also should establish and use routines during transitions between activities. A transition such as moving from a lecture/discussion format to working with the textbook requires that students use different materials and that they get their books out and open them. If this transition is handled poorly it can take too long and the attention of the class may be diverted, again increasing opportunities for defiance and atten-
tion getting. Teachers should try to conduct transitions quickly and efficiently so that students’ attention is drawn to the next part of the task as soon as possible.

At the beginning of the school year, the teacher might introduce a transition in the following manner:

Class, the next thing we are going to do is go over the assignment to answer the study questions at the end of the chapter. Before you get your books out, I want to let you know how I do things. First, I really dislike having to repeat instructions, so when I ask you to get your books open to a particular page, I will write the page number on the board, so there is no reason for anyone to ask, “What page?” In addition, I do not like to waste time each day moving from the lecture to going over the assignment, so when I ask you to get your books out and open, please do so quickly and quietly. Open your books to page 42 [while writing the page number on the board].

Efficient routines and smooth transitions help to keep students actively engaged in instructional tasks. Keeping students involved in instruction reduces behavior problems and consistently is correlated positively with academic achievement (Brophy & Evertson, 1976).

**Scanning**

Another tool used by effective teachers to prevent misbehavior and increase student motivation is scanning (Evertson & Emmer, 1982). Scanning is the process of frequently glancing to all parts of the room where students are located. Almost all teachers are good at scanning during teacher-directed instruction, but scanning is also critical during activities such as independent seatwork or lab activities. One of the obvious purposes for scanning is to catch minor misbehavior before it becomes a severe problem. Another reason teachers should scan is to demonstrate that they observe and are aware of the students’ efforts to meet classroom expectations. Teachers who neglect to scan tend to interact only with misbehavior; however, teachers who scan are aware of and can provide feedback on both desirable and undesirable behaviors. Scanning is an important strategy for developing what Kounin (1970) referred to as “withitness”—the ability of effective teachers to be so in touch with what is happening in the classroom that they almost seem to know what students are going to do before they have a chance to do it.

Scanning is an easily observable teacher behavior that can be increased through coaching and practice. School psychologists can help teachers become better scanners by observing teachers’ rates of scanning and providing feedback and modeling as needed.

**Scheduling**

The way teachers arrange activities within a 50-minute class period can have a significant impact on secondary students’ behavior. Teachers who expect students to
spend the majority of each class period engaged in paper-and-pencil tasks or who always give students a long time at the end of the class period for independent work should expect behavior problems.

Look at the two schedules shown in Table 2. Schedule A leaves lots of time for students to get off task. However, Schedule B, because it is so structured and teacher directed, does not allow as much opportunity for students to get off task. Intermixing teacher-directed instruction and student seatwork has a further advantage of giving students more guidance throughout their assigned tasks, thus reducing the chance that a student will make errors on an assignment. Some teachers are reticent about trying a sequence like Schedule B because of the number of transitions required. However, the teacher who establishes an active schedule from the beginning and runs the transitions efficiently as presented above can keep students focused on instructional tasks.

**Student Involvement in the Lesson**

Effective teachers do not simply lecture; they get students to participate in the lesson, and thus reduce misbehavior (Gunter & Hummel, 1998; Christenson, Ysseldyke, & Thurlow, 1989). By giving students frequent opportunities to respond and participate, the teacher can derive information on the degree to which students are mastering important concepts. On the basis of the correct and incorrect responses of students, the teacher can proceed with the lesson, or review and provide additional information and practice of key information. When giving a standard lecture without student participation, the teacher receives no information on the degree of student understanding or mastery.
One of the most obvious ways of facilitating student involvement in the lesson is for the teacher to ask questions frequently. However, care must be taken to involve all students, not just those who volunteer, because students who tend to volunteer often are those who are highly motivated by the content of the presentation.

Effective questioning, which involves virtually every member of the class, can be accomplished in three basic ways. Although rather unusual at the secondary level, one effective way to involve the class is to use whole-group choral responses. Choral responses are especially effective for the introduction of new vocabulary and for reviewing previously taught facts. However, choral responses are not feasible for responses that could be phrased in a variety of ways. Another approach is used when asking questions that have numerous correct answers: Here, the teacher should ask the question, instruct everyone to get an answer ready, and then call on an individual student. By waiting to name the student who is assigned to answer the question, the teacher increases the likelihood that all students will be thinking about the question and trying to develop an answer.

A third way to involve students in lessons via question asking and answering is to give frequent ungraded quizzes. Having each student answer three or four questions on a quiz and then correct the answers allows every student to participate, practice, and receive feedback on correct and incorrect responses. Frequent ungraded quizzes are a common feature of most mastery learning models of effective instruction (Becker, 1986).

Another important variable to consider with student participation is the extent that they understand in-class assignments or projects. Evertson and Emmer (1982) found that effective teachers clearly communicated directions and objectives of assignments. If students do not clearly understand the assignment—and, specifically, what they should be doing—they are much more likely to engage in off-task behaviors.

Structuring lessons in ways that require participation from students on a daily basis ensures that teachers receive ongoing feedback on whether students have achieved mastery on the material being taught. Teachers who rely primarily on lecturing and calling on volunteers receive insufficient feedback on mastery because students who do not understand rarely raise their hand to say, “I don’t know.”

**Effective Evaluation and Grading Policies**

One of the key ways to increase student motivation is to demonstrate to students that if they participate in class, complete assignments, and try their best, it makes a difference in whether they will succeed in passing tests and getting decent grades. In many classes a low-performing student could do everything the teacher asks—follow the rules, attempt to participate in class, try to do assignments and tests—and still fail. A student who continually experiences failure after trying to comply with a teacher’s expectations has no incentive for behaving the way the teacher asks.

This section will examine ways teachers can demonstrate to students that effort pays off with passing grades. First, the evaluation procedures used to determine mastery will be examined, and then other aspects of grading systems will be explored that can help improve a student’s motivation for earning a passing grade.
An effective evaluation system can make a big difference in student motivation. Teachers can increase their students’ success on tests and prevent behavior problems by following three relatively simple steps:

1. When preparing unit tests, write the test first. The test should reflect the objectives the teacher has identified as being important. Thus, what is on a teacher’s test should not be a surprise to students.

2. When introducing concepts in class that will be covered on the test, inform students that “this information is important” and they will be tested on it.

3. Provide students the opportunities to practice on the concepts taught until they achieve mastery.

By following these three steps, all students learn that if you pay attention in class, the lessons help prepare you for the test. Unfortunately in some classrooms the relationship between instruction and testing is not adequately clear to some students. Once students learn that passing tests is not a mysterious process, there is an increased chance that they will strive to achieve a passing grade. However, for students to be motivated toward grades, they must fully understand the teacher’s grading system. The remainder of this section explores other aspects of grading systems that can affect student motivation.

Grades and their relationship to student behavior should function as a reinforcement system, not as a punishment tool. Many teachers expect students to be motivated to avoid getting bad grades. The problem with this assumption is that typically low-performing students may have become totally inured to receiving bad grades. An alternative approach is to construct grading systems so that a passing grade depends on student effort as well as mastery of material. When it is clear that effort and participation in class contribute to a student’s grade, there is a good chance that the student will be more highly motivated to attend and behave in class. For more detailed information on this topic see Sprick (1985).

Another factor affecting whether students are motivated by grades is the extent to which the grading system is understood. Grading policies should be clearly stated and simple enough to be summarized on a handout. At the beginning of each new semester, the teacher should distribute and discuss this handout with students and explain the system in 5–10 minutes. In essence, the teacher will teach students that if you play by the rules, you can win the game—and winning the game means passing the course. If the system is so complex that students have trouble understanding it, some students will assume the rules are too complicated for them to possibly win the game—so why bother to play?

Another advantage in using an uncomplicated grading system is that simple and understandable policies allow students to monitor their own progress in class. Effective grading practices often involve students in keeping track of their own grades.
Sophisticated students know where they stand at any point during the grading period. Ask high-performing students what their grades are and you get responses such as, “In history I have a B but there are three more tests in the grading period so I know I can kick it up to an A if I study for those tests.” Ask lower-performing students the same question and they look at you as if you are crazy. Many lower-performing students think that grades are something teachers do to them at the end of the semester. Students who do not know their current grade are unlikely to be motivated to want to get a better grade. Unless students are required to keep track of their grades, only the most motivated will do so. One way to help students track their own grades is to give them a form at the beginning of the semester that they can keep in their note-books and that they are required to keep up to date. A sample of such a record sheet is shown in Table 3.

A sheet of this type makes it possible to have students total their points to date and determine their grades. Each week the teacher can put information on the board outlining where student point totals are heading in terms of letter grades—an example is shown in Figure 1.

The procedure requires teachers to use a point system for determining grades. Unfortunately, some teachers will give letter grades on assignments without using a

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**TABLE 3**

Example of a Student Grading Record Form

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student:</th>
<th>Class:</th>
<th>Period:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tests</th>
<th>Quizzes</th>
<th>Term Paper</th>
<th>Homework</th>
<th>Participation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#1 /100 points</td>
<td>#1 /100 points</td>
<td>/200 points</td>
<td>#1 /10 points</td>
<td>#1 /20 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#2 /100 points</td>
<td>#2 /100 points</td>
<td>#2 /10 points</td>
<td>#2 /20 points</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>#10 /20 points</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total /500 pts</th>
<th>Total /500 pts</th>
<th>Total /200 pts</th>
<th>Total /100 pts</th>
<th>Total /200 pts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**FINAL SCORE** /1500 points
point system, making it very difficult to communicate to students the relative weight of different types of assignments. For example, a low-performing student who gets an A on a homework assignment may think that a D on a term paper has been offset. Through the use of points, the teacher can more readily communicate that the term paper is worth a possible 200 points and each homework assignment is worth 10 points. Therefore, it is expected that students should put far more time and effort into the term paper than into a homework assignment and it is clear that the term paper makes up a greater portion of a final grade than does a homework assignment.

Another point system grading technique that can increase student motivation involves establishing a percentage of the actual academic grade (and thus the total points earned) that is based on participation and effort. To incorporate this procedure the teacher must decide how many points students can earn each week for behavior and participation before the term begins. This number should be based on the approximate percentage input this behavior grade will have on the total grade. For example, in a ninth-grade science class the teacher estimates that there will be approximately 750 points for tests, labs, homework, and the final exam during the 12-week trimester. If the teacher would like behavior and effort to have a 25% impact on the grade, the grading system should have approximately 1,000 total points possible. Assigning 20 points possible per week would result in 240 points for behavior during a 12-week trimester. Thus there would be a total possible of 990 points, 240 being approximately 25% of the 990 point total.

The recommended percentage of the grade to be based on behavior and participation can range from 0 to 80 depending on the class. Percentages generally will be higher in classes of middle and junior high school students than at the high school level. That is, in middle school and junior high, one of the major objectives should be to teach students how to behave in ways that will allow them to be successful in further academic pursuits. Consequently, a greater percentage of the grade can be based on the degree to which students exhibit these behaviors.

### Figure 1

**Classroom Example of Using the Blackboard to Keep Students Updated on Their Grades**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Second Period Grades as of Monday, November 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Points possible so far.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>293 - 325 = A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>260 - 292 = B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>227 - 259 = C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>195 - 226 = D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 195, come and see me!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Once the number of participation points possible each week has been determined, the teacher must decide on a system for students to earn those points. The criteria for awarding points should be made as objective as possible, and students should be told in advance how their behavior will be evaluated. In the example of the science class with 20 points possible each week, the teacher might present the plan to the class in the following manner:

Each week, I will put a grade in the grade book based on your behavior and participation. There are 20 points possible, and each week you begin the week with 16 points. I will determine your points based on how well you use your class time and each of you will get a score between 0 and 20. Anytime I tell you that you are using your class time well, I will make a note next to your name on the class list attached to this clipboard, and that raises your score 1 point. Anytime you are wasting class time and I need to remind you to get back on target, you lose a point. Each Friday, I will post the scores on the bulletin board in the same way that I post the scores for tests. Look for your student number to find the points you earned for the week. Anytime during the week that you want to know where you are, come and look at my clipboard before or after class.

The teacher can extend this system to include consequences for tardies, late work, not having materials, and any other frequent but minor types of problems. However, the system should not be viewed as consisting predominantly of negative consequences. It is important to note that such a grading system carries with it the responsibility that the teacher must make a concerted effort to get to each student two to four times each week to acknowledge positive performance. The goal is for students to see that by using class time well they can improve their grade. Detailed information on establishing and implementing a system of this type is provided in Sprick (1985).

Teachers frequently are concerned about the legality of a system that bases a percentage of student grades on behavior. The most important consideration is that students be informed from the beginning of a course how behavior will affect their grades and how their points will be determined each week. Disputes with grading often involve a teacher who modifies a student grade at the end of the term because of misbehavior during the term.

It should be noted that some professionals have argued that a student’s grade should entirely reflect the degree of mastery of course content and should not involve any aspect of student behavior (Gathercoal, 1987). However, the authors have found participation grading to be an effective tool for preventing and reducing minor misbehavior and for increasing the motivation of many students.
BEHAVIOR CHANGE

Many adolescents exhibit complex behavior patterns that have been maintained by a long history of attention from peers, teachers, or parents; escape from schoolwork; or even escape from school. Common sense suggests that if behavioral contingencies such as reprimands, time in the office, and detention or suspension were always effective, there would be few behavior problems in schools. Unfortunately these consequences often function unintentionally as either positive or negative reinforcement procedures. To further complicate matters, by the time some students get to high school, they have learned a large repertoire of disruptive behaviors that can seem impervious to change.

Use of the strategies discussed thus far can prevent a significant amount of misbehavior in secondary classrooms. However, some misbehavior probably will occur regardless of the effectiveness of prevention strategies employed. This section will present procedures that secondary teachers can use to increase desirable behaviors and address discipline problems that do occur. First, a review of some basic principles of behavior management will be presented. Table 4, on page 388, may be a useful tool to help refresh the behavior management skills of secondary teachers. For a more in-depth study of the application of behavioral principles in classroom settings encourage teachers to examine Alberto and Troutman (1986), Becker (1986), Kerr and Nelson (1998), or Sulzer-Azaroff and Mayer (1986).

These seven basic principles can be reviewed and discussed with secondary teachers. However, in working with secondary teachers, the school psychologist should be careful not to alienate teachers with unnecessary or unfamiliar vocabulary. For example, to many teachers, the word punishment means something different from the classic behavioral definition (i.e., a stimulus that follows a behavior and reduces the future occurrence of that behavior). When some teachers hear the word punishment, they assume an angry, vengeful procedure implemented by the teacher. Given these potential differences in vocabulary, it is clear that communication between psychologists and teachers has the potential to be difficult, yet this communication must be precise. Throughout the remainder of this chapter, punishment procedures will be referred to as punitive consequences.

Guidelines for Reducing Misbehavior Using Punitive Consequences

This section will examine procedures for reducing misbehavior. Guidelines will be given for effectively implementing punitive consequences and then four specific consequences will be presented. An effective secondary teacher must demonstrate an ability to act when misbehavior occurs. Thus, reprimands and sanctions are important procedures for teachers to be able to implement (Doyle, 1986). We see the need for secondary teachers to be familiar with seven major guidelines for implementing punitive consequences effectively.
Guideline 1: Stay calm. When working with secondary-level students, this is the most important guideline. Some students derive a great sense of power from their ability to make adults angry. In working with this type of student, an emotional response from the teacher serves as a powerful positive reinforcer of inappropriate behavior. As noted earlier, behaviors that are not positively reinforced will tend to happen less often in the future. When the teacher calmly informs the student of a consequence, it communicates that the misbehavior has no power to affect the teacher, and the student’s misbehavior is essentially placed on extinction. A calm implementation also communicates that the teacher’s feelings have nothing to do with the fact that the consequence is being implemented. The student has been previously informed that the behavior would lead to the consequence and now the teacher is calmly following through on that arrangement.

Guideline 2: Treat students with respect. During any implementation of a consequence students should be treated with dignity and respect. Humiliation, sarcasm, and ridicule should never be used as consequences. Respect for students is evidenced by
use of adult vocabulary, offering students choices about events that affect them, use of realistic timelines, and use of age-appropriate consequences for desired as well as undesired behaviors.

**Guideline 3: Develop a hierarchy of consequences.** The most frequent misbehaviors in classrooms are minor infractions, and yet in many classrooms the teacher’s only consequences are severe, such as referral to the office. Office referral is appropriate for severe problems, but is inappropriate for behaviors such as talking in class, being off task, forgetting materials, handing assignments in late, and other minor disruptive behavior. If mild consequences are not used, the teacher must tolerate lots of these minor infractions, because office referral is too severe a consequence to reasonably fit the infraction. Each teacher needs a range of consequences to fit the range in severity of classroom rule infractions (Sprick, 1981).

For most behavior, soft reprimands and/or individual and private discussions should be the first step. In many cases, simply informing the student that a behavior is unacceptable may be sufficient to reduce the future occurrence of mild misbehavior (Darch et al., 1998; Walker, Colvin, & Ramsey, 1995). A soft reprimand can be verbal or nonverbal, and should communicate to the student what behavior is expected. Some advantages of reprimands are that they are quick, easy, and involve no record keeping on the part of the teacher. Also, reprimands have less probability of creating adversarial relationships between the teacher and the student than more intrusive consequences, such as separating the student from his or her friends or requiring the student to stay after class. An effective reprimand communicates that the teacher fully anticipates students will be successful in meeting positive expectations in the future.

Finally, reprimands are most useful for minor classroom infractions in the early stages of a semester while the teacher is still clarifying classroom expectations. However, if the misbehavior continues after the students know and understand the expectations, reprimands may not be sufficient and another consequence (e.g., separating the student from their friends) may need to be established.

**Guideline 4: Plan ahead.** For consequences to be most effective, students should know which behaviors will meet with a teacher response. If reprimands have not worked, inform the student that future infractions will no longer be reprimanded but will entail a specific consequence. After reviewing with the student what the specific consequence will be, the teacher should question the student to ensure understanding. When equipped with the information that misbehavior will result in a specific consequence, the student will thus understand that to choose to engage in the behavior is to also choose to receive the consequence.

**Guideline 5: Establish a concurrent plan to reinforce success.** When dealing with chronic misbehavior, a punitive consequence alone has a relatively low probability of changing student behavior. Many students with problem behavior have developed a “So what?” attitude toward being kept after school or being sent to the vice-principal’s office. If reprimands have not been effective and it becomes necessary to establish another consequence, the teacher also needs to think about how to motivate the student to cooperate. An intervention that applies consequences only for misbehavior is
usually doomed to failure primarily because it does not teach students appropriate behavior.

The goal of the intervention is for the student to learn that inappropriate behavior results in aversive consequences, but appropriate behavior results in pleasant consequences. How to accomplish this goal in ways that are not embarrassing to the student will be covered later in the chapter.

**Guideline 6: Be as consistent as possible.** Students must see that, once it is made clear that a behavior will lead to a specific consequence, the teacher follows through consistently. If some days the students “get away with it,” the behavior can become part of a game the students play: “Let’s see if I can do it again today and not get caught.”

**Guideline 7: Keep the interaction short.** When an infraction occurs, the teacher should simply state the misbehavior and state the consequence and then resume instruction. If the teacher spends more than 3 seconds on the problem, the flow of the lesson is lost. All too often, misbehaving students can control the pace of the instruction through their misbehavior. For example, each time an infraction occurs, the teacher may have to stop teaching and says things like: “Jason, I am getting very tired of this. We have discussed this before and you know that when this happens I keep you after school. I do not like keeping you after any more than you like being kept after, but you leave me no choice. I now fully expect you to get your act together.”

If the scenario above is happening several times a week, it is easy to observe how much attention the student is receiving for the inappropriate behavior. Not only is the student getting attention from the teacher during the lecture, but every other student in the class is watching the interaction. When the teacher singles out an individual for a lecture on behavior, the student is put on display in front of peers. Some students like nothing better than being the center of attention for having been “bad.”

When the chronic misbehavior occurs, the teacher should spend no more than 3 seconds with a student who has misbehaved. If the situation has previously been discussed with the student, at the time of the infraction the teacher can simply say, “Jason, that is disruptive; you owe me time after school. Now class look at Problem 3.” It is important that the teacher immediately shifts the focus off the problem student and back to instruction.

**Four Specific Classroom Consequences for Reducing Misbehavior**

As discussed earlier in the chapter, the most common negative consequence in secondary schools seems to be office referral. Although office referral is a reasonable consequence for dangerous, illegal, or truly insubordinate behavior, it is not reasonable or even effective for typical classroom misbehavior. Secondary teachers need to understand that a mild consequence implemented calmly and consistently will tend to work better than a more severe consequence implemented emotionally or inconsistently. The following consequences are presented in order of least to most intrusive. The first employs response cost, a procedure that reduces the frequency of occurrence of a
behavior through contingent removal of a previously earned reinforcer. In a general sense, the other three procedures could be thought of as forms of time-out, in which the student is denied the opportunity to receive attention or social reinforcement for a fixed period of time.

**Response cost.** Response cost programs offer flexibility in classrooms because they can be implemented in a variety of ways. Students earn points toward valued reinforcers; teachers commonly give each student a specific number of behavior points at the start of the week and the number of points a student earns increases with the occurrence of appropriate behaviors or decreases with the occurrence of inappropriate behavior throughout the week. For example, each time the teacher reminds a student to get back to work, the teacher records the reprimand and the student loses one point. It is important to note that these points are not deducted from points earned from other point “categories” such as tests and assignments. For programs using response cost to be effective, the students must be taught how the whole system works. The teacher must also keep an emphasis on awarding points for positive behavior rather than simply taking away points for misbehavior.

**Time owed.** In essence time owed involves keeping a student after class for a short period of time. This consequence can be used only in schools that have passing periods long enough to keep a student after class for a short time and still give the student time to get to the next class. For example, if a school has 4-minute passing periods and in 3 minutes a student could get to the farthest room in the school, the teacher could keep a student after class for up to 1 minute without having to give the student an excuse to get into the next class. The teacher informs students in advance that for certain infractions they may be kept after class for 30 seconds per infraction. This rule would allow the teacher to use this with any student for two infractions per class period. This consequence is very mild but it can be effective with some students, because it cuts into their time for socializing out in the school halls.

During instructional periods the goal is to have students actively engaged in the lesson. However, when time owed is used students should not be allowed to do assigned work. Assigned work should not be part of a consequence because the student may assume that it is punishment. Furthermore, allowing academic work to be completed during this time can make the time go by very quickly and reduce the aversive nature of time owed. Completing work during time owed may even inadvertently create a “study hall” for that student that frees up time during another part of their day. The student should sit and do nothing during the time owed.

**Isolation area in class.** This is essentially a secondary-level version of time-out. One of the major mistakes teachers make with this procedure is to isolate students for long periods of time; the isolation period should be relatively short. In this procedure a desk and chair are set off to the side of the room and students are informed that for various infractions they will be sent to this area until they are ready to participate appropriately in class. Generally this procedure is used more frequently at the middle school and junior high levels than at the high school level. While in the isolation area, the students should have nothing to do. The goal of this procedure is to impress on
the students that because of their misbehavior they are not being allowed to participate for a short time.

The length of time the students remain in the isolation area can either be a standard 5-minute period, or if the teacher prefers, the students can be informed that they may rejoin the class whenever they feel ready. However, if the isolated students are permitted to choose to come out on their own, the teacher should specify a criterion such as, “You may rejoin the group when you are ready to quietly work on your math at your seat.”

**After-school detention.** This is one of the most common consequences in use in secondary schools. Routinely, all students assigned to detention after school report to a particular room. In many schools there will be 20 or 30 students after school each day. The detention period is usually 30-60 minutes and students are usually required or allowed to do academic work during this time.

This consequence has more potential problems than any of the consequences previously described. The biggest problem is student transportation. Usually the infraction occurs on one day, the parents are notified that evening, the student stays after school the next day, and the student and/or the parents are responsible for arranging transportation. This means that there is a 24- to 31-hour delay between the infraction and the consequence. This time delay reduces the potential effectiveness of the consequence. Another problem with keeping students after school is getting the student to show up. If the student does not come to the detention area, there need to be additional consequences imposed. A final problem is that the student is now in the same room with other students with problem behaviors and these students often reinforce one another’s misbehavior.

If the same students are routinely being kept after school in detention, it is important to change the consequence. Have the student spend the detention time after school with the teacher who assigned the time. In this way, the student is not in the room with other problem students and will probably find the after-school time to be more boring. Unfortunately, this procedure may be more punishing to the teacher than to the student. The teacher needs to evaluate whether keeping the student after school would be effective in changing the behavior and whether accomplishing this change is worth the time and effort required to keep the student after school.

**Maintaining and Increasing Student Motivation**

One useful way of thinking about student motivation is the Expectancy X Value (expectancy multiplied by value) theory (Feather, 1982). According to this theory, student effort on a task will be a product of the degree to which the student expects to be successful at the task multiplied times the degree to which the student values the rewards that accompany success. Note that the function described is multiplicative rather than additive, because if either expectancy or value is equal to zero, student effort will also be nonexistent.

If the teacher does an effective job of teaching behavioral expectations and organizing the classroom during the first weeks of the school year, as was described in the
first section of this chapter, students will know exactly what is required to be successful. If the teacher does an exemplary job, every student will believe that it is possible to be successful if they do the things the teacher asks them to do. If the teacher follows through and implements effective instructional practices, students will experience success in their daily learning activities. To put it another way, the teacher has built the expectancy that success will be possible, and the first half of the expectancy times value theory has been accomplished. The second half of the equation—value—then needs to be addressed.

The majority of students in the typical secondary classroom already value good grades and the satisfaction associated with successful task completion. However, other students just don’t seem to care. To motivate these students, secondary teachers need to do more than teach interesting classes and manage a reasonable grading system; secondary teachers need to implement techniques that will increase student motivation in extrinsic ways. Although this can be accomplished with a variety of strategies, two major techniques will be discussed here: (a) using teacher and peer attention to reinforce desired behaviors, and (b) using more structured or tangible rewards when necessary.

### Differential Teacher and Peer Attention

Some secondary students who do not seem to value success get far more attention for misbehavior than for positive behavior (Sprick & Howard, 1995; Walker, H. et al., 1995). It could be argued that the attention is, in fact, serving to reinforce the inappropriate behavior. One tool for increasing the motivation of these students is to change which categories of behaviors lead to attention and recognition from the teacher and from peers.

The first step in this behavior change process is to reduce the amount of attention the student receives for negative behavior. This can be accomplished by ignoring the majority of minor misbehavior and by implementing mild and quick consequences for the more severe misbehaviors. For example, the teacher may decide to ignore a student who neglects to raise her hand or gets out of her seat; but the teacher may institute consequences for the same student when she uses offensive language or is physically aggressive. As was previously described, when implementing consequences the teacher should be calm and should take no more than three seconds to state the consequence. By delivering consequences in this fashion, the teacher reduces the amount of time spent with the student following the severe misbehaviors. By ignoring the minor misbehaviors, the teacher reduces the number of times during each class period the student gets attention for misbehavior. In doing this, the teacher has also reduced the amount of peer attention the misbehaving student receives. By maintaining a focus on instruction, the teacher can keep the attention of the class focused on the task, rather than on the student who is trying to gain recognition through inappropriate behavior.

At the same time the teacher is working on reducing attention to misbehavior, effort must be put into giving time and attention to appropriate behavior. At the secondary level this can be challenging, especially when the teacher perceives a long, negative history of interactions with a student. Getting past this history is important. A
teacher should attempt to interact with students while they are behaving appropriately three times more frequently than while they are behaving inappropriately. This can be accomplished in two ways: first, by simply interacting with a student while that student is behaving appropriately, and second by using effective praise.

Examples of interacting with a problem student while he is behaving appropriately include saying hello to him as he enters the classroom, calling on him when he appears to be listening, looking at his work while he is on task, talking with him in the hallway, smiling at the student when he hands in the assignment, making sustained eye contact during a lecture, or asking the student to take a note to the office. Although none of the examples above involve overt praise, the interaction communicates that the student is of interest and value to the teacher and that the student does not need to misbehave in order to be acknowledged or recognized.

Praise can be another useful technique for increasing student motivation. Secondary teachers too often assume that students with a history of problem behavior are unresponsive to praise. To be effective, praise must be contingent, descriptive, and nonembarrassing. Contingent praise follows an appropriate behavior that is new or difficult for the student, or follows a behavior the individual is proud of. No one wants to be praised gratuitously.

Effective praise is descriptive rather than evaluative. In acknowledging a student’s performance the teacher should state exactly what behavior the student exhibited that is important. The focus should be on what the student did, not on how much it pleases the teacher. Over time, descriptive praise will help students to learn to evaluate and reinforce their own behavior.

At the secondary level, the teacher should be careful not to put the student in the position of being embarrassed in front of peers for having done a good job. In general, praise will be less embarrassing if it is (a) distributed so that every student gets positive feedback, (b) if it is part of the flow of instruction, and (c) if it focuses on the behavior rather than on the student. Another important factor is that the positive feedback be implemented in a manner that the teacher is comfortable with. If the teacher tends to be businesslike, then positive feedback to students can be given in a very businesslike manner. If the teacher is very energetic and friendly, then positive feedback can be given in a very energetic and friendly manner. If the businesslike teacher attempts to reinforce in an overly friendly manner, the students may feel that the interaction is insincere. For more details on effective praise see Sprick (1985) and Brophy (1981).

Structured Rewards

In addition to frequent attention to positive behavior, secondary teachers can increase student motivation through the use of more structured rewards. One systematic way of delivering feedback and rewards has already been presented—designing a portion of the grading system on student behavior. In this system, when praising a positive behavior or reprimanding an inappropriate behavior the teacher records the interaction. At the end of each week, every student is given a score for that week that is
TABLE 5

Intermittent Rewards Suitable for Secondary Students

- Writing a note to the student’s parents
- Calling the student’s parents
- Complimenting the student in front of another staff member
- Giving the student a responsibility
- Tickets to a school activity
- Coupon to rent a movie
- Privately praising the student’s classroom performance in a nonclassroom setting such as in the hall after school
- Writing a note to the student
- Calling the student
- Asking one of the administrators to reward the student’s behavior
- Tokens for a video arcade
- Food
- Letting the student choose an activity for the class
- Checking out a book the student might be interested in

entered into the grade book based on the number of positive comments and negative comments. One of the goals of this procedure is for students to see that appropriate behavior can positively affect their grades.

Another way to reward appropriate performance is through a variety of intermittent rewards. Unlike structured reinforcement systems, where a contract is made that states, “If you do …, you get …,” intermittent rewards are delivered sporadically at the discretion of the teacher. For example, when a student makes a really significant step toward success, the teacher may want to use a stronger reinforcer than praise. This is the time to provide a special reward. Intermittent rewards should give students the feeling that their behavior was truly special. If any specific reinforcer is used too much, there can be an inflationary phenomenon and the reinforcer may lose value to the student because of its overuse. This problem can be reduced if the teacher implements a variety of intermittent rewards. Table 5 shows a list of some potentially effective rewards that can be used intermittently at the secondary level.

With the students who are not intrinsically motivated, effective praise, frequent attention, and occasional intermittent rewards may fill out the value portion of the motivation equation. The eventual goal is that every student will become intrinsically motivated; however, until that occurs the school staff must demonstrate that positive behaviors lead to positive consequences.

INTERVENTIONS INSTITUTED DIRECTLY BY THE PSYCHOLOGIST

The interventions presented thus far are procedures to be implemented by the classroom teacher. There are several effective interventions that can be facilitated through the direct involvement of the school psychologist. School psychologists not
only play an important role as a consultant to teachers in schools, but also in directly working with students to clarify rules and expectations, teaching students successful classroom behaviors, assessing student ability, and implementing reinforcement programs with individual students.

**Clarifying Rules and Expectations**

In the case of a student who is chronically misbehaving, the school psychologist may observe him or her in the classroom, review the teacher’s rules with the student, and ask the student questions regarding the teacher’s behavioral expectations. “What are you supposed to be doing during the time your teacher is taking attendance? If you have a question or something to say while the teacher is lecturing, how are you supposed to get the teacher to call on you?” By observing in the classroom and interviewing the student, the school psychologist can determine whether the student’s misbehavior is a result of not understanding the teacher’s expectations or a result of choosing to misbehave or break the rules.

If the student lacks a detailed understanding of the teacher’s expectations, we recommend that the school psychologist arrange a meeting with the teacher and the student so that these expectations can be discussed in a positive manner. As a third party at this meeting, the school psychologist asks questions of both the teacher and the student to help clarify the minute-by-minute expectations for that classroom. With some students it may also be helpful to have the school psychologist and the student practice and role-play classroom situations to be sure that the student can meet the expectations (Colvin, Kame‘enui, & Sugai, 1993; Colvin & Sugai, 1988).

**Improving Students’ Participation in Class**

School psychologists can also help students who do not actively participate in class, meet with them and establish an expectation that they should be taking notes in class. To avoid overwhelming the student and to determine whether this will be a helpful intervention, the school psychologist can start by working with the student on one class period. The school psychologist can then teach the student to take notes by giving a very specific assignment, such as, “Make at least three specific notes each day in a notebook during fourth period.” In addition the psychologist can help the student realize that teachers tend to flag the most important information and can encourage the student to write a note anytime the teacher says things like:

“This is important.”
“Be sure to study pages …”
“You really need to know …”
“Pay particular attention to …”
The psychologist and the student can then meet once a week to examine the notes the student has made. The school psychologist can reinforce the student if he or she is meeting the expectation of participating in class or can provide additional encouragement, strategies or instruction if necessary.

**Assisting Students in Understanding Grading Practices**

Another direct intervention strategy involves the school psychologist meeting with the student to discuss grades. A surprising number of secondary-level students do not understand grading practices. The psychologist can interview the student about one or more teachers’ grading practices and, if the student is uncertain, can coach the student in how to go to the teacher to find out more. Below are some of the types of information students may need coaching in how to obtain:

- How many points they have currently,
- How many points are currently possible,
- Any assignments that they have not turned in, and
- The teacher’s grading scale (e.g., 90% for an A, and so on).

After the student has gathered this information, the psychologist can teach the student to track grades and monitor progress.

It may also be useful for the school psychologist to help the student set realistic goals for improving performance. Goal setting has been demonstrated to be an effective procedure for improving student performance (Bandura & Schunk, 1981; Tollefson, Tracy, Johnsen, Farmer, & Buenning, 1984). The student may need assistance initially, because the goals should be specific, fairly immediate, and challenging but obtainable. Written contracts are also a useful tool for helping a student become more motivated to improve performance and thus improve grades. For more detailed information on goal setting and contracts see Sprick & Howard (1995).

**Mediating Consequences With Teachers and Students**

In some situations it is beneficial for the school psychologist to mediate a meeting between the teacher and the student. By facilitating a discussion, the psychologist can help the teacher in clarifying expectations and in helping the teacher and the student negotiate the consequences for unacceptable behavior (Sprick et al., 1993). The goal is to ensure that the student understands which behaviors will lead to negative consequences and also which acceptable behaviors the teacher wishes to see. A meeting of this type not only helps clarify expectations for the student, it can also help the teacher be more consistent. When the teacher has explained his or her procedures to the student in front of a third party, there is an increased accountability for following through on what was stated.
Implementing a Reinforcement Program

In some cases teachers may be unwilling to establish a plan to reinforce success. In this situation, a plan can be established and implemented by the psychologist. One example would be a daily report card that the teacher signs if the student has behaved appropriately. The psychologist then meets with the student weekly to debrief the student’s performance, awards points for good days, sets goals, and provides reinforcers as the student accumulates enough points.

Teaching Students to Interact With Teachers

If a student behaves in ways that result in frequent negative interactions with adults, the school psychologist can teach the student to interact positively with the teacher. Training the student to do things as simple as saying hello and smiling at the teacher can go a long way toward helping improve a teacher’s perception and willingness to help a student. Other strategies that can be shared include teaching the student when and how to go to the teacher and ask a question and teaching the student to appropriately reinforce the teacher’s behavior.

Conclusions

Classroom management procedures implemented by secondary teachers play a major role in affecting the behavior of all students who are not intrinsically motivated. The effective secondary teacher (a) organizes the classroom and instruction in ways that communicate to students that they can be successful if they are willing to follow the rules and try; (b) develops strategies for dealing with misbehavior that are efficient and consistent and that do not allow misbehavior to interrupt the flow of instruction; (c) provides extrinsic motivation to the students who need it in the form of positive attention, praise, and intermittent rewards; and (d) uses a grading system that allows students to earn points for participation, completion of assignments, and tests, while providing frequent feedback to students regarding their performance.

The school psychologist can assist teachers and students in implementing strategies such as clarification of expectations, goal setting, and training the student in how to interact with teachers. The goal of the psychologist should be to work with teachers and students before a problem has gone on so long that the teacher only wants the student removed from the room. The strategies presented in this chapter can counter many problems before they reach crisis proportions. Effective teaching and classroom management need to be proactive processes and the psychologist can play a significant role in helping teachers incorporate these practices into their teaching repertoire.
REFERENCES


