PART III. A FOUR-STEP MODEL FOR SUCCESSFUL CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

If your goal is to become more and more successful, you should not limit your planning to designing lessons and implementing teaching strategies, as important as these are. You should begin to include classroom management and disciplinary strategies during your planning. To make this task easier for you, there's a four-step model that you can use.

When you begin planning for successful management, you will have already started Step 1, "Planning for Success." As you plan, you will consider the nature of the lesson and activities. Experience will be invaluable as you learn to include management strategies within your lesson plans.

Let's distinguish briefly between your management plan and your management style. A management plan is a daily activity that anticipates situations and conditions that are likely to be experienced during a particular lesson. A management style, such as that of a Guide, reflects one's general philosophy for dealing with people in a classroom environment. It is characterized by the nature of the daily classroom environment, so, when we talk about management planning, we mean preparing for situations or problems that might occur during a given lesson. For example, when you are planning a small-group activity, you will want to consider, among other things, how you should group the students and how many groups you can effectively monitor and manage.

Step 2 of our model involves "Making a Good First Impression." You see, your management plan should be activated on the very first day of the course. You should establish your rules and policies as soon as possible on those first days of class. Present your rules and policies in a positive way so that your students will not feel overwhelmed. State your expectations clearly, concisely, and in a positive manner. For example, don't say [harshly], "Food and drink may not be brought into this classroom." Instead say [as you would make a request to adults], "Please consume food and drinks before entering the classroom."

Exhibit a positive attitude toward your new students, the course, the school, and your role as an instructor. Emphasize the responsibilities of individual students and of the class as a group. Treat them as adults and tell them that you will welcome their input and participation. And, above all, model the type of behavior and enthusiasm that you expect from your students.

During each lesson, put your management plan into action as soon as you enter the classroom. Get to the classroom a little early when your schedule permits but always be prompt. Arriving before your students will give you time to put a brief outline of your lesson plan and the day's objectives on the front board. Encourage students who arrive early to use the outline to prepare for the day's activities.
When the class starts, begin by providing a good overview of the lesson including your expectations for the class. Follow this with a brief and clear introduction. By doing this, you will be setting the stage for successful management each day.

Now that your lesson is off to a good start, what should you do to ensure that good management continues? According to Step 3 of our model, you should be "Using Proactive Techniques." Being proactive means that you are anticipating potential problems before they occur. Permit me to offer some examples.

First, to the extent possible, arrange the physical layout so that you can clearly see all students. Good eye contact is a powerful, non-verbal means of controlling behavior.

Second, move around the classroom during the lesson regardless of your method of instruction. Don't hide behind your desk or, for that matter, behind the lectern. During lectures and discussions, move from one side of the room to the other. As facilities permit, you may even want to move from the front to the back of the room occasionally.

Third, keep students actively involved either individually or in groups. Most management problems arise when students are idle or inattentive. Your task is to keep them involved and to command their attention. Make it a point to communicate in some way with every student during every lesson. Use both verbal and non-verbal means.

For example, greet students as they enter and leave class. During questioning, call on as many students as possible. It has been said that a person's name is the sweetest sound that a person ever hears. So, when communicating, include students' names frequently. Smile and use good eye contact when you address students or answer questions. Make effective use of gestures and vocal inflections when speaking. Communicate with students even as you monitor them during group activities.

Fourth, when you are supervising several different types of activity simultaneously, take steps to make the process manageable. For example, be sure that individual students or groups have all the materials they need and that your instructions are clear. Have resource aids available that can help those who are having difficulty. If students become frustrated, your management strategy can fall apart in a hurry. Assure them that you are aware of what is happening, particularly during independent and group activities.

Last, but certainly not least, maintain the progress. Keep your lessons and students moving along. If a problem arises that requires you to deviate from your planned lesson, be sure to have an alternative plan ready to go. For example, suppose the classroom loses power on a day when you had assigned students to work with computers or electrical equipment. Won't they be impressed to see you quickly switch to your alternative activity for that day?

Maintaining the pace of a lesson is crucial to good management. Students will quickly learn that they can expect to be actively involved when they are in your class. When you
hear a student say, "I can't believe this class is over already," that's usually a good sign of successful class management.

The fourth and final step in our management model involves "Encouraging Proper Behaviors." Emphasize the need for students to accept personal responsibility for their work and their demeanor.

Once you have established your management style and your students are responding well, you will need to follow up by regularly reinforcing your principles and expectations. Be consistent when implementing your policies and procedures so that your students will know what is expected of them. Focus on their positive behavior and freely offer compliments when opportunities arise. Be observant enough to frequently catch them doing something right, and when you do, praise them publicly. When criticism and reprimand are in order, issue them privately.

Both positive and negative feedback should be directed to specific behaviors. It's alright to generalize at times such as when you might say, "That was a great class today!" However, if you want to correct or reinforce certain behaviors, your comments must be specific. For example, you might say, "I was pleased that everyone participated in the discussion today," or "I expect that everyone will be prepared to participate tomorrow."

And finally, you should personally be a role model for your students by carefully following the school's rules and regulations. Don't expect your students to come to class on time if you are tardy or start class late. If you expect students to submit work promptly, then you should return it to them as soon as reasonably possible. We teach a lot by example.