

EIGHTH EDITION

Building Classroom Discipline

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Jane Nelsen, Lynn Lott, and H. Stephen Glenn's *Positive Discipline in the Classroom*

OVERVIEW OF
NELSEN, LOTT,
AND GLENN'S
MODEL

Focus

- Seeing misbehavior (mistakes) as opportunities for learning social and life skills.
- Mutual respect: humane, dignified regard for self and others.
- A learning environment that encourages rather than discourages and humiliates.
- Involvement in looking for solutions to misbehavior rather than punishment.

Logic

- Students can learn to behave with dignity, self-control, and concern for others.
- These traits develop in classrooms that are accepting, encouraging, and supportive.
- The process that serves best is cooperative planning infused with humane concern.

Contributions

- A strategic approach to positive interaction rather than a packaged system.
- Help for teachers on how to stop directing students and begin working with them.
- Clear strategy for intervening respectfully and helpfully when students misbehave.
- Suggestions to help empower students and prepare them for later success.

Nelsen, Lott, and Glenn's Suggestions

- Help students see they are capable, significant, and able to control their own lives.
- Help students develop intrapersonal, interpersonal, strategic, and judgmental skills.
- Learn to be a caring teacher who works with, rather than against, your students.
- Replace barriers to relationships with builders of relationships.

About Jane Nelson, Lynn Lott, and H. Stephen Glenn

Jane Nelson, Lynn Lott, and H. Stephen Glenn are educators who promote their concepts on Positive Discipline through lectures, workshops, and private practice. Their goal is to help adults and children learn to respect themselves and others, behave responsibly, and contribute to the betterment of the groups of which they are members. Their book *Positive Discipline in the Classroom* (2000) helps teachers establish learning climates that foster responsibility, mutual respect, and cooperation. They believe that such climates do away with most of the discipline problems teachers otherwise encounter, since students learn the value, for themselves, of respect and helpfulness toward others.

Nelson, Lott, and Glenn have authored or coauthored a number of books, of which the following are most significant for teachers: *Raising Self-Reliant Children in a Self-Indulgent World* (Glenn and Nelson, 1989, 2000), *Positive Discipline* (Nelson, 1989, 1996), *Positive Discipline for Teenagers* (Nelson and Lott, 2000), and *Positive Discipline in the Classroom* (Nelson, Lott, and Glenn, 2000). Jane Nelson and H. Stephen Glenn can be contacted at Empowering People, P.O. Box 1926, Orem, UT 84059-1926, phone 1-800-456-7770, website: www.empoweringpeople.com. Lynn Lott can be reached at 707-526-3141, ext. 3 or email: Maxlynski@aol.com.



Jane Nelson



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Nelson, Lott, and Glenn's Contributions to Discipline

Nelson, Lott, and Glenn's main contribution is an approach to discipline that emphasizes students' ability to control themselves, cooperate, assume responsibility, and behave in a dignified manner. They believe that these desirable traits grow especially well in groups where Positive Discipline concepts are discussed and practiced in regular class meetings. They suggest that concerns of students or teacher be written into a notebook and be made agenda items for class meetings. In those meetings, everyone participates in attempting to resolve problems in a manner satisfactory to all concerned. Involvement in that process teaches students important life skills.

Nelson, Lott, and Glenn's Central Focus

Nelson, Lott, and Glenn help teachers develop classrooms where students are treated respectfully and taught the skills needed for working with others. These are classrooms where students (1) never experience humiliation when they fail but instead learn how to turn mistakes into successes, (2) learn how to cooperate with teachers and fellow students

to find joint solutions to problems, and (3) are provided an environment that instills excitement for life and learning in place of fear, discouragement, and feelings of inadequacy. In the process, students develop a sense of connection, belonging, and significance.

Nelsen, Lott, and Glenn's Principal Teachings

- *Discipline problems gradually become insignificant in classrooms where there is a climate of acceptance, dignity, respect, and encouragement.*
Teacher and students must work together to maintain this climate.
- *Students need to perceive themselves as capable, significant, and in control of their own lives.*
These perceptions grow best in classes that hold regular class meetings that employ the principles of *Positive Discipline*.
- *It is crucial for students to develop skills of self-control, adaptability, cooperation, and judgment.*
Classroom meetings are good venues for developing these skills.
- *Teachers must show that they truly care about their students.*
This is necessary if the desired perceptions and skills are to develop properly.
- *Teachers demonstrate caring by showing personal interest, talking with students, offering encouragement, and providing opportunities to learn important life skills.*
These tactics are crucial for every teacher.
- *Teachers can greatly facilitate desirable student behavior by removing barriers to good relationships with students and replacing them with builders of good relationships.*
By simply avoiding certain barriers, teachers quickly bring about great improvement in student behavior.
- *Class meetings should emphasize participation by everyone, group resolution of problems, and win-win solutions.*
The meetings should also be a place where everyone, teacher and students alike, practices communication, respect, support, encouragement, and cooperation.

Analysis of Nelsen, Lott, and Glenn's *Positive Discipline in the Classroom*

Positive Discipline in the Classroom is intended to empower students at all levels to become more successful, not only in the classroom but also in all walks of life. The belief that underlies this approach is that behavior problems can be greatly diminished as students acquire the skills of accepting and respecting others, communicating effectively, and focusing on solutions to problems. These outcomes are most likely to occur within a class atmosphere of kindness and firmness, where dignity and mutual respect prevail. There the mistaken goals of behavior are clarified and diminished. Positive discipline management

tools are used, including encouragement and positive feedback. Collaboration occurs with other faculty, and parent/teacher/student conferences are held to communicate progress and find better ways to encourage and support students.

The authors say that class meetings are uniquely suited to implementing *Positive Discipline in the Classroom*. Although the meetings are not a cure-all, they significantly promote social skills such as listening, taking turns, hearing different points of view, negotiating, communicating, helping one another, and taking responsibility for one's own behavior. Academic skills are strengthened in the process as well because students must practice language skills, attentiveness, critical thinking, decision making, and problem solving, all of which enhance academic performance.

Class meetings also alter students' perception of teachers by helping students see that teachers and other adults need nurturing and encouragement just as much as they do. When teachers involve themselves as partners with students in class meetings, a climate of mutual respect is encouraged. Teachers and students listen to one another, take each other seriously, and work together to solve problems for the benefit of all. Antagonisms so often seen in most classrooms tend to fade away.

The Significant Seven

Nelsen, Lott, and Glenn have identified three perceptions and four skills that contribute to the special benefits of *Positive Discipline in the Classroom*. They call these perceptions and skills the significant seven, which they describe as follows:

The Three Empowering Perceptions

Class meetings help students develop three self-perceptions that lead to success in life:

1. Perception of *personal capabilities*. (I have ability; I can do this.)
2. Perception of *significance in primary relationships*. (I am needed; I belong.)
3. Perception of *personal power* to influence one's life. (I have control over how I respond to what happens to me.)

The Four Essential Skills

Class meetings help students develop four essential skills that contribute significantly to success in life:

1. *Intrapersonal skill*. (I understand my emotions and can control myself.)
2. *Interpersonal skill*. (I can communicate, cooperate, and work with others.)
3. *Strategic skill*. (I am flexible, adaptable, and responsible.)
4. *Judgmental skill*. (I can use my wisdom to evaluate situations.)

Intrapersonal Skills Young people seem more willing to listen to one another than to adults. They gain understanding of their personal emotions and behavior by hearing feedback from classmates. In a nonthreatening climate, young people are willing to be accountable for their actions. They learn to distinguish between their feelings and their

actions; that is, what they feel (anger) is separate from what they do (hit someone), and although feelings are always acceptable, some actions are not.

Interpersonal Skills Class meetings encourage students to develop **interpersonal skills** by means of dialogue, sharing, listening, empathizing, cooperating, negotiating, and resolving conflicts. Teachers, instead of stepping in and resolving problems for students, can suggest putting the problem on the class meeting agenda so everyone can work to solve it together.

Strategic Skills Students develop **strategic skills**, the ability to adapt to problems, by responding to the limits and consequences imposed by everyday life. Through the problem-solving process, they learn alternative ways to express or deal with their thoughts or feelings.

Judgmental Skills Young people develop **judgmental skills**, the ability to evaluate situations and make good choices, when they have opportunity and encouragement to practice doing so. This process is fostered in classes that acknowledge effort rather than success or failure. There students find themselves in a setting that allows them to make mistakes safely, learn, and try again.

Nelsen, Lott, and Glenn suggest that teachers involve students in classroom meetings as often as feasible. There students can make mistakes in a safe atmosphere, take responsibility for the mistakes, and learn from them without being judged negatively for what they say. This helps them give up a **victim mentality** in which they blame others ("The teacher has it in for me") and accept an **accountability mentality** in which they accept personal responsibility ("I received an F because I didn't do the work"). They also learn that even when they can't control what happens, they *can* control their own responses and their resultant actions.

The Importance of Caring

The approach to discipline advocated by Nelsen, Lott, and Glenn requires that teachers truly care about students' welfare and that such caring be made evident. Teachers show their care when they go out of their way to learn about students as individuals, encourage them to see mistakes as opportunities to learn and grow, and have faith in their ability to make meaningful contributions. Students know teachers care when they feel teachers are listening to them and taking their thoughts and feelings seriously.

Relationship Barriers and Builders

Certain teacher behaviors act as barriers to developing caring relationships with students, whereas other behaviors help build such relationships. Nelsen, Lott, and Glenn identify five pairs of contrasting behaviors, which they call barriers and builders. **Barriers** are behaviors that prevent good relationships because they are disrespectful and discouraging to students, whereas **builders** are behaviors that build good relationships because they are

respectful and encouraging. Here are some examples of barriers versus builders (the barrier is shown first, followed by the builder).

1. *Assuming versus Checking.* All too often teachers *assume*, without checking with students, that they know what students think and feel, what they can and cannot do, and how they should or shouldn't respond. Teachers then deal with students on the basis of those assumptions. When they do so, however, they often prevent students' unique capabilities from becoming evident. It is greatly preferable that teachers verify what students actually think and feel, which is done by *checking* with them instead of assuming.

2. *Rescuing/Explaining versus Exploring.* Teachers wish to be helpful to students. They usually think they are helpful when they explain things, rescue students from difficulties, or do some of their work for them. Students progress better, however, when allowed to perceive situations for themselves and proceed on the basis of personal perceptions. Elementary teachers explain and rescue, for example, when they say, "It's cold outside, so don't forget your jackets." They help explore when they say, "Take a look outside. What do you need to remember in order to take care of yourself?"

3. *Directing versus Inviting/Encouraging.* Teachers do not realize they are being disrespectful to students when they say, "Pick that up"; "Put that away"; "Straighten up your desk before the bell rings." But such commands have many negative effects: They build dependency, eliminate initiative and cooperation, and suggest to students it is all right to do as little as possible on their own. Directives of this type stand in contrast to *inviting and encouraging* students to become self-directed. Instead of commanding, the teacher might say, "The bell will ring soon. I would appreciate anything you might do to help get the room straightened up for the next class."

4. *Expecting versus Celebrating.* It is important that teachers hold high expectations of students and believe in their potential. However, when students are judged for falling short of expectations, they become easily discouraged, as when teachers say, "I really thought you could do that," or "I thought you were more responsible than that." Students respond far better when teachers look for improvements and then call attention to them. Attention to their improvement is quite motivating to students.

5. *"Adult-isms" versus Respecting.* Nelsen, Lott, and Glenn use the term *adult-ism* for teacher statements that suggest what students *ought to do*, such as: "How come you never . . . ?" "Why can't you ever . . . ?" "I can't believe you would do such a thing!" These adult-isms produce guilt rather than support and encouragement. Instead of handing an unacceptable paper back and saying, "You knew what I wanted on this project!" a teacher could say, "What is your understanding of the requirements for this project?" Nelsen, Lott, and Glenn (1993) flatly state:

We guarantee 100% improvement in student-teacher relationships when teachers simply learn to recognize barrier behaviors and stop demonstrating them. Where else can you get such a generous return for ceasing a behavior? And when the builders are added, the pay-off is even greater. (p. 18)

In addition to emphasizing builders while avoiding barriers, teachers can do a number of things to show that they care about their students, such as:

- Using a supportive tone of voice.
- Listening to students and taking them seriously.
- Acting as though they enjoy their jobs.
- Appreciating the uniqueness of individual students.
- Showing a positive attitude (e.g., eagerly trying to help students).
- Showing a sense of humor.
- Showing interest in and respect for students' outside interests.
- Involving students in making decisions about the class and curriculum.
- Looking for improvement, not perfection, in student work and behavior.

Eight Building Blocks to Effective Class Meetings

As you have seen, class meetings are the primary venue for identifying and implementing the caring, supportive, and cooperative climate desired in *Positive Discipline in the Classroom*. Nelsen, Lott, and Glenn maintain that training in **eight building blocks** for effective class meetings is the surest route to the kind of classroom climate desired by students and teachers. Each of the building blocks focuses on a particular skill. It takes about two hours to introduce the eight building blocks to students. After that, about four additional class meetings will be needed to give adequate attention to what they entail.

Preliminary Considerations

Before beginning to explore the eight building blocks, introduce the concept of class meetings and get students to buy into the idea. This can be done by explaining you would like to begin holding class meetings where students can express concerns and use their power and skills to help make decisions. Elementary students are usually eager to try class meetings, but middle school and high school students may need some persuading. Using language appropriate for your grade level, begin by initiating a discussion about power, how problems are usually handled in school, and how that method results in teachers telling students what to do. The students then comply or rebel, without being brought into the decision-making process.

Next, ask students questions such as the following: Who has an example they would like to share about what happens when someone tries to control you? What do you feel? What do you do? What do you learn? Students will usually say that they feel angry or scared or manipulated. What they learn is to rebel, comply, or withdraw. Ask them also how they try to control or manipulate others, including teachers.

Continue by asking students if they would like to be more involved in the decisions that affect their lives. Would they be willing to do the work required to come up with solutions they like? Point out that some students actually *prefer* having adults boss them around so that they can rebel, or so they don't have to take responsibility themselves. It takes time and personal responsibility from everyone to use class meetings effectively. Make it clear that you don't intend to waste time teaching and learning a respectful method if they prefer continuing with the usual way in which the teacher is in control and students' only options are to comply, rebel, and/or spend time in detention. This kind of discussion is especially helpful and effective in classrooms where students have been taught with authoritarian methods.

Finally, once students indicate support for classroom meetings, decide together when the meetings will be held. Preferences vary from weekly half-hour meetings to three shorter meetings per week. A meeting every day is advisable for the first week, as students learn the eight building blocks.

Building Block 1: Form a Circle

The first step in implementing class meetings is to establish an atmosphere that allows everyone an equal right to speak and be heard and where **win-win solutions** can take place. A circular seating arrangement serves best. Ask students for suggestions about how to form the circle, listen to them, and write their ideas on the board. Make decisions based on their suggestions.

Building Block 2: Practice Giving Compliments and Showing Appreciation

It is important to begin class meetings on a positive note, which can be accomplished by having students and teacher say complimentary things to each other. Many students at first have difficulty giving and receiving compliments. Practice helps. Ask them to recall when someone said something that made them feel good about themselves. Let them share their examples with the group. Then ask them to think about something they would like to thank others for, such as thanking a classmate for lending a pencil or eating lunch together. See if they can put their feelings into words.

Receiving compliments is often as difficult as giving them. The best response to a compliment is a simple "Thank you." The notion of giving and receiving compliments seems embarrassing to some older students. When that is the case, use the term *show appreciation* instead of *compliment*.

Building Block 3: Create an Agenda

All class meetings should begin with a specific agenda. When students and teachers experience concerns, they can jot them down in a special notebook. This can be done at a designated time and place, such as when students leave the room. The class meetings will address only the concerns that appear in the notebook.

Building Block 4: Develop Communication Skills

Nelsen, Lott, and Glenn suggest a number of activities for developing communication skills, such as taking turns speaking (begin by going around the circle and letting each person speak), listening attentively to what others say, learning to use I-statements (saying "I think," "I feel," and so forth), seeking solutions to problems rather than placing blame on others, showing respect for others by never humiliating or speaking judgmentally about them, learning how to seek and find win-win solutions to problems, and framing conclusions in the form of "we decided," showing it was a group effort and conclusion.

Building Block 5: Learn about Separate Realities

In this building block, teachers focus on helping students understand that not everyone is the same or thinks the same way. Nelsen, Lott, and Glenn describe an activity that poses

problem situations involving turtles, lions, eagles, and chameleons. Students discuss how each would probably feel, react, and deal with the problem. This can lead to helping students see that different people perceive situations, feel, and react in different ways.

Building Block 6: Recognize the Five Reasons People Do What They Do

Ask students if they have ever wondered why people do what they do. Ask for their ideas, acknowledge them, and then ask if they have ever heard of the primary goal of belonging and the four mistaken goals of misbehavior. Proceed by using examples to illustrate the goal of belonging and the mistaken goals of undue attention, power, revenge, and giving up.

Author's Note: Nelsen, Lott, and Glenn use Rudolf Dreikurs's explanation of why students behave as they do. As you have seen, there are alternative explanations concerning student motivation and causes of misbehavior (see William Glasser; C. M. Charles). Nelsen, Lott, and Glenn's recommendations pertain regardless of the causes of behavior that are identified.

Building Block 7: Practice Role-Playing and Brainstorming

By the third class meeting, students are usually ready to begin considering problems and seeking solutions to them. Here are some suggestions for exploring problems in a tactful manner: (1) Discuss the key elements of the problem situation. (2) Have students act out roles involved in the problem. (3) Brainstorm a number of possible solutions to the difficulty or problem and allow students to select a solution they believe will work best.

Building Block 8: Focus on Nonpunitive Solutions

Ask students the following and write their answers on the board: "What do you feel like when someone bosses you? What do you want to do? What do you want to do when someone calls you names or puts you down? When others do these things to you, does it help you behave better?" Then ask them how their behavior is affected when someone is kind to them, helps them, or provides stimulation and encouragement. Have them compare their answers, which you have written on the board. Use the comparison to draw attention to the value of encouragement versus punishment.

Tell the students that you intend never to punish or belittle them in any way and that when they do something wrong you will try to help them behave more appropriately. Explain that what you will do to help will always be *related* to what they have done wrong, *respectful* of them as persons, and *reasonable*. These are what Nelsen, Lott, and Glenn call the **three R's of good solutions**. They explain the concept this way: If students don't do their homework, sending them to the office is not related to missed homework. A *related* solution might be to have them make up the homework or not get points for that assignment. *Respectful* means addressing the solution with dignity and consideration: "Would you like to make up the homework assignment at home or right after school?" *Reasonable* means you don't add punishment such as, "Now you'll have to do twice as much."

Standard Format for Class Meetings

Consistent with the building blocks, Nelsen, Lott, and Glenn suggest that teachers use the following format for class meetings. The teacher normally initiates the meeting and makes sure everyone abides by the rules and has an equal right to speak:

1. *Express compliments and appreciation.* Each session begins in this way as a means of setting a positive tone.
2. *Follow up on earlier solutions applied to problems.* Any suggested solution is to be tried only for a week, so it is important to determine if the solution has been working. If it hasn't, the class may wish to put the issue back on the agenda for future problem solving.
3. *Go through agenda items.* When an agenda item is read, ask the person (student or teacher) with the issue if he or she still wants help with it. If so, ask that person what a satisfactory solution could be. If he or she can't think of any, go around the circle giving every student an opportunity to offer a suggestion. Ask the student to select the most helpful solution from the suggestions offered.
4. *Make future plans for class activities.* End the class meeting by discussing a fun activity for the entire class at a future date. For example, the class might decide to set aside some time on Friday to discuss an upcoming event, view a videotape, or complete homework assignments with a friend.

What a Positive Discipline Class Meeting Looks Like

The following description was provided personally by Jane Nelsen (December 2002).

1. Students sit in a circle, and the teacher sits in the circle at the same level. (In other words, if the students are on the floor, so is the teacher. If the students are sitting in chairs, so is the teacher—as opposed to standing and teaching.)
2. As soon as possible, students lead the meeting.
3. The student in charge will start the compliments by passing an item (such as a talking stick or koosh ball) around the circle so every student has an opportunity to give a compliment, pass, or ask for a compliment.
4. The receiver of a compliment will say, "Thank you."
5. The teacher or student in charge will handle the agenda and read off the next item to be discussed.
6. After the agenda item is read, the student who placed the item on the agenda can choose among (a) sharing feelings while others listen, (b) discussing without fixing, or (c) asking for problem-solving help.
7. If the student asks for discussing without fixing or for problem-solving help, the item will be passed around the circle again for students to discuss without fixing or to brainstorm for solutions. (Short comments are also allowed.)
8. The teacher refrains from commenting on the students' suggestions (except to make sure the student is giving a suggestion. It may be necessary to say, "How could you turn that into a suggestion?"). When the item reaches the teacher, he or she can make a comment or suggestion—but only then.

9. Each suggestion is written in a notebook or on chart paper.
10. In most cases, the item will go around the circle twice to give children an opportunity to make a suggestion they didn't think of before listening to others. (This doesn't take as long as some fear.)
11. A vote will be taken only if the problem involves the whole class. Otherwise, the student who put the problem on the agenda can choose the suggestion he or she thinks will be most helpful.

Six Reasons Class Meetings Fail

The following information was provided personally by Jane Nelsen (December 2002).

1. Not forming a circle.
2. Not having the meetings regularly (three to five times per week for elementary; less often for secondary).
3. Teacher censoring what students say.
4. Not allowing students to learn nonpunitive problem-solving skills.
5. Talking down to students patronizingly instead of showing faith in their abilities.
6. Not going around the circle and allowing every student a chance to speak or pass.

Respectful Interventions and Management

Nelsen, Lott, and Glenn continually emphasize mutual respect among all members of the class. They make suggestions such as:

1. *Give students choices but make the choices appropriate and limit their number.* **Appropriate choices** are those that further the educational program. Instead of saying, "What do you want to do first this morning?" say "We can begin with our directed work or our group discussion—which do you prefer?" An **acceptable choice** is one that you, the teacher, deem worthwhile. Do not provide unacceptable choice options to students.
2. *Ask students to use a problem-solving process to settle disputes.* A **four-step problem-solving process** should be introduced for this purpose and its steps posted in the room:
 - Step 1. *Ignore the situation.* This encourages students either to avoid involvement or else leave the area of conflict for a cooling-off period.
 - Step 2. *Talk it over respectfully with the other students.* This is an opportunity for students to tell each other how they feel, to listen to and respect their own feelings, to figure out what they did to contribute to the problem, and to tell the other person what they are willing to do *differently*.
 - Step 3. *Find a win-win solution.* This might involve brainstorming for solutions or simply apologizing.
 - Step 4. (If no solution is agreed to) *Put it on the class meeting agenda.* This shows students it is all right to ask for help.

When students come to you with a problem, refer them to the four problem-solving steps chart, and ask if they have tried any of the steps. If they haven't tried any, ask which one they would like to try. This keeps you out of the role of perpetual problem solver.

3. *When you cannot wait for a class meeting, follow through immediately.* At times, kind and firm action is called for. In 10 words or less, identify the issue and redirect the student's behavior: "I need your help to keep the noise down."

4. *When conflict occurs, ask students about it rather than telling them what to do.* Teachers tend to tell students what happened, why it happened, how they should feel about it, and what they should do. Instead of telling, teachers should ask students their perception of why it happened, how they feel about it, and how they could use that information next time. This encourages students to use judgment and be accountable for their actions. Nelson, Lott, and Glenn say whenever you feel like telling students, stop yourself and *ask*. This is usually enough to get students to think about their behavior and decide what ought to be done.

5. *Use questions that redirect behavior.* Certain questions cause students to think about what they are doing and decide on better behavior. For example, the teacher might say, "How many of you think it is too noisy in here for people to concentrate? How many do not?"

6. *Be willing to say no with dignity and respect.* It is all right to say no. Many teachers don't think they have the right to say no without giving a lengthy explanation, but often a kind and succinct "no" is all that is required.

7. *Act more but talk less.* Most teachers would be amazed if they could hear the number of useless words they speak. It is better to let one's behavior do the talking. Use hand signals, body posture, and facial expressions.

8. *Put everyone in the same boat.* It is almost impossible to identify the culprit and judge behavior correctly in every situation that arises. When some students are talking and others are not, say, "It is too noisy in here." If someone says, "It wasn't me; I wasn't doing anything wrong," simply say, "I'm not interested in finding fault or pointing fingers but in getting the problem resolved."

Solutions Rather Than Consequences

Nelsen, Lott, and Glenn caution that it is easy to misuse logical consequences. They point out that well-meaning teachers often perpetuate the use of punishment even though they call it "logical consequences." Nelson, Lott, and Glenn urge teachers always to think in terms of solutions rather than consequences. The following illustrates their point.

During a class meeting, students in a fifth-grade class were asked to brainstorm logical consequences for two students who didn't hear the recess bell and were late for class. Following is their list of consequences:

- Make them write their names on the board.
- Make them stay after school that many minutes.
- Take away that many minutes from tomorrow's recess.
- No recess tomorrow.
- The teacher could yell at them.

The students were then asked to forget about consequences and brainstorm for solutions that would help the students be on time. The following is their list of solutions:

- Someone could tap them on the shoulder when the bell rings.
- Everyone could yell together, "Bell!"
- They could play closer to the bell.
- They could watch others to see when they are going in.
- Adjust the bell so it is louder.
- They could choose a buddy to remind them that it is time to come in.

Notice the difference between these two lists. The first looks and sounds like punishment. It focuses on the past and making kids "pay" for their mistake. The second list looks and sounds like solutions that would help students do better in the future. It focuses on seeing problems as opportunities for learning. The first list is likely to hurt; the second is likely to help.

Among Nelsen, Lott, and Glenn's other suggestions for moving beyond consequences are:

Involve students in the solutions. When students participate in finding solutions to behavioral problems, they strengthen communication and problem-solving skills. They are also more likely to abide by agreements they have helped plan. Because they are made to feel part of the classroom community, they have less reason to misbehave and are more willing to work on solutions to problems.

Focus on the future instead of the past. When teachers apply logical consequences, they often are likely to be focusing on the past on the behavior the student has already committed. Rather than that, teachers should ask students to look to the future, thinking of solutions that will improve conditions in days to come.

Make connections between opportunity, responsibility, and consequence. Nelsen, Lott, and Glenn do not say that students should never experience logical consequences. Students need to learn that every new opportunity they encounter brings with it a related responsibility. If students are unwilling to take on the responsibility, they should not be allowed the opportunity. Nelsen, Lott, and Glenn illustrate this point as follows: Elementary students have the opportunity to use the playground during recess. Their related responsibility is to treat the equipment and other people with respect. If they treat things or people disrespectfully, the logical consequence is losing the opportunity of using the playground. A way to instill a sense of responsibility in students who have been given a consequence is to say, "You decide how much time you think you need to cool off and calm down. Let me know when you are ready to use the playground respectfully." Nelsen, Lott, and Glenn remind us that consequences are effective only if they are enforced respectfully and students are given another opportunity as soon as they are ready for the responsibility.

Be sure you don't piggyback. To piggyback is to add something to a consequence that isn't necessary and may actually be hurtful, such as, "Maybe this will teach you!" or, "You can just sit there and think about what you did!" Teachers who use piggybacking make punishment out of what would otherwise be a solution or even a respectful consequence.

Plan solutions carefully in advance. A good way to prevent punishment's creeping into solutions is to plan out the solution in advance with student collaboration. During a class meeting, ask students to think about what sort of solutions would actually help them learn. Make the questions specific, such as, "What kind of solution do you think would help any of us to remember to use the school equipment respectfully?" "What do you think a helpful solution would be when we return books late to the library?"

Putting It All Together

When new procedures are implemented, it often takes some time before they begin to function smoothly. Nelsen, Lott, and Glenn say that if students do not respond to class meetings and other parts of Positive Discipline with the enthusiasm hoped for, don't be discouraged. You wouldn't stop teaching math or reading if students didn't grasp the concepts in a week or a month. Trust in the procedure; it will eventually come together. The goal is for long-term quality, not short-term convenience. Have faith that students and teachers can cooperate happily with each other. When putting class meetings into practice, be willing to give up *control over* students in favor of gaining *cooperation with* students. Forgo lecturing in favor of asking questions about students' thoughts and opinions. When students are encouraged to express themselves and are given choices, they become better able to cooperate, collaborate, and solve their problems.

Strengths of *Positive Discipline in the Classroom*

Nelsen, Lott, and Glenn provide a discipline program designed to help students accept responsibility and take positive control of their behavior. They say that punishment, rewards, and praise have no positive effect in developing self-directed people. They believe that each problem presents an opportunity for learning and that students learn important life skills when they help each other find positive solutions to problems. To accomplish the goals they identify, they advocate regular and frequent use of class meetings, which they believe afford the best opportunity for group discussions, identification of problems, and pursuit of solutions. They give many suggestions for making the meetings work effectively within the daily class program.

Although Nelsen, Lott, and Glenn provide lists of suggestions and cautions, the approach to discipline they advocate is not highly structured. Teachers who use it can adapt it to their needs and realities. This will be seen as a strength by teachers who like the ideas but want to make them part of their personal style of teaching. The Nelsen, Lott, and Glenn system will require some time for organizing and for student acclimatization. Therefore, its benefits may not be realized immediately, but over time they will be effective and lasting.

Initiating *Positive Discipline in the Classroom*

The Nelsen, Lott, and Glenn model of discipline depends on successful implementation of class meetings as an integral part of the instructional program. These meetings make it

possible to involve students in discussions about curriculum and behavior and obtain their input in making decisions. They also furnish a venue for practicing many of the skills of communication, problem solving, and conflict resolution that Nelsen, Lott, and Glenn advocate. Therefore, a teacher wishing to implement *Positive Discipline in the Classroom* should set up class meetings and use the agenda suggested for them. They are best introduced at the beginning of the year or term. It will take time to get this approach functioning fully, but once under way it will help students develop skills that serve in life inside and outside the classroom. Any lost academic time will be regained once students begin behaving helpfully so that instruction is not disrupted.

KEY TERMS AND CONCEPTS PRESENTED IN THIS CHAPTER

The following terms are central to understanding the Nelsen, Lott, and Glenn model of discipline. Check yourself to make sure you understand them:

three self-perceptions: personal capabilities, significance in primary relationships, personal power
four essential skills: interpersonal skills, intrapersonal skills, judgmental skills, strategic skills

three R's of good solutions: related, respectful, reasonable
victim mentality
personal accountability
barriers to relationships
builders of relationships

eight building blocks for classroom meetings
win-win solutions
four-step problem-solving process

SELECTED SEVEN—SUMMARY SUGGESTIONS FROM NELSEN, LOTT, AND GLENN

Jane Nelsen, Lynn Lott, and H. Stephen Glenn suggest that you emphasize the following, as well as their many other suggestions:

- 1 Help students develop the skills of accepting and respecting others, communicating effectively, and focusing on solutions to problems. These skills not only lead to good behavior in the classroom but also empower students in all walks of life.
- 2 You must show you truly care about your students by learning about them as individuals, encouraging them to see mistakes as opportunities to learn and grow, and having faith in their ability to make meaningful contributions.
- 3 Work with your students in a kindly manner within a classroom climate of acceptance, dignity, respect, and encouragement. By doing so, you can gradually reduce discipline problems to an insignificant level.
- 4 Hold regular classroom meetings, in accordance with the eight building blocks of effective classroom meetings. Give up some of your power in these meetings and allow students to make decisions that work for the class.
- 5 When working with students, remove the normal barriers to relationships and replace them with builders of relationships.
- 6 Help your students perceive themselves as capable, significant, and in control of their own lives. At the same time provide conditions that enable them to develop skills of self-control, adaptability, cooperation, and judgment.
- 7 When discussing class problems, always focus on solutions rather than consequences.

CONCEPT CASES
■ CASE 1 *Kristina Will Not Work*

Kristina, a student in Mr. Jake's class, is quite docile. She socializes little with other students and never disrupts lessons. However, despite Mr. Jake's best efforts, Kristina will not do her work. She rarely completes an assignment. She is simply there, putting forth no effort at all. *How would Nelsen, Lott, and Glenn deal with Kristina?*

One of the many possibilities they would advise Mr. Jake to do is the following: Ask Kristina if she would like to put the problem on the class meeting agenda to get ideas from the class that might be helpful. If she says yes, during a regular class meeting invite students to brainstorm ideas that might be helpful. Write down every suggestion. When finished, ask a volunteer to read the suggestions. Allow Kristina to choose the solution that would be most helpful to her, such as working with a buddy. Ask Kristina to try the solution for a week and report back in a class meeting how it is working. If she begins to do her work, give her a compliment in the class meeting. If she does not, ask her at the end of the week if she would like to put the problem on the agenda again to receive more suggestions from the class. It is rare that students do not follow through on suggestions they choose.

■ CASE 2 *Sara Cannot Stop Talking*

Sara is a pleasant girl who participates in class activities and does most, though not all, of her assigned work. She cannot seem to refrain from talking to classmates, however. Her teacher, Mr. Gonzales, has to speak to her re-

peatedly during lessons to the point that he often becomes exasperated and loses his temper. *What suggestions would Nelsen, Lott, and Glenn give Mr. Gonzales for dealing with Sara?*

■ CASE 3 *Joshua Clowns and Intimidates*

Larger and louder than his classmates, Joshua always wants to be the center of attention, which he accomplishes through a combination of clowning and intimidation. He makes wise remarks, talks back (smilingly) to the teacher, utters a variety of sound-effect noises such as automobile crashes and gunshots, and makes limitless sarcastic comments and put-downs of his classmates. Other students will not stand up to him, apparently fearing his size and verbal aggression. His teacher, Miss Pearl, has come to her wit's end. *Would Joshua's behavior be likely to improve if Nelsen, Lott, and Glenn's techniques were used in Miss Pearl's classroom? Explain.*

■ CASE 4 *Tom Is Hostile and Defiant*

Tom has appeared to be in his usual foul mood ever since arriving in class. On his way to sharpen his pencil, he bumps into Frank, who complains. Tom tells him loudly to shut up. Miss Baines, the teacher, says, "Tom, go back to your seat." Tom wheels around, swears loudly, and says heatedly, "I'll go when I'm damned good and ready!" *How would Nelsen, Lott, and Glenn have Miss Baines deal with Tom?*

QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

1. In your journal, make entries from the Nelsen, Lott, and Glenn model that relate to the five principles of building a personal system of discipline.
2. Each of the following exemplifies an important point in the Nelsen, Lott, and Glenn model of discipline. Identify the point illustrated by each.
 - Miss Sterling, when Jacob interrupts her for the fifth time, says angrily, "Jacob, you go sit at the back table by yourself and stay there until you figure out how to act like a gentleman!"
 - "If I catch you talking again during the class, you will have to stay an extra five minutes."
 - "I am concerned about the lack of neatness in the work being turned in. I'd like to know your thoughts about neatness and what we might want to do, if anything, to improve."
 - "You are simply not working up to the standards I have for this class. You will need to put in more effort, or else I will have to increase the homework assignments."
3. For a grade level and/or subject you select, outline in one page what you would do if you wished to implement Nelsen, Lott, and Glenn's ideas in your classroom.

YOU ARE THE TEACHER

Middle School Library

You are a media specialist in charge of the middle school library. You see your job as serving as resource person to students who are seeking information and you are always eager to give help to those who request it. About half the students in your school are Caucasian. The remainder are African American, Hispanic American, and Asian American. Each period of the day differs as to the number and type of students who come under your direction. Small groups are usually sent to the library to do cooperative research. Some unexpected students always appear who have been excused from physical education for medical reasons but hate to be sent to the library, or else they bear special passes from their teachers for a variety of purposes.

Typical Occurrences

You have succeeded in getting students settled and working when Tara appears at your side, needing a book to read as makeup work for missing class. You ask Tara what kinds of books interest her. She resignedly shrugs her shoulders. You take her to a shelf of newly published books. "I read this one last night," you tell her. "I think you might like it. It's a good story and fast reading." Tara only glances at it. "That looks stupid," she says. "Don't you have any good books?" She glances down the shelf. "These are all stupid!" Another student, Jaime, is tugging at your elbow, with a note from his history teacher, who wants the source of a particular quotation. You ask Tara to look at the books for a moment while you take Jaime to the reference books. As you pass by a table of students supposedly doing research, you see that the group is watching Walter and Teo have a friendly pencil fight, hitting pencils together until one of them breaks. You ad-

dress your comments to Walter, who appears to be the more willing participant. Walter answers hotly, "Teo started it! It wasn't me!" "Well," you say, "if you boys can't behave yourself, just go back to your class." The other students smile and Walter feels he is being treated unjustly. He sits down and pouts. Meanwhile, Tara has gone to the large globe and is twirling it. You start to speak to her but realize that Jaime is still waiting at your side with the request for his teacher. Somehow, before the period ends, Tara leaves with a book she doesn't want and Jaime takes a citation back to his teacher. The research groups have been too noisy. You know they have done little work and wonder if you should speak to their teacher about their manners and courtesy. After the period is over, you notice that profane remarks have been written on the table where Walter was sitting.

Conceptualizing a Strategy

If you followed the suggestions of Jane Nelsen, Lynn Lott, and H. Stephen Glenn, what would you conclude or do with regard to the following?

1. Preventing the problem(s) from occurring in the first place.
2. Putting a clear end to the misbehavior now.
3. Involving other or all students in addressing the situation.
4. Maintaining student dignity and good personal relations.
5. Using follow-up procedures that would prevent the recurrence of the misbehavior.
6. Using the situation to help the students develop a sense of greater responsibility and self-control.

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