

Develop a Clear Vision for Your Class and Your Classroom Management Approach

Numerous tasks throughout this book will help you define your vision, high positive expectations, and long-term goals. You will continually think about what the ideal learning environment looks and sounds like as you define expectations, plan for your interactions (both positive and corrective) with students, and implement other tasks throughout this book. In this chapter, we present some of the key ideas that guide the DSC approach. These are foundational principles, critical concepts, or pillars for implementation that are essential as you embark on the ongoing journey to implement a positive and proactive approach to behavior management and student support. The concepts in this chapter are critical for developing a clear vision of how to manage student behavior and motivate students in effective ways.

There are three tasks in this chapter:

Task 1: Understand foundational principles and practices that guide the DSC approach

Task 2: Understand how to shape behavior

Task 3: Prepare your Classroom Management Plan

The first two tasks will help you understand some of these fundamental principles of behavior management, motivation, and the DSC approach. These tasks can also help you position your work with DSC in the context of other major initiatives and frameworks that exist in your class, school, or district. The third task introduces you to the Classroom Management Plan, which will help you summarize your vision, classroom organization, daily

expectations, and other major factors you will evaluate and possibly refine as you work through this book. In this task, you will work to identify the level of support you will need to put in place in your classroom for students to be successful. The level of support you identify in Task 3 will have significant implications in the decisions that you make throughout this book.

By attending to each of these three tasks, you can set the foundation for an effective management plan that will help achieve your vision of what your class will look, sound, and feel like, and the goals and accomplishments you and your students will achieve. As you work through these foundational tasks, challenge yourself to carefully examine your own beliefs and practices. Where do you see alignment? Where do these foundational concepts challenge your existing ideas or practices related to behavior, the teacher's role in education, or the potential of your students? Mindsets drive action; this chapter provides essential information about productive mindsets that will help you effectively manage your classroom so it becomes a productive and positive environment for learning.

Task 1: Understand Foundational Principles and Practices That Guide the DSC Approach

Learn about the DSC model and critical concepts that can help you establish a positive and proactive classroom.

Classroom management is a journey and not a destination. This simple statement is a powerful reminder that self-reflection and a commitment to continuous improvement is an integral part of the educational process. Effective teachers reflect on their own practices to determine what is working for their students (and for themselves!), and they identify elements of their practice that they should celebrate and protect. At the same time, effective teachers continually work to identify practices that may need to be changed to address current classroom concerns. The best teachers recognize that change and adjustment are natural parts of teaching. Every student who walks through the door, and every mix of students in the classroom, is different and presents unique strengths and challenges. Thus, effective teachers demonstrate a commitment to flexibility. They accept that when something isn't working, they can embrace change without judgment and maintain forward momentum toward the vision of success.

Throughout this book, you will be challenged to reflect on your current practices—what should be celebrated and protected as well as what should be tweaked, changed, or abandoned to increase student success and help you reach your positive vision of the ideal classroom.

This task introduces some of the critical concepts and hallmark practices that serve as the foundation for effective classroom management. As you read this task, challenge yourself to carefully examine how your current practices do or do not reflect these foundational elements.

The concepts that are briefly overviewed here represent complex and interwoven concepts, and each has significant implications for every teaching practice. Thus, they will be revisited frequently and interwoven throughout this book.

Mission and Beliefs: Create an Effective Vision to Guide Your Practice

Mahatma Gandhi once said, “Your beliefs become your thoughts, your thoughts become your words, your words become your actions, your actions become your habits, your habits become your values, your values become your destiny.” So this journey begins with evaluating your beliefs about your students, your educational community, and yourself as a teacher. The process of defining and documenting your beliefs and then using them to inform your practice is an essential element in developing an effective Classroom Management Plan.

Begin by reflecting on your mission as an educator. Why did you enter the field of education? What do you hope to accomplish with your students? What do you believe is the purpose of your job? What is your commitment to your school community as a teacher? If your school has a written mission or vision statement, examine this statement and consider whether it reflects the culture of your school and the culture of your classroom. Some examples of good mission statements include:

- The staff at South High School are committed to helping every child develop a love of learning and motivating every student to reach their full potential.
- Every day, every student in every classroom learns, grows, and feels respected.

The mission is essential to create an overarching vision that creates a sense of purpose for all members of the school community. However, it is common for these statements to become empty words. In many cases, staff don’t even know what their school’s mission statement is! As you reflect on your school’s mission, or as you create a mission statement yourself, consider how you can take daily actions that help you actively strive to reach the mission. Your mission serves as a North Star that you can use to reflect on all aspects of your classroom practice—as in, does this practice, procedure, or approach help me or does it in any way violate my efforts to reach the mission? One way to further refine this process is to define beliefs for yourself about behavior management and discipline.

Your school may already have a set of staff beliefs in the form of a written description of principles related to behavior management and discipline. If you do have these, consider how your own beliefs and actions align with the school’s written staff beliefs. Staff beliefs should relate directly to your school’s mission—if staff are using practices that align with their beliefs, it should help the school achieve its mission. If there are points of disagreement or disconnect, consider how you can engage in professional discourse with your administrator to better understand the purpose behind certain beliefs or to begin a conversation about how to ensure that staff beliefs match best practices for behavior management and discipline.

If your school does not have a written set of staff beliefs, consider the following samples and work to write your own set of beliefs to guide a positive and proactive approach to student behavior and motivation.

At Safe & Civil Schools, we have articulated the following:

Mission: We are committed to providing welcoming and supportive educational settings where all students can thrive. To accomplish this, we believe:

- That staff behavior creates the climate of the school, and a positive, welcoming, and inviting climate should be intentionally created and continuously maintained.
- All student behaviors necessary for success need to be overtly and directly articulated and taught to mastery. If you want it, teach it.

- All students should have equal access to good instruction and behavior support, regardless of their current skills or background.
- Clarity of expectations and consistency of application and enforcement of these expectations are essential throughout the school.
- Punitive and corrective techniques are necessary but have significant limitations. Misbehavior presents teaching and learning opportunities.
- Everyone, even students who make poor choices, should be treated at all times with respect and in ways that demonstrate a commitment to helping them reach their positive potential.
- All students have basic human rights that must be honored and upheld by all school personnel, regardless of politics, religion, ideology, or personal beliefs.

Composite Sample of Beliefs from Several Schools

(Adapted with permission from *Foundations: A Proactive and Positive Behavior Support System* by Sprick, Boohar, Isaacs, Sprick, & Rich, 2014.)

All staff members contribute to a school's friendly, inviting environment. We set the tone through our actions and attitudes. We demonstrate continuous support and encouragement for all students in five important ways:

1. We teach students the expectations for responsible behavior in all school settings. We help students strive to exhibit productive habits and attitudes for learning, including: being responsible, always trying their best, cooperating with others, and treating everyone with respect, including themselves.
2. We recognize that positive relationships with students are foundational to a productive learning environment, and we strive to build positive relationships with every student by learning who they are and fostering their strengths.
3. We provide positive feedback to students when they are meeting expectations and striving to exhibit productive habits and attitudes.
4. We view minor misbehavior as a teaching opportunity, and we respond calmly and consistently to misbehavior with corrections and corrective consequences.
5. We work collaboratively and with a solutions-oriented mindset to solve chronic and severe behavior problems.

To use a bowling analogy, imagine that your mission statement is like the pins at the end of the bowling lane. To achieve a strike, you must successfully guide your classroom throughout the year to achieve your mission. Your written statement of beliefs for behavior management and discipline can serve like bumpers or guardrails in the gutter of the bowling lane. Novice bowlers often find their ball veering off course and landing in the gutter. Similarly, teachers can easily veer off course from their mission when they encounter students with challenging behavior. In order for the ball to reach the pins, a bumper can be placed in the gutter or guardrails can be raised so that the ball stays out of the gutter and proceeds toward the pins. Your written statement of beliefs about behavior management can help prevent you from veering off course. Without clarifying these beliefs, you may struggle to evaluate which classroom management practices you should keep, tweak, or abandon over time. However, just as a bowling ball can take many different paths down the bowling lane even with guardrails in place, your Classroom Management Plan and approach give you a lot of flexibility and many paths to help your class be successful. As you work through this

book, continue to evaluate your beliefs about student behavior and classroom management, and how these beliefs relate to your overarching mission. Make efforts to periodically evaluate your Classroom Management Plan and daily actions in relation to your (or your school's) staff beliefs and mission statement.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Access: Fulfilling the Promise of Education for All

Effective schools help *all* students thrive and achieve their full potential. Effective classrooms help all students become increasingly responsible, respectful, motivated, and highly engaged in meaningful instructional activities. Unfortunately, throughout the history of the United States and despite some improvements and the earnest efforts of many educators, school systems have not fulfilled the promise of education for all students. Large numbers of students have fallen through the cracks of the system. School systems have struggled to fulfill the promise of an effective education for broad groups such as Black and Brown students, students identified with emotional and behavioral disabilities, students who struggle from experiences of trauma, and LGBTQ+ students, among others.

Overt and ongoing efforts are needed in all schools (and by all educators within those schools) to nurture diversity, equity, inclusion, and access (DEIA) so we can fulfill the promise of education for all. Nurturing DEIA means moving beyond awareness of differences and individual identities into eliminating barriers to access, providing supports that encourage active participation and engagement, and listening to and valuing all perspectives within a community. It requires a commitment from educators to build classroom and school environments that truly support all students and allow them to thrive. DEIA must be a cornerstone commitment for all educators.

DEIA is an important focus within any school community, whether the community is extremely diverse or is largely homogeneous in terms of race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or other factors. Imagine that you work in a school with a mix of students from different race/ethnicities, immigrants and refugees from other countries, different socioeconomic circumstances, and different religions. The differences in student cultures and experiences can present unique challenges in meeting a wide variety of needs, but they also represent wonderful opportunities to learn with and from each other about diverse perspectives. Hopefully, educators working in a school like this have a heightened awareness of the need to consider DEIA throughout their teaching practice.

In a more homogeneous community, for example, if 90 percent of the student and staff population are of one race/ethnicity, it is equally important to commit to and continually reflect on issues of DEIA. However, it can be easy to fall into the trap of not thinking critically about DEIA because one culture or demographic group is so prominently represented. You may make assumptions about your students based on comparison with norms of the population that is most represented. You may not be as aware of the ways in which cultural differences, individual differences, and the backgrounds of your students affect your perceptions of their behavior, motivation, or needs. Regardless of whether you work in a homogeneous or a heterogeneous community, actively seek to learn about and reflect on DEIA and how you can support all learners.

An effective classroom management approach is one essential element of putting your commitment to DEIA into practice. Effective classroom managers eliminate hidden norms and ensure that classroom expectations, disciplinary practices, and everyday interactions are just and equitably applied. They encourage and provide needed supports to all students

and continually work to establish a positive and safe learning environment. DEIA should be a primary consideration as you work through the tasks in this book.

In addition, many important school initiatives are designed to help educators nurture specific aspects of DEIA. Cultural competency, trauma-informed/trauma-sensitive care, restorative practices, identifying implicit bias, and other frameworks push educators to analyze existing practices, identify gaps, reveal hidden norms, and consider meaningful supports for students who might otherwise fall through the cracks. When used proficiently, these can be powerful tools for working toward the promise of nurturing DEIA. However, recognize that none of these approaches is a panacea. Effective educators continue to work throughout their career to expand their knowledge and implement practices that will move them closer to fulfilling the promise of education for all.

In their efforts to gain more proficiency in nurturing DEIA, educators may move through a common progression with three main phases (or mile markers) of development: becoming informed, increasing sensitivity, and changing practice. Whether working toward providing more equitable and inclusive experiences for students with disabilities or addressing concerns about cultural competence or implicit bias, educators will encounter the three phases of becoming informed, increasing sensitivity, and changing practice as they progress in their understanding and implementation. Each phase involves increased time, effort, and energy, but also represents getting closer to meeting the goals presented within DEIA.

Becoming informed. During this phase, educators become aware of potential barriers or gaps that are impacting a student's educational achievement. For example, someone who is trauma-informed is aware of research about the negative impacts of trauma and can begin to identify students who may exhibit signs of struggle due to experiences with trauma.

Increasing sensitivity. The second phase involves self-reflection. In this phase, educators take a deep look at themselves and how they interact with the world around them in relation to the area of knowledge. This sounds like a simple proposition, but examining biases and blind spots and reflecting on needed areas of personal growth can often be difficult. The goal is for teachers to become so well-informed that they are now sensitive to barriers to achievement and gaps in supports for students in real time. They can also anticipate underlying issues caused by their own practices or the environment. Someone who is in the increasing sensitivity phase related to issues of implicit bias is not only aware of what biases look like in others and within the educational system but has begun to identify their own biases and how they may be impacting their classroom and students.

Changing practice. Lastly, educators adopt prevention, early intervention, and responsive support strategies to address the specific issues they were previously informed about and sensitive to. During this phase, the educator's daily actions and efforts become aligned with their knowledge and beliefs—they are living the commitment to DEIA. They demonstrate that their efforts go beyond just knowledge and beliefs. Someone who delivers culturally competent practice has moved beyond identifying their own cultural values and biases, developing a better understanding of culturally specific knowledge about their students, and having knowledge of some of the institutional barriers that may prevent some of those students from adequately accessing educational resource. The educator is now mastering skills to successfully teach students who come from cultures different from his or her own by integrating his or her knowledge and sensitivity about cultural competence into the daily actions of teaching.

This progression across phases takes time and requires a commitment from educators to be open to challenging their own assumptions and making changes to existing practices. The

actionable and practical skills and strategies in this book provide one way to help convert sound theory within frameworks related to DEIA into meaningful practice.

Data-Driven Processes: Tools for Continuous Improvement

Data is one of the most powerful tools in any educator's toolbox. When used skillfully, data not only inspires, but can also help you prioritize resources, unpack and clarify complex issues, identify effective remedies, and monitor progress. Two chapters in this book focus heavily on how to use data in your classroom in effective ways (see Chapter 5: Observe and Chapter 10: Maintain a Cycle of Continuous Improvement).

The relentless pursuit of collecting and analyzing data to inform practice is also one of the most practical tools for establishing a culture that nurtures diversity, equity, access, and inclusion. Some of the questions to ask yourself as you analyze your classroom data include:

- Are certain demographic groups (e.g. race/ethnicity, gender, disability status, students who receive free/reduced lunch) thriving or falling through the cracks?
- Are disciplinary procedures, such as the number and type of corrective consequences, proportional to the subgroups in my classroom?
- Is there any disproportionality in the academic achievement or behavioral success of different groups of students in my classroom?

Identifying differences is only the first step. Once you recognize that there are concerns, begin asking the questions that will drive you to make changes:

- If I identify disparities, what can I do to increase parity and representation?
- What can I do to identify the barriers that students may be facing or the needs that must be filled in order for students to reach high expectations of success?
- If I identify disproportionate levels of success and struggle, what is my new course of action? How do I plan to monitor the new plan to ensure that it is working to provide greater equity in supporting all my students to thrive?

As you use data to support efforts toward continuous improvement, be careful to avoid manipulating data to craft a narrative that represents what you think others want to see or that misrepresents the reality of your classroom. If you have to record a video six times to get a clip you feel comfortable coding or having someone else observe, it probably does not represent what is occurring in your classroom on a day-to-day basis! Data should never be used to create a culture of judgment, so there is no need to manipulate data to present a false narrative.

Also be careful not to judge your data in relation to anyone else's in your building: "My classroom is doing better than hers so I don't need to worry about making changes" or "Look at how much worse my data looks than everyone else's." Rather, judge your data in relation to goals for success with your students. As you look at your data, place your mission statement and beliefs next to the data so you can reflect on where you are now and where you would like to go. The data is simply the tool you use to identify what is working and what needs to be addressed as a priority for improvement. Strategies in this book will provide you with the tools you need to determine what changes to make when you identify a priority for improvement.

Existing Regularities: Evaluate Whether the Way Things Have Always Been Done Is the Best Way to Meet the Needs of the Moment

In many schools, rituals and routines are passed down through the years. When educators within the school are asked where those rituals and routines came from or what the thought was behind doing things a certain way, it is common to find that no one in the school actually knows the history or the purpose behind certain practices! Classroom teachers may adopt certain practices without much thought because they are what they experienced in school or are what their student teaching mentor did in their classroom. Or they may continue using practices within their classroom from year to year without evaluating whether those practices are continuing to meet the needs of a changing student population. In other words, these are existing regularities.

While it is human nature to tend to do things the way they've always been done, existing regularities pose a significant threat to good teaching practice. Historical practices often do not match the current needs and ideals of the educational system. Many common practices historically used in schools were not developed with consideration of critical factors like DEIA, student motivation, and an understanding of how to shape behavior.

A foundational part of the DSC approach is a commitment to continuous improvement, which involves self-reflection about how well current practices are meeting the needs of your current students. As you reflect, we challenge you to look carefully at existing regularities in your practice. Question whether the way you've always done things is still the best way for the students you currently serve. You will likely find that some practices are working just as well now or maybe even better than they did when you began implementing them—the best practices can be timeless! However, you will also likely find that some practices are not helping you reach your vision of success for all students. It may be that your student composition has changed and practices that once supported students are now unintentionally harming them. Or it may be that these practices always had some drawbacks, but you are now more informed and sensitive about how to meet the needs of your students and so are better able to recognize the drawbacks of these practices. Either way, teachers must be flexible and willing to change when needed. A commitment to continuous improvement means committing to tweaking or abandoning any practice if it no longer meets the needs of students.

Although examining existing regularities can happen at any point in the school year, three situations should trigger in-depth evaluation of existing regularities:

1. When you have identified an ongoing concern with a student, a group of students, or a whole class, carefully look at existing regularities. Reflect on which rituals, routines, and practices are working and which ones may need to be changed or replaced.
2. Prior to starting a new school year, do a careful analysis of your Classroom Management Plan, the summary document that describes the major considerations and practices in your classroom management approach (see Task 3 in this chapter for how to use the Classroom Management Plan). Consider existing regularities as you examine your plan. Think about what worked well the previous school year, but also what you wish was different. Consider whether making changes to any of the existing regularities in your classroom would set students up for greater success. For example, if you have always used the same practices regarding homework but in the past two years students have struggled to complete and turn in homework, consider making changes to how you assign, collect, and provide feedback on homework, or

even the types or amount of homework assigned. You may wish to do this in-depth analysis of your Classroom Management Plan at least once or twice during the year as well (e.g. before each new term or semester starts).

3. When there is a significant change in your student population, or a major change in the school environment or community conditions, take some time to think about existing regularities. For example, if you suddenly get an additional group of students added in the second term or if a natural disaster forced your school to move to a temporary location, these changes should trigger an evaluation of existing regularities. Consider which rituals, routines, and procedures to keep, tweak, or abandon.

Chapters 5 and 10 provide suggestions for how to use data to identify when a change is needed. Bring the lens of evaluating existing regularities to this process of continuous improvement in your classroom.

Locus of Control: Take Control Over Those Factors within Your Sphere of Influence

Throughout this book, you will be challenged to focus on what is in your locus of control. Locus of control relates to the way you think about the causes of success or failure. When you think about why something is happening in your classroom, you can think about internal causes—things that you have immediate influence over, such as your own teaching abilities, efforts, and personal actions. You can also think about external causes—things that are not within your sphere of influence, such as luck, students' circumstances outside of school, and the actions of other people. While anything that occurs in a classroom has both internal and external causes, you should spend more time, effort, and energy thinking about and working to address the internal factors that you can influence in meaningful ways.

For example, if students experience high levels of success, internal causes that you may have influenced include things like the organization of your units of instruction, the high levels of participation and interest you prompted through engaging activities and instruction, the study skills you helped students learn, and the safe and supportive class environment you established through effective behavior management. Whether students came into your class with strong academic or behavioral skills, and whether families were highly engaged or not (external factors), your efforts and actions (internal factors) contributed in important ways to your students' high levels of success. You should work to celebrate and preserve those aspects of your teaching practice that are within your internal locus of control and that contribute to student success.

If students are struggling, consider what changes are within your control rather than focusing your time and energy on things that are beyond your sphere of influence. You cannot control your colleagues (administrator, teaching colleagues, other staff) and how they do their jobs. You cannot control who students live with or the circumstances of their lives outside school or their personal history. You cannot control whether students enter your classroom with disabilities, experiences of trauma, or past academic or behavioral struggles in school. You can control your mindset, your habits, and your actions.

The following are some of the most powerful things that you can control with regard to student behavior:

- Structures you put in place within your classroom to set students up for success
- Teaching expectations explicitly

- Observation and active supervision
- Interacting positively to build positive relationships with students and their families
- Correcting students fluently and with care

These variables make up the acronym STOIC, which is the framework that outlines five main variables that can be used to influence student behavior and motivation. Chapters 2–8 of DSC are organized around these five variables.

In addition to the STOIC variables, you can control how you personally feel about yourself as a teacher and what you feel and believe about your students. It is natural at times to question or experience moments of doubt. Change is difficult, behavior management is difficult, and it is easy to become overwhelmed. This can lead to saying, “This is beyond my control.” Sometimes it can lead to blaming others: “If only [parent/administrator/counselor/special education teacher] would do their job . . .” Or it can lead to questioning yourself, your students’ potential, your beliefs about behavior, and even your overarching mission as a teacher. When you experience these struggles, remind yourself that you are not responsible for everything that happens—many things are beyond your control. You should not try to control those things that are outside your sphere of influence. However, it is important to remember that difficult circumstances should never become an excuse for failing to relentlessly pursue actions that you can control.

You can control your response to difficult situations. You can control whether you continue to push toward your mission and your positive vision for all students’ success. You can control whether you persevere and pursue those changes in your classroom that will create conditions necessary for students’ success. You can control your own behavior, attitude, and disposition as you attempt to work collaboratively with others as a professional. We encourage you, as a professional, to take pride and responsibility for the many things that are within your sphere of influence and your internal locus of control. Teachers have a powerful influence on student behavior and motivation, which is why this book is in large part about adult behavior. By continually reflecting on and making changes to those variables within your control, you play an important role in helping all your students experience success in school.

Logic Over Impulse: Recognize the Role of the Amygdala When Dealing with Challenging Behavior

If you have ever experienced serious behavioral concerns with students, such as physically dangerous behavior or serious and ongoing acts of defiance, you likely also experienced certain physiological responses. Did your palms sweat, your muscles tighten, your heart rate increase, or your breathing become shallow? Did you experience some combination of these? If the behavioral concerns recurred across time, you may have found that these physiological responses began before you even entered the environment or activity that triggered misbehavior. Perhaps you experienced these symptoms just by thinking about the student and the misbehavior.

While there is some debate in the scientific community about the specific pathways and processes that cause this effect, the following is a very basic explanation of what occurs in your brain when you experience fear, anxiety, or anger when students misbehave (Ferrara et al., 2020).

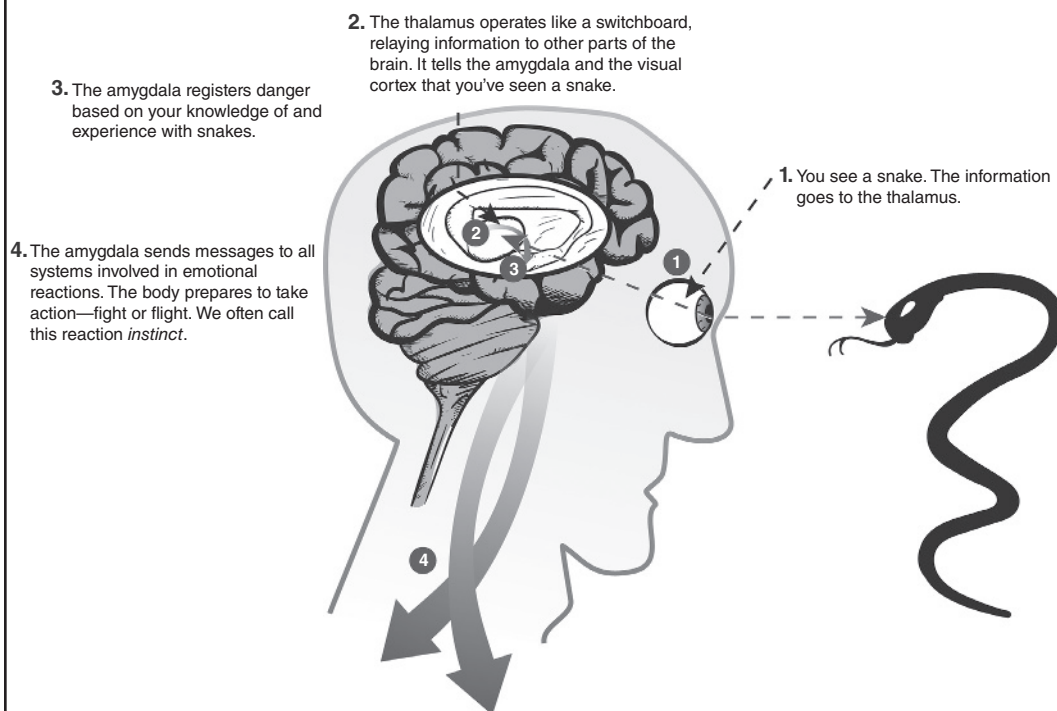
A region in the temporal lobe of the brain, called the amygdala, plays a significant role in emotions such as fear, anxiety, and anger. The information that you receive from your senses when you see, hear, smell, and touch converge in your amygdala. Then the amygdala sends

messages to the systems involved with emotional reactions and physiological symptoms. If the experience is something you fear, you hate, or you know can hurt you, the amygdala triggers the systems that keep your body safe, such as the adrenal system. Your fight, flight, or freeze response is activated, which means your body rapidly mobilizes energy to deal with the danger. Your body gets ready to fight the threat, run from it, or hide from it.

For example, if you hear or see a snake, and you know from previous experience that this sound represents a serious danger, you might freeze, your blood pressure and heart rate rise, and stress hormones are released. If you hear a frightening noise, you might quickly run away, and you get a rush of adrenaline that lets you run faster and longer than usual so you can get away from the perceived threat. In a similar way, if you experience something you fear in the classroom (e.g. dangerous behavior from a student or losing control of the class) or something that makes you extremely angry (i.e. repeated misbehavior that drives you nuts), your instinctual reactions may be triggered. Figure 1.1 shows a simplified graphic representation of the processes involved in this sequence.

While these processes were necessary and important from a human evolutionary perspective—they provided a way to stay safe from threats like wild animals or natural disasters—they are actually a major threat to being an effective educator. If student misbehavior triggers instinctual emotional and physiological responses, it can lead to impulsive responses to misbehavior that have significant likelihood of escalating negative situations. You risk being reactive, and potentially even volatile and explosive with your students. Unfortunately, there are many examples of teachers and other educators who lost control

Figure 1.1
Fight-or-Flight Response



with students who were misbehaving, leading to harmful, unethical, and sometimes even dangerous behavior from the educators themselves.

Even if you don't totally lose control, it is important to recognize that impulsive reactions to misbehavior can be the enemy of your efforts to build relational trust with students. Building positive relationships requires a thoughtful and systematic approach (as described in Chapters 6 and 7), and thus it comes from a place of logic and self-control. If the amygdala triggers impulsive responses, this is in direct conflict with the ability to use logic and self-control. Educators may find themselves belittling or ridiculing students, snapping angrily at them, screaming or yelling, or engaging in other actions that threaten the positive foundation of relational trust.

Luckily, there is another area of your brain, the prefrontal cortex, that can act as a mediator, taking impulses from the amygdala and allowing you to decide whether or not to act on them. When you recognize that you are triggered, you can coach yourself to use strategies to calm yourself down or slow down the negative emotional momentum. Many strategies in this book are designed to help you learn to self-regulate when students engage in misbehavior. Some strategies include:

- Use self-talk and tell yourself not to take student misbehavior personally.
- Coach yourself to view misbehavior as a puzzle to be solved and not a threat to be removed.
- Tell the student you need a few minutes to think about how you and the student can move forward in a positive way.
- Adopt an instructional attitude and approach to student misbehavior.
- Engage in positive interactions with other students who are meeting expectations (Chapter 6).
- Prepare yourself to deliver unemotional and fluent corrections to students (Chapter 8).
- Practice self-care and mindfulness strategies (Chapter 10).

Evaluate on an ongoing basis whether your prefrontal cortex (logical center) or your amygdala (impulsive center) is in control during times of student misbehavior. The first step is to recognize feelings and physiological symptoms of emotional escalation in the moment. If you notice symptoms like shallow breathing, sweating palms, or increased heart rate, use a strategy such as those listed above to regain a sense of control. In extreme cases, you might need to call another adult to come to your classroom for a short period so you can take a brief walk doing something calming to regain control. If situations where your emotions and impulses take control recur, consider what interventions you can put in place for yourself and seek help from colleagues, family members, friends, or even trained professionals as appropriate.

Research suggests that the prefrontal cortex is not fully developed in teenagers (Arain et al., 2013). Some of your students may have poor control over their decisions and emotions, but your more mature brain will allow you to better control your own emotions and actions. Managing yourself when students are misbehaving is within your locus of control, and it is a critical skill set for any teacher. When students are misbehaving, you have a powerful opportunity to provide a model of self-regulation and self-control.

Motivation: Understand How Motivation Affects Behavior

At various points in this book, you will consider ways to boost student motivation, and motivation is discussed in detail in Chapter 7, Task 1. In this section, you will learn one of

the foundational concepts about motivation that is referred to throughout DSC—the Expectancy times Value theory of motivation (Feather, 1982).

Before you learn about the basics of this theory, it is important to understand that motivation is not something that you can observe directly (Schunk et al., 2012). You cannot see whether a student is motivated or not, but you can infer motivation based on the student's actions and words (e.g. actively engaging with tasks or saying "I want to . . ."). When a student demonstrates a lack of action with desired tasks (e.g. refusing to engage with tasks, doing the bare minimum, or saying "I don't want to . . ."), a teacher may infer that the student may be struggling with the motivation to engage with or sustain efforts. In schools, motivation relates to factors such as (Wentzel & Miele, 2016):

- Whether and how a student engages in classroom activities
- Whether and how a student attends to instruction
- Whether a student seeks help when not understanding
- The persistence and effort a student demonstrates when faced with challenging tasks
- A student's choices (e.g. choice of extracurricular activities, courses in high school, whether to pursue school beyond high school)

Consider a student whose behavior indicates he may be struggling with motivation. The student shows up late to class, sits slumped in his chair, and rarely volunteers to participate. During independent work tasks, he either does nothing or completes only a small portion of the work. He appears apathetic and does the bare minimum in class to avoid getting in major trouble, but the teacher continually struggles to get him to engage and participate. It is common to hear teachers describe a student like this as someone who "doesn't care," "doesn't like school," or "doesn't value school."

While it is possible that a lack of value may be contributing to the student's apathetic behavior, statements such as these fail to acknowledge that the student may struggle with motivation because he does not believe he can be successful. The student may feel unmotivated because he has experienced repeated failure, because he knows his skills are far behind his peers', or because he has never seen a model of success in school within his family. He may actually highly value being successful in school and desperately wants to do well, but because he does not believe it is possible, he is unmotivated.

This example illustrates the Expectancy times Value theory of motivation. This theory explains a person's motivation on any given task as a function of the formula:

$$\text{Expectancy} \times \text{Value} = \text{Motivation}$$

In this formula, Expectancy is defined as the degree to which an individual expects to be successful at the task and Value is defined as the degree to which an individual values the rewards that accompany that success. In the following table, notice that expectancy and value are each assigned a value on a scale of 0 to 10, with 0 representing no value or no expectancy of success, and 10 representing the highest value or expectancy of success.

Expectancy Rate	×	Value Rate	=	Motivation
10	×	10	=	100
10	×	0	=	0
0	×	10	=	0

If a person has a value of 10 and an expectancy of success of 10 for a particular task or activity, that person is fully motivated to engage. However, if either expectancy or value is less than 10, the person will not be fully motivated. If either expectancy or value is 0, the person will have no motivation to engage or persist with the task.

Let's go back to the student at the beginning of this section. The teacher in this scenario hopes to come up with a plan that will help the student arrive on time, actively participate in all class activities, and complete classwork. In order to help the student meet these goals, the teacher must consider whether the student fully values the rewards that accompany success but also whether the student believes he can be successful with classroom activities. If the student does not value the rewards that accompany success, boosting motivation will require strategies to increase factors related to value. For example, if the teacher knows that the student doesn't really care about the academic content but really wants his parents to be proud of him, the teacher might increase her efforts to provide positive communication with the student's parents when he engages in classroom activities. If, on the other hand, the teacher identifies that the student has a low expectancy of success, she might provide certain accommodations or scaffolds to instruction that allow the student to experience success.

The first step is to determine what is impacting the student's motivation—low value, low expectancy, or both. Compare times when the student demonstrates motivated versus unmotivated behavior. Talk to the student and ask questions that help you understand the student's perspective and beliefs. If you can identify what is affecting the student's motivation, the next step is putting strategies and supports in place to help boost those aspects of motivation that need to be addressed.

Relational Trust: Create the Foundation of Your Management Approach by Consciously Building Positive Relationships

Classroom management and behavior support is about creating the conditions necessary for all students to be responsible, motivated, and highly engaged in meaningful tasks. The goal of an effective classroom management plan is to create a safe, civil, and productive learning environment that reduces barriers to learning. An effective management approach helps all students thrive while meeting high expectations for behavioral and academic success. These goals cannot be met without a strong foundation of relational trust with students.

Relational trust occurs when teachers demonstrate respect for students throughout their day-to-day interactions and continually demonstrate that they value students for the unique attributes and experiences they bring to the table (Bryk & Schneider, 2003). Teachers make overt efforts that demonstrate that they want to understand their students and how best to work with them and maximize their success. Teachers build relational trust when they demonstrate integrity by being consistent with what they say and what they do, and when their actions demonstrate that they have students' best interests at heart.

Think about a great sports coach. Great coaches go through drills and techniques just like any other coach. But to maximize players' potential, they seek to understand their players. They go beyond just pushing for output—they seek to understand how their players process experiences and how best to motivate them. They identify players' strengths and put them in positions that foster those strengths. They put intentional plans in place to help players develop the skills needed to address areas of weakness. Players trust that even when the coach is pushing them hard, the coach believes in them and will support them through

challenging times. Players try their best because they want to succeed, but also because they want to make their coach proud. If a player is struggling, enough trust has been built that the player can go to the coach and be vulnerable in seeking needed supports. The team is stronger because the coach has established a foundation of relational trust.

Relational trust is critical because no teacher can force their students to behave—nor should they try! While you cannot force someone to behave, you can provide a strong influence when you have built relational trust with your students. Recognize that the student is the one ultimately responsible for making any behavioral changes. If a student does not trust that her teacher has her best interests at heart, she will be much more resistant to doing what the teacher wants her to do. Even if she can see there might be some benefit in making a change, she might resist it because she doesn't want to be compliant to someone she feels is not in her corner.

Relational trust is especially important when the student cannot envision an immediate benefit in making a change requested by the teacher. The student's behavior will be entirely reliant on whether she trusts the positive intentions of her teacher. If she trusts her teacher, she may make the change simply because she knows the teacher wouldn't ask her to do something unless it was important for her success. If the student doesn't trust the teacher, it is unlikely she will put herself in the vulnerable position of trying something new or different simply because the teacher wants it.

Intentional and ongoing efforts to build relational trust are critical when you work with diverse learners who come from backgrounds different from your own (e.g. racial, socioeconomic, cultural, linguistic, etc.). Some students may automatically feel a greater sense of relational trust with a teacher who looks like them or who comes from a similar socioeconomic or cultural background. If a student thinks "this person looks or speaks like my mom and dad" or "I know this person came from the same community I grew up in," there will be a feeling of common ground that provides the beginnings of relational trust. The teacher will still have to work to build on and maintain relational trust, but the groundwork is already established.

If a student feels like their teacher doesn't look like them or talk like them, or the teacher speaks from a vastly different background, the student may not feel the same sense of familiarity or trust at the outset. This teacher will need to do more to build relational trust from day 1 so that when the teacher asks the student to do something outside of the student's comfort zone, he can trust that the teacher has their best interests in mind.

Beyond recognizing the importance of building relational trust, you can apply some practical skills to do so. Strategies throughout this book provide ways to build and maintain relational trust. A few of these are:

- **Interact respectfully at all times with students.** When students are engaged in misbehavior, model self-regulation and unemotional ways of addressing misbehavior. Be careful about the way you talk about students to others, including other students, colleagues, and parents, and strive to discuss the student in respectful ways that illustrate your belief in their potential for success.
- **Explicitly teach your Guidelines for Success, classroom rules, and expectations.** If you teach students how and why these behaviors will help them be successful in your class, and you demonstrate integrity when you apply these expectations consistently across students, students will learn to trust that you are true to your word.

- **Learn about your students' background and interests.** Use surveys, interviews, and informal conversations. Ask questions like:
 - How many siblings do you have?
 - What responsibilities do you have around the house?
 - What do you like to do after school?
 - Who do you spend your free time with?
- **Work to meet students' basic needs for acknowledgment, recognition, attention, belonging, purpose, competence, nurturing, and stimulation and change.** Periodically analyze the degree to which your students' needs are being met inside and outside of school and identify ways to implement new programs and practices that help address unmet needs.
- **Strive to have more positive interactions with students (e.g. positive greetings, acknowledging efforts and successes) than corrective interactions (e.g. reprimands, corrective consequences).** Help students understand that you see them and their strengths, and acknowledge areas of success and growth. Work to establish the understanding that corrections occur so that you can help students learn to be successful in school and beyond, not because you see them as bad kids or that they need to be punished.

The STOIC Framework: Understand Five Main Variables That Can Be Used to Influence Behavior

One of the critical concepts at the heart of DSC is that behavior, no matter how challenging or chronic, can be changed. Some people look at a class of students with challenging behavior and think, "That's just the way the kids are. They'll never change." This book operates on the opposite understanding—if most behavior is learned, it can certainly be changed! And if it can't directly be changed, supports can be put in place that allow you to create a bypass around challenges and barriers. The STOIC framework provides a way to problem-solve using the variables that can most effectively facilitate change.

A theme that runs throughout DSC is that all adults who work with kids should be problem solvers. Chronic misbehavior is viewed as a puzzle to be solved (what variables can I manipulate and what strategies can I put in place that might have a positive impact?) rather than a threat that needs to be removed (this student doesn't belong in this class/school). The principles of Structure, Teach, Observe, Interact positively, and Correct fluently (STOIC) provide a framework for fitting the puzzle pieces together, whether you're trying to change the behavior of an individual student or positively affect the collective behavior of a class:

S Structure your classroom for success. The way the classroom is organized (physical setting, schedule, routines and procedures, quality of instruction, and so on) has a huge impact on student behavior; therefore, effective teachers carefully structure their classrooms in ways that prompt responsible student behavior (Epstein et al., 2008; Gardino & Fullerton, 2010; Trussel, 2008; Wannarka & Ruhl, 2008; Weinstein, 1977). They make decisions outside of their contact time with students to set students up for success, considering factors like how to orchestrate classroom activities and transitions. When students are present, teachers organize the physical environment and instructional activities to help all students be at their best while learning.

T Teach behavioral expectations to students. Effective teachers overtly teach students how to behave responsibly and respectfully (in other words, to be successful) in every classroom situation—teacher-directed instruction, independent seatwork, cooperative groups, tests, and all major transitions (Brophy & Good, 1986; Emmer & Evertson, 2009; Simonsen et al., 2008; Trussel, 2008). Effective teachers also teach students important social-emotional skills for school and beyond. While many teachers do a fantastic job using effective teaching skills for academic content, they may struggle to apply the same skills to teaching social-emotional and behavior expectations. In *DSC*, teachers are encouraged to *teach* not *tell* when it comes to student behavior.

O Observe and supervise. Effective teachers monitor student behavior by physically circulating whenever possible and by visually scanning all parts of the classroom frequently. In addition, effective teachers observe student behavior, particularly chronic misbehavior, in objective ways and use meaningful data to monitor trends across time (Alberto & Troutman, 2012; Brophy, 1983; Colvin et al., 1997; Gunter et al., 1995; Kounin, 1970; Scheuermann & Hall, 2008) and to inform efforts for continuous improvement in their classroom. Teachers monitor data with careful consideration to issues of equity and whether structures are set up in ways to help all students be successful.

I Interact positively with students. When students have positive relationships with their teachers and feel a sense of trust that their teacher's decisions and actions are in their best interest, they are more likely to communicate, try, and succeed. Build positive relationships with students by demonstrating interest, investing in their success, and acknowledging each student's strengths. When students are behaving responsibly, they receive attention and specific descriptive feedback on their behavior. Teachers should focus more time, attention, and energy on acknowledging responsible behavior than on responding to misbehavior—what we call a high ratio of positive to corrective interactions (Brookhart, 2017; Brophy & Good, 1986; Cook et al., 2017; Klem & Connell, 2004; Sutherland et al., 2000).

C Correct fluently. Teachers must correct misbehavior to help teach students right from wrong and to help them understand how to be successful with each teacher's idiosyncratic classroom expectations. However, corrections should never represent the majority of a teacher's interactions with their students, and they should never violate the students' rights to have others honor their dignity and treat them with respect. When corrections are poorly implemented, they can damage a teacher's efforts in all of the other *STOIC* variables. Therefore, teachers should preplan their responses to misbehavior to ensure that they respond in a brief, calm, and consistent manner, increasing the chances that the flow of instruction is maintained (Abramowitz et al., 1988; Acker & O'Leary, 1988; Colvin & Sugai, 1988). In addition, with chronic and severe misbehavior, the teacher should think about the function of the misbehavior (Why is the student misbehaving?) and build a plan that ensures that the student learns and exhibits appropriate behavior (Alberto & Troutman, 2012; O'Neill et al., 1997).

Behavior can be changed by continually using and manipulating these five conceptually simple principles. The chapters in Section Two of this book are organized around the *STOIC* acronym so that you can learn a wide range of strategies to influence each of these variables. At first glance, some people may think the word *stoic* implies someone who is cold and unfeeling. However, the Encarta World English Dictionary gives us a definition of the

adjective *stoic* as “tending to remain unemotional, especially showing admirable patience and endurance in the face of adversity.” Thus, a stoic teacher is one who is unruffled by student misbehavior and who implements research-based strategies (as found in DSC) with patience and endurance.

When you begin to view misbehavior as a puzzle rather than a threat, and when you relentlessly and skillfully manipulate the STOIC pieces of the puzzle, you will find you can change behavior. We have seen it. You can do it!

In summary, in this task you learned some of the critical concepts and foundational principles that guide the DSC approach and are evident in the efforts and practices of educators who are committed to the success of all of their students:

- Mission and Beliefs: Create an Effective Vision to Guide Your Practice
- Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Access: Fulfilling the Promise of Education for All
- Data Driven-Processes: Tools for Continuous Improvement
- Locus of Control: Take Control Over Those Factors within Your Sphere of Influence
- Logic Over Impulse: Recognize the Role of the Amygdala When Dealing with Challenging Behavior
- Motivation: Understand How Motivation Affects Behavior
- Relational Trust: Create the Foundation of Your Management Approach by Consciously Building Positive Relationships
- The STOIC Framework: Understand Five Main Variables That Can Be Used to Influence Behavior

As you work through this book, carefully examine how your current practices do or do not reflect these foundational elements, and whether specific strategies would strengthen your practice in any of these areas.

Task 2: Understand How to Shape Behavior

Develop an understanding of fundamental behavior management principles so that you can make effective decisions and take appropriate actions to help students learn to behave responsibly.

Every school seems to have some students who appear angry, argumentative, or unmotivated. Frustrated teachers throw up their hands and declare these students lost causes. Teachers conclude, “They’ll never change!” The students often enter a downward spiral fueled by low expectations, constant criticism, and academic failure. Certainly, some tendencies and personality traits seem to be present from birth, but most human behavior is learned—which means it can also be unlearned or shaped into a more desirable form.

Picture Sandra, a responsible and successful ninth-grade student. Imagine that one day, the rewards she receives and values for being a model student evaporate. Instead, she starts getting failing grades, and teachers are critical of her work. The other students laugh at her work and her class participation. They either ridicule her or ignore her altogether. No one notices when she stays on task, works hard, and is respectful to others. Her parents show no interest in her schoolwork.

If this continues day after day, at home and at school, Sandra will probably stop trying to succeed. She may even respond with anger and hostility. If her angry response is rewarded by attention from others, she may find that acting in an antagonistic and aggressive manner gives her a sense of satisfaction or self-preservation. If this were to continue for months or years, Sandra would develop into a very different student from the successful ninth-grader she once was.

Now picture a student, Jevonte, who is always argumentative and angry, and as a result, has low achievement. Imagine that school personnel create a setting in which he starts experiencing success and good grades, he receives peer recognition for his positive behavior, and he no longer gets so much attention or status for his anger and hostility. If done well, an environment like this can create a powerful positive change in Jevonte. Behavior can be taught and changed (Alberto & Troutman, 2012; Cooper et al., 2007).

When a student frequently behaves irresponsibly, it's likely that they haven't experienced the benefits of responsible behavior enough, or even at all. It's also likely that this student has learned that irresponsible behavior is a more effective or efficient way of getting their needs met. The student may find that they get power, control, and perhaps even admiration from peers as a result of misbehavior (Hershfeldt et al., 2010).

If a student who was originally well-behaved will probably experience behavior changes due to repeated exposure to bad circumstances, a student who was previously struggling has the same probability of experiencing behavior changes when repeatedly exposed to good circumstances. The following behavior management principles provide the framework for the rest of this book—that is, that exposing all students to the best circumstances can foster positive behavior and high levels of motivation, whether the student previously engaged in mostly appropriate or mostly inappropriate behavior. Behavior can be changed.

Behavior Management Principles

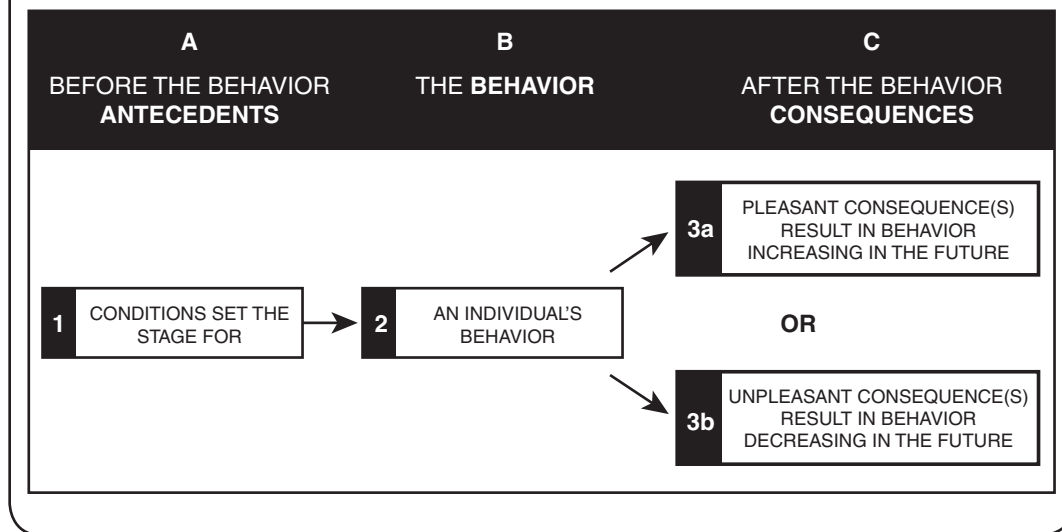
Throughout this book, you will focus on the vision of your ideal classroom. Because there will undoubtedly be times when your students behave irresponsibly, your classroom vision should include something about how you will help students learn to behave more responsibly. You can do this by developing an understanding of and skill in using fundamental behavior management principles. Specifically, as a teacher, you need to know why and how to:

- Structure your class and teach expectations to promote responsible student behavior.
- Effectively acknowledge responsible student behavior.
- Effectively respond to irresponsible student behavior.

An overview of the most important principles of behavior management is presented in the following pages. Chapters 2 through 8 provide more detailed information about the principles and specific actions that you can take.

The principles of behavior management are grounded in the assumption that people are constantly engaged in learning and that every life experience adds to a person's knowledge base. Every experience influences a person's subsequent actions, both consciously and unconsciously. In general, behaviors that are rewarded over time are maintained, while those that are not rewarded are typically extinguished. For example, a job seeker who has submitted scores of résumés without any resulting interviews may decide to write a new résumé.

Figure 1.2
Variables That Affect Behavior



He sends out the new résumé and gets multiple interviews. He has learned that the new résumé brings better results, and in the future he will likely use the new résumé instead of the old one. Similarly, if someone goes to a movie that a friend recommends and finds it to be a bad movie and a waste of money, that person will be less likely to trust the friend's movie recommendations in the future.

Scenarios such as these are repeated in each person's life many times each day, in uncountable and interwoven combinations, to create a rich fabric of experiences and learning. Simply put, a person's behavior is influenced by events and conditions they experience. Some experiences encourage that person to engage in certain behaviors, and others discourage that person from engaging in certain behaviors. Figure 1.2 shows a graphic representation of the three main variables that affect behavior.

The three variables are:

1. **Conditions.** What is prompting or enabling the behavior?
2. **The Behavior.** What is the person doing?
3. **Consequences.** What is encouraging and sustaining or discouraging the behavior? If consequences resulting from a particular behavior are perceived as pleasant, that behavior will increase or occur more frequently. If consequences resulting from a particular behavior are perceived as unpleasant, that behavior will decrease or occur less frequently.

Readers with behavioral training will recognize this as a simple antecedent, behavior, consequence model of behavioral theory expressed in commonsense and pragmatic terms. This model provides a useful structure for helping teachers understand basic behavior management principles.

To effectively apply the fundamental principles of behavior management to your classroom, you should keep in mind two essential underlying concepts. These concepts have very important implications for teachers about where they should focus their time and energy

Note

Because the vocabulary typically associated with behavioral theory is so often misunderstood or misused (or both), less technical vocabulary and more commonsense examples are used throughout this book. In addition, although the fundamentals of school-based behavior management are based on a large and comprehensive body of research findings, only that information most useful to teachers is included. As a result, what is presented here reflects a simple understanding of very complex principles.

in terms of managing student behavior. The two concepts are:

1. Effective teachers spend more time promoting responsible behavior than responding to irresponsible behavior (Beaman & Wheldall, 2000; Brophy & Good, 1986; Walker et al., 2004).
2. Effective teachers recognize that misbehavior (especially any chronic misbehavior) occurs for a reason, and they take that reason into account when determining a response to the misbehavior (Alberto & Troutman, 2006; Cooper et al., 2007; Scheuermann & Hall, 2008).

Promoting Responsible Behavior

You will prevent most misbehavior from ever occurring when you focus the majority of your time and energy on these three major categories of teacher-based actions for promoting responsible behavior:

Modify conditions. Use effective instruction and set up conditions for students to be successful by prompting responsible behavior and discouraging irresponsible behavior. Specific actions include but are by no means limited to:

- Make sure students understand what the behavioral expectations are.
- Make sure students know how to meet the behavioral expectations.
- Arrange the physical space so that it is more conducive to responsible behavior than to irresponsible behavior.
- Design a fast-paced schedule and provide interesting lessons.
- Run efficient transitions between activities.
- Build a positive rapport and relational trust with all students.
- Interact respectfully and positively with all students.
- Show an interest in student work.

Implement pleasant consequences for responsible behavior. Ensure that students experience appropriate positive feedback when they engage in responsible behavior. Specific actions include:

- Give verbal praise.
- Write positive notes.
- Encourage students to praise themselves.
- Contact parents regarding students' responsible behavior.
- Occasionally reward individuals or the whole class with a special activity.

Remove any aversive aspects of exhibiting responsible behavior. Ensure that students do not experience negative results from exhibiting responsible behavior. Specific actions include:

- Avoid embarrassing students with the way in which you deliver praise.
- Ensure that no student is the target of laughter for making a mistake during class participation.
- Ensure that no student ever feels like a geek for behaving responsibly.
- Ensure that no one is ridiculed as a teacher's pet for behaving responsibly.

Discouraging Irresponsible Behavior

It is often difficult to understand why a student behaves irresponsibly, especially when the consequences of that behavior seem highly unpleasant. However, whenever a student or group of students exhibits irresponsible behavior on an ongoing basis, the behavior is occurring for a reason—it is not completely random (Carr, 1993; Gresham et al., 2001; Skinner, 1953). Therefore, the first thing you need to do is determine the reason for the misbehavior. Likely possibilities are:

- The student doesn't know exactly what you expect.
- The student doesn't know how to exhibit the responsible behavior.
- The student is unaware that they engaged in the misbehavior.
- The student is experiencing some pleasant outcome from exhibiting the misbehavior (for example, she likes the attention she gets from adults or peers).
- The student is successfully avoiding some unpleasant outcome by exhibiting the misbehavior (for example, he is getting out of assigned work).

Many of you may recognize that the previous bulleted list relates to the concept of *function of behavior*. Once you have a reasonable idea of why a chronic misbehavior is occurring, you can take actions to reduce and eventually eliminate it. Again, there are three major categories of teacher-based actions for you to consider.

Modify conditions. Modify any conditions that may be perpetuating the misbehavior. Specific actions include but are by no means limited to the following:

- Provide lessons to teach the student how to behave responsibly.
- Assign different seats to two students who talk when they sit together.
- Modify work that is too difficult for the student who is not completing assignments.
- Pace lessons more quickly so students are less likely to get off-task.
- Provide something for students to do when they complete classwork so they do not have lots of time to fill with misbehavior.

Remove any positive aspects of exhibiting irresponsible behavior. Remove any pleasant outcomes that might be resulting from the misbehavior. Examples include:

- Ignore misbehavior designed to get attention.
- Respond calmly to a student who likes to make adults angry.
- Ensure that a student is not excused from assigned work as a result of their misbehavior.

Implement corrective consequences for exhibiting irresponsible behavior. Implement corrective consequences that will make exhibiting the misbehavior more unpleasant for the student. Examples include:

- Use a system of demerits (three demerits result in an after-school detention, for example).
- Assign 15 seconds of time owed after class for each infraction.
- Use a classroom point system and institute point fines for particular infractions.

Case Study: Taking Action to Improve Irresponsible Behavior

Consider a ninth-grade student, Emilio, who has been chronically confrontational and argumentative with staff since he entered the high school. Emilio has been continually sent out of class and regularly assigned to detention, but his behavior hasn't improved.

Imagine you are tasked with developing a plan to help improve Emilio's behavior and increase his likelihood of success in ninth grade.

First, you'll need to consider what the student gains from his behavior. There are several possibilities to consider:

- Arguing may give Emilio lots of attention from adults (direct, angry engagement), providing him with a sense of power over adults.
- Emilio may find that getting sent to the office for arguing is more interesting than remaining in the classroom.
- Arguing may give Emilio lots of attention from his peers for appearing strong and powerful enough to fight with teachers.
- Emilio may not know the expectations for respectfully communicating with staff when advocating for himself at school.
- Emilio may be struggling in class and slips into argumentative behavior to avoid doing academic work.
- Emilio may lack the skills to manage anger and frustration, and as a result his behavior escalates.

Next, review each of the action categories and suggested procedures that school personnel might take to influence Emilio's behavior. For each of the possible reasons for misbehavior listed above, select one or two procedures from each category that would make sense to implement with Emilio.

1. Modify conditions (organization, schedule, physical structure, and so on) to encourage more responsible behavior and discourage irresponsible behavior.
 - Give Emilio a high-status job (to be performed daily) that will increase his sense of power and purpose in the school.
 - Because Emilio seems to behave better during teacher-directed instruction, consider arranging for a greater percentage of his daily schedule to be teacher-directed instruction.
 - To mitigate the possibility that Emilio is misbehaving because he is frustrated by academic difficulties, arrange for him to receive private tutorial assistance in his most difficult subjects.

- Modify Emilio's academic assignments so he can succeed.
 - Correct Emilio before he makes an error (for example, privately say, "This is the type of work period where you need to try to stay calm and work with me without arguing. Let's have a good day today.")
 - Assign Emilio a different place to sit in the room.
 - Tell all staff to make an effort to give Emilio very clear directions.
 - Remind staff to avoid power struggles with Emilio.
2. Implement pleasant consequences designed to encourage responsible behavior.
 - Tell all staff that whenever Emilio exhibits responsible behavior, they should give him specific praise.
 - Ask all staff members to make an effort to give Emilio frequent, unconditional, positive adult attention.
 - Remind all staff to privately praise Emilio when he follows directions without arguing.
 3. *Remove any aversive aspects of exhibiting responsible behavior.*
 - Prearrange times during the day when Emilio can privately ask teachers questions or get assistance so he does not have to do so in front of his peers.
 - Remind staff to avoid publicly praising Emilio for following directions.
 4. *Remove any positive aspects of exhibiting irresponsible behavior.*
 - Remind staff to avoid engaging in arguments with Emilio. Provide training as necessary.
 - Train other students to ignore situations in which Emilio begins to argue.
 - Train staff to maintain instructional momentum so Emilio doesn't get attention from peers when he attempts to argue.
 5. *Implement effective corrective consequences designed to reduce irresponsible behavior.*
 - Give Emilio a warning when he begins to argue. ("Emilio, this is an example of arguing.").
 - Calmly implement a corrective consequence when Emilio continues to argue after the warning.
 - Ignore any further attempts by Emilio to engage in arguing.
 - Redirect Emilio to the activity he should be engaged in.
 - Keep accurate records of the number of times and the duration of each arguing incident.

Implementing an intervention plan that includes procedures from some or all of these categories increases the probability that staff will be successful in helping Emilio learn to behave more responsibly. An intervention plan may not be effective if staff does nothing to remove the positive aspects of exhibiting the irresponsible behavior, such as the peer and teacher attention the student receives. If getting peer and teacher attention is more valuable to him than anything he gains from the intervention steps taken, his behavior will not improve.

In summary, whether you are starting this book at the beginning of the year or during it, understanding that you, the teacher, can change student behavior—shaping students toward those behaviors that will allow them to succeed—is essential to understanding the DSC approach. Most of the suggestions in the rest of the book assume that you understand the basics of behavior management that have been presented here.

Task 3: Prepare Your Classroom Management Plan

Understand how to use your Classroom Management Plan to summarize important information, policies, and procedures you will use to motivate students and address appropriate and inappropriate behavior.

By developing a Classroom Management Plan before the school year begins, you set the stage to deal productively with the range of behaviors, both positive and negative, that students will exhibit in your classroom (Alberto & Troutman, 2012; Emmer & Evertson, 2009; Emmer et al., 2003; Scheuermann & Hall, 2008; Trussell, 2008).

Some educators are uncomfortable with the term *management* when it comes to student behavior. They fear that it connotes a dictatorial approach to force compliance from students. Instead, we urge you to consider what a highly effective, positive manager does in a business setting. A good manager is one who effectively manages time and resources to ensure the business is thriving. The manager considers the strengths and needs of staff members to create the conditions for everyone to be successful. The manager uses effective communication to clearly teach expectations and to determine what the business and employees need so they can all be at their best. Just like an effective manager in business, your job is to design a management plan for your classroom that creates the conditions for maximum success.

An effective management and discipline plan is not a canned program or a static entity. It is a framework that supports a variety of rituals, routines, rules, consequences, and motivational techniques you can use to ensure that students are academically engaged and emotionally thriving. Though your plan should be in place before the school year begins, you will adjust your initial plan to meet the changing needs of the class as the year progresses. Your plan will be somewhat different on the first day of school, on the 20th day of school, on a day a new student comes to class, and on the last day of school.

Let's look at an example from the field of medicine to get a sense of this concept. If you are going into the hospital for surgery, you assume (and hope!) that the surgeon, the nurses, and the lab have a plan in place for how everything is going to work. Without a coordinated plan, the possibility of disaster is high—they may not have the blood type you need, the equipment may not be sterilized, or perhaps there won't be enough nurses to assist in the operation. However, even with the most organized plan, adjustments need to be made during the course of the operation. They may need more plasma

than originally anticipated, they may need immediate information from the lab about an abnormal growth, or they may find that your organs are in a slightly atypical position. With the basic plan in place, it can be adjusted to meet the needs that arise during the course of the operation.

Exhibit 1.1 shows the Classroom Management Plan that will be used to summarize the major management considerations you put in place in your classroom. As you proceed through the remaining chapters of this book, you will complete tasks and fill in different sections of your Classroom Management Plan. A blank fillable version, Reproducible 1.1, that you can complete is provided in the downloadable reproducible materials (see p.7 for download directions). If you prefer, you can print out Reproducible 1.1 and fill it in by hand. Reproducible 1.2 (shown in Chapter 9, Task 1) is a template that includes bulleted highlights from each chapter to assist you in filling out your version of the Classroom Management Plan. Special thanks to Mike Booher for the idea to provide Reproducible 1.2, the template with bulleted explanations.

Exhibit 1.1

Classroom Management Plan

Teacher

School Year

Room No.

Grade Level/Class

The level of support I anticipate establishing is (check one): ☐ High ☐ Medium
☐ Low

Guidelines for Success (Chapter 2, Task 1, pages 48–51)

Posted Rules (Chapter 2, Task 2, pages 52–56)

Attention Signal (Chapter 2, Task 4, pages 67–69)

Beginning and Ending Routines (Chapter 2, Task 5, pages 70–80)

1. Routine for entering class:
2. Routine for opening activities:
3. Protocols for students not prepared with materials:

4. Protocols for students returning after an absence:
5. Procedures for end of class or period:
6. Routine for dismissal:

CHAMPS or ACHIEVE Expectations for Classroom Activities and Transitions (Chapter 2, Task 6, pages 81–90, and Chapter 3, Tasks 3–5, pages 117–138; Forms 2.3 and 3.2 or 3.3)

Procedures for Family Contact (Chapter 2, Task 8, pages 93–101)

Procedures for Managing Student Assignments (Chapter 3, Task 6, pages 138–146)

1. Procedures for assigning classwork and homework:
2. Procedures for collecting completed work:
3. Procedures for returning completed work:
4. Procedures for maintaining records and keeping students informed of their current grade status:
5. Procedures and policies for dealing with late and missing assignments:

Procedures for Managing Student Technology Use (Chapter 3, Task 7, pages 146–153)

Long-Range Goals (Chapter 3, Task 8, pages 154–156)

Procedures for Interacting Positively with and Encouraging Students (Chapter 6, Tasks 2–4, pages 234–252, and Chapter 7, Tasks 2–3, pages 265–293)

Correction Procedures for Misbehavior (Chapter 8, Task 2–3, pages 300–320; both early-stage corrections and rule violation consequences)

Identify the Level of Support You and Your Students Need

Your Classroom Management Plan may be very tightly or very loosely orchestrated and supported by you as the teacher. This notion of level of support has nothing to do with being friendly or punitive, but simply refers to the degree of orchestration of student behavior and the amount of care you must take when implementing procedures to encourage appropriate behavior. For example, in a highly supported classroom, dismissal may be very organized, with students excused in small groups for a calm, orderly, and quiet exit. In a low-support management plan, the entire class may be excused at once, resulting in a slightly more chaotic feel. The low-support approach requires greater maturity on the part of the class to ensure safe and responsible exiting.

The level of support in your Classroom Management Plan is based on two factors: your unique personal needs and the collective needs of your students. To determine the level of support necessary, you will use this task to reflect on your own style and the needs of the students you will be teaching.

If you have a high need for structure (e.g. if you prefer minimal background noise and very orderly movement), it's best to create a highly orchestrated management plan, even if your students can responsibly handle a less structured setting. If you personally have quite a bit of tolerance for noise and movement, you can defer more to the needs of your students.

Student needs are determined largely by the risk factors of your student body. If you have a large class, many immature students, or students who struggle with the course content, the risk factors are likely high and you will need a more supportive class environment. If your classes have predominantly mature and independent students, you will be able to follow a more loosely structured plan.

Consider your needs. Reflect on your personal style. Are there issues that you need to address in order to be comfortable in the classroom? For example, what is your tolerance for noise? A teacher with a high tolerance for noise still needs to teach students appropriate noise levels, but these levels might be higher than in some classrooms. This teacher is also unlikely to be rattled by activities where the noise level rises, such as cooperative groups. For a teacher with a low tolerance for noise, this same level of activity in a class of 30 or more students without a high and clearly defined structure may provoke a feeling of chaos and concern that the class is spiraling out of control. This teacher may turn to increased punitive consequences or exhibit a level of stress and frustration that is not productive to the class environment. The difference here is not the behavior of the students but the needs and perception of the teacher. The teacher who knows they have a low tolerance for noise needs to create a management plan that will directly teach and ensure that students keep the noise level to a minimum. This teacher must plan to monitor and provide feedback to students about the level of noise that is acceptable. This is especially true during activities such as cooperative groups and lab activities.

Review the questions in Part 1 of Classroom Support Needs Assessment, and assign yourself a score on a scale from 0 to 20 for each question. There are no right or wrong answers to these questions. Plan to be honest with yourself about yourself. This survey is not a scientific instrument, but rather a good way to reflect on the type of classroom setting you need in order to thrive as a positive and energetic force. The answers to these questions will help you determine which issues you need to address in order to be comfortable in the classroom.

Repro 1.3/Exhibit 1.2

Classroom Structure Needs Assessment

PART 1: TEACHER NEEDS

Read each question and assign yourself a score from 0 to 20, with 0 representing the answer on the left of the scale and 20 the answer on the right.

- What is your tolerance for **background noise**?

I love to have conversations in crowded, noisy restaurants.	Holiday music in department stores drives me crazy after about 30 minutes.
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20	
- What is your tolerance for **individual voices** (volume, pitch, whining, mumbling, etc.)?

No style of voice seems to bother me — even when there are several at once.	Some voices are like fingernails on a chalkboard.
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20	
- What is your tolerance for **interruption**?

I would be fine working as a receptionist — managing phones, people, and equipment.	When the phone rings twice during dinner, I want to scream.
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20	
- What is your tolerance for **background movement**?

I thrive on the hustle and bustle of downtown in a large city.	I prefer to relax by the side of a quiet lake.
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20	
- What is your ability to **multitask** without becoming flustered?

I love to do three things at once.	I do not like to talk to anyone while I am collating papers.
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20	

TEACHER NEEDS TOTAL SCORE

0–33
Low Support Needs

You don't require much structure and will probably be content with a Low, Medium, or High Support Classroom Management Plan.

34–66
Medium Support Needs

For you to stay calm and positive, your classroom management plan should involve Medium or High Support.

67–100
High Support Needs

For you to stay calm and positive, your classroom management plan should involve High Support.

Upon completing the survey, total the scores. Use the scales provided in Classroom Support Needs Assessment to assess your needs and determine the most appropriate level of support for your classroom management plan.

- *Low support needs:* If you scored between 0 and 33, you may be fine in any type of setting. As long as your students can responsibly handle low supports, you can establish a management plan that is less orchestrated.
- *Medium support needs:* If you scored between 34 and 66, you probably do best in classrooms that are medium to high support. You require some level of calm, orchestration, and predictability in order to feel under control and that your classroom is running smoothly.
- *High support needs:* If you scored between 67 and 100, you'll need a high support plan. If noise, interruption, and multitasking make you nervous or put you on edge, structure your classroom to keep these factors to a minimum so you can stay calm and positive. You may wish to complete the student needs survey simply out of interest, but regardless of the results, plan to implement a high-support management plan.

Exhibit 1.2

Classroom Structure Needs Assessment

PART 2: STUDENT RISK FACTORS

For each question, circle the number under the statement that best answers the question. If you are unsure about or do not know the answer to a question, circle the middle choice. Add all the numbers circled and enter the total.

Questions 1–6 relate to the population of the entire school.

1. How would you describe the overall behavior of students in your school?

Generally quite irresponsible. I frequently have to nag and/or assign consequences.	Most students behave responsibly, but about 10% put me in the position where I have to nag and/or assign consequences.	Generally responsible. I rarely find it necessary to nag and/or assign consequences.
10	5	0

2. What percentage of students in your school qualify for free or reduced lunch?*

60% or more	10% to 60%	Less than 10%
10	5	0

3. What percentage of students in your school typically move in and/or out of the school during the course of the school year?

50% or more	10% to 50%	Less than 10%
10	5	0

4. How would you describe the overall attitude of students toward school?

A large percentage hate school and ridicule the students who are motivated.	It's a mix, but most students feel okay about school.	The vast majority of students like school and are highly motivated.
10	5	0

5. How would you describe the overall nature of the interactions between students and adults in your school?

There are frequent confrontations that include sarcasm and disrespect.	There is a mix, but most interactions are respectful and positive.	The vast majority of interactions are respectful and positive.
10	5	0

6. How would you describe the level of interest and support provided by the parents of students in your school?

Many parents are openly antagonistic, and many show no interest in school.	Most parents are at least somewhat supportive of school.	The majority of parents are interested, involved, and supportive of what goes on in school.
10	5	0

*While poverty level tells you nothing about an individual student, the percentage of students from poverty has an influence on your initial decision about level of support. Notice that this is weighted the same as Item 8, the number of students in the class.

Questions 7–10 relate to students in your class this year. Use your most difficult class, or if you are doing this before the school year begins, simply give your best guess.

7. What grade level do you teach?

9th Grade	10th Grade	11th or 12th Grade
10	5	0

8. How many students do you have in your class?

30 or more	23 to 30	22 or fewer
10	5	0

9. How many students in your class have been identified as eligible to receive special education services under the categories of Emotional Disturbance or Autism? NOTE: This label varies from state to state (e.g., ED, EBD, BD, etc.).

Two or more	One	Zero
10	5	0

10. Not including students eligible to receive special education services, how many students in your class have a reputation for chronic discipline problems?

Three or more	One or two	Zero
10	5	0

STUDENT RISK FACTORS TOTAL SCORE

Interpretation: Use the scale below to interpret student risk factors and determine the most appropriate level of support for your classroom.

0–33 Low Support Needs	34–66 Medium Support Needs	67–100 High Support Needs
You don't require much structure and will probably be content with a Low-, Medium-, or High Support classroom management plan.	For you to stay calm and positive, your classroom management plan should involve Medium or High Support.	For you to stay calm and positive, your classroom management plan should involve High Support.

CHAMPS: A Proactive and Positive Approach to Classroom Management by J. Sprick, R. Sprick, J. Edwards, & C. Coughlin (Eugene, OR: Ancora Publishing, 2021)

Consider your students' needs. Next, consider the needs of your students. Review the risk factors listed in Part 2 of Classroom Structure Needs Assessment and indicate those items that are relevant for your classroom. For example, if you have 30 students in your class, you'll likely need a more supportive management plan than for a class of 15.

Use the scales provided in Classroom Support Needs Assessment to assess your students' risk factors and determine the most appropriate level of support for your classroom management plan.

- **Low support needs:** If your score is between 0 and 33, your students can probably be successful with a classroom management plan that involves low, medium, or high support. The level of support can be defined by your teaching style.
- **Medium support needs:** If your score is between 34 and 66, your classroom management plan should involve medium or high support for your students to be successful.
- **High support needs:** If your score is between 67 and 100, your classroom management plan should involve high support. Regardless of your personal preference or style, your students will probably benefit from a detailed, systematic, and organized Classroom Management Plan.

Note

If you know you will be teaching groups with highly different needs and risk factors throughout the day, plan to complete the students' needs evaluation for each group. For example, if you teach three periods of freshman remedial math classes and two periods of AP Calculus, these two distinct groups will likely require different levels of support. In some cases, you may teach periods with the same material and grade level, but one class has highly mature and responsible students and the other has many immature students with behavioral concerns. These classes may require differing levels of support in order to ensure a safe, civil, and productive learning environment for each group. In these instances, assess each group for the required level of support by filling out multiple versions of Classroom Support Needs Assessment, Classroom Structure Needs Assessment, for the different student groups you are teaching.

Putting Your Needs and Students' Needs Together: What Level of Support Is Needed?

After completing the questionnaires related to your needs and your students' needs, decide on an appropriate level of support for your Classroom Management Plan. As you progress through the remainder of this book, you will find references to how tasks will be implemented differently depending on your and your students' needs for support.

At the top of your Classroom Management Plan (Reproducible 1.1), indicate which level of support is higher—your needs or your students' needs. For example, if your needs indicate that you are okay with low structure but your students require high structure and support, plan to use high support. Similarly, even if your students do well with low support but you require high structure to function at your best as a teacher, plan to put a high structure and support plan in place. Once you determine the level of support, it will guide many subsequent decisions about your management plan, such as organizational routines and whether and how to implement a group-based motivational plan.

We recommend always erring on the side of higher support. In general, research has shown that classrooms with more structure typically promote increases in appropriate academic and social behaviors (Simonsen et al., 2008). If the risk factors of your class are high and your management plan is not sufficiently structured with tightly orchestrated activities and transitions, student behavior will become problematic (Barbetta et al., 2005; Guardino & Fullerton, 2010; Pedota, 2007). It is not acceptable to have a low-support management approach (even if that is your preference based on your own personal needs) if the result is chaotic, off-task, or disrespectful behavior from students. Similarly, providing positive feedback and working to establish positive relationships with students will benefit any classroom, but will be of critical importance in classrooms with many students who struggle with academic or behavioral expectations or who require greater levels of support for other reasons.

There are two additional considerations regarding support:

1. ***Start the year with high support.*** As previously suggested, plan to err on the side of using high supports, especially at the beginning of the year. Starting the year with a more supportive classroom management plan increases the likelihood that students will engage in high levels of academic engagement and appropriate behavior later in the year (Emmer & Evertson, 2009; Emmer & Stough, 2001). If the students in your class end up being highly responsible, you can easily transition to a less structured approach.

For example, in your end-of-class routine, it is more structured to excuse students by rows or tables than to simply say, "Class, you are excused. See you tomorrow." If during the first two weeks of school you excuse your class by small groups and find that they are a highly respectful and responsible group, you may then say, "Class, for the last two weeks I have been excusing you in groups. You are such a responsible class that starting today, I will excuse the entire class at once. I know you will handle this responsibly, with no racing to the door. Everyone, remember to respect everyone else's physical safety and to use quiet voices."

Contrast this with a different class. Imagine that, on the first few days of school, you excused the entire class at the same time and they were loud and unruly. It will now be harder to enforce a more highly structured dismissal because the students will expect (and may even look forward to) a loud, unruly end to the class. You are also taking away a more student-directed procedure, which your students may perceive as unfair or punitive.

2. ***Make adjustments as the year progresses.*** The level of support in your classroom is not static and should fluctuate during the course of the school year based on students' changing needs. Plan to evaluate your students' need for support at various times throughout the year. For example:
 - Assess how well students are meeting your expectations sometime during the fourth or fifth week of school and again after winter and spring breaks (procedures for evaluating how well students are meeting expectations are discussed in Chapters 9 and 10). Recognize that during the week before and after each major break and during the last month of school, student behavior predictability deteriorates somewhat. Rather than relaxing your support, it is probably better to increase it at that time.
 - If your students experience a major change or event, such as a major natural disaster or a traumatic event affecting the school community, additional structure can help create predictability and a sense of calm and routine.
 - If a new student or students will be moving into your classroom during the year, plan to tweak your management plan and increase support for a few weeks to help you determine if the students require higher support. As many teachers well know, even one individual student can drastically change existing classroom dynamics in ways that warrant greater orchestration by the teacher. This is especially true if your work in a school with high risk factors in a large portion of your population and/or your student population experiences high mobility and you can therefore expect frequent changes in the classroom composition throughout the year.

- If you do not personally require higher structure and see that your students are demonstrating the ability for increased independence, work to gradually loosen supports while actively teaching students how to handle increased responsibility and independence as the year progresses.
- If a significant number of students are not meeting expectations at any point in the school year, temporarily move to a higher level of support and organization until they are consistently meeting behavioral expectations.

As you read through the subsequent chapters in this book, you will notice references to how various tasks might be implemented differently depending on whether your class requires higher or lower levels of support.

- If you have a class that needs high support, implement all of the tasks in this book.
- If you have a medium-support class, implement most of the tasks in this book, except for those that your students clearly do not need. You may decide to implement them in a somewhat less orchestrated or teacher-directed fashion than may be needed with a high-support class.
- If you have a low-support class, you can implement only the tasks you believe will be needed to motivate your class and ignore any procedures that you feel aren't necessary to ensure effective use of instructional time.

To summarize, the greater the support needs of your students, the more you as a teacher will need to carefully orchestrate and implement all of the tasks in CHAMPs.

Conclusion

In this chapter, you learned some of the foundational principles that guide our work at Safe & Civil Schools and that we hope will guide your approach to the DSC materials and implementing a proactive and positive management approach. Your Classroom Management Plan is the framework that supports a variety of rituals, routines, rules, consequences, and motivational techniques you can use to ensure that students are academically engaged and emotionally thriving. It may be highly or loosely supported to meet your needs and the needs of your class. You will complete the Classroom Management Plan as you go through each chapter in this book, keeping your current or incoming group of students in mind. Remember to adjust your initial plan to meet the changing needs of the class as the year progresses and from year to year.

