

## Classroom Management

The following questions highlight some considerations when developing, establishing, and maintaining classroom expectations and routines (Colvin and Lazar, 1997; Kame'enui and Darch, 1996; Kerr and Nelson, 1998; Sprick, 1981, Sprick, Garrison, and Howard, 1998; Sugai and Tindal, 1993):

- Am I teaching useful, appropriate, and important skills and knowledge to students?
- Am I using effective instructional strategies and curricula to teach these skills and knowledge?
- Is my instruction designed to maximize successful student engagement?
- Have I taught classroom rules and expectation directly to students?
- Have students demonstrated mastery of classroom expectations and routines?
- What obstacles prevent students from performing desired classroom expectations and routines?
- Have I taught and do I use procedures for encouraging (positively reinforcing) appropriate displays of classroom rules and expectations?
- Have I taught and do I use a continuum of procedures for discouraging/preventing rule violations?
- Have I established and taught students the differences between teacher or classroom-managed and administrator managed problem behavior?
- Do I modify my instruction to maximize student learning and to accommodate individual student differences?
- Do I have procedures in place for monitoring student behavior and the effectiveness of my classroom management practices?

### **What classroom management practices should be emphasized in classroom systems?**

Over the past 30 years, a clearly defined research-validated literature base exists on effective classroom management practice (Alberto and Troutman, 1998; Charles, 1995; Colvin and Lazar, 1997; Kame'enui and Darch, 1995; Kerr and Nelson, 1998; Sugai and Tindal, 1993). The following list provides a small sample of effective practices that fit conceptually within classroom systems of positive behavioral support and have clear empirical evidence of their effectiveness.

Provide advance organizers/precorrections. Precorrections function as reminders by providing students with opportunities to practice or be prompted about expected behavior before they enter situations in which displays of problem behaviors are likely (Colvin, Sugai, Patching, 1993). For example, a teacher states the following: "remember, before you go to homeroom collect all you materials, put your work on my desk and quietly line up," or "what are your responsibilities before you go to home room?"

Keep students engaged. During teacher instruction, students go "off-task" because (a) the instructional activities do not maintain student attention, (b) insufficient positive reinforcement is being provided, or (c) students access positive reinforcement from other activities or individuals. The teacher's task is to maximize academic engagement and success for all students in order to support

appropriate behavior and to compete with factors that encourage problem behavior (e.g., peer or teacher attention, task avoidance or escape).

Provide a positive focus. To promote desired student behavior, teachers should communicate high and positive expectations, have more positive than negative interactions (e.g., four positive engagements for each negative interaction), catch problem behavior before it escalates or becomes more severe, provide high rates of positive reinforcement, etc.

Consistently enforce school/class rules. If all students are expected to engage in appropriate behavior, rule definitions, positive reinforcement, rule violation consequences, etc. should be the same for all students at all times.

Correct rule violations and social behavior errors proactively. The application of error correction strategies should be conducted in a "business-like" manner, and attention for the problem behavior should be minimized. For low frequency and intensity rule violations, teachers should provide a brief signal that an error has occurred, indicate what the desired behavior should have been, and follow-up with the established consequence. Error correction strategies will be more effective if students first are taught what acceptable and unacceptable behaviors look like and what consequences are likely to follow each. For chronic rule violations, strategies should be established to pre-empt future occurrences of the problem behavior and to increase the probability that the desired or expected behavior is likely to occur.

Teach and plan for smooth transitions. Teachers should never assume students will know what behaviors are expected during transitions. Successful transitions are associated with (a) teaching clear expectations for student behavior, (b) establishing clear expectations for staff behavior during transitions, (c) preplanning transition implementation, (d) following transition routines consistently, and (e) providing regular and frequent acknowledgements for successful transitions.