

# 2

## RULES AND PROCEDURES

Probably the most obvious aspect of effective classroom management involves the design and implementation of classroom rules and procedures. Emmer, Evertson, and Worsham (2003) attest to the need for rules and procedures by explaining that they

. . . vary in different classrooms, but all effectively managed classrooms have them. It is just not possible for a teacher to conduct instruction or for students to work productively if they have no guidelines for how to behave or when to move about the room, or if they frequently interrupt the teacher and one another. Furthermore, inefficient procedures and the absence of routines for common aspects of classroom life, such as taking and reporting attendance, participating in discussions, turning in materials, or checking work, can waste large amounts of time

and cause students' attention and interest to wane. (p. 17)

Even though this quotation comes from a textbook on secondary classroom management, the authors make the same assertion about elementary rules and procedures (Evertson, Emmer, & Worsham, 2003).

Although the terms are sometimes used interchangeably, rules and procedures have some important differences. Both refer to stated expectations regarding behavior. However, a rule identifies general expectations or standards, and a procedure communicates expectations for specific behaviors (Evertson et al., 2003; Emmer et al., 2003). For example, a teacher might establish the rule "Respect others and their property." This single rule addresses a wide range of expected behaviors. The same teacher might also establish separate procedures for collecting assignments,

turning in late work, participating in class discussions, and so on. These expectations are fairly specific in nature.

## The Research and Theory

As discussed in Chapter 1, the findings from my meta-analysis form the basis for the recommendations made in this book (although I have tried to also include the findings and conclusions from a broad and, I hope, representative review of the research and theory). Figure 2.1 presents the results of the meta-analysis with regard to rules and procedures.

The first row in Figure 2.1 reports the average effect size for designing and implementing classroom rules and procedures in general. Out of 10 studies involving 636 students, the average effect size was  $-.763$ . Figure 2.1 also reports the average effect sizes for designing and implementing rules and procedures at the high school level, the middle school/junior high level, and the upper

elementary level. Before considering those grade-level effect sizes, let's focus on the average effect size of  $-.763$ .

This effect size indicates that across the various grade levels the average number of disruptions in classes where rules and procedures were effectively implemented was 28 percentile points lower than the average number of disruptions in classes where that was not the case. Figure 2.1 also includes information that was not presented in the discussion in Chapter 1 regarding effect sizes—namely the column entitled 95 Percent Confidence Interval. That interval for the average effect size of  $-.763$  is  $-.598$  to  $-.927$ . Understanding what this interval means will help broaden the discussion of the benefits of meta-analysis.

Recall that in Chapter 1 I described meta-analysis as a technique for quantitatively synthesizing the findings from a number of studies. In this case, the findings from 10 studies were synthesized to produce the average effect size of  $-.763$  for rules and

**Figure 2.1**

Effect Sizes for Rules and Procedures

	<b>Average Effect Size</b>	<b>95% Confidence Interval</b>	<b>Number of Subjects</b>	<b>Number of Studies</b>	<b>Percentile Decrease in Disruptions</b>
Design and Implementation of Rules and Procedures	$-.763$	$(-.598)$ to $(-.927)$	636	10	28
High School	$-.772$	$(-.574)$ to $(-.970)$	425	3	28
Middle School/Junior High	$-.617$	$(-.059)$ to $(-1.293)$	48	1	23
Upper Elementary	$-.772$	$(-.438)$ to $(-1.106)$	163	6	28
Primary	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND

ND = No data were available to compute an effect size.

procedures. In Chapter 1, I noted that meta-analysis allows us to be more certain of our findings. This is because of the increased number of students who are involved in a meta-analysis as opposed to a single study. In terms of the design and implementation of rules and procedures, the average effect size reported in Figure 2.1 involved 636 students across 10 studies. Any one of those studies probably involved about 60 students. When researchers have only 60 students in a study, they typically won't have a great deal of confidence in their findings. The effect size they observe might be rather large, but this might be due to the uncontrolled error mentioned in Chapter 1. For example, students in the class where rules and procedures were implemented might have been less disruptive by their very nature than students in the class that did not implement rules and procedures. In general, the more subjects included and the more studies considered, the more this uncontrolled error tends to cancel itself out and findings become more reliable.

In Figure 2.1, the level of certainty for each average effect size is reported in the 95 percent confidence interval. That interval reports the range of effect sizes in which we are 95 percent sure that the "real" effect size would be found if a study contained no error. Consequently, Figure 2.1 tells us that we are 95 percent sure that the smallest the real effect size could be for implementation of rules and procedures (if there were no uncontrolled error in a study) is  $-.598$ , and the largest it could be (if there were no uncontrolled error in a study) is  $-.927$ . In other words, we are still not sure that the reported average effect size of  $-.763$  is uncontaminated by error. It might be artificially high, or it might be artificially low. But we can say with 95 percent cer-

tainty that the real effect size is probably no smaller than  $-.598$  and probably no larger than  $-.927$ . This provides us with a great deal of confidence that designing and implementing classroom rules and procedures has a definite effect on student behavior. In fact, any confidence interval that does not include 0.00 is referred to as "significant at the .05 level."

In Figure 2.1, none of the confidence intervals include 0.00; therefore, the effect sizes are significant at the .05 level. As you read the remaining chapters of this book, you will note (by examining the 95 percent confidence intervals) that all of the effect sizes reported from my meta-analysis are significant at the .05 level. In fact, only one of the effect sizes even comes close to zero, and that single effect size appears in Figure 2.1. To further illustrate the concept of a confidence interval, let's consider that one outlier effect size in more depth.

As reported in Figure 2.1, the average effect sizes for the high school, middle school/junior high, and upper elementary levels are  $-.772$ ,  $-.617$ , and  $-.772$ , respectively. (No data were available to compute an average effect size for the primary level.) All of these are substantial. Based on the discussion above, we know that all three of these average effect sizes are significant at the .05 level because their confidence intervals do not include 0.00. However, even though the confidence interval for the middle school/junior high level does not include 0.00, it comes close; it ranges from  $-.059$  to  $-1.293$ . This means that we are 95 percent sure that the real effect of rules and procedures on student behavior at the middle school/junior high level might be as large as  $-1.293$  or as small as  $-.059$ . This is a very large range and doesn't provide as much confidence in our average effect size for the middle school and junior

high levels as we have with the other levels. The reason why we have less confidence in this average is readily apparent in Figure 2.1. That average of  $-.617$  was based on one study involving 48 students. It is because we have so few subjects in this study that we must establish a wide confidence interval around our average. Does this mean that we should question whether rules and procedures are effective at the middle school level? Certainly not. It is still significant at the  $.05$  level, which is the typical standard in educational research. Additionally, given the pattern of effect sizes reported throughout this book, I can confidently say that if one more study could have been found on the impact of rules and procedures at the middle school level, the confidence interval would be much smaller simply because we had more students with which to compute an average.

This situation does, however, illustrate the underlying logic and power of meta-analysis. When you combine the results from a number of studies, you can say with increasing confidence that a given classroom management technique (or any other technique you might be studying) has a specific impact on student behavior or achievement.

In addition to the effect sizes reported in Figure 2.1, the importance of rules and procedures is evident from the research on the home environment. For example, in a study involving more than 69,000 pairs of parents and children, Xitao Fan and Michael Chen (2001) found an effect size of  $.26$  for the impact of establishing rules and procedures at home on student academic achievement. This means that establishing rules and procedures at home is associated with a 10-percentile-point increase in student achievement at school. It might be the case that proper use of

rules and procedures at home fosters dispositions in students that help them behave better in school and consequently learn more. Similarly, in a study involving more than 2,000 high school students, Ellen Slicker (1998) computed an effect size of  $-.79$  for the impact of implementing rules and procedures at home on student behavior in school. This means that effective use of rules and procedures at home is associated with a decrease in disruptive behavior at school of 29 percentile points. Similar findings have been reported by a number of other researchers (Christenson, Rounds, & Gorney, 1992; Martini, 1995).

Clearly, the research supports the notion that designing and implementing rules and procedures in class and even at home has a profound impact on student behavior and on student learning. However, research also indicates that rules and procedures should not simply be imposed on students. Rather, the proper design of rules and procedures involves explanation and group input. This was demonstrated in a study by Brophy and Evertson (1976) in which they compared the instructional techniques of teachers who consistently produced student achievement gains greater than expected to the techniques of a group of randomly selected teachers. They note,

. . . the more successful teachers took pains to explain both the rule itself and the reason behind it to the children. This was important in helping the children to see the need for the rule and therefore, to accept it . . . In contrast to this middle of the road system with good explanations and built-in flexibility, the less well organized and successful teachers tended to have either no rules at all (so that they were continually making *ad hoc* decisions that

distracted them from teaching tasks), or else to have so many rules that the rules became overly specific and essentially meaningless. (pp. 58–59)

In their book, *Discipline with Dignity*, Richard Curwin and Allen Mendler (1988) also comment on the importance of student input when establishing classroom rules and procedures. They go so far as to say that classroom rules and procedures should be viewed as a “contract” (p. 47) between teacher and students.

Again, the research on home atmosphere also supports the need for a negotiated, rather than an imposed, set of rules and procedures. Slicker’s (1998) study indicates that negotiated rules and procedures at home have an effect size of  $-.47$  on student behavior in school when compared with rigidly imposed rules and procedures. This means that the implementation of negotiated rules and procedures between parents and children results in an 18-percentile-point decrease in student misbehavior at school as compared to rigidly imposed rules and procedures at home.

Research and theory, then, support the intuitive notion that well-articulated rules and procedures that are negotiated with students are a critical aspect of classroom management, affecting not only the behavior of students but also their academic achievement.

## Programs

Virtually all of the programs on classroom management address to some degree the four factors associated with classroom management as described in this book. Specific programs typically emphasize some aspects more than others. In this section, I briefly summarize the characteristics of a program that is

particularly strong in the implementation of rules and procedures. Other chapters have a similar section discussing programs that are particularly strong in their respective classroom management topics.

One of the most well-researched classroom management programs is the Classroom Organization and Management Program (COMP), developed by Carolyn Evertson and her colleagues at Vanderbilt University (see Evertson, 1995; Evertson & Harris, 1999). In addition to its strong emphasis on rules and procedures, the program addresses techniques for organizing the classroom, developing student accountability, planning and organizing instruction, conducting instruction and maintaining momentum, and getting off to a good start.

COMP has a particularly strong track record in terms of its impact on students. Specifically, a number of studies have shown that COMP decreases student disruptive behavior, increases student engagement, and even increases student achievement as measured by standardized tests at both the elementary and secondary levels. (See Evertson, 1995 for a review.)

According to Evertson (1995), COMP is designed to be an inquiry-based approach to staff development for K–12 educators. During the 6 to 18 weeks of inservice training, teachers analyze their classroom practice using a series of checklists, try out research-based strategies, and examine the effectiveness of their efforts. Textbooks used in the course include *Classroom Management for Elementary Teachers* (Evertson et al., 2003) and *Classroom Management for Secondary Teachers* (Emmer et al., 2003). According to Evertson (1995), “Since 1989, COMP has trained over 5,870 teachers and administrators in 28 states/territories and gained over 2,900 adoptions” (p. 7).



## ActionSteps

### ACTION STEP 1 ▼

#### *Identify specific rules and procedures for your classroom.*

As mentioned previously, different classrooms will have different rules and procedures depending on the needs and dispositions of the teacher and the students. However, teachers typically use rules and procedures in the following general categories:

- General expectations for behavior
- Beginning and ending the class day or the period
- Transitions and interruptions
- Materials and equipment
- Group work
- Seatwork and teacher-led activities

This does not mean that you must have rules and procedures in each of these areas. In fact, doing so would probably be counterproductive. Indeed, Emmer, Evertson, and Worsham (2003) recommend that teachers employ only about seven rules and procedures at the secondary level. Evertson, Emmer, and Worsham (2003) recommend only from five to eight at the elementary level. Thus, it is important that you carefully select the rules and procedures for your classroom.

#### ► **General Classroom Behavior**

Most situations involve general expectations about how we treat others and how they treat us. The same is true for the classroom. Rules

and procedures should be established for general conduct and behavior in a variety of contexts.

At the elementary level, rules and procedures for general classroom behavior commonly address the following areas:

- Politeness and helpfulness when dealing with others
- Respecting the property of others
- Interrupting the teacher or others
- Hitting or shoving others (see Doyle, 1986; Evertson et al., 2003; Good & Brophy, 2003).

To illustrate how rules and procedures for general classroom behavior might be approached at the elementary level, consider the following vignette:

*During the first week of school, Mr. Banner divided his 3rd graders into groups and gave each group one of the four major rules for the class. The task for the students was to print the rule on a strip of paper and decorate the strip with simple pictures related to the rule. As they worked, they were to discuss the theme of the rules, which was thoughtful behavior. The rules read as follows:*

1. *Help two classmates a day; think of others.*
2. *Treat the property of others as if it belonged to you; think about how you would feel.*
3. *Listen to others before speaking; think before you speak.*
4. *Keep your hands to yourself; think before you act.*

*Periodically, Mr. Banner took a strip down from the wall and discussed with the students how “thinking” could help them understand and obey the rules.*

*When necessary, the class added an additional rule on a new strip of paper, always stating it in “thinking” terms.*

At the secondary level, rules and procedures for general behavior commonly address the following areas:

- Bringing materials to class
- Being in the assigned seat at the beginning of class
- Respecting and being polite to others
- Talking or not talking at specific times
- Leaving the assigned seat
- Respecting other people’s property (see Emmer et al., 2003; Brophy, 1996; Doyle, 1986; Good & Brophy, 2003)

The following vignette portrays how a secondary teacher might initially approach rules and procedures for general classroom behavior:

*Ms. Sweeney, the 9th grade English teacher, had two goals during the opening week of school—to communicate with students about the class rules and to introduce the major curriculum units for the first quarter. She decided that it would be fun to address both of those goals at once—by using poetry, one of the first curriculum units, to communicate the rules. Her students received a handout with the following simple poem that she had composed:*

*Bring your paper, pencils, books,  
Unless you want my dirty looks.  
Class will start—I know I’m pushy—  
When in your seat, I see your “tushy.”*

*You need to know that it’s expected  
That you respect and feel respected.  
Watch your words and be polite,  
Avoid aggression, please don’t bite.*

*Sometimes you’ll sit, sometimes you’ll  
walk,  
Sometimes you’ll listen, sometimes  
you’ll talk.  
Please do each of these on cue.  
Listen to me, I’ll listen to you.*

*These rules exist so we can learn.  
Obey them and rewards you’ll earn.  
I also feel compelled to mention,  
Breaking rules will mean detention.*

*If these rules seem strict and terse,  
Please make suggestions, but only in  
verse.*

*Just as she had hoped, the students chuckled when they read the poem. This created a lighthearted feeling in the room as she went over each verse with them, expanding on the meaning of the rules. When she posted the poem on the bulletin board in the front of the room, she was convinced that the students’ feelings about the rules were more positive than she had seen in the past, when she had simply posted a sterile list of rules. And there was a bonus—she felt ready to begin her unit on using poetry as a way of communicating ideas and feelings.*

### ► **Beginning of the School Day or Beginning of the Period**

The manner in which class begins sets the tone for what happens next. Beginning well is particularly important in a self-contained classroom where students begin and end the day with the same teacher or in the same room. When the day is organized in classes taught by different teachers, the manner in which each class begins is critical. Consequently, rules and procedures might be set for the beginning of the day and the beginning of the period. The same might be said for the

end of the day or the end of the period. The way the day or the period ends leaves students with an impression that carries over to the next time you meet.

At the elementary level, rules and procedures that pertain to the beginning and ending of the school day commonly address the following areas:

- Beginning the school day with specific social activities (e.g., acknowledging birthdays, important events in students' lives)
- Beginning the day with the Pledge of Allegiance
- Doing administrative activities (e.g., taking attendance, collecting lunch money)
- Ending the day by cleaning the room and individual desks
- Ending the day by putting away materials (see Evertson et al., 2003; Doyle, 1986; Brophy, 1996; Good & Brophy, 2003)

To understand how these rules and procedures might be employed, consider the following vignette:

*Ms. Patton had established routines for her 2nd graders that helped them to begin and end the day efficiently, thus maximizing instructional time. When students entered the class, they immediately walked over to a pegboard where colorful name chips were hanging. Students removed their name chips and placed them in boxes that indicated their lunch preference. As soon as they sat down they immediately began to work on the "sponge" problem on the board, a problem that was always both challenging and fun. While they were working, Ms. Patton recorded absences by checking which name chips were still hanging on the board and prepared the lunch count by*

*counting the chips in the lunch-preference boxes. No time was wasted, and the stage was set for a productive day. At the end of the day, students placed their chips back on the board as soon as they had cleaned up and put away materials. When all the chips were back on the board, Ms. Patton dismissed the class.*

At the secondary level, rules and procedures that pertain to the beginning and ending of class commonly address the following areas:

- Taking attendance at the beginning of the period
- At the beginning of the period, addressing students who missed the work from the previous day because of absence
- Dealing with students who are tardy at the beginning of the period
- Ending the period with clear expectations for homework (see Emmer et al., 2003; Doyle, 1986; Brophy, 1996; Good & Brophy, 2003)

The following vignette depicts how one teacher addressed this area:

*Mr. Lima's routines for starting and ending class were designed to get the most from the 47-minute period and to shift some of the management responsibilities to the students. To achieve this, students were organized into groups with specific roles assigned on a rotating basis. One student in each group took on the role of "Organizer." During the first minute of class, the Organizer's job was to check with each group member to determine if anyone needed make-up assignments explained and to ensure that everyone had the required materials for class. Mr. Lima, at the same time, scanned the room to mark attendance and tardies in his grade*



book. Within a minute or two, the students and Mr. Lima were ready to begin working. At the end of class, the Organizer was given time to make sure that everyone had recorded and understood the homework. If problems or confusion occurred that could not be addressed within the group, the Organizer asked Mr. Lima for assistance. This group approach, in Mr. Lima's opinion, helped to ensure that students' individual needs were addressed immediately, which minimized the potential for classroom disruptions.

### ► Transitions and Interruptions

Inevitably students will have to leave and enter the classroom for a variety of reasons. For example, individual students might have to leave your classroom to use the bathroom, to go to the office, and so on. Additionally, the whole class might leave to attend a school-wide function, to go to the library, and so on. These transitions and interruptions can cause chaos without relevant rules and procedures.

At the elementary level, rules and procedures that pertain to transitions and interruptions commonly address the following areas:

- Leaving the room
- Returning to the room
- Use of the bathroom
- Use of the library and resource room
- Use of the cafeteria
- Use of the playground
- Fire and disaster drills
- Classroom helpers (see Evertson et al.,

2003; Doyle, 1986; Brophy, 1996; Good & Brophy, 2003)

The following vignette depicts how transitions and interruptions might be addressed at the elementary level:

*Inside the classroom door, Mr. Swanson had a large flip chart with laminated pages. Each page had a list of rules and procedures for the major transitions that would regularly occur, such as going to the bathroom, to recess, and to assemblies. In the margins of each list were pictures, created by his students each year, that illustrated the most important part of each rule and procedure. Before major transitions, Mr. Swanson would ask a student to flip to the appropriate page and then lead the class in a review of the rule or procedure. Periodically, after a class transition, Mr. Swanson would flip to the appropriate page and ask specific students to lead the class in an evaluation of the students' behavior. This gave him the opportunity to both reinforce good behavior and to address problems. When the front page of the flip chart was showing, students saw the simple general reminder, "What should I be doing right now?"*

At the secondary level, rules and procedures that pertain to transitions and interruptions commonly address the following areas:

- Leaving the room
- Returning to the room
- Fire and disaster drills
- Split lunch period (see Emmer et al., 2003; Doyle, 1986; Brophy, 1996; Good & Brophy, 2003)

To understand how these areas might be introduced at the secondary level, consider the following vignette:

*When she was talking about safety procedures and rules, Ms. Bono found that it was as difficult to get the attention of her high school students as it was for flight attendants to get the attention of frequent fliers when safety procedures were being*

*explained. One year she ran across an old copy of a film that had been shown to her decades before, which showed students crouching under their desks in case of a nuclear attack. She decided to show this to her students to get their attention and make them laugh. It worked. The students were awake and attentive by the end of the film. She began, "We are going over some major class procedures here. You have seen some differences in what I had to do when I was in school. As you listen, be ready to tell me which procedures are probably the same as those I heard when I was in school—and which ones are probably dramatically different.*

#### ► Use of Materials and Equipment

Materials and equipment are critical to a variety of subject areas. Most subject areas use textbooks, and many require other materials such as lab equipment, artistic materials, computer-related equipment, and so on. Commonly, rules and procedures apply to retrieving and replacing these materials.

At the elementary level, rules and procedures that pertain to the use of materials and equipment commonly address the following areas:

- Distributing materials
- Collecting materials
- Storage of common materials
- The teacher's desk and storage areas
- Students' desks and storage areas
- The use of the drinking fountain, sink, and pencil sharpener (see Evertson et al., 2003; Doyle, 1986; Brophy, 1996; Good & Brophy, 2003)

To understand how these rules and procedures might be addressed at the elementary level, consider the following vignette:

*One of the major roles assigned in Mr. Brayson's cooperative groups was "Materials Captain." Each week, the student in the group who was assigned this role took responsibility for handing out and collecting materials throughout the school day. To ensure that all students understood this role, Mr. Brayson taught the students the distinctions for each of the three major areas where materials might be kept. He labeled these areas Yours, Mine, and Ours. Yours referred to the materials in students' own desks, materials that the Captains were not to touch. Mine referred to materials that belonged to Mr. Brayson and that were not to be used by students. Ours referred to all other classroom materials that would be distributed and collected by the Materials Captain. All of the students, when it was their turn to be Captain, understood the importance of these distinctions, and that Mr. Brayson expected them to follow his procedures. "You are the Captains, but remember, I am the Admiral," Mr. Brayson often joked.*

At the secondary level, rules and procedures that pertain to the use of materials and equipment commonly address the following:

- Distributing materials
- Collecting materials
- Storage of common materials (see Emmer et al., 2003; Doyle, 1986; Brophy, 1996; Good & Brophy, 2003)

To understand how these rules and procedures might be addressed at the secondary level, consider the following vignette:

*Mr. Teller had learned from years of experience that even high school science students need close monitoring at the beginning and end of science labs to make*

sure equipment is distributed, and then collected and stored properly. To help him with this monitoring, he asked the photography instructor to take pictures of the storage areas when all equipment was put in its proper place. These pictures were printed up as posters and hung on the wall next to each storage area as a guide and a reminder for students to put equipment away properly. Periodically Mr. Teller covered up one or two of the pictures with a humorous or bizarre picture he found on the Internet. If the students in charge of storing equipment in each area did not notice the new picture and comment on it, he knew they had stopped using the photos to check proper equipment storage. He would then gently but firmly remind them to use the pictures every time they stored equipment.

### ► Group Work

Group work—particularly cooperative group work—is a powerful instructional activity. Indeed, research indicates that cooperative learning groups have a positive impact on student achievement, interpersonal relationships, and attitudes about learning (see Slavin, 1995; Johnson & Johnson, 1999; Nastasi & Clements, 1991). These positive benefits are usually attributed to students' increased interaction with the content and with each other. For cooperative learning to produce these positive results, it must be set up well via the implementation of relevant rules and procedures.

Rules and procedures pertaining to group work at the elementary level commonly address the following areas:

- Movement in and out of the group
- Expected behaviors of students in the group

- Expected behaviors of students not in the group
- Group communication with the teacher (see Evertson et al., 2003; Doyle, 1986; Brophy, 1996; Good & Brophy, 2003)

The following vignette depicts how one teacher approached group work:

*Ms. Westerberg had avoided using group work in her classroom for years, until she took a workshop on how to maximize group time. As a result of the workshop, she realized that, in the past, she had never made group behavioral expectations clear to the students. Now, whenever she uses group work, she spends time at the beginning and end of each work session going over the rules and then processing with students how well the rules worked for the groups. For example, one rule, "Two before me," is intended to remind students to ask each other for help before coming to the teacher. On the first day of a new group project, Ms. Westerberg reminds students of this rule and explains the importance of helping each other. At the end of their work time each day, she asks the students to describe in their individual learning logs any example of how they (1) received help from their group members and (2) might have helped each other better. Every day, before they begin working, the students read to their group members the learning log entry from the previous work session. This starts their work with a review of what is going well and what behaviors need to be improved.*

Rules and procedures pertaining to group work at the secondary level commonly address the following areas:

- Movement in and out of the group
- Group leadership and roles in the group

- The relationship of the group to the rest of the class or other groups in the class
- Group communication with the teacher (see Emmer et al., 2003; Doyle, 1986; Brophy, 1996; Good & Brophy, 2003)

To understand how these areas might be addressed at the secondary level, consider the following vignette:

*Ms. Frost and Ms. Savory agreed that they were enjoying teaching their 8th graders so much this year because they were team teaching. One of the main advantages to teaming was that they could role-play behavioral expectations for the students, dramatizing both appropriate and inappropriate behavior. For example, when using cooperative learning groups, they would assign roles, such as recorder, timekeeper, taskmaster, and self-assessor. Before students began working, the two teachers would dramatize, in an exaggerated, humorous fashion, the appropriate behavior for each role. Ms. Frost was hilarious when she pretended to be a taskmaster who turned into a dictator: "Hey, you! Get to work. Quit being lazy. Do my work for me, too. I rule." The students cracked up. Ms. Savory would then model proper conduct for a taskmaster, again in an exaggerated manner: "Now, now. I think we are getting off task. Let's look at our goals again and be clear about what to do next." Even this positive modeling caused some chuckling from the students, but they got the idea, and it had its desired effect.*

### ► **Seatwork and Teacher-Led Activities**

Even though group work, particularly cooperative group work, is a necessary and common practice in elementary and secondary class-

rooms, seatwork and teacher-led activities are still a staple of K–12 education (Carnine & Kameenui, 1992; Doyle, 1990; Good & Brophy, 1994). Sometimes direct, whole-class instruction is the best way to provide input for students, and sometimes students must work at their seats practicing and reviewing the content that has been addressed (Anderson, Reder, & Simon, 1995, 1996). To illustrate, in their discussion of cooperative learning, Thomas Good and Jere Brophy (2003) state,

We recommend cooperative learning methods, although . . . it is important to view cooperative learning not as a wholesale replacement of traditional whole-class instruction, but as an adaptation in which active whole-class instruction is retained but many follow-up activities are accomplished through small-group cooperation rather than through individual seatwork. (p. 288)

Seatwork and teacher-led activities usually involve the expectation that students will remain in their seats. Rules and procedures at the elementary level that pertain to seatwork and teacher-led activities commonly address the following areas:

- Student attention during presentations
- Student participation
- Talking among students
- Obtaining help
- Out-of-seat behavior
- Behavior when work has been completed (see Evertson et al., 2003; Doyle, 1986; Brophy, 1996; Good & Brophy, 2003)

The following vignette depicts how one elementary teacher addressed this area:

*Ms. Somerset was masterful at providing appropriate help for students when they*

worked at their desks. However, this year, for some reason, her procedures were not working. Students not only seemed particularly needy, but also when they raised their hands and did not receive immediate help, they began waving, moaning, and getting out of their seats. Ms. Somerset finally came up with a new color-code system. Each student was given a green, yellow, and red card. When working independently, students were asked to place the green card on their desks to indicate they were getting started. If they began to have problems, they were to place the yellow card on their desk but continue to work on the assignment as best they could until Ms. Somerset could help them. Sometimes students solved their problem on their own before Ms. Somerset got over to them. If this happened, they simply switched back to their green card. This earned them compliments and high-fives from Ms. Somerset. If they were completely stuck and could not continue working at all, students knew that they should place the red card on their desk and read a book quietly until Ms. Somerset could get to them. This color system became a regular part of Ms. Somerset's approach to seatwork.

Rules and procedures at the secondary level that pertain to seatwork and teacher-led activities commonly address the following areas:

- Student attention during presentations
- Student participation
- Talking among students
- Obtaining help
- Out-of-seat behavior
- Behavior when work has been completed (see Emmer et al., 2003; Doyle, 1986; Brophy, 1996; Good & Brophy, 2003)

To understand how these areas might be addressed at the secondary level, consider the following vignette:

*In his Advanced Placement Social Studies class, Mr. Wimple had very few rules because he felt that he really didn't need many. Students generally behaved appropriately during teacher-led activities, group work, and seatwork. The only problem he noticed was that some students did the bulk of the talking during group discussions. He had no desire to stifle their enthusiasm, but he wanted some of the more reticent students to speak. To this end, he started discussions by giving each student a certain number of poker chips, the number determined by the length of the discussion time. Before students could speak, they had to toss one of the chips into a box in the middle of the room. When students were out of chips, they had to listen. If students still had all three chips when the discussion was beginning to wind down, Mr. Wimple would elicit ideas from them directly. The result was that more students participated, and the regular participants considered their contributions more carefully before spending a chip.*

### **ACTION STEP 2 ▼**

#### ***Involve students in the design of rules and procedures.***

The second action step you should take relative to classroom rules and procedures is to involve students in their design. As mentioned in the research and theory section of this chapter, the most effective classroom managers don't simply impose rules and

procedures on students; rather, they engage students in the design of the rules and procedures.

Before addressing specific rules and procedures with students, it is useful to have a discussion regarding the fact that many situations in real life involve rules and procedures. For example, most students have a sense that there are certain expectations for behavior during dinner when guests are at the house that are different from the rules and procedures that apply when only family members are having dinner together. Similarly, most students are aware of the fact that there are rules and procedures governing behavior in church that do not apply to the behavior in one's own living room. A discussion regarding the importance of rules and procedures in situations outside of school provides a nice set-up for the discussion of classroom rules and procedures.

Next, you might present students with the rules and procedures you have already identified, explaining and providing examples of each one. Students might then discuss those rules and procedures and be invited to suggest alternatives, additions, and deletions. If they disagree on the importance or the specifics of a given rule or procedure, adequate time should be spent addressing the issue. Ideally, a group discussion will produce a compromise rule or procedure that all can live with. If not, you, the teacher, should have the final word in the deliberations. However, the fact that a discussion has taken place will communicate to students that you are concerned about their perceptions and their input. To illustrate how such a discussion might play out in the classroom, consider the following vignette:

*On the first day of class, Mr. Whiteside hung large sheets of paper around the room, each with one of the seven important classroom rules printed across the top. Working in groups, students were given seven sticky notes on which they were to write their reaction to each rule and then place it on the corresponding large sheet of paper. They could recommend that the rule remain as presented, or they could make specific suggestions for how the rule might be modified or even eliminated. After all groups had finished, Mr. Whiteside stood next to each rule and read the reaction note from each group. When the notes suggested general agreement, he responded with a promise to consider the recommendations. When the notes represented very different views, he asked groups to explain their views. After some discussion, Mr. Whiteside said he would consider the different viewpoints expressed. A few days later, Mr. Whiteside presented the class with the revised rules. Some students were pleased; others were still not happy. The rules, however, remained in place, and Mr. Whiteside was ready to begin his unit on Principles of Government.*

## Summary

Classroom rules and procedures are important, but they may vary from one teacher to another. Rules and procedures typically fall into several categories, including general expectations for behavior, beginning and ending the day or the period, transitions and interruptions, materials and equipment, group work, and teacher-led activities. In all cases, it is important to involve students in the design of classroom rules and procedures.