TCM Chapter 4: Intentionally Promoting Clear and Shared Classroom Expectations: The Cornerstone of the Effective Classroom

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In this Chapter:

- What are classroom expectations?
- Where do expectations exist?
- Levels of classroom expectations
- Why to be concerned with intentionally promoting classroom expectations
- Strategies which are most effective at intentionally promoting clear, positive, and shared expectations
- Examining classroom expectations within the One and Two-Style classroom management approaches

What are Classroom Expectations?

In any classroom, expectations are ever-present. Whether they were promoted intentionally or unintentionally, whether they exist in the minds of students consciously or unconsciously, they are there continuously defining the feel and function of the classroom. *Students use their expectations to answer the questions in the class*. These include the practical questions such as:

- *What are the directions for this activity?*
- *How am I being graded on this project?*
- *What would happen if I decided to get off task?*

And they include the larger questions, such as:

- *Do I find the learning in which I am involved meaningful to me?*
- *Does the teacher respect me?*
- *Am I emotionally safe in this class?*

It is useful to recognize that all teachers are constantly projecting expectations, and all students are continuously interpreting the expectations for any situation (Hargreaves, Hester & Mellor, 1975). Things that are said, things that are done, patterns of action, body language and one's tone of voice all send out information that students invariably interpret. Over time these interpretations lead students to construct answers to their questions and make judgments about what they understand is expected within the class. Put simply, *students learn to expect through what they have experienced and observed in the past*.

Wentzel, Battle & Looney (2000) found that half the students in middle schools that they studied reported not knowing what the teacher expected.

Where do Expectations Exist?

Indispensable to the *transformative classroom* will be the presence of *intention* and *awareness.* The means to achieving these qualities will be dependent on our ability to develop clear and shared expectations among the members of our class. In fact, any classroom's expectations only exist to the degree that they are clear and shared. In the effective class, students know where things are going, how they fit in, what is expected of them, and trust that others do as well (Wentzel, Battle & Looney, 2000).

The idea that expectations exist as shared concepts and ideas seems rather abstract. However, an examination of a few classrooms will help validate this view.
For instance, most of us have observed a class in which all the students seemed to be on the same page and knew what was expected of them with very little "telling" on the part of the teacher. Contrastingly, we have observed classes in which there were long lists of rules on the wall and the teacher made constant pleas for orderly behavior, yet the majority of students seemed to be working off conflicting scripts and the energy in the class could best be characterized as divergent and chaotic.

> **Chapter Reflection 4-a:** Recall the classes that you have observed that seemed to have a shared sense of purpose and direction. What do you think contributed to that environment?

So how do we create a classroom in which our students are all in congruence about those practical classroom realities that would work to their benefit? In this chapter, we will examine various strategies for creating intentional expectations.

TYPES OF CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS

Before we examine how one would go about attempting to promote shared intentional expectations, it is useful to make some distinctions about the various types of expectations that operate within any classroom, and the ways that this idea will be used throughout the remainder of the book. It might be helpful to classify the expectations within any class from least to most conscious and/or conspicuous beginning with 1) unconscious expectations, followed by 2) explicit but unwritten expectations, and finally, 3) written rules, classroom constitutions or social contracts.

Previously, we examined the idea of *unconsciously conveyed expectations*. We noted that as teachers, we need not even try to communicate our biases, preconceptions and motives. They will find a way of affecting what we say and do (Weinsstein, Gregory, & Strambler, 2004). Recall the Pygmalion in the classroom study (Rosenthal & Jacobs, 1968), in which the teachres were told that some of their students were "rising stars." These teachers were entirely unaware that their implicit expectations were having such a dramatic effect on how they were teaching. Moreover, research has shown that students we like get better grades in our classes (Pianta, Hamre, & Stuhlman, 2003).

Because of the powerful effect our expectations can have, recognizing and making the deliberate effort to bring our unconscious expectations to our conscious awareness will be critical. While it is possible to project primarily intentional expectations to our students, it is important to keep somewhere in the back of our minds that we will struggle to promote healthy and functional explicit expectations if we have a substantial amount of unexamined dysfunctional expectations operating like computer viruses to corrupt our intentional efforts.

The number of expectations that could potentially exist in any classroom is countless. If we began to list all the behaviors that we desired from our students, we could identify hundreds. So while it is tempting to try to capture all of our expectations in a set of written rules, it will be ultimately counterproductive. Therefore we need to make a distinction between the mechanisms for achieving some basic guiding ground rules/principles and promoting the endless number of other expectations that we want students to hold. Later we will examine the process for creating and implementing a

formal social contract. While the social contract will include all levels of expectations in principle, in practice it will focus primarily on the formal guiding principles in the class. It will include the basic rules that the class has agreed to follow and the logical consequences when students choose to violate those rules. For example, the social contract may include a rule related to being on time, and a consequence for being late. The rule will include an expectation (i.e., there is a value to being on time), but it is further formalized when it is termed a "rule" (e.g., when you are late, then the consequence for violating that rule is that you will lose the opportunity to do _____.)

In this chapter, we will examine how our largely unwritten expectations are promoted. While the development of the social contract will act in concert with our efforts to promote our classroom expectations in general, we take a systematic approach to the development of the countless number of unwritten expectations within the class.

> **Chapter Reflection 4-b**: I recently heard two teachers talking early in this school year. They were each lamenting that they struggled to get the kind of learning outcomes that they wanted because of some of the misbehavior exhibited by their students. One of the teachers expressed the belief that he did not feel he should have to actively help the student behave better, that "they should be able to do that by now." The other teacher took the position that part of his job was to support more functional behavior on the part of his students. Which teacher would you guess had fewer behavioral problems as the year progressed? What are your feelings about each teacher's position?

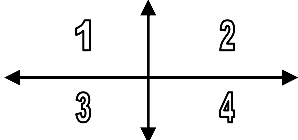
The Benefits of Promoting Clear and Purposeful Shared Classroom Expectations
There are a whole host of benefits to intentionally promoting clear and shared classroom expectations. A survey of the research demonstrates many of them that would be largely anticipated such as:

- Students know what to expect and they understand the learning tasks better (Wentzel, 2006).
- Things in the class run more smoothly with less confusion (Grusec & Goodnow, 1994).
- Students have a clearer sense of what it takes to perform (Hines, Cruickshank & Kennedy, 1985).

However, other benefits of clear expectations are less obvious, such as:

- Expectations that are clear and shared are essential to help foster the cause-and-effect relationship between actions and consequences that are at the heart of functional frames, an effective social contract, and the logic to the reasonable and related consequences for that contract. Without clarity and a shared understanding, consequences feel arbitrary. The result is that they will have less benefit and be experienced as more punitive and result in more resentment and less behavior change.
- The absence of clear expectations will create practical problems and an environment of uneasiness in the class that will lead to confusion, frustration and hostility when expectations clash.
- An intentional approach to promoting expectations helps them become more concrete and meaningful. When expectations exist as words (or even less-effective privately held assumptions), they remain abstractions. They must be "operationalized" to be effective.

- Expectations help the class interpret events and actions as examples or non-examples of “things that are making us better.” For example, a funny comment can be either hurtful or act to amuse the group. The clarity of the expectation provides a means for helping members of the group understand which it is. The result is a class that feels more liberated to act, with less fear that what they do or say will be unwanted or unacceptable to others.



- A foundation of clear and shared expectations is essential for creating either a 2- or 1-Style classroom. In the absence of clear expectations, the teacher-centered class will inherently manifest 4-Style characteristics, and attempts at student-centered management will descend into a 3-Style environment.

> **Chapter reflection 4-c**: Examine an environment in which there is a lot of anger, resentment, and pain-giving. As you examine it more closely, do you find a desire on the part of those involved to create clear expectations? Perhaps, if they are tired of the frustration but have developed a habit of attack and retaliation, you will notice that the expectations are rather vague, and the parties like to keep it that way. Why do you think this is?

As teachers, the more deliberate and intentional we are about promoting our classroom expectations, the more effective we will be. Moreover, the expectations that guide the class will be those that are desirable and that lead to the mutual benefit of teacher and student.

Intentionally Creating Positive Expectations: Which Strategies Are Most Effective?
As one examines how expectations are intentionally cultivated in a classroom, it is evident that some strategies demonstrate a greater capacity to promote quality behavior than others. We could say that the most effective intentional strategies would be those that function to do the following:

1. Promote in the minds of students a greater sense of clarity of the expectation.
2. Promote in the minds of students positive associations with the desired behavior implied in the expectation.

Using this principle, if we were to evaluate the effectiveness of the most commonly incorporated strategies according to their ability to create positive expectations, we would observe a substantial variation in effectiveness. An approximation of the effectiveness ratings for each strategy is offered in Figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1: Approximate rating of common management practices related to their ability to create clarity of expectations and a positive association with the expected behavior, from most (four stars) to least effective (no stars).

Practice	Clarity rating	Affect rating	Overall	What they promote related to the management effectiveness continuum	
Purposeful Action ▪ Consistency ▪ Follow-through Positive Recognition Clarifying Statements/Mantras Clarifying Questions Expectation Cues Debriefing Written Expectations	+ + + + + + +	+ + N+ N+ N+ + N	**** **** *** *** *** **** **½	Strategies that do a great deal to create cause and effect clarity and positive associations related to expectations Use promotes movement up the effectiveness continuum	
Personal Recognition/Praise Warnings Requests	N N+ -	N+ N N-	* * ½*	Strategies that do little to promote expectations and create inconsequential or confusing emotional climates Use promotes little movement up or down continuum	
Negative recognitions Irrational or Negative Actions Threats and Put Downs	N- - -	- - -	½ * 0 0	Strategies that do very little to promote clarity and do a great deal to create negative associations with the desired behavior Use promotes mostly movement down the effectiveness continuum	
Boundary Setting Assessing Behavior	NR NR	NR NR		Strategies that vary greatly depending on how they are used	

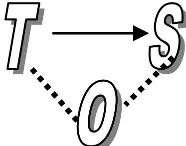
+	*demonstrates high levels of effectiveness in this area*
N+	*demonstrates some effectiveness*
N	*is neutral or inconsequential*
N-	*does a bit more harm than good but has an effect*
-	*does mostly harm*
NR	*(no rating) can vary from + to – depending on how they are used*

Each of these strategies rated in Figure 4.1 is examined in more depth in the following sections, beginning with the most effective and progressing to the least.

Purposeful Action

Purposeful action on the part of the teacher is rated at the top of the list for the simple reason that actions really do speak louder than words. No matter what we say, students learn about our class from what we do. In a sense, words are technically action, but in an operational sense they can also be perceived as inaction. Actions demonstrate that we are committed to our words. Actions take more effort than words, so students learn what we value and who we are by what we make the effort to do. Conversely, inaction sends a powerful message as well. When we fail to follow through on our agreements or responsibilities, we undermine the cause-and-effect relationship between choices and consequences in the class, and shift the locus of control away from the student

(internally) to ourselves (externally). When we complain as opposed to take action to change the problem, we show the students that we are more interested in image management as opposed to the quality of the learning in the class.



Our actions are the primary means by which we promote the responsibility-freedom social frame in the class. These lessons are learned in most cases through indirect or social learning. For example, when there is a classroom expectation that is collectively understood (e.g., following directions, show respect to other students, fulfill one's student responsibilities, etc.), and students successfully meet it, we can take action to give the students more freedom or self-determination related to that expectation. Positive recognitions will also be useful as we will discuss later, but a change in practical action will have an even greater effect on the development of the expectation. Conversely, when we have set up an expectation that implies that if the student does not do A, then as teacher we are responsible to do B (e.g., deliver a consequence, support the student's efforts to improve their behavior, etc.) and do not follow through, it sends a very concrete and observable message to students that the expectation is weak or non-existent.

> **Chapter Reflection 4-d**: Recall teachers whom you have had in the past, or have observed recently. Contrast those teachers who tended to take action and followed through on agreements versus those teachers who did a lot of telling but seldom took action. In which classrooms were the expectations clearer? Which strategy was more effective at changing behavior?

Positive Recognitions

What we term *positive recognitions* are incidents in which the teacher points out that something that is happening or has happened is beneficial for an individual student and/or the class as a whole. What is being positively recognized or encouraged can take the form of good ideas, quality performance or effort, behavior that meets important expectations, and/or any behavior that is judged to be valuable. Positive recognitions have a powerful effect. However, we need to first distinguish them from what we term *personal recognitions* or praise. Positive recognitions highlight behavior, whereas personal recognitions/praise call attention to the agent doing the behaving. Praise, by its nature, leads to dependence on an external source, and is not readily associated with learning. Positive recognitions create clarity of the task and encourage the student's own internal goals and interests.

Let's examine an example related to listening. A common phrase that many primary teachers use is, "I like the way Maria is listening." Compare that phrase to, "It's great that we are listening so well, notice how much easier it is to . . . " The first phrase may sound like a positive recognition at first, but let's examine it more closely. What do students infer when they hear it? Maria will hear something to the effect, "the teacher likes me because I am being good." The other students likely hear, "the teacher likes Maria because she is being good." It does little to create clarity of the expectation or to

reinforce the need for the expectation. Personal recognitions are more effective than negative recognitions such as mentioning who is not listening, but they run the risk of having negative effects associated with praise; that is, operating as an emotional extrinsic reinforcement of persons, not behavior (Kohn, 1999).

Consider the phrase, “I see this group has taken care to organize all the ideas that they brainstormed before they started to create their poster; this will help the quality of their end result.” It represents an example of a positive recognition of behavior, in this case the collective behavior of a group. Notice the specificity of the feedback. The effect will be that it will feel positive and encouraging to those that received the recognition, but it does not sound personal. And it will have the effect of modeling that quality performance to the other students.

Positive recognitions can be focused primarily on either the collective, or on particular individuals or groups. There are advantages to each level of attention.

The advantages of recognizing a collective accomplishment include:

1. The group feels that, in a sense, it has “won as a team.” This experience will help develop communal bonds within the group.
2. The members of the group are given the chance to recognize that it is possible to trust that others will do their part as they do their part.
3. The focus of the reinforcement is more readily associated with the accomplishment of the behavior rather than personalities.

While these emotions experienced by the members of the recognized group are subtle, over time they can have a powerful cumulative effect. The group feels a progressive sense of pride and cohesion as their efforts are acknowledged. With time, the group begins to associate collective function with fulfilling the need for belonging. In addition, the growing level of trust generates acceptance and a feeling of emotional ease.

Chapter Reflection 4-e: Judge the assumption for yourself use your own experiences. Recall a situation in which you found yourself working with a group of people with whom you worked well and grew to trust. Recollect your level of anxiety. How about your acceptance level of what was taking place? Now recall a situation where you found yourself working with a group that you did not trust very much. Where was your level of anxiety throughout the process? How critical were you of the final outcomes in each case?

When we evaluate the use of positive behavioral recognitions of collective behavior in relation to our two principles for judging the quality of expectation promoting strategies (see Figure 4.1), why it is so effective becomes more evident. Collective positive recognitions have the effect of identifying behavior very specifically and therefore making expectations very clear and concrete. In addition they act to meet student’s basic needs for power, competence and belonging, and therefore create a very positive association with the behavior that is expected. Over time, their use promotes a steady progress up the continuum of management effectiveness to greater levels of function.

Pedagogical suggestion box 4.1

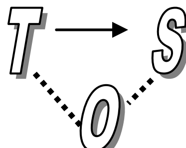
If generating the language for your positive recognitions is not coming easily, the following phrases may be helpful general examples:

- *This group just _______-- that is a great idea that I had not thought of.*

- *I am seeing people doing a good job of taking the time to ______ before they ____ .*
- *I love the creative ways that we are approaching _______ .*
- *I appreciate that you are putting so much care and attention into _____, it will pay off when we ________.*
- *Do you remember that we had trouble with this two weeks ago? Now see how well we are doing.*

The advantages of recognition of individual or individual group behavior are:

1. The teacher can specifically recognize a particular behavior that they want other students to model.
2. The teacher can recognize a student publicly in a way that can be motivating.
3. The teacher can use the recognition to shape a behavior or help a student recognize a skill, ability, or accomplishment.



Recall the social learning model from the previous chapter--the power of positive recognition becomes more evident. When the teacher recognizes a behavior or academic performance demonstrated by a particular student that exemplifies quality effort or thinking or clarifies the requirements of the task, the effect is that the other students have information that they can use. When we silently observe and evaluate student performance on a task, we tend to learn a great deal about what would help the students do better. This is typically the case. Students work in isolation and we gain the benefits of insight as we monitor their learning. However, when we make audible what we have observed in the form of positive recognitions of high quality efforts and task clarifications, the students gain the benefit of our insight.

For example, instead of walking around the room and giving students simple task completion feedback, such as "You have five minutes left," or making praise statements such as "good job," we will have a much greater impact if we find concrete behaviors to recognize that will teach the class as a whole lessons, such as "I notice some groups deciding on who is going to take on each role before they get into the task, good idea; it will make your job easier as you go." The effect of the use of public positive recognitions has the effect of being both a powerful teacher of the collective as well as a highly emotionally satisfying form of encouragement, or what we might term "healthy praise" to those being recognized.

Chapter Reflection 4-f: If you do not already provide your students with frequent and intentional positive recognitions, you may want to take part in some active research in this area. For some amount of time--an hour should be sufficient--find as many opportunities as you can to make positive recognitions. After the hour, note the degree to which the students show a clear understanding of and investment in the task. Also note the affect in the room. Does it feel more positive and focused?

Clarifying Statements, Directions and Mantras
A clarifying statement is one in which the teacher (or in some cases a student) simply states the necessary behavioral expectation. For example, “we are making sure that we are getting all the notes we need to present our ideas in a couple of minutes.” This kind of statement does not assume that anything is happening or is not happening currently. It is not a positive or negative recognition. It is simply a neutral clarification, stated positively.

Clarifying statements work like focusing a lens. They do not change the picture, or interpret it. They just help the students refocus their efforts a bit more intentionally. When the teacher uses a clarifying statement such as “we are all giving Sandra our undivided attention right now” (as Sandra is sharing an answer to the members of the class), there is no judgment about what is not happening, praise for what is happening, or new information. It is just a statement to help focus the expectation lens more clearly. It affirms the expectation was already understood, but may have been a little fuzzy.

Providing good direction in any activity is critical. And as the use of clarifying statements, “expectation mantras,” and positive recognition act to further define any task, we have powerful tools for making our learning targets clear and “standing still” (Stiggins, 2001) without the need for constant explanations or negativity. In the next chapter, we will discuss a systematic method for giving directions that promotes accountability and a culture of responsibility.

Expectation Mantras
Finally, a highly effective but under-utilized strategy for clarifying expectations is the stating of “expectation mantras.” Mantras are repeated phrases that help shape a desired behavioral expectation. Mantras act on the conscious level as clarifying statements and on the unconscious level to condition thinking. For example, an example of a mantra phrase would be, “in this class we . . . listen to one another attentively, take care of our equipment, say only life-giving statements to one another, raise our hands when we have something to say, persist and stay positive without quitting or getting negative, learn from our mistakes and move on quickly, etc.” No matter how familiar or unfamiliar the content of the mantra statement is to the students, how accurately it represents the current state of affairs, or how trite you think you may sound saying it, give it a chance to work. Mantras work to the extent that they are stated repetitively. Regardless of the students’ existing level of performance in relation to any particular behavior, mantras act to raise the level of quality of that behavior in the direction of that expectation. For instance, if you inherit a class that demonstrates a habit of disrespect, it will be effective to employ the mantra, “in this class we do a great job of listening to each other and respecting one another’s opinions.” While at first it may sound a bit odd to the students (as they see evidence that this is not currently accurate), over time as they hear it repeated, and as you reinforce respectful behavior and show no tolerance for disrespectful behavior, you will see behavior change. The mantra begins to become internalized. Moreover, your use of the mantra sends a message to your students that you believe in them, will only accept the best they have to offer, and will not give up on them. Over time you will see not only behavior change but also a change in their self-concept related to the particular expectation. Ultimately, the evidence that a mantra has been substantially internalized will be when you begin to hear them come out of the mouths of the students as they interact with one another.

Clarifying Questions

Clarifying questions ask students to reflect on their actions in relation to an operating behavioral expectation. For example the question, "Looking at the clock, at which stage of the process should you be right now?" has the effect of prompting the students to consider their level of progress in relation to the amount of time that they have to complete the task. When compared to clarifying statements, clarifying questions have the effect of eliciting not simply recognition of the expectation but also subjective interpretation.

To illustrate the difference, it may help to examine an example of each type of statement related to the same expectation:

- *Clarifying statement* – "Make sure you are all doing a good job of your cooperative group roles."
- *Clarifying question* – "How would you say you are doing fulfilling your cooperative group roles so far today?"

Each statement will have the effect of focusing the expectation lens. Neither is judgmental or distracting. However, it is instructive to reflect upon what types of thinking each will elicit. The clarifying statement effectively brings awareness to the task. However, the clarifying question adds the dimension of promoting reflection as well. In the clarifying statement, few students will hear the implication related to the quality of the task. Mostly they will just hear "make sure you are on task." In the clarifying question the students are encouraged to consider the quality and effectiveness of their efforts to a greater degree.

When is it best to use a question rather than a statement? It will depend of course on the situation. But a general principle might be to use questions more frequently when the particular expectation has already been shown to be clearly understood and demonstrated at least once. Before then it will likely be more frustrating than useful.

Expectation Cues: Telling vs. Expecting

When we tell a student what to do, we are in essence keeping them dependent on our instructions to perform. As the classroom expectations become more internalized, we can begin to simply expect, and then recognize, rather than tell. We can accomplish this with the use of expectation "cues." Expectation cues are key words that represent a broader series of behavior. (Cues will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter.) A good example of a cue word is "ready." If we operationalize the concept of ready successfully, the result is that this one word can represent an extensive set of knowledge, skills and dispositions. Consider the following two statements:

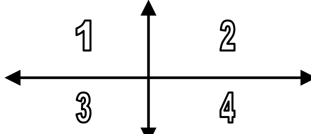
Case A: *Telling*
"I want you all to get ready to go"

Case B: *Expecting*
"I am looking for a group that looks ready."

In the first statement, the students are told clearly what they need to do, and if they understand what "ready" means, it will function as an effective request for students to act. In the second statement, the implicit assumption is that the students already know

what ready means, what is required to meet the expectation (in this case to move with a sense of urgency to get prepared for a new activity), and what potential consequences might be for meeting or not meeting the expectation.

So what is the difference? It will depend on how the cue (cause) is supported by consequences (effect). If there is some advantage or benefit to being ready when the teacher says they are “looking for a ready group,” the students will move with a sense of urgency. What is the benefit, advantage or consequence for being ready? It could be getting to go first, or some other privilege, a common understanding that time is of the essence, or the awareness that being ready demonstrates respect to the other members of the class.



Within the 2-Style approach, “ready group” competition is a powerful technique. Even if the reward is as small as getting to go first, students will act quickly to get ready. However, it has the effect of defining the purpose of getting ready quickly as getting to go sooner. Within the 1-Style approach, it may be effective to incorporate competitive incentives early in the year, and as students begin to internalize the value of the expected behavior, weaning them off the extrinsic incentives over time.
For those attempting to incorporate a 1-Style approach it will be helpful to progressively tap into more intrinsic forms of motivation for meeting expectation, such as the realization that it shows respect to the other members of the class, as the year goes on.

When is it best to use expectation cues rather than directions? As with the choice between clarifying statements or questions, it is best to be as direct and concrete as possible at first, and as the expectation becomes better understood both conceptually and practically, one will find that using expectation cues the majority of the time will get the best results.

Debriefing

Debriefing with our students after an activity can be a powerful method for clarifying the expectations within that activity (Roth & Lavoie, 2002). It is especially effective for clarifying concepts and skills that could benefit from being operationalized. For example, we may have an expectation that groups use active listening during a cooperative learning activity. The concepts and skills related to active listening are rather abstract and unfamiliar to most students. Debriefing can help make them more concrete and behavioral. In this case, we may ask students, “Who can share an example of a member of their group who did an especially good job of active listening?” Once they identify the person, we will want to encourage the students to be very specific about what that group member did in behavioral terms, as well as the benefits the group experienced as a result of that members actions -- in this case being good active listeners. Debriefing can be useful to clarity a broad range of expectations from what makes for an effective procedure to the elements that define quality for a product or performance. When we debrief we are in essence using the effectiveness of positive recognition, yet making it even more powerful as it requires students to generate the concrete examples of the concept themselves. Moreover, when they are positively recognized by our peers it is typically more rewarding than when it comes from us. When we examine the potential of debriefing within the lens of our two principles for what makes expectations effective, we

find that it is exceedingly effective at promoting both clarity as well as positive feelings related to the behavior.

At its essence debriefing is an inductive exercise in identifying the concrete, specific ingredients to a concept of task. In practice it can take many forms. Therefore, we can use it however it best suits the needs of the situation and the nature of the task. Debriefing can be especially powerful when used after a cooperative learning exercise, or to help clarify abstract terms used to define high quality behavior or participation (see Chapter 20).

Stolovitch (1990) offers a six-step process for debriefing following highly interactive activities. As you examine the sequence of steps you will recognize that the process moves from more concrete and practical to more abstract and general.

1. **General discussion and decompression.** In this step we set the context for the kinds of concepts and skills that we are going to debrief.
2. **Generation of factual information from the activity.** In this step we help the students recall “what happened?” in concrete, specific, and behavioral terms. These recollections will act as data for our inductive examination.
3. **Drawing inferences from the factual information**. In this step we ask the students to interpret the data. We will want to ask them questions to facilitate the process of interpretation, e.g., – “What did they/you do that made you label their actions as effective?” or “When you did ___ what was the effect?”
4. **Identifying generalizations and unifying principles**. In this stage, we will want to help students create generalizations from their inferences. Again, this will be best facilitated with questions, e.g., “So given what we have concluded about what worked, what overall principle can we draw from our experience?”
5. **Identifying how skills can be transferred to other situations.** Once students have developed a set of working principles that help promote effectiveness in one context, we will want to help them see how those same principles can be applied to other contexts. For example, we might ask them, “How could you use the principles for conflict resolution within your cooperative learning groups on the playground?” or “We have generated a set of principles for giving written feedback in our peer writing process, is there any part of that that we could apply to the process of verbal feedback in our class discussions?”
6. **Looking for “Real World” Applications**. Finally, it will be useful to help connect the skills and concepts from the classroom context to the outside world and the students’ daily lives. This process could be as simple as asking them to think about how this applies to what they experience outside the class, or what is going on in the world, or as complex as relating the discoveries within this process to other assignments, and/or service learning projects.

Debriefing exercises can be done rather efficiently. Taking even a minute or two to debrief after an activity can pay for itself many times over in the clarity that it creates. It helps promote the processes of inquiry and reflection. When used repetitively for the same kinds of activities, it provides students with opportunities to reflect upon and then apply the skills that they learned as a result of previous episodes of debriefing. In addition it provides each student the opportunity to positively recognize others (or themselves) or be positively recognized, which not only reinforces the behavior but builds community as well. Used effectively, debriefing can contribute to a very needs-satisfying classroom climate, as well as produce clearer expectations.

Chapter Reflection 4-g: Reflect on situations in which you were positively recognized by your peers for demonstrate a skill or action in a group context. How did it make you feel? How effective was it in reinforcing the skill or action?

Written Expectations

Putting expectations in writing is very helpful for many reasons, and should be included whenever possible. The clarity provided by written directions can spell out the task for all learners more effectively and may be essential to students who are not strong auditory learners or second language learners. Be careful not to assume that written directions are sufficient to clarify and support one's expectations. When words are conspicuously displayed in the class, students will read them many times over. However, if the actions in the class do not support the words, even the most dramatic and catchy posters will very quickly become invisible. This is true for both directions for tasks and for broad behavioral expectations.

If we were to examine two groups of students who were given a task where one group had written directions and the other didn't, who would you predict would do a better job of the task? The answer may seem obvious, yet how often do we trust verbal directions when written directions would have saved a great deal of misguided effort, the need to repeat what was said, and frustration for both teacher and students? For early grades, putting directions at work centers and/or on the board is a very effective practice. For upper grades, giving individual students or groups assignment task sheets and rubrics will result in a much higher level product in the end, as well as a more focused process along the way.

Insert as dialogue box to the right
Pedagogical Suggestion Box 4.2
Other ideas for using the written word to clarify your expectations:
*Use the walls to help convey your messages.
*Display student work early. Let them know it is their space.
*Use bulletin boards to make a statement or provide information.
*Put up your favorite sayings/quotes/messages.

Personal Recognitions

Statements by the teacher such as "I like the way Brandon is sitting" are examples of what could be referred to as personal recognition statements. They have become more popular in the last decade as a way to reinforce desired behavior without being negative (Wong, 1991; Canter, 1992). It is true that they are more positive than a negative recognition such as "I am waiting for Brandon to sit quietly before I can begin." So on that score, they will produce overall a more positive effect on the association with sitting quietly. But if we examine personal recognitions more closely, we will recognize that they are essentially a form of praise (discussed in the next chapter). What we are saying is that the *student* is doing "something we like." On the surface the affective message seems to be supportive, but examined more closely, as is the case with any praise, the affective association is not with the act (in this case sitting quietly), but with the student. Therefore, other students do not experience a positive association with sitting. They may even develop a negative reactive association with it. It can in the end represent something that certain students ("of whom I am jealous") do. So as a student, my choice

to sit now includes the considerations for both my feeling about the students who are being praised as well as how much I desire the affection of the teacher on that day. In terms of clarity, personal recognitions are not especially strong either. Because the association is with the student being praised, there is little sense of cause and effect between the behavior and any resulting consequence.

Chapter Reflection 4-h
Evaluate the power of this intervention yourself. Observe a teacher who uses it as the primary source of clarifying expectations, what do you notice? Do you see a high level of clarity? How about the quality of affective association with the expectations? It is quite possible you will notice that it becomes less powerful over time, and at some point the teacher will (misguidedly) turn to something negative in an effort to gain more control. In your observation could this frustrating cycle have been avoided by using a more effective strategy for clarifying expectations for desirable behavior?

Warnings

Warnings are a very familiar technique to all of us. They are used to tell us something is coming up of which we need to be made aware, or that we did not get it right this time, and that we had better do it right the next time. Time warnings or change of activity warnings are valuable techniques that help students prepare for a change in activity. They support the clarity and emotional ease in the room. The "I'll let is pass this time," type of warnings have a much more confusing effect on the quality of the classroom expectations. When the teacher gives a warning to the class or a student that an action was problematic, and that this time nothing will happen but next time it will, he/she feels that he/she is sending a clear message that there is an expectation in the class and it needs to be respected. Warnings are typically effective at making the teacher feel a little better for a little while, but they are not very effective at changing behavior or clarifying expectations. In fact, if they are expressed in an angry or frustrated tone they can exacerbate the undesirable behavior.

A warning is intended to portend an action, but it is in itself an action. Or better said it is a conspicuous and deliberate inaction. It sends the message that in this class the cause-and-effect relationship between behavior and consequences is weak or that the teacher does not have the energy or courage to follow through. If the teacher makes warnings a routine intervention students learn to assume that they get a free pass the first time they choose to cross a line (Bluestein, 1999). Students do not need to be malicious to learn quickly that they are able to take advantage of any system that gives them a buffer between their choices and accountability for those choices.

Chapter Reflection 4-i: Test this principle yourself. Consider your own response to a condition in which you knew that the State Patrol always gave one warning to drivers not wearing a seat belt, versus a condition in which they gave tickets to all non-belted drivers without warnings. Would your behavior be affected?

So when is a warning useful? Not very often, yet when a classroom expectation is new or is only in place for a particular event, warnings can be a nice consideration to those who did not understand the direction/expectation very well. Warnings in this case are a courtesy that says in effect "Since we are all doing our best and acting with good

intentions--but we are human and need reminders of what is expected--let me do you a favor and explain what we need to be doing at some future time." But given that many of the expectations that we have are for things that we do on a repeated basis (e.g., line up, participate in class discussions, turn in work on time, cooperate within one's group, etc.), a reminder is seldom called for. In these cases, warnings water down the cause-and-effect relationship between what is expected and what happens when expectations are met or not met. A mere warning today makes the clarity of the expectation a little weaker for tomorrow.

Requests

Requests are cases in which the teacher asks the students to do something and holds the assumption that they will do it. In practice, as in giving directions, a request alone will have very little effect on promoting an expectation. However, what happens afterward within the context of the request has a significant effect. For example, if the teacher asks the class for attention, expects them to be listening, does not speak until they are attentive, and follows up with consequences if there is not 100% attention, students learn that the request is meaningful. If the teacher requests attention, does not get it, and then begins to talk anyway, the students quickly learn that the teacher really does not have an expectation of being listened to. And when the request comes in the form of a plea such as "I want you to listen to me," students learn that the teacher's requests are essentially meaningless (and maybe pitiful).

Requests differ from directions in that they ask, whereas direction and clarifying statements tell. This difference can be rendered inconsequential if students learn that when we ask them to do something we are actually giving them directions. For example, students may learn that their teacher's saying "it is time to stop, I want you to put away your books and open your journals" means that there is now an expectation that they make the transition from one activity to another, it is not optional, and implies that they need to move with a sense of purpose or there will be a consequence. Keep in mind, for students whose parents do not phrase directions as requests this can be confusing. In most cases, students can adjust to the style preferences of the teacher, but the teacher does bear the responsibility of effective communication and making expectations clear to students of all cultural groups and not penalizing students who are not able to infer that they use requests when they are actually giving directions or commands.

Chapter Reflection 4-j: What type of language and inflection did your parents use when they wanted you to do something? Did it take the form of a polite request? Or was it more of a straightforward command? Something more neutral? What would you predict the result be if we were to use this same type of style with children who were used to something quite different? Have you seen first-hand examples of this?

New teachers especially should keep in mind an important principle involving the use of requests as related to expectations -- *never make a request that students do something they are already expected to be doing*. An expectation implies that there is an understanding between parties, and part of that understanding involves consequences (effect) for when students choose not to meet the expectation (cause). When the teacher makes a further *request* instead of taking the action that is implied by the expectation, the students learn that there is no cause-and-effect relationship between their actions and the consequences for those actions. Consequently, the particular expectation

becomes weakened. Moreover, they learn that when the situation requires it the teacher will not follow through but will instead use a passive tool such as a further request.

Negative Recognitions

A negative recognition could be considered any message from the teacher that identifies a particular behavior that they want to stop. It could also be referred to as the "chronicling of misbehavior." Negative recognitions can take the form of comments to individuals, such as "Cornell, I want you to stop bothering Mahfouz." Or they can take the form of comments to the collective, such as "It is getting too noisy in here," or "Shshsh!"

As with warnings, negative recognitions of unwanted behavior may seem like action and in the short term make the teacher feel that they did something to address the problem. Yet over time the net result is that the expectations in the class get weaker and the climate in the class grows more negative. Using negative recognitions to achieve clarity of expectations is like drinking salt water to quench a thirst. There is a momentary sense of resolution, but one is just worsening the problem.

If we evaluate negative recognition of behavior using a two-part standard that sound expectations come from strong cause-and-effect relationships along with a positive association with the behavior expected, it fails both parts. First, as with warnings and threats, pointing out unwanted behavior is essentially conspicuous inaction. We are showing in a very public manner that we are too lazy or weak to take any meaningful action. The cause-and-effect relationship that is created in this case is when there is student misbehavior the teacher does nothing, but just pretends to do something. Because there is no action that is meaningful, the students quickly learn to tune out the message that comes with the "inaction."

Second, consider what negative recognition does to the association with the behavior. Imagine that the behavior is quality small group interaction. A typical negative recognition might be something like, "You guys over there, quit socializing and get to work!" How has the teacher created a positive association with the desired task? The distressing fact is that the group (and indirectly the whole class) just heard the teacher say something to the effect, "Socializing is what you want to do, and this task is not very enjoyable, but you are supposed to do it because I am in charge and I decide what we do in here." The teacher has just contributed to the students' perception that the work was not enjoyable, thus creating an even more negative association with the task. The intention of negative recognition is founded in pain-based logic. If I give you pain (i.e., shame, guilt, or disappointment), it will change your behavior. This logic will not only lead to a negative climate and depressed motivation, but will undermine the process of creating clear expectations.

Chapter Reflection 4-k: Recall teachers whom you have observed. Reflect on the effect of the use of negative recognitions and chronicling of behavior and chronicling of student failure by the teachers whom you have observed. What was the effect on the class? What was the effect on the clarity of the expectations in the class? Compare the language of this teacher to one who relied more extensively on the use of positive recognitions. What did you find?

Threats and Put-Downs
"If you guys don't stop goofing off before I get over there, you are all going to be in trouble." On the surface a threat such as this can appear to be a powerful tool to encourage behavior. However, recall the qualities that give an expectation its power, and consider whether threats meet those qualifications. By its nature, a threat is both hostile and passive. It sends the message that the teacher is willing to externalize his or her negativity, but is too weak to take any meaningful action. Is it apparent to you why threats were rated "0" stars for their ability to promote intentional expectations? They are, however, rather effective at creating the implicit and unintentional expectation that the teacher is not an emotionally safe being, and is lazy as well. As a result they have the effect of leading a class downward on the effectiveness continuum toward greater levels of dysfunction.

Put-downs work with a similarly superficial but faulty logic -- if I tell you enough times and in strong enough terms how inadequate you are, you will change. Do you recognize the pain-based logic in this thinking? Unfortunately, most of us have a great deal of day-to-day experience with put-downs. They do have power. They cause us to retreat or avoid. They have the power to destroy relationships and deflate the motivation of others, but they have little to no value in promoting desirable expectations or changing behavior for the better. Like threats they are hostile and passive. The pain and hurt that you see on the face of the person that you just put down is likely the tip of the iceberg. Almost certainly, there is a great deal more under the surface. And sooner or later all the pain that one gives out will come back in some form or another -- multiplied by the number of students in the class.

4.1 Case Study: Tortoises vs. Hares -- Building Classroom Expectations
Byron is a secondary level teacher and Elspeth is an elementary level teacher. They both have a great deal of confidence, talent and charisma. They are what many refer to as "born teachers." Byron has been a substitute for a year and has gotten used to using his commanding and persuasive personality to get students to behave. Elspeth has been a Teacher's Assistant and is very comfortable with students. Byron is beginning his student teaching and Elspeth is in her first year as a full time teacher. Both use a good number of personal statements and communicate their pleasure and displeasure -- letting students know what is not going very well and that it makes them feel disappointed. Byron likes to use phrases like "I would expect better work from high school students," or "This level of noise is making it hard to teach," or "I like it so much better when everyone is listening and on task." Elspeth likes to send an affectionate and caring affect to her students, so she lets them know when what they did makes her feel good. She also likes to use personal disappointment to modify behavior with such phrases as "I am having trouble hearing," "It makes me sad when we say things to each other like that," and "It will make me happy if we all do our best on this project."

Kahra teaches secondary and Alberto teaches at the elementary level. Kahra has not spent much time in a classroom and is feeling rather intimidated by the energy level and capriciousness of her students. Alberto is very shy and has not had much success in his life in social situations. Both of these new teachers spend a great deal of time at night worrying about whether they have what it takes to be a good teacher. However, each begins the year committed to creating clear and positive expectations. They find that using positive recognitions, clarifying statements and expectation mantras feels somewhat unnatural, but they stick to their principles and refrain from using personal

and/or negative feedback. At first, their students test them and respond slowly to only being given clarifying language -- they seem to be asking for negative recognitions and shaming. However, over time the students begin to get used to the way that the Kahra and Alberto talk to them and realize they like it better than the teachers who spend a great deal of time telling them what not to do. In addition, both these new teachers and the students in their classes find that the expectations for the tasks become very clear and the anxiety level in the room is noticeably low. Kahra finds that the better she becomes at giving clear feedback during the task, the better the products from the students. Her favorite mantra is "In this class, we always put the time into preparing, and making the effort so we know the products will be great." What she finds is that with each project her students internalize that mantra (as well as the many others that she uses) and she sees the quality of the work getting progressively better. Both teachers find that they need to use a combination of effective management strategies including the use of an effective attention cue and following through with consequences, but each found that they were able to make it past the first three weeks without resorting to being negative. As a result of his efforts, Alberto found that he bonded quickly with his students without needing to use praise and disappointment. He found that the students could tell that he really liked them, and on an unconscious level they appreciated that he was empowering them – he made it about their growth, not about him.

After two months, Byron and Elspeth were still dealing with a lot of inconsistency. Some days seemed great and others seemed to require more negative recognitions and lectures. It seemed that every couple days they needed to give a lecture about how the quality of behavior and effort should be better than it was. Each began to shift more and more of the blame for the dysfunction onto their students, especially a few who consistently misbehaved. Both Elspeth and Byron settled into a pattern of using a mix of positive, personal and negative forms of feedback in varying amounts. But over the course of the year the behavior, the level of focus with activities, and the quality of processes and procedural execution by their students was inconsistent and often left them disappointed.

After two months, Kahra and Alberto found that the challenges that they experienced in the first few weeks have mainly disappeared. Kahra was struck by how much she was now able to do with her students. She observed other colleagues struggling and complaining about how their students were incapable of various kinds of tasks and she wondered if she had just gotten lucky with her group, because they were now able to work together and execute procedures that she designed increasingly well. She found that she was able to be creative in her lesson planning (she worried that she would not be able to after hearing so many horror stories), because she worries little about overcoming the resistance that so many teachers complain about. Alberto found that his personality increasingly emerged and he felt quite confident rather quickly. He found that he was able to use humor and lightness and did not have to put on a hard shell to send a message that he was the authority in the room, because students were clear about what was expected.

It the parable of the Tortoise and the Hare, the more talented hare lost the race to the less gifted tortoise because of their overconfidence and lack of effort. Like the Tortoise, Kahra and Alberto did not rely on their personalities, common sense, charisma or talent; they relied instead on effective technique and executed it faithfully.

Chapter Reflection 4-I: Have you seen an example of the principle of the Tortoise and the Hare played out in a school? Is it always the most talented and charismatic teachers that have the effective management? What is it that leads to effective management, if not simply talent?

Assessing Behavior

Using a system for assessing student behavior can have a profound effect on improving the expectations for quality behavior. Used intentionally and systematically it qualifies as an effective source of both clarification and to create positive associations with expected behavior. It works as a systematic way of communicating positive recognitions. In Chapter 20, we will examine a step-by-step process for constructing a system that can be used by teachers at any level K-12 to help support more healthy and functional class behavior and their classroom expectations. However, used unsystematically and carelessly, it can at best be ineffectual, and at worst, create a negative association with the behavior being assessed. And when structured as a deficit model such as a names-on-the-board or colored card system, it acts as a systematic process for delivery of negative recognitions. Chapter 19 examines these shame-based deficit model systems in more detail.

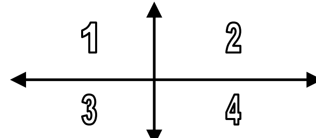


Figure 4.2. A short phrase that characterizes each of the four management style orientations as it relates to expectations.

1-Style – **"*How does it feel when we*** (meet the expectations for the class)?"	2-Style – "***I need you to*** (meet the expectations of the class)."
3-Style – "***There is not enough*** (behavior that is meeting my expectations)."	4-Style – ***"There is too much*** (behavior that is not meeting the class expectations)."

COMPARING 2- AND 1-STYLE MANAGEMENT ORIENTATIONS IN RELATION TO THE INTENTIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS

To effectively meet their goals, both 2- and 1-Style management approaches require the promotion of the qualities of clarity and positivity in how classroom expectations are development. Moreover, each approach will need to be undertaken intentionally and deliberately. Yet, given that the goal of each will be different, they will require somewhat differing strategies which will ultimately lead to different results. The essence of a 2-Style approach to expectations is the clarification of the respective roles, duties and responsibilities of both the teacher and the students. The ultimate goal of this approach is for students to become experts in understanding and exhibiting the behavior defined by the expectation--as defined by the teacher--to demonstrate that they are a functional part of the class.

The essence of a 1-Style approach to expectations is the development of the students' sense of collective responsibility toward promoting the "common good." Because the common good of any group evolves over time with the needs and development of the

group dynamics, in this approach the expectations will need to evolve as well. Therefore, in the 1-Style class, helping students understand what the expectation is intending to accomplish can be as important as the fact that the expectation is known and is being shown. The development of a student-owned social contract, shifting the focus of one's technical management from execution to recognition of value, periodic class meetings, and negotiating boundaries are among the strategies that will promote of the goals of the 1-Style classroom. These and other techniques for promoting a self-directed class will be examined in detail in subsequent chapters.

A technique that can be effective in supporting expectations within a 1-Style management approach is *boundary setting* (Bluestein, 1999). Boundary setting is the process in which the teacher and students work together to find the most desirable and workable standards for any particular situation. The reason that it was not rated in Figure 4.1 is that its effectiveness will vary dramatically depending on how it is led. If it takes the form of random complaints, changing expectations after the fact because of students' pleading, or is generally characterized by selfishness and/or laziness, it will be counter-productive. It will lead the 1-Style classroom toward the realm of the 3-Style classroom. However, when students respond with a sense of responsibility to being empowered with a substantial amount of control over the expectations in "their class," boundary setting can work as a means to both increased student ownership as well as clarity of expectations. For example, if we find that students are having trouble completing a regularly assigned task in the time that we typically give them, we might take the opportunity to ask how we as a collective might solve our problem. The potential solution could take any number of forms that would work for the teacher and that the students would find acceptable to them as a group. After the boundary setting exercise, a new expectation has emerged for the situation. The outcome may help solve the problem, but more than that, the process will have had a powerful effect on the development of our 1-Style classroom goals, and the clarity and effectiveness of the new expectation.

As we will discuss in Chapter 15, when examining the creation of the 1-Style classroom, if one is committed to a 1-Style approach but has inherited a group of students who are unfamiliar with being empowered with a high level of self-direction or engaging in democratic participation, it may be necessary begin operating early in the year by using a 2-Style approach, and over time gradually work toward a more internalized and self-directed 1-Style approach. Any class can learn to be self-directed and exhibit a clear understanding of shared behavioral expectations. For all students, this environment represents a context in which there is the greatest potential to have one's basic needs met. Nevertheless, for some students gaining an operational knowledge of and internalizing the value of many of the basic expectations for being a functional member of a self-directed classroom community will require a great deal of intentional instruction on the part of the teacher.

CONCLUSION

No matter our personal vision of an ideal classroom, we will be successful achieving our goals to the extent that we are ability to promote clear and intentional expectations. Shared expectations must serve as the cornerstone. In the following chapter we will explore the area technical management. It is the domain of management that addresses such areas as creating effective procedures, directions, transition, and gaining 100% attention from students. High quality technical management is built on clear and positive expectations.

Journal Reflections

1. In your experience, what methods did adults use to express to you that they wanted or did not want you to engage in a particular behavior? Was it effective?

2. When would you use warnings?

Chapter Group Activities

1. Examine a classroom or recall one that you have observed recently. Does the teacher use more positive or more negative recognitions of behaviors? What is the result, in your analysis?

2. In small groups, discuss the use of personal praise vs. encouragement or positive (performance) recognitions. Then classify the following phrases into the category – praise or positive recognition.

- I like the way Soraayah is listening.
- I see groups locating all their research before they start writing their reports.
- That looks like a good idea.
- Good Job, Sven!
- We've done so well transitioning from one presentation to the next, wonderful.
- I'm so pleased with the way the papers turned out.
- Jorge, way to set your feet early to hit that forehand.

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