

**JOSSEY-BASS TEACHER**

**GRADES 9-12**

**DVD INCLUDED!**

# DISCIPLINE — IN THE — SECONDARY CLASSROOM

**SECOND EDITION *with DVD***

**A POSITIVE APPROACH TO BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT**

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## **Loss of Point**

If you use the behavior grading procedures presented in Chapter Two, you have already set your class up so that certain infractions result in the loss of a point. In this system, each student starts the beginning of the week with a preestablished number of points—say, 15 out of a total weekly possible of 20. Then during the week, each singled-out example of positive behavior will add a point to the student's total and each rule violation will subtract a point from this total.

One of the biggest difficulties for high school teachers, as compared to elementary teachers, is that there are relatively few corrective consequences that the teacher can implement. One advantage of behavior grading is that you now have a mild corrective consequence that can be implemented consistently for low-level misbehavior that would otherwise be absent from your menu of possible consequences.

Here are some reminders of the essential features that are described in detail in Chapter Two:

- Check with your administrator to determine if this system can be a component of the academic grade or if it must remain separate.
- Each time an infraction occurs, inform the student of the infraction and the loss of a point.
- Make sure that all students get feedback on the total number of points they earned for the week.

### **Time Owed**

When a student misbehaves and you have to intervene, some of your time is wasted. Therefore, a reasonable corrective consequence is to have the student lose time from an activity he or she values (for example, waiting fifteen seconds after the rest of the class has been dismissed). Time owed is an appropriate and effective corrective consequence for misbehaviors that occur frequently (such as disruptions, talking during lessons, name calling, or disrespectful behavior) because of its compounding nature.

Although fifteen seconds might sound almost silly, it is actually a pretty long time for an adolescent who wants to be in the hall talking with friends between classes. The brief nature of the consequence also allows it to be assigned more than once in a class. If the immediate corrective consequence was several minutes, you could not issue it to any student more than once a class. You may need to establish a policy that if the maximum of time owed is reached, another penalty will be issued, such as detention. For example, you could inform students in advance that each time you have to remind a student about a rule violation, he or she will owe fifteen seconds, but at the fourth infraction, you will make a parental contact and assign an after-school detention.

It is important that the time not be paid in such a way that it interferes with the student's time with another teacher. If keeping students after class for more than one minute would delay a student getting to his or her next class promptly, you should plan not to keep any student for more than one minute.

Finally, you must decide what to have the student do while paying this time owed. As a general rule, you should have the student do nothing. For a first offense, you may wish to use the time to discuss the misbehavior and ways the student could behave more responsibly in the future. Do not do this regularly, however, as the one-on-one interaction time with you may become reinforcing to the student and actually serve to perpetuate the misbehavior.

### **Time-Out**

Many people think that the purpose of time-out is to send the student to an aversive setting. This is not the case. The actual purpose is to remove a misbehaving student from the opportunity to earn positive reinforcement. The goal is to communicate to the student that if he engages in a misbehavior, he will not get to participate in the interesting, productive, and enjoyable activities that will continue without him. The obvious implication here is that instruction and classroom activities need to be interesting, productive, and enjoyable. Following are descriptions of two different types of time-outs that some high school teachers have implemented effectively. Of course, if you think these procedures seem unlikely to be

effective with your high school students, you should follow your instinct and utilize another consequence.

**Time-out in class.** In this option, you establish an area in a low-traffic part of your classroom. It can be as simple as having a chair off to the side of the room. Let students know that if you ask them to go to this “time-out area,” you are doing it instead of sending them out of the classroom. Also let students know that if they go quietly to this area and complete their time-out without further disruption, they can rejoin the class and there will be no additional consequences. However, make sure students understand that if they refuse to go, disrupt others on the way, or continue to disrupt the class, you will have no choice but to remove the student from class and write a disciplinary referral. If you are concerned that your students may view this consequence as too elementary, consider using a sports example such as hockey: if a player breaks a rule, there is a time-out in the penalty box.

**Time-out in another class.** For students who are likely to misbehave during an in-class time-out (for example, a student may try to get other students to laugh at her while she is in time-out), it may be necessary to assign the student to time-out in another class. To do this, you need to find a teacher with a room near yours who has a class with fairly mature students.

A student who misbehaves in your room would be sent to the classroom of the other teacher, who should have a prearranged spot for a time-out student—for example, a chair in a low-traffic area of the class—and should have already warned his or her class to ignore the student when he enters. The time-out teacher should not be required to stop teaching class or interact with the misbehaving student. The idea behind this procedure is simply that the student is less likely to show off for students in a class he does not know.

## Restitution

Restitution, which was presented as a correction strategy for early-stage problems in Task 2, can also be effective with chronic misbehaviors if they involve damage to property or social relationships. If a student engages in behavior that causes damage, a logical consequence is that the student has to repair the damage. For example, if a student writes on desks, a logical consequence is for the student to spend some time cleaning them. (You may not be able to have the student use chemicals such as a disinfectant, but he can certainly use water, a sponge, and a little effort.) When restitution is used with ongoing misbehavior, the amount of the restitution should increase with successive instances. Thus, if a student wrote on a desk, you might have him wash the desk. If he did it a second time, you would have him wash his desk and several others.

## Detention

Detention is usually a schoolwide system that involves assigning a student to spend an established amount of time (forty minutes, for example) in a nonstimulating setting. Most schools that use detention have their detention periods after school, before school, or during lunch. When it is used as a schoolwide procedure, any teacher can assign any student detention. Detention is often structured so that the students are required to do academic tasks during the detention period. One problem with detention is that students may find it reinforcing if they are assigned to detention with friends. Like any other corrective consequence you try, keeping records can be helpful. If you are repeatedly assigning the same student to detention across a period of time, then this corrective consequence is not working for that student, and you should modify your correction plan accordingly.

### Demerits

Demerits are negative points that, when accumulated, result in a negative consequence or the loss of a privilege. They can be used to soften a predetermined consequence that might otherwise be overly harsh for a single misbehavior. For example, if the consequence for talking in class is after-school detention (which would be rather harsh for a single instance), the teacher is likely to respond to that behavior inconsistently, sometimes ignoring the behavior and sometimes threatening ("If you keep talking I am going to have to give you a detention") and then finally giving the detention. The use of demerits might allow the teacher to set up a more consistent policy. The teacher might tell students that each time he has to speak to a student about talking in class (or any other minor disruption), that student receives a demerit. If a student gets four demerits within a one-week period, he or she will receive an after-school detention. The teacher is much more likely to intervene every time there is disruptive behavior if he is only issuing a demerit instead of a detention.

If you can use the loss of a point consequence or the fifteen seconds time owed after-class consequence (or both), you probably do not need to use the demerit system as well. However, if you cannot use either of these corrective consequences, demerits can be an adequate way to consistently correct mild misbehavior.

### Office Referral

Referring a student to the administration should be used only in cases involving the most severe misbehaviors, that is, physically dangerous or illegal behaviors. If you think there may be other behaviors for which you might want to send a student to the office, discuss these circumstances with an administrator ahead of time, so that he or she can coordinate a plan for when the student is sent to the office.

### In Conclusion

Classroom rules should be designed in advance to correct the most common misbehaviors. Your three to six rules should be specific, observable, and stated positively. Design the consequences that you will assign for violations of these rules. Clear rules and consistent corrective consequences will reduce, and eventually eliminate, the majority of classroom misbehavior. Teaching your students these rules and consequences is fully addressed in Chapter Seven.