



P E A C E   C O R P S

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# Classroom Management

IDEA BOOK

Information Collection and Exchange  
Publication No. M0088

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# **Classroom Management**



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## The Idea Book Series

This Idea Books is one of a series of booklets produced to share specific activities you may be interested in replicating. You are encouraged to submit your successful activities to this series. Other titles in the series are listed below, and new ones are being produced continuously. All of these ideas come from the work of Volunteers. Most of them were submitted just as they are printed—there is no additional information. Others were parts of larger reports. To obtain copies of the Idea Books, contact Information Collection and Exchange (ICE).

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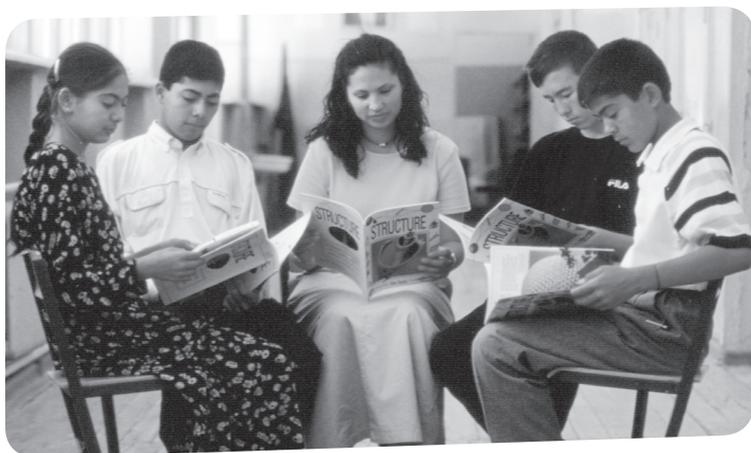
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# INTRODUCTION

As a Peace Corps Volunteer teacher, you are in a unique situation. Not only do you have the opportunity to learn and observe a new culture and introduce your own culture to others, you will also create—together with your students—a whole new classroom culture. This is exciting and inspiring! Whether or not you have previous teaching experience, teaching in a new culture requires thoughtful planning and adjustment. This Idea Book will help you approach your new classroom in a culturally sensitive and appropriate manner.

This book was written in response to feedback from Volunteer teachers. They report that managing a classroom in a new cultural environment is a primary challenge. Many feel that the time spent dealing with classroom management issues detracts from the time spent actually teaching content. Sensitive and complicated questions, such as how to teach in a school that condones corporal punishment, surfaced frequently.

Volunteers and staff members from around the world were asked to submit ideas and suggestions. Here you will find practical strategies for dealing with the most commonly reported challenges. Suggestions range from how to develop useful classroom routines to more complex topics, such as assessing students fairly and effectively.



It would be helpful to read this book before you start teaching, but it will be equally helpful once you are teaching. When you run into situations that you did not expect, this book will give you some strategies to begin to understand them. It will help you think about the classroom, your students, and your colleagues from new perspectives so you can adapt to a new teaching environment. There are exercises that ask you to exchange information with your host colleagues. Take the opportunity to learn as much as you can from your teaching colleagues, your students, and Peace Corps staff.

Finally, do not forget to assess your own learning! In Chapter 6, you will find a progress checklist so you can chart your growth as a classroom manager as the year unfolds. Above all, enjoy your teaching (and learning) experience and come back to this book often. With each review, you will find another idea that you can read about today and implement tomorrow.



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# CHAPTER 1

## Managing Classrooms to Maximize Student Learning: An Overview

### **What Do You Think?**

*Reflect back on all the classes and classrooms in which you were a student, teacher, or observer—including those in your host country. With these thoughts in mind, complete the exercise below.*



**Imagine your ideal classroom.** You are in your host country classroom. Look around.

- What does your room look like?
- What is in it?
- What are the students doing?
- What are you doing?

Close your eyes and try to imagine the scene. Write about some of your images in the space below.

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You may have a vision of your perfect classroom, but what do teachers actually do to make it a reality? This is a common question; generations of teachers have looked for ways to ensure an ideal learning environment. In this chapter, you will find time-tested ideas gathered from education research, host country teachers, and Volunteer teachers. Keep in mind that not every idea will work in all situations: teachers need to be flexible and have a variety of tools to suit the context in which they find themselves. Often, a strategy that works with one group of students in the morning will not work with a similar but different group of students in the afternoon!

### **Key Ideas in This Chapter**

*Three teacher characteristics are essential to support student learning.<sup>1</sup> Effective teachers*

- *have positive expectations for student success;*
- *are good classroom managers; and*
- *know how to provide good instruction.*



## **Positive Expectations of Student Success**

Students tend to live up to the expectations teachers set for them. Set your expectations realistically high and consistently communicate positive expectations during instruction and your students will rise to meet those expectations.

**Be positive with your students!** Let them know you believe in them and that they can do it! Encourage and praise student attempts (e.g., “You got the first part right, keep trying! You’ll get it!”).

—Peace Corps/The Gambia

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Thomas L. Good and Jere E. Brophy. *Looking in Classrooms*, 9th ed. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2002.

Look for opportunities to communicate positive expectations to your students.

- Meet them at the classroom door with a smile and greeting that says, "I am glad you are here today to learn."
- Set challenging but achievable learning objectives and allow adequate time for students to accomplish the objectives.
- Acknowledge past learning achievements and predict future success. "Yesterday we learned adjectives to describe physical characteristics. Now we are ready to brainstorm adjectives to describe someone's personality."
- Provide students with an assist, hint, or prompt. For example: "Remember the formula for the area of a rectangle? How might that relate to the formula for the area of a triangle?"
- Ask follow-up questions that make students think. For example: "That is an interesting position. What thought process led you to it?"
- Give lower-achieving and higher-achieving students (and girls as well as boys) equal attention and structure learning activities to ensure their success.
- Prepare core activities for everyone and extension activities for those who finish first. One option: ask students who finish quickly to assist peers who may have questions.
- Follow up on work that you assign to students. When teachers assign work and do not follow up on it, students begin to lose motivation.

### **Reaction to Positive Expectations of Student Success**

*"I walk in my classroom. I'm a few minutes late. The teacher smiles at me. I go to my desk and start working. I don't quite finish when the teacher asks for volunteers to check our work. I raise my hand for the first problem and the teacher calls on me. I say my answer, and the teacher says, 'Good try! Thanks for taking a chance!' I know my answer is wrong, but I feel good anyway. The teacher tells us that it's more important that we try than to always get the answer right. The teacher calls us 'risk takers.' After I hear the right answer and she explains it, I change mine so I'll remember it."*

—a student from the South Pacific

Demonstrating your positive expectations of student success motivates students, helps ensure their cooperation, and builds productive student-teacher relationships. Your expectations become a self-fulfilling prophecy.

### **The Star Strategy**

*“At the end of each class, I recognize at least one student for something she or he did that day that deserves recognition. On a star-shaped piece of paper that I will pin to a bulletin board, I write the student’s name, the date, and what he or she did. Once a student has three stars, he or she can choose a prize from the treasure chest. If I forget to give the star, my students frantically call, ‘Miss! The star!’”*

—Peace Corps/Kiribati primary teacher



### **Changing Negative Words to Positive Phrases**

*During a workshop, Bolivian teachers generated a list of negative Spanish words or commands that might be used with students and then developed more positive, encouraging terms to use instead. For example, instead of saying “You are lazy,” say, “You are capable of doing your homework”; instead of “Be quiet!” say, “Keep calm, please.”*

*Collect more ideas to communicate positive expectations of student success that fit the host country’s culture from your teacher counterpart, other teachers, Peace Corps staff, and students.*

## **Classroom Management Skills**

Classroom management refers to teacher behaviors that facilitate learning. A well-managed classroom increases learning because students spend more time on task. Chapter 3: “Strategies for Classroom Management” probes deeper into the topic and includes many ideas. Following are a few thoughts to jumpstart thinking about classroom management.

## What does a well-managed classroom look like?

Students are deeply involved with their work. The climate of the classroom is work-oriented, but relaxed and pleasant.

Peace Corps Volunteers in Bulgaria recommend “classroom structure before instruction.”

## How to support student learning

- Establish classroom rules and procedures during the first days of school and consistently and fairly enforce them throughout the school year. **Be consistent.**
- Establish a positive professional relationship with students—the teacher is both in charge and cooperative. You will never have enough techniques to get students to behave and learn if you do not first create positive relationships.
- Give understandable instructions so students know exactly what they are expected to do. (**Cultural Hint:** Do not ask, “Does everyone understand?” In many cultures, students would not dare say “No” because that would indicate the teacher did not do his or her job well.)
- Use nonverbal signals rather than words. Silent cues are less disruptive.
- Delegate, delegate, delegate! Students learn skills and responsibility, while saving the teacher time. But, teach students how to accomplish the delegated task or this time saver can turn into a time waster.
- Move around the classroom. Move closer to problem spots in the classroom. This tactic tends to prevent or stop inappropriate behaviors.
- Have a back-up plan if the lesson is not going well or runs short.

*Discuss the classroom management teacher behaviors described on the previous pages with your counterpart teacher. Ask if they are culturally appropriate and inquire about classroom management norms at your host school.*



“Classroom management will not make your students hate you. On the contrary, students will respect you more and be more enthusiastic about learning when they see you are serious about education.”

—Peace Corps/Romania

**Using sign language or nonverbal cues** encourages a person to look at the speaker. Some students who do not do as well academically excel in reading sign language or nonverbal cues.

*“As much as I want my students to take the content knowledge from my class, I also want to teach life skills, like manners. For a student who has done something for me, such as turning off the lights at the end of the day, I sign or cue, ‘Thank you.’ During assemblies, I often catch the eye of a student whose mind is wandering and sign or cue, ‘Pay attention, please.’*

*“There are some basic words that I use over and over. I created signs or cues for these. In time, the students become involved and create signs of their own. They even made up signs for ‘give me five.’ Many of my students are kinesthetic learners.”*

—Volunteer teacher in Latin America

“Values are caught, not taught.” Teachers who are courteous, enthusiastic, in control, patient, and organized provide examples for their students through their actions. For example, if the class is getting too loud, don’t shout to be heard, speak at a normal volume so the class has to be quiet to hear you.

## Instruction Skills

Instruction is what most people think of as teaching. In addition to content knowledge, teachers need the skills to design and deliver engaging lessons, and the skills to monitor learning progress.



**Cultural note:** *Using a teaching method that produces good results in one culture does not mean it will work in a different culture. The method may need to be culturally adapted or it may not be appropriate. For example, a straightforward, fact-based, logical instructional approach is effective in training some teachers, while others prefer stories from which they can deduce information. There is more about culture and how it influences education in Chapter 2: “Teaching in a Cross-cultural Context.”*

Both instruction and learning are easier in a well-managed classroom where students are expected to succeed. But when instruction fails to actively involve students in their learning, they become restless and classroom management becomes increasingly difficult.

### Effective teachers

- Understand students’ level of knowledge and design lessons to fit students’ abilities.
- Clearly state the learning objective for the lesson. When students are told the objective, they know what they are responsible for learning.
- Break concepts and skills into small digestible learning chunks—no more than two or three new ideas per lesson.
- Structure lessons so students experience a variety of instruction methods and to accommodate different learning styles and maintain students’ interest. Change the type of activity during the lesson to help students concentrate more effectively on each task.
- Pace instructions to allow students the time they need to achieve learning objectives.

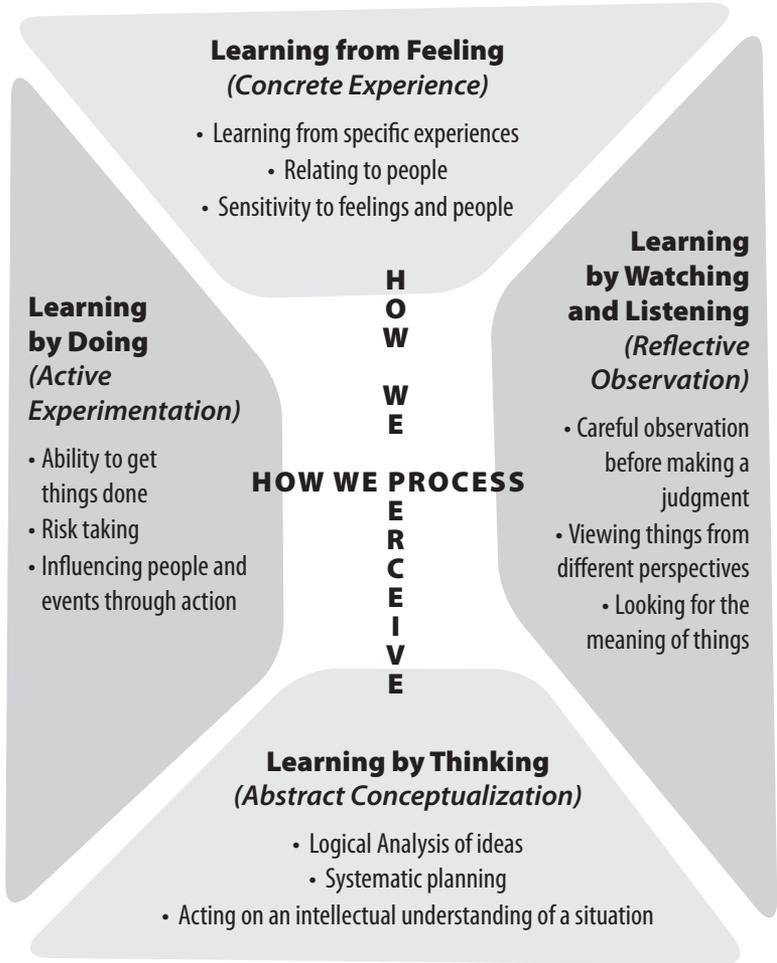
- Incorporate students' interests into lessons. Use examples from students' daily lives to make lessons relevant. (*Community Content-based Instruction (CCBI) Volunteer Workbook* [ICE No. M0073] is a great resource.)
- Use visuals (graphic organizers, maps, word webs, drawings, pictures). Students may understand visuals better than words, especially when the teacher and student have different first languages. See sample graphic organizers at the end of the chapter.
- Use silent signals to give directions, such as a finger on the lips to mean don't speak, or a hand behind your ear to mean listen.
- Engage students physically and mentally in lessons (manipulatives, role-plays, drama, pantomime, games, or artwork).
- Assess learning to determine if learning objectives were achieved. If not, adjust instruction to enable students to learn the concepts and/or skills.
- Teach to different learning modalities—auditory, visual, kinesthetic; right brained, left brained; multiple intelligences; learning styles. (See chart on the next page and *Nonformal Education (NFE) Manual* [ICE No. M0042] Pages 48-49 for more information on learning styles.)



“Use common factors that all teenagers are interested in to grab their immediate attention, such as music, sports, television and film. Incorporate these interests into your lesson plans and real learning will occur.”

—Peace Corps/Bulgaria

“Not an artist? Simple stick figures suffice. Copy clip art illustrations. Enlist students to provide the visuals—let students with artistic talent shine.” —Peace Corps/Tonga



**Thoughts on Instruction from a Peace Corps/Nepal Volunteer Teacher**

*One reason Volunteers might feel that their classes are “falling apart” may be because they are teaching to only one type of learner. For example, lecturing day in and day out may leave many students in the class lost or bored, which may result in acting out, chatting too much, or even missing class.*

*Even with few teaching materials and obligations to teach specific content, it is possible to be creative and appeal to visual, tactile, and auditory learners. Also remember that some students learn well from each other in a more social way; they will need to work in pairs and groups.*

**Lesson planning**

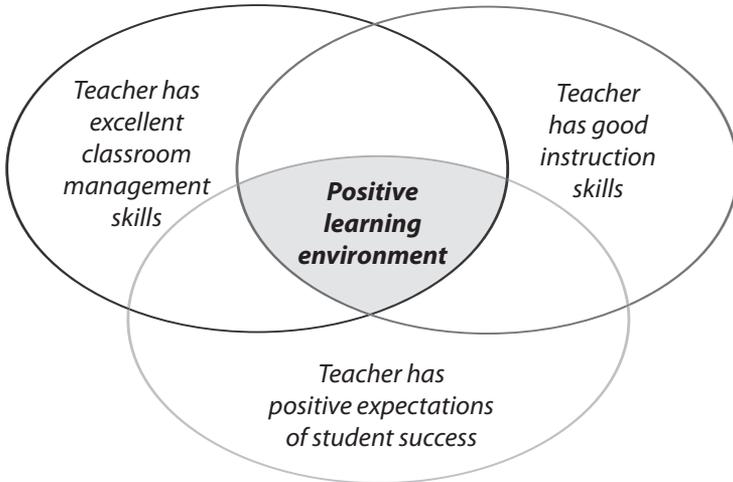
Well developed lesson plans help ensure effective instruction techniques are incorporated into your lessons. As a rule of thumb, it takes about twice as long to develop an effective lesson plan as it does to teach the lesson in the classroom. Talk to your supervisor or Peace Corps staff to learn about approved lesson plan formats for your host school.

Regardless of teaching styles, traditions and cultures, all high-quality teaching has a common goal—student learning.



## Summary

This chapter has described three key skill sets teachers need to develop in order to support student learning. When all three skills sets are present, you provide a positive classroom environment for student success.



As you read the rest of this book, you will have opportunities to test ideas against host country cultural norms—including different value systems. These norms may produce different expectations of the roles and behaviors of students and teachers. Keep an open mind and continually try and imagine what will work for you and your students in your new teaching context. Discuss your ideas with Peace Corps staff, counterpart teachers, and experienced Volunteers to see if they will succeed in your school.

“The way to get good ideas is to get lots of ideas and throw the bad ones away.”

—Dr. Linus Pauling

Additional instruction resources:

*Working with CCBI: Volunteer Workbook*. Washington, DC: Peace Corps, 2004. [ICE No. M0073]

*Nonformal Education (NFE) Manual*. Rev. Washington, DC: Peace Corps, 2004. [ICE No. M0042]

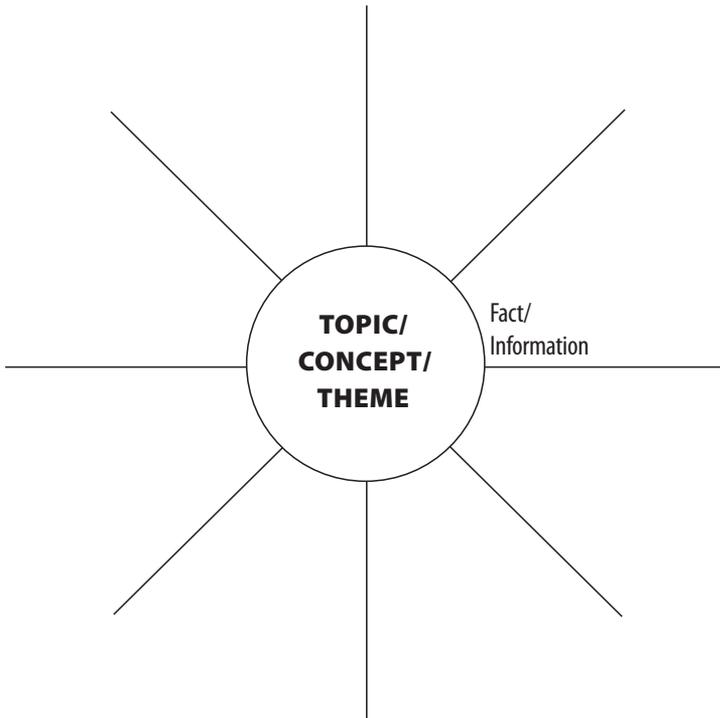
*Teaching English as a Foreign Language to Large, Multilevel Classes*. Washington, DC: Peace Corps, 1992. [ICE No. M0046]

## Examples and Tools

### Sample Graphic Organizers

#### *Word web*

The word web (or cluster map) is used to describe a central idea: a thing, a process, a concept, a proposition. The map can be used to check students' level of understanding before planning a lesson, as a warm-up or transition, or as a quick assessment. The key questions are: What is the central idea? What does this central idea make you think about or remember?



For example, before starting a unit on a particular period of history, brainstorm what students know (or think they know) about it. Refer to the web as you teach the unit to help students make connections in their thinking, to reinforce what they know, or to clarify misconceptions. Or, use the web as a warm-up in a mathematics class. Put a number in the middle and ask students to think of as many ways as they can to add or subtract to get that number. (So, with "5" in the middle, you would get "4+1", "7-2", "3+2", etc., radiating from the middle.)

**Compare/contrast chart**

This chart can be used to compare and contrast two or more items, characters in a story, proposals, etc. List each item to be compared along the top, and list the characteristics of the items you want to compare along the side.

Example:

	<b>Proposal A</b>	<b>Proposal B</b>
Cost		
Time to completion		
Skills/assets needed		
Overall end result		

***Problem-solving organizer***

Use this organizer to help students map out their problem-solving thinking in any content area. The key questions are: What is the problem? What are the possible solutions? Which solution is best? How will you implement this solution?

**The problem:** \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Possible Solutions</b>	<b>Consequences</b> What will happen if this solution is adopted?	<b>Pro or Con?</b>	<b>Value</b> How important is the consequence? Why?

**The best solution is:** \_\_\_\_\_

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## CHAPTER 2

### Teaching in a Cross-Cultural Context

#### **What Do You Think?**

*Before reading this chapter, think back to an experience you had with a foreign teacher or trainer. Perhaps you had a college professor or a teaching assistant from another country. You can also reflect on host country teachers or trainers you have had while in Peace Corps training.*



Here are some questions to guide your thoughts.

1. How was their dress, body language, tone of voice, or level of formality different from American teachers?
2. How did this teacher affect your learning, both positively and negatively?
3. Did this teacher bring new perspectives to the topic or present material using techniques you had not encountered before?
4. Were you always able to understand what the teacher said?
5. Did the examples this teacher use seem relevant to your life?
6. Were this teacher's expectations of student behavior and/or academic standards similar to your previous classroom experiences?
7. Can you remember an instance when you had trouble talking to or explaining something to the teacher? If so, why do you think it was difficult?
8. If given the opportunity, would you choose to have this teacher/trainer again? Why or why not?

Reflecting on your experience of being taught by someone from a different culture might provide insight into how your behavior might be perceived by your students. Having a foreign teacher can be enriching and frustrating. Much depends on cultural understanding and how teaching is adapted to accommodate cultural differences.

This chapter explores the question of why cultural awareness is important when planning and conducting day-to-day teaching and learning activities.

**Key Ideas in This Chapter**

1. *Culture matters—it influences day-to-day classroom activities.*
2. *To understand others, you must first understand yourself.*
3. *To understand the cultural environment of your school and classroom requires ongoing effort.*
4. *Introduce new ideas or changes in a culturally sensitive manner.*



What can you do to ensure your students have a positive learning experience with their foreign teacher? Start by seeing your “cultural” self in the school setting. Then learn as much as you can about the host country’s values and assumptions that influence how your school is run and how the students and teachers behave. This will be an ongoing process your entire Volunteer service! Every time something causes you to say, “I didn’t expect that!” or “What did he or she mean by that?” you are trying to figure out another cross-cultural experience. If you determine that introducing change would benefit students, this chapter offers some considerations for introducing new ideas or change.

**Simple definitions of commonly used terms in this book**

Culture: “The way we do things around here.”

Values: Principles a group believes are good or right.

Norms: Typical behaviors of group members.

## Examine Your Own Culture

“The essence of cross-cultural understanding is knowing how your own culture is both similar to and different from the local or ‘target culture.’ For this reason, those who pursue cross-cultural knowledge must, sooner or later, turn their gaze on themselves.”

—*Culture Matters: The Peace Corps Cross-Cultural Workbook*, Page 37

## What is your cultural intelligence?

“Cultural intelligence” is the sum of the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that enable a Volunteer teacher to work successfully with students, fellow teachers, administrators, and parents at a host school. You are not born with cultural intelligence, nor is it acquired overnight.

Remember the three aspects of cultural intelligence with three questions: What? Why? How?<sup>1</sup>

**What?** Knowledge about cultures

**Why?** Awareness of yourself and others

**How?** Specific skills

$$\begin{array}{l} \textit{Knowledge} \\ \textit{about Cultures} \\ \textit{(facts and} \\ \textit{cultural traits)} \end{array} + \begin{array}{l} \textit{Awareness} \\ \textit{(of yourself} \\ \textit{and others)} \end{array} + \begin{array}{l} \textit{Specific} \\ \textit{Skills} \\ \textit{(behaviors)} \end{array} = \begin{array}{l} \textit{Cultural} \\ \textit{Intelligence} \end{array}$$

<sup>1</sup> Peterson, Brooks. *Cultural Intelligence: A Guide to Working with People from Other Cultures*. Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press, Inc., 2004. Page 13.

How do you gain cultural intelligence?

**First:** Increase your awareness of your own cultural values, beliefs, traditions, and norms and how they affect your behavior.

**Next:** Appreciatively observe everyday school life and ask nonjudgmental questions. Make tentative assumptions about the culture and check your assumptions through additional observations and/or discussions with individuals familiar with the culture. Learn from your mistakes. Study and practice the language.

**Finally:** Adapt some behaviors that enable you to function in the culture, while maintaining your own values and beliefs.

Volunteers who have developed cultural intelligence recognize cultures have evolved to meet the needs of their people. There are valid, but perhaps not obvious, reasons why a culture is how it is. Having a reaction to or questions about another culture is natural, but it is important to respect the host country's cultural beliefs, values, or traditions. It is their culture and it works for them.

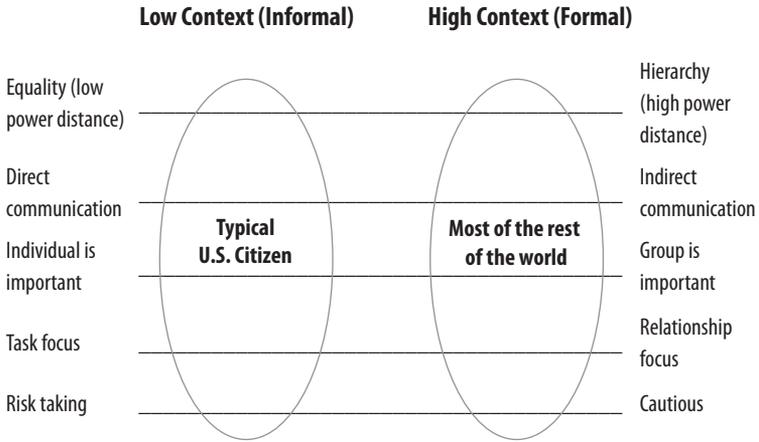
*In addition to working with your counterpart and colleagues, you might want to find your own personal "cultural coach." Respectful and successful expatriates who have lived in the country for many years may be more attuned to the cultural differences than host country nationals. They may find it easier to explain cultural differences than your host colleagues. Be sure, though, to check the information you get from an expatriate with host country coaches, just to be sure it is accurate!*

### **Cultural values**

Because cultures are complex, we use models to help understand them. The five culture scales described by Brooks Peterson also illustrates the differences between low-context and high-context cultures.<sup>2</sup> Keeping these generalizations in mind may offer insight into behavior patterns and relationships you observe in your school and community. A simplified model of low context (informal) and high context (formal) is shown below as a continuum. The ends of the continuum are definitions. People's styles and values may fall all along the continuum.

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<sup>2</sup> Peterson, Brooks. *Cultural Intelligence: A Guide to Working with People from Other Cultures*. Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press, Inc., 2004. Page 61.



Context refers to the circumstances in which a particular event or action occurs. In reference to culture, context refers to the often unwritten rules or norms that have evolved and become part of a group's expected behavior in various situations.

A high-context, or formal, culture evolves when people live together for many generations. Because there is so much general understanding and shared knowledge, people do not need to explain many things to each other; the context gives the clues. For example, the form of communication may vary by age. A young person speaking to someone older may use specific verb forms (honorific titles) and/or may look/not look at the person, stand or stay seated, bow slightly or deeply, etc. All of these things are done automatically, without much conscious thought.



Everything matters in high-context cultures: how you dress, how you greet each other, who you consider your "family," and so on. Members of the culture understand behavioral expectations from the context. Outsiders find behaviors puzzling because they cannot see the context. People in high-context cultures are cautious of change because they often have long traditions of how things are done.

Low-context, or informal, cultures are relatively young societies and often include mixed ethnic groups. Because people do not come from generations of living together and knowing everyone, they have less shared context on which to base their interactions. They tend to ask more direct questions to learn about each other, and get to know people for what they do rather than from whom they are related. Dress codes may be relaxed and people may address each other in a casual manner even across age groups—



the use of first names is common. People focus more on doing things, rather than spending time nurturing relationships. Change is more readily accepted as the norm, generally with a belief that the future will be better.

Most Peace Corps Volunteers come from the low-context U.S. culture, unless their family belongs to one of the high-context subcultures in the U.S. In most of the rest of the world cultures are higher context. It is important to remember, however, that this is a model. There is diversity within every culture. Also, each individual may find him/herself in a different place on the continuum depending on the situation or context, such as at work, at home with family, etc.

Based on the diagram and description about low- and high-context cultures, what are five specific differences you would expect if your school is in a high-context culture and you come from a low-context culture?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

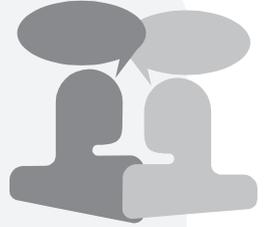
To learn more about American cultural values read Pages 37–57 and complete the exercise “Fundamentals of Culture: Comparing American and Host Country Views” on Pages 179–182 in *Culture Matters: The Peace Corps Cross-Cultural Workbook* [ICE No. T0087].

## Cultural norms

Cultural norms are often so strongly ingrained in an individual's daily life that the individual is unaware of certain behaviors. Until these behaviors are seen in the context of a different culture with different values, the individual may have difficulty recognizing and changing or adapting them.

### **Think-Pair-Share Activity**

When we look at a situation, we interpret what is happening through the filter of what our culture tells us is happening. Read the following description of a classroom in a developing country written by an American observer.



*Teachers' frequent use of corporal punishment discourages students from actively participating in the classroom. Students are expected to sit rigidly in their seats and speak only when spoken to. Conditioned in that way, it is not surprising they don't feel free to speak out in the classroom; their shyness, however, should not be mistaken for lack of interest.*

**Think** about what you just read. What conclusions (judgments) were made about learning conditions in this classroom? How did cultural values and beliefs influence the writer's conclusions?

**Pair** with a host country teacher who has also read and thought about the classroom description by the American observer.

**Share** your thoughts with each other and discuss how cultural values and beliefs affect how teachers manage their classrooms.

—Activity adapted from a Peace Corps/Tonga pre-service training exercise. Classroom description is from *Culture Matters: The Peace Corps Cross-Cultural Workbook*, Page 8.

## Examine a New Culture

Schools are a microcosm of community culture. They reflect the community’s cultural values and take an active role in passing both visible and hidden cultural elements to the next generation. Cross-cultural experts use the analogy of an iceberg to help explain the visible and hidden components at play in a culture. The iceberg is used because culture, like an iceberg, is nearly 90 percent underwater or invisible. The invisible or hidden parts to culture are beliefs, values, and assumptions—the reasons people behave the way they do. The visible aspects of culture are things you might photograph or observe.

Let’s examine some of the cultural elements that are in, or influence, the formal educational setting.

### School culture as an iceberg



Some examples of how the hidden culture may affect behaviors in host schools.

- Teachers and friends do what they can to help a strong math student gain admission to higher education, even though he or she cannot get a high enough score in a language class.
- Child-rearing and religious values are reflected in school discipline practices.
- Grades may be influenced by the status of the student's family or a "gift" to a teacher or school official.
- Students stand when a teacher enters the classroom.
- Good students sit in front and bad students sit in the back of the classroom.

*An education leader from the Caucasus, during a speech on university academic standards, noted that people had always accepted bribery for university entrance. They thought it was just part of their culture, and they had never even considered that other countries had merit-based systems firmly in place.*

*An educational leader from the South Pacific said, "Our students need a good education so they can go overseas to New Zealand, Australia, or the United States and send money home to their families." In Tonga there is a strong cultural duty for young people to maintain the financial well-being of their families.*

By observing visible culture (the tip of the iceberg), and understanding low- and high-context culture generalizations, you can make some reasonable guesses concerning the hidden values of the host school's culture.

## Six activities to gain insight into the host school culture

### 1 A host teacher shadowing activity

*This activity allows you to observe the tip of the iceberg.*

Find a teacher at the host school who will let you accompany him or her for several hours a day.

Watch and listen to what is going on around you and record what you observe. Note the differences between what you see here and what you would expect to see if you were following a teacher in a U.S. school.

Keep this checklist and the points in mind during the first school semester. It will take time and knowledge of the host language to understand some of these things. You may want to revisit the checklist over the course of the year. As your language skills improve and your cultural knowledge deepens, you will notice more subtle nuances of the culture.

Adapted from *Culture Matters: The Peace Corps Cross-Cultural Workbook*  
Pages 131-133.

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#### **Nonverbal Communication**

- How do people dress?
- How do they greet each other?
- Do people maintain eye contact when they talk?
- How far apart do people stand?

#### **Power Distance Behaviors**

- How do teachers treat school administrators?
- How do school administrators treat teachers?
- How do teachers treat students?
- How do students treat teachers?
- Do you see evidence of administrators delegating authority?
- Do you see evidence of teachers taking initiative?
- With whom do people eat lunch or have tea? Do they eat only with their peers, or is there mixing of the ranks? Does everyone share food?

#### **Communication Styles**

- How do people make suggestions, propose ideas?
- How are disagreements expressed?
- Are people generally direct or indirect in their conversation?
- Does this appear to be a high- or low-context workplace?

#### **Other Workplace Norms**

- When people interact, do they get to the task right away or talk more generally first?
- Are women treated differently than men? If so, in what way?
- What does the prevailing attitude seem to be about rules and procedures and the need to follow them?
- Do teachers come to work on time and do meetings start on time?

What major differences do you see between the host school and schools you are familiar with in the U.S.?

## ② A values and norms clarification exercise

Use this activity to identify similarities and differences in your education values and norms and those of your host school.

**Instructions:** This is a forced choice exercise where you must choose either answer a or answer b. Sometimes it will be hard to decide. The purpose is to prepare for a discussion of these topics. There is not necessarily one right answer.

1. Trainees/Volunteers answer the questions to clarify their own education values.
2. Invite as many host country education stakeholders (ministry of education officials, school administrators, teachers, parents, community members, and/or students) as possible to answer the same questions.
3. Volunteer and host country stakeholder answers might vary. Insights into the cultural values behind answers may be gained by discussing why each individual chose particular answers.

Answer each of the following, circling only one choice:

- |                                                           |                                                                 |                                                         |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>1. Students should</b>                                 | a. be spontaneous and talk out when they have something to say. | b. raise their hands and participate in an orderly way. |
| <b>2. Homework should be given</b>                        | a. sparingly and only when needed.                              | b. every night.                                         |
| <b>3. The classroom should be</b>                         | a. student-centered.                                            | b. teacher-centered.                                    |
| <b>4. Teachers should be</b>                              | a. friendly and spontaneous.                                    | b. reserved and formal.                                 |
| <b>5. Teachers should</b>                                 | a. create their own curriculum based on student needs.          | b. follow a set curriculum.                             |
| <b>6. In group work</b>                                   | a. the process is important.                                    | b. the product is important.                            |
| <b>7. Class assignments are most useful when they are</b> | a. done in a group.                                             | b. done individually.                                   |
| <b>8. The classroom should be</b>                         | a. open with students free to move around.                      | b. closed and orderly.                                  |
| <b>9. Students are mostly motivated by</b>                | a. internal rewards.                                            | b. external rewards.                                    |
| <b>10. Male and female students</b>                       | a. should be held to the same standards.                        | b. should be held to different standards.               |
| <b>11. Evaluation should be</b>                           | a. informal.                                                    | b. formal.                                              |
| <b>12. It is more important to</b>                        | a. change values.                                               | b. change behavior.                                     |

- |                                                      |                                               |                                                    |
|------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| 13. The curriculum should be directed toward         | a. local community needs.                     | b. national examinations.                          |
| 14. Grades are                                       | a. a deterrent to developing self-motivation. | b. an effective mechanism for motivating students. |
| 15. It is important to cover                         | a. certain content in depth.                  | b. all pre-set curriculum.                         |
| 16. Standards for discipline should be determined by | a. the individual teacher.                    | b. school policy and tradition.                    |
| 17. Class time should                                | a. include nontopic-related discussions.      | b. be spent on task.                               |
| 18. Students should be tracked by                    | a. ability.                                   | b. age.                                            |
| 19. In school, it is most important to               | a. learn how to learn.                        | b. learn facts.                                    |
| 20. Teachers                                         | a. should have all the answers.               | b. are allowed to say, "I don't know."             |
| 21. Teachers and students should                     | a. suppress their emotions.                   | b. be free to show their emotions.                 |
| 22. Students should expect                           | a. teachers to show them the way.             | b. to be taught how to find their own way.         |
- 

—Adapted from Peace Corps/Mauritania

### 3 A cultural interview activity

Encourage students or teachers to think about school culture and share their thoughts with the Volunteer teacher with this activity.

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#### Student Activity: Cultural Interviews

When teaching within a new cultural context, reaching students can be difficult at first because you lack an understanding of your students' culture and how to relate to them. This activity helps bridge that gap.

Note: Because it is often easier to say what others think, in this activity students are asked about their friends' opinions rather than their own. This would also be a valuable activity to conduct with your teaching colleagues by changing "your friends" to "your fellow teachers."

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, cultural norms are often so strongly ingrained in an individual's daily life that the individual may be unaware of certain behaviors. It is usually difficult for people to describe their own culture. By asking indirect questions, you allow

people to describe in broad terms how they think their culture is perceived by more than just one person. These indirect questions can be asked of students individually, in pairs, or in small groups. After students have written their answers, they present them, and a class discussion is held. This activity gives students an opportunity to reflect on their school's culture and the teacher an opportunity to learn what students are thinking.

- What would your friends tell a new student about this school?
- What is the one thing your friends would most like to change about this school?
- Who is a hero at this school? Why?
- What is your friends' favorite thing about this school?
- What do your friends think a new teacher should know about this school?

#### **4 Compare parents' aspirations for their children to learn about cultural values**

This exercise requires a few host country nationals who have children (they can be your trainers, teaching colleagues, or community members) and a few Americans. You will need a blackboard or chart paper.

1. Ask small groups to make a list of the characteristics/values/behaviors they hope their children will develop. Items might include 'successful,' 'good students,' 'parents,' 'independent,' 'loyal to family,' etc.
2. Have groups share lists, explaining or clarifying what the items mean. For example, what does "successful" mean? It might mean owning a farm or marrying and having a family or getting a well-paying job. Once everyone understands both lists, you probably will see some differences. Perhaps there are some items on one chart that are not reflected on the other.
3. For each item on each chart, discuss what the parents would do to raise their children to have those characteristics. For example, if the children are expected to be independent as adults, they may be given opportunities to make some of their own decisions (like getting an allowance and being able to spend it the way they want or choosing what they want to eat in a restaurant). If children are expected to grow up to be closely connected to the family, they may spend most of their free time with family members and receive money they need for activities from their parents.
4. Generally what will emerge is that the children are raised to carry the values of the culture; different values will lead to different child-raising activities. Learning more about your host culture's values in this way may help you understand why schools are run the way they are and why students are expected to behave the way they do.

### 5 Use participatory analysis for community action (PACA) activities to explore the host school's culture

Participatory analysis for community action (PACA) tools are useful in discovering more about your students, your fellow teachers, and your community. Here are some examples of how the different tools can be used to teach skills while they provide you with important information about your students and the community.

PACA Tool	Students learn	Volunteer teachers learn
Assign students to create <b>daily activity schedules</b>	Sequencing and writing skills	The time students have available for studying, homework, after school activities such as clubs, and tutoring sessions
Have small groups of male and female students separately draw <b>community maps</b>	Group and mapmaking skills Different perceptions of boys and girls	Boys' and girls' interests and concerns; their perceptions of the community
Teach students <b>priority ranking techniques</b> and use them to select classroom rules and/or consequences	Ranking skills How to participate in group decision making Critical thinking skills Responsibility	Students' expectations for classroom behavior, and students' sense of fair consequences
Have small groups of male and female students make and present <b>seasonal calendars</b>	Group, organizational, and presentation skills	Seasonal differences in terms of activities, health, and out of school obligations; opportune periods to schedule different lesson activities during the school year

Also, consider inviting your counterpart or team teacher to do a daily activity schedule to identify possible times for co-planning and to gain a better understanding of their non-school responsibilities. Consider ways the other tools might be useful at the school, such as the seasonal calendar.

For more ideas, see *PACA: Using Participatory Analysis for Community Action Idea Book*. Washington, DC: Peace Corps, 2005. [ICE No. M0086]

## 6 Attend workshops or faculty meetings in the host country

Look for opportunities to hear experienced host country teachers discuss teaching issues, techniques, and classroom management. Ask your program manager if there are local or regional meetings or workshops that you can attend.

## Introducing Change

By now, you have developed some cultural awareness and have adjusted some behaviors to accommodate living with people from a different culture. You realize changes are necessary when working in a new culture.

Are there changes you want to make in your behavior as a professional teacher, your teaching methods, and/or how you promote educational change? Below are a few ideas to help you fit in with the host school's culture.

Give respect to get respect.

—Peace Corps/Mozambique

### Use culturally appropriate behaviors to establish professional credibility.

- Learn the language. Of course, learning the language facilitates communication. It also shows respect for the culture and a desire to understand the host school's culture.
- Dress and groom yourself for your role as a professional teacher: use host country teachers as models.
- Behave appropriately when meeting colleagues for the first time. (Find out: Do you introduce yourself or is it more appropriate for someone else to introduce you? Do you shake hands? What should you say—should you talk about your family first or your education and experience?)
- Observe the correct protocol for meeting with the school administrator. (Find out: Do you schedule the appointment or does the administrator? How should the administrator be addressed? Do you talk about generalities or get right down to business? What questions are appropriate to ask? How do you know when it is time to leave?)

- Behave appropriately when first meeting your students. (Is it better to do it alone or have the school head or a team teacher introduce you? How should you ask students to address you? What should you tell students about your background and expectations?)
- Learn how you are expected to interact with parents. (When and where should you meet them? Do you visit their homes? During regularly scheduled meetings? Only when there is a problem with their son or daughter? How do you address parents and how should they address you?)
- Learn what community involvement is expected of a teacher. (In what types of community activities do teachers participate? Are there expectations about their dress and/or behaviors even when not at school?)

Will some of these require you to change what you might do at home in the U.S.?

### **Volunteer-Counterpart Activity**

*This activity could also be used with students or community members.*

*Complete the drawing on the next page. Consider that the adult in the drawing is you as a teacher. Add to the drawing details of dress, statements, and thoughts that would reflect a respected teacher at a school in the U.S. Provide the student figure with indications that the student respects YOU.*

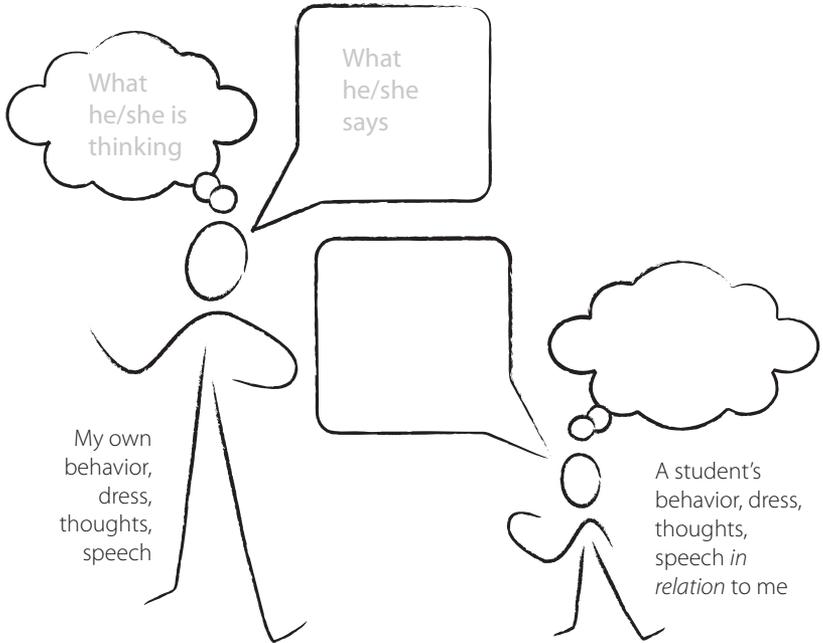
*Invite your counterpart to complete a similar drawing.*

*Share your drawings and reflections. Explore together what is expected of teachers and students.*

—Adapted from Fulbright Teacher Exchange Orientation<sup>3</sup>



<sup>3</sup> Blohm, Judee and Sandra Fowler. *Fulbright Teacher Exchange Program Orientation*. Washington, DC. August, 2000.

**How do teachers and students show respect?**

See the appendix for a training session similar to this activity from *Working with Supervisors and Counterparts*, Washington, DC: Peace Corps, 2002. Pages 70-71. [ICE No. T0121]

**Change and cultural implications**

Before you decide to initiate change, consider your options.

- A. You inquire about behaviors you don't understand, determine the beliefs and values behind them, and learn to accept their cultural rules.
- B. You weigh the benefits of doing something "their way" even though you are slightly uncomfortable with it because it really isn't all that important.
- C. You take time to analyze the things you are thinking about changing, pick out one or two you believe are critical, and work carefully to make changes in those things.

Think **1-2-3** when considering change in the classroom:

1. How would a change improve student learning? How will you know?
2. Are you the one that needs to change? Look within yourself before you look at others. It is often best for foreign teachers to change the way they act or their attitude to fit in with the host school's culture.
3. Do you have a strong feeling that if others change there would be an overall improvement in student learning? If you do, then find ways to involve students, administrators, and parents from the very beginning of the change process.

Read the stories of three foreign teachers below. Would the stories be different if they had thought 1-2-3? Why or why not?

"The first month or two in class I was always saying, 'Look at me when I talk to you,' and the kids simply wouldn't do it. They would always look at their hands, or the blackboard, or anywhere except looking me in the face. And finally one of the other teachers told me it was a cultural thing."

—Tony Hillerman from *Skinwalkers in Culture Matters: The Peace Corps Cross-Cultural Workbook*, Page 109.

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One teacher felt that talking in class was the number one problem in dealing with classroom management. "Before you become too frustrated and disheartened, keep in mind that in Bulgaria, it is not unusual for a teacher to continue with a lesson while his or her students chat in the meantime. The students are also accustomed to this, so having a silent classroom is not very realistic."

—Peace Corps/Bulgaria

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When I entered the classroom, all the students automatically stood up until I gave them a signal to sit. I was uncomfortable with this deferential behavior and told my students they need not stand when I entered the room. Two weeks later, the headmaster asked to speak with me. He informed me the other teachers had heard my students were not standing when I entered the room and they were upset. They regarded this behavior as a sign of disrespect, which they feared might spread to their classrooms. They worried

that I deliberately might be trying to blur the distinction between teacher and student. If students put themselves on the same level as teachers, chaos would result. It didn't occur to me that this small change in my classroom would cause problems.

—Adapted from “Upstanding Students” in *Culture Matters: The Peace Corps Cross-Cultural Workbook*, Page 124.

A Volunteer teacher in the Czech Republic had difficulty communicating with her supervisor. The following change benefited both the supervisor and Volunteer: Each Friday the Volunteer wrote a short English note to her supervisor, explaining what she had done during the week and asking any questions she had. When the Volunteer and supervisor met on Monday the supervisor had translated the note into Czech to give to the Volunteer and was prepared to discuss the Volunteer's questions.

*One area where Volunteer teachers will need to modify their classroom behavior is when (and if) they speak English. Some modifications that help ensure understanding:*

- Speak slowly and clearly, but not loudly.*
- Keep it simple; use short sentences.*
- Avoid idiomatic expressions, such as “Am I in the ballpark?”*
- Use open-ended questions. Close-ended questions prompt students to respond as they think you want.*
- Write key points on the board; students often understand better when they see the words.*
- Use examples to which the students can relate.*
- Use clear, culturally appropriate gestures.*
- Give and seek feedback to check understanding.*

**Fostering change requires good communication skills. Proceed respectfully and slowly.**

While Americans usually view change as a positive and inevitable force and are relatively quick to make changes, people in high-context cultures often value traditions and may rarely contemplate

change. Risk-taking outside the cultural norms might be unheard of. This high-context cultural tendency suggests it is best to **go slowly**, do not rush through the change process, and be sure to involve other teachers, school administrators, parents, and perhaps students.

*A Volunteer advisor to an educational nongovernmental organization in central Europe became exasperated with the long discussions of what seemed to her to be rather trivial matters. A young staff member responded to the Volunteer's frustration by pointing out a key difference: "You Americans decide quickly and if it doesn't work you try something else. We know we can't afford to make mistakes."*

If you decide to be a change agent, first find a committed local partner and start with positive advice; move on to more cautionary words later. Know that sustainable change will only occur if local people adopt the change as their own and institutionalize it (make it part of school norms).

- Explain the rationale for change—communicate frequently and clearly.
- Provide a clear vision.
- Seek opportunities to involve people.
- Make sure people have the know-how.
- Track behavior and measure results.
- Beware of bureaucracy.
- Expect resistance.
- Get resistance out in the open. (See the useful tools "Overcoming Resistance to Change" and "Force Field Analysis" on the next pages.)

### **Planning to overcome resistance**

When Volunteer teachers and counterparts or team teachers are considering changes in instruction or classroom management techniques, the table on the following page is a useful model to identify proposed changes, reasons for resistance, and strategies for overcoming resistance.

<b>Overcoming Resistance to Change</b> <i>Peace Corps/South Africa</i>		
<b>Areas of Resistance</b>	<b>Reasons for Resistance</b>	<b>Strategies for Overcoming Resistance</b>
Using cooperative learning strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fear of losing control of class</li> <li>• No previous experience as a learner</li> <li>• Not sure how to organize learner groups</li> <li>• Not sure how to give individual grades for group activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain how using cooperative groups can help the teacher manage the class</li> <li>• Observe others who can model cooperative learning activities</li> <li>• Start with pair work activities</li> <li>• Use two grades: a group grade (all members receive identical grades) and an individual grade (based on an assessment of a student's learning)</li> </ul>

*There is a blank template of this chart at the end of this chapter.*

**Force Field Analysis** is a useful tool in preparing for and working with resistance to change. Do the force field analysis with a representative group of people who would be involved in the change.

1. Propose a change.
2. Brainstorm driving forces, as well as restraining forces in its implementation.
3. Evaluate both forces in terms of strength. (This is a group subjective judgment.)
4. Develop strategies to remove or decrease restraining forces, starting with the easily changed ones.
5. Develop strategies to strengthen driving forces, striving for win/win solutions.
6. Translate these strategies into action plans: Why? What? When? Where? How?
7. Develop a plan to evaluate the effectiveness of your action plan, once implemented.

<b>Force Field Analysis Example</b>	
<b>Proposed change:</b> Incorporate student-centered learning into classroom instruction	
<b>Favoring (driving) forces</b>	<b>Restraining (opposing) forces</b>
Students learn to take responsibility for their own learning and thus gain the skills to become lifelong learners.	It is the teacher's job to make students learn.
Through experiential and discovery learning students acquire problem-solving skills as they learn.	Experiential and discovery lessons take students longer; they will not be able to cover all the required material during the school year.
Students are actively involved in learning; consequently, more learning takes place.	Only the bright students will learn. Slower students will not be able to figure out what they are supposed to learn and become frustrated.
Student-centered learning allows students more flexibility in adapting their learning methods to fit their individual learning styles	Playing games and group activities seem like play; students will not take schoolwork seriously.
When students enjoy the learning process they are less likely to misbehave.	Teachers will lose face if they are not the purveyors of knowledge.
Students acquire planning and decision-making skills as they participate in student-centered learning.	The national syllabus prescribes what students must learn. Students might not choose to learn what is listed in the syllabus.
Students tend to help each other and learn to work together.	Our school does not have the materials needed to implement student-centered activities.
Student-centered learning puts the focus on the student and learning.	Teachers have not been taught how to teach and use student-centered methods.
Student-centered learning better accommodates students who are at different levels of understanding.	Assigning grades is more difficult when all students are not doing the same thing.

*There is a blank template of this chart at the end of this chapter.*

### **Change is possible**

Although change is sometime slow and difficult, it is possible. Some Volunteers found that with the support of their host countries' ministry of education, change was welcomed and encouraged.

In the Dominican Republic and in Kiribati, ministries of education are actively supporting new and innovative teaching techniques in their schools. Volunteers in the Dominican Republic work with teachers to implement Quantum Learning techniques—the use

of neurocognitive strategies to maximize memory retention by capturing students' interest and attention, sharing a common experience, and linking new learning with prior knowledge. Volunteers in Kiribati model "learner centered" activities. A student (or learner)-centered approach empowers students (learners) to take responsibility for their own learning. Teachers facilitate learning by developing activities and materials relevant to the students' needs and interests. This kind of support is especially important in cultures where authority is highly regarded.

## Examples and Tools

### Sample Overcoming Resistance to Change Chart

Use this template to reveal areas of resistance and determine strategies for overcoming the resistance.

<i>Overcoming Resistance to Change</i>		
Areas of Resistance	Reasons for Resistance	Strategies for Overcoming Resistance

### Sample Force Field Analysis Chart

Use this template to conduct a force field analysis with host country stakeholders. The length of the arrow should indicate how strong a factor it is.

#### *Force Field Analysis*

<b>Proposed change:</b>	
<b>Favoring (driving) forces</b>	<b>Restraining (opposing) forces</b>

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## CHAPTER 3

### Strategies for Classroom Management

#### **What Do You Think?**

*Using your prior knowledge about classroom management and what you have observed so far in your host country, complete the activity below.*



What strategies create a classroom that promotes student learning? List them.

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*Discuss the strategies you listed with your counterpart or other host country colleagues. Are there alternative strategies that your counterpart thinks might work better? Together, select two or three strategies you want to focus on during the term.*



**Key Ideas in This Chapter**

*Your proactive, appreciative classroom management will affect your students' performance. Implementing the right strategies will make the difference between a learner-friendly classroom and a disorganized classroom.*

- *Set the tone the first week of school*
- *Establish routines and rules*
- *Organize a learner-friendly classroom*
- *Make every minute count*
- *Engage students with proactive strategies*
- *Teach life skills of good learning habits and self-reliance*
- *Maximize use of scarce resources*
- *Use project design and management processes*



The classroom management ideas in this chapter are grouped into eight categories. Discipline strategies are covered later in Chapter 4 and grading strategies in Chapter 5. Consider how you might adapt the ideas to your classroom as you read.

**Eight Strategies for Classroom Management****Strategy 1: Create an effective learning environment**

Benjamin Franklin said: "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." This is particularly true of a teacher's actions during the first week of school. The effort and time you put into planning for the year and thinking through potential pitfalls will help in the long run. If you are one step ahead of your students and their day-to-day needs, you will manage the unexpected more smoothly when it comes along. Students will recognize and follow the classroom routine earlier and more easily if you are prepared. Students will also see that you are in charge of your classroom, you have high expectations of them and you expect them to succeed.

## *What to do the first week of school*

### Preparation

- Arrange the room to facilitate your proximity to students and your mobility.
- Be prepared! You do not yet know your students' abilities and behaviors so have alternative and backup activities ready.
- If you are team teaching, plan with your team teacher and agree on individual responsibilities to make working together in the same classroom more efficient.

### Climate setting

- Greet students at the classroom door and tell them what to do when they enter the classroom. For example, on day one, introduce yourself, ask their names, and assign their seats. On day two, greet students by name whenever possible and indicate they are to do the one-minute assignment you have written on the board as soon as they get to their seats.
- Learn every student's name and something about each student as quickly as you can. Use nametags, getting-acquainted activities, and/or seating charts.
- Tell students about yourself.
- Teach subject content from day one. Keep lessons focused and doable for the length of the class. Clearly communicate learning objective(s), give simple instructions, and structure lessons to accommodate students' knowledge and skills.
- End class with a routine that summarizes the day's accomplishments, reminds students what they need to do to prepare for the next day, ensures materials are put away, and leaves the room clean.

“It is easier to loosen than it is to tighten.”

—Peace Corps/Malawi

### Create community

- Develop a set of written behavior expectations (rules and procedures) with the class that you can live with and consistently enforce.
- Establish cooperative learning groups, give tips for working as a group, and practice group work by accomplishing needed tasks (e.g., organizing learning centers, decorating the room, suggesting class rules and consequences, etc.).

- Make parents your allies when you meet them. Describe your positive student expectations, briefly explain classroom rules, and indicate your willingness to meet with parents.



**Cultural note:** *As you plan for the first week of school, consider cultural and school norms. Gather information from teaching colleagues about local classroom rules and procedures. Try to incorporate many of these familiar practices into your classroom management plan to maximize students' comfort level with a foreign teacher.*

### Establishing classroom rules

Teachers are ultimately responsible for classroom rules. New teachers or teachers in a new culture should consult experienced teachers and follow their examples in establishing classroom rules. Your rules should not contradict school rules. Try to limit your rules to five or six.

#### Rules

- identify specific expectations for general behaviors;
- have consequences; and
- must make sense to both receiver and enforcer.

Post rules where students can see them and you can visually refer to the chart. Teach how to behave according to the rules.

“Set clear, enforceable rules with clear consequences—do it early! Make sure students know the rules—translate them and sign an agreement (the teacher should sign one, too, and stick to it).”

—Peace Corps/Tanzania

**Have Students Generate Rules**

Teachers may choose to involve students in determining the rules. Rules developed collaboratively tend to promote student cooperation. However, reserve the right to modify student-generated classroom rules. Ask students in small groups to come up with five rules beginning with “always” and five rules beginning with “never.” Discuss the lists as a class to arrive at five or fewer rules that express the students’ main ideas positively.

**Classroom Agreement from Peace Corps/Bolivia**

In Bolivia, Volunteers and their co-teachers collaborate with their students to write a classroom set of rules and expectations. The activity concludes with teachers and students discussing and agreeing to the final list of rules, signing the document, and posting it in the classroom to show their commitment to abide by the agreement.

**Rules About Rules from Peace Corps/Romania**

1. Write simple rules with simple consequences.
2. Never create a rule that cannot be immediately enforced. If a rule is broken, implement the consequence or you will lose respect in the eyes of the pupils.
3. Effective classroom management requires everyone to respect the rules.

### **Sample Classroom Rules**

#### **Primary level classroom rules**

1. *Raise your hand to speak.*
2. *Only one person speaks at a time.*
3. *Do not eat, spit, or litter in the classroom.*
4. *Do not fight.*
5. *Ask permission before you leave the classroom.*
6. *Respect other people's belongings.*

—Peace Corps/The Gambia

#### **Secondary school classroom rules**

1. *Cooperate with your teacher and classmates.*
2. *Respect the rights and property of others.*
3. *Carry out your student responsibilities:*
  - *Keep track of your own supplies, books, and assignments.*
  - *Ask for help when you need it.*
  - *Do your own work.*
  - *Turn your work in on time.*
  - *Accept responsibility for grades or other consequences.*

—Peace Corps/Tonga

### **Regaining control of your classroom**

It will happen, you will lose control of your classroom. It happens to both inexperienced and experienced teachers. Recognize the problem and make a plan to re-establish order. If appropriate, you may want to stop in and talk to a colleague, Peace Corps staff, or school official who can help support your efforts to regain control of your classroom.

If there are just one or two students who are disrupting the classroom, you may want to focus on those students, rather than the whole class. Talk to the students outside of class, call a

conference with co-teachers, parents, or school administrators, or whatever is appropriate in your community.

If you need to start over with the whole class, follow these steps.

- Get a good night's sleep.
- Review the classroom rules and procedures again, on your own. You might need to revise them with your students.
- Put on your "business face" and go to school ready to be firm, but positive.
- Review the classroom rules and procedures with your students. Make sure they understand what your expectations are and how to follow the rules appropriately. Be assertive and confident.
- Once you have reviewed the rules, be consistent in enforcing them. Initially, establish a zero-tolerance policy toward any transgressors.

"Taking back" your classroom can be implemented any time during the year. It is challenging, but keep in mind that the time you take to re-establish order and calmness in your classroom will translate into greater productivity and learning achievement later in the year.

## **Strategy 2: Establish classroom procedures**

Classroom procedures communicate how to do daily activities. Teach and model procedures until they are routine.

### ***Suggestions from Peace Corps/Nepal***

- *Write step-by-step instructions for the activity.*
- *Say the steps or read them aloud.*
- *Show the steps visually in writing or through illustrations.*
- *Demonstrate each step or have a student demonstrate.*
- *Have the whole class practice until each student masters the procedure and it becomes a routine.*
- *If necessary, reteach procedures.*

### **Visual Reminders**

*Here is a useful activity to teach procedures and help reinforce them throughout the term. Divide your class into small groups. Each group is assigned the task of making a visual reminder (perhaps a poster) to show the steps in a classroom procedure. These visual reminders are displayed in the classroom. When a student fails to follow a procedure, you don't need to say a word—get his or her attention and point to the step missed.*



“Teach procedures for routines in the classroom so that the environment is predictable and well structured.

**Procedure + Practice = Routine**”

—Peace Corps/South Africa

### **Use a procedure to begin student work**

For example

- Have students sit at their desks or in their groups.
- Have everyone get out the materials needed.
- Make sure all eyes are on you—use nonverbal cues.
- Point to posted assignment and state instructions.
- Test understanding by asking students, “What is the first step?” or “What are you supposed to do now?”
- Work the first few questions or problems as a class and have students record the answer(s).
- Walk around the classroom until you are sure all students are on task.

There is a sample classroom procedures planning guide at the end of this chapter.

**Strategy 3: Create a motivational environment**

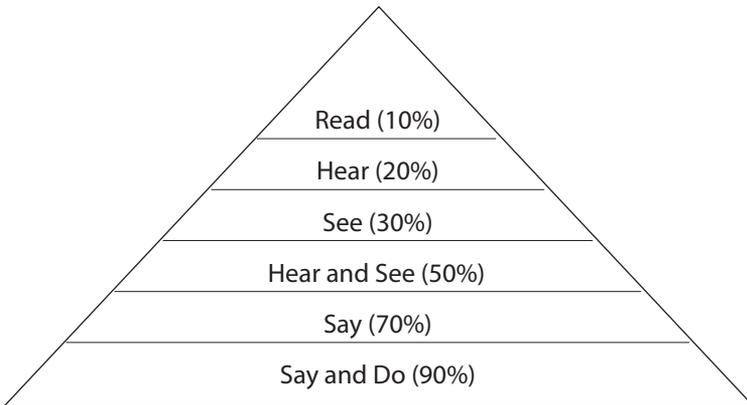
The following classroom conditions and strategies will help create a classroom climate that encourages learning.

- Create an attractive, enriched environment. Get students involved by asking them to decorate their own classroom. Use student work to decorate when possible, to validate the work and to show examples of good work.
- Develop lessons at a level that challenges students but is not too difficult or confusing.
- Give clear directions. Ask student to repeat the directions.
- Engage all students actively. For example, while one student makes a presentation, other students take notes or use a rubric to assess the presentation.
- Demonstrate consistently that you believe all students will learn. For example, use short positive words to praise good work and behavior (e.g., great idea, fantastic, good job, sensational, super). Better yet, if you teach in a local language, brainstorm with students words of praise in their language and use them.
- Teach to different learning styles. For example, write key words on the board or use a diagram or visual, and so on.
- Make learning intrinsically interesting by relating lesson content to the students' life and local environment. For example, make connections between the lesson and local current events or common life experiences in that region.
- Use vivid, novel, or different attention getters at the beginning of the lesson. Use objects or pictures, have students read a poem or quotes, have a diagram on the board, or play some music.
- Vary lesson presentations to keep teaching from going stale. Limit lectures or presentations to 15 minutes before directing a student activity. Break the class period into two or three different activities (e.g., lecture, group work, report out). Be sure each activity segues smoothly into the next.

- Structure learning experiences so students feel successful. Develop activities at an appropriate level of difficulty and consider ways they can participate at two or three levels so all students can succeed.
- Set clear behavior expectations and consistently reinforce expectations.

*More than 2,000 years ago, the Chinese philosopher Confucius (551-479 BC) said, "You hear and you forget, you see and you remember, you do and you understand." Research has confirmed his words. Help your students learn better by always having them do something with content you are teaching.*

Research conducted by Edgar Dale in the 1960s showed that what we recall from learning depends greatly on how the learner interacted with the learning material. Typically, we remember 10 percent of what we learned in a passive manner (e.g., lecture, reading, observing) but we remember 90 percent of what we learn by actively engaging with the material (e.g., simulations, active experiments, performing). Dale's Cone of Learning illustrates how much we remember of what we learned by the various methods listed below.<sup>1</sup>



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<sup>1</sup> Dale, E. *Audio-Visual Methods in Teaching*, (3<sup>rd</sup> ed). Austin, TX: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston. 1969.

This learning pyramid shows retention rates for various teaching methodologies.

lecture (5%)  
 reading (10%)  
 audio-visual (20%)  
 demonstration (30%)  
 discussion group (50%)  
 practice by doing (75%)  
 teach others/immediate use (90%)

### **Student Reflection Activity**

*The following activity will help reveal past educational experiences that students remember positively. It also helps students focus on their positive school experiences.*



Instructions: Read and respond to the following questions. Do not use names of past teachers. Be specific and honest in your responses.

1. What school event will you remember for many years to come? What happened that you remember so clearly?
2. List the special qualities of your **BEST** teacher.
3. List the special qualities of your **FAVORITE** teacher.
4. You wake up tomorrow morning and **YOU** are the teacher. What good ideas would you bring to your classroom?

### **Follow-up ideas**

- Ask the students to consider their list of good ideas for the classroom from question 4. Ask them to suggest ways in which you could incorporate some of the good ideas they have into your classroom.
- Share the results of the activity with your fellow teachers and headmaster. Clarify any information from the activity that you might not understand.
- Reflect on your teaching. Are there any qualities the students like that you could incorporate in your style?

**Strategy 4: Make every minute count**

Begin on time. End on time. A few minutes of class time saved every day could add up to hours of additional academic instruction by the end of the school year.

***To maximize learning and teaching time***

- Plan each lesson in advance. Well-designed lesson plans have clear learning objectives and provide meaningful activities for students to reach the objective.
- Write learning objectives, examples, problems, etc., on the board, flip-chart paper, or recycled cardboard before class.
- Divide your board into three sections: (1) the left side for organizational points (date, objectives, instructions, homework); (2) the central and largest section for ongoing work that can be erased as the lesson progresses; and (3) the right section for reference points which students need throughout the lesson.

Class time is the most valuable classroom resource.

- Begin class with “bell work,” which students begin as soon as they enter the room. Tasks may be related to the previous lesson or related to the lesson of the day. For example, students can copy the learning objectives for today’s lesson, copy a diagram or a list of words into their notebook, or write the most important thing learned during yesterday’s lesson.
- Save time by taking roll while students are working, using a seating chart or delegating the task to a team teacher or student aide.
- Make the student aide of the week responsible for handing out and picking up papers and supplies.
- Be prepared with an emergency lesson or activity. Have an organized plan if your planned lesson for the day runs short or you need to fill time. Time will not be wasted and students will not get bored and act out.
- Have activities ready for students who finish their work early—books for preferred reading, fun worksheets, learning games, or art materials.
- Use homework folders. Students place their completed homework in their folder and remove their checked work. When distributing worksheets, place copies in folders of absent students; work is ready for the students’ return.

### **Alternative Attendance Taking**

Prepare a tack board with students' names on the left. Each day, post a short answer question. As students enter, they can write their answers on a strip of paper and tack their strips next to their names. Questions can be fun or can review the previous lesson.



**Plan, but be flexible!** Some Volunteers find that no matter how hard they try to be informed and in the communication loop with other faculty members, they are surprised by interruptions to regular class time. An unknown holiday, school field trip, school children's presence required to welcome a dignitary to town, a school workday, or other events may disrupt your plans. Advice: plan some flexibility into your schedule!

### **Strategy 5: Keep everyone engaged**

Challenging students to think actively involves them in learning and develops critical skills. Expect both low and high achievers to participate in classroom discussions and answer questions.

#### **Ideas to encourage all pupils to think**

- Ask a question, wait three to five seconds (wait time), then call on a student. *Wait time encourages more thoughtful responses and allows slower, as well as quicker, students to respond.*
- Use the echo technique: one student gives an answer and you call on another student to repeat it. "John, tell us what Sara said." "Mia, rephrase Michael's answer for us." *This process reinforces correct answers, involves more students, and improves listening skills.*
- Encourage a student to try and answer the question. "Take a risk. I think you know it." *Communicates it is OK to make a mistake.*
- Praise correct answers. "Great thinking!" "Outstanding!" "Well done!" *Shows teacher believes student is a successful learner.*
- Prompt students' thinking. "Based on what we learned [read, heard], what do you think will happen next?" *Encourages students to think ahead and links past learning to future learning.*
- Make sure procedures are understood. "We are going to create dialogues in groups. Who can remind us how we are going to do this?" One student gives information, another repeats. *Requires students to recall directions for certain types of activities.*

- Create a question box. Place all students' names in a box and draw a name to answer the question. Once all names have been called and the box is empty, place all names back in the box and start over. *Makes sure all students are asked questions and keeps students in suspense as to who will be called on next.*
- Pose a question and move your gaze to several different students during the wait time before selecting a student to answer. *Adds drama to questioning.*
- Use total group choral response. Ask a question and then twirl your index finger in a circle to signal to the class that you want a total group response. *This practice helps keep the class involved and adds variety to question sessions. (Make sure this gesture is not culturally offensive.)*
- Create a student-to-student chain. Call on a student to answer the question. That student then poses a different question to another student, and so on. *This method stretches the responder's thinking by having him or her ask another student a relevant question.*
- Pass a beanbag (or other object, such as a "talking stick"). Ask the class a question, pause (wait time), and then pass the object to a student. The student answers the question (or not) and returns the stick to you or to another student. Use creative variations, such as student to student. *This is fun and physically involves students.*
- Have the class indicate if the answer is correct or incorrect. After a student or group answers, ask, "Do you agree, class?" Students show agreement or disagreement by using previously agreed upon gestures, such as one hand up if the answer was correct, looking down if it was wrong. Be careful of the gestures you choose; showing thumbs up, thumbs down, for example, may be inappropriate gestures in some cultures. *This technique keeps all students involved and has the added advantage of giving the teacher an instant check on the students' understanding.*
- Correct students' incorrect answers in ways to encourage their continued participation in the learning process. *Try some of the following techniques.*



- Sandwich technique: Negative information is sandwiched between two positive statements. Example:
  - “The first row of problems is correct.”
  - “Number 12 needs work.”
  - “The rest looks great.”
- Respond with a question: “Are you sure the Earth is the largest planet?”
- Ask: “What leads you to that conclusion?”
- Validate their thought process: “I see how you might think that, but did you consider ... ?”
- Praise the student’s willingness to try an answer: “You were brave to try, but it was not the right answer.”
- Give clues to help the student discover the answer.
- Once the student has discovered the right answer, repeat the question, have the student repeat the right answer, and provide praise.

### **Fun for Younger Students**

*Save wooden sticks or cut sticks out of cardboard or cereal boxes. Write each student’s name on a stick. (You might have the students do this themselves and decorate the sticks.) Put sticks in a jar on your desk. As you teach lessons throughout the day, draw sticks to call on individuals until every student has had a chance to participate. When your container is empty, replace the sticks and begin again. This is quick and students see it as fair—it keeps them on their toes.*



—Peace Corps/Kiribati

### **What about large and multilevel classrooms?**

There is a complete ICE publication on this subject: *Teaching English as a Foreign Language to Large, Multilevel Classes* [ICE No. M0046]. The techniques offered in this book are helpful to all teachers, not just those who are teaching English. Suggestions include full class activities, pair work, group work, and independent study.

## Strategy 6: Teach life skills and good learning habits

As you work to create an organized learner-centered classroom you can teach students many important skills. Sometimes called character skills or life skills\*, these are the skills that enable students to become mature, confident, and successful adults who contribute positively to their communities and society as a whole.

(\*Note that the Peace Corps has a publication called the *Life Skills Manual* [ICE No. M0063], which is often used in schools to teach students communication skills, assertiveness, how to deal with peer pressure, etc. It was developed to help students avoid exposure to HIV/AIDS but can be used in any setting.)

UNICEF and numerous ministries of education recognize the importance of life skills training. The relative value of a life skill and how the skill is expressed in daily behavior are culturally dependent. For example, most Americans highly value initiative, effort, and curiosity, while other cultures may be more likely to place a high value on respect, patience, and cooperation.

*Discuss with your colleagues and community members their perception of the merits of each of the following life skills and modify the list below to fit the local culture.*



### **Representative life skills**

<b>Caring</b>	Feel concern for others
<b>Common sense</b>	Use good judgment
<b>Cooperation</b>	Work together toward a common goal or purpose
<b>Courage</b>	Act according to one's beliefs
<b>Curiosity</b>	Want to learn or know about one's world
<b>Effort</b>	Try your hardest
<b>Flexibility</b>	Be able to change plans when necessary
<b>Friendship</b>	Make and keep a friend, so that you care for and trust each other
<b>Initiative</b>	Do something because it needs to be done
<b>Integrity</b>	Do the right thing
<b>Organization</b>	Plan ahead to keep things in order
<b>Patience</b>	Wait calmly for someone or something
<b>Perseverance</b>	Keep trying, no matter what
<b>Problem-solving</b>	Solve problems, even when they are very difficult
<b>Respect</b>	Value the worth of another person
<b>Responsibility</b>	Do what you are supposed to do, when you are supposed to do it
<b>Sense of humor</b>	Laugh and be playful without hurting others

You can teach many of these skills daily as you manage the classroom—teach students how to take responsibility for class tasks and praise them when they do well; expect students to treat each other respectfully during group learning activities; and model the life skills you want your students to acquire.

### **Schoolwide Project**

*Teachers at one elementary school defined life skills as “character traits” (responsibility, respect, caring, trustworthiness and citizenship\*) and made teaching these character traits a schoolwide project. Classes made up songs, planned an art show, presented plays at school assemblies, and honored students for exhibiting character traits.*

*\*Citizenship was described as acting in ways to make our schools, community, and world better.*



Here are some ideas for making a special effort to teach life skills.

1. Take advantage of “teaching moments” to reinforce life skills. For example, remind students, “If everyone helps to clean the classroom, we can go to lunch early.” Or, “We have five books and 10 students. How can we share them fairly?”
2. Highlight a different skill each week throughout the school year. For example, “Class, this week’s life skill is *respect*. What is respect? How do you show someone respect?”  
For younger students you may want to select only three to five life skills to emphasize during the term.
3. Have students write stories or do role plays where characters exhibit one or more of the life skill traits. Present those to other classes or during school assemblies.
4. Have students draw/paint pictures or posters illustrating life skills and create a life skill art show.
5. Use journals. Students write about people they have observed demonstrating a life skill or write how they plan to use a behavior in their own lives. For example, saying “no” to peers who pressure them to drink alcohol.

6. Create life skills tickets. When you see a student demonstrating a skill, circle the trait and write the student’s name on the ticket. At the end of the month the student with the most tickets is named “student of the month.” Come up with a suitable reward.

**Life Skills Ticket**

I Saw...	Respect	Integrity
Initiative	Flexibility	Perseverance
Organization	Sense of Humor	Effort
Common Sense	Problem-solving	Responsibility
Patience	Friendship	Curiosity
Cooperation	Caring	Courage

Student’s Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Good learning habits depend on a number of life skills: responsibility, initiative, organization, effort, perseverance, curiosity, common sense, patience, and, at times, cooperation. Individuals who know how to learn will do better at all levels of their education and will become lifetime learners.

Classroom management facilitates teaching and learning.  
 Good study habits make learning easier.

***As you teach, model good learning habits***

Structure assignments to encourage an organized approach

- Outline the lesson on the board.
- Highlight important vocabulary words, dates, people, or tasks.
- Break large tasks into doable smaller pieces. For example, for a research paper, set progressive goals for students:
  - research cards due in two days (you return the cards the following day with feedback)
  - essay outline in four days (you return outline the following day with feedback)
  - the completed essay in six days

- Use time-management techniques like making study schedules, daily goals, to-do lists.
- Teach an individual lesson or unit on study skills.
- Incorporate study skills and learning strategies in your lessons.
- Use graphic organizers to take notes on a day's lesson.
- Demonstrate memory techniques:
  - Flash cards to use for repetition
  - Acronyms and acrostics

“In addition to posting assignments and explaining them orally, it is useful to have students copy the assignment into their notebooks.”

—Peace Corps/Tonga Volunteer

### ***Use cooperative learning groups to reinforce life skills in the classroom***

Research shows that students who participate in *cooperative learning experiences* tend to earn better grades and display more enthusiasm. Cooperative learning is an instructional technique where students work in small learning groups. For each activity assigned, each student has a role: note taker, timekeeper, speaker, supply organizer, etc. Students are responsible not only for the material being taught, but also for helping their group learn.

Cooperative learning can be used:

- in class
- after-school study groups
- for homework
- test review groups

#### **Construct a Class Good Learning Habits Book**

*Have groups of students take a topic (positive learning attitude, listening, note taking, memorization, time management, test taking skills, etc.) and create a chapter for a class book called Good Learning Habits.*



### **Strategy 7: Be creative**

You may think your teaching methods are limited by scarce resources. But Volunteers and creative colleagues are famous for coming up with innovative solutions to better utilize, take care of, acquire, and/or create teaching/learning resources.

Here are a few ideas and resources to get you started.

#### ***Use Peace Corps and local resources***

- Order or download materials listed in the ICE catalog.
- Search the Internet to find resources such as pictures, maps, activity ideas, arts and crafts instructions, and free, downloadable materials.
- Find out what local or national professional organizations or agencies might have materials, including the U.S. Embassy's American Corners program.

#### ***Create writing surfaces***

- Blackboard paint can be used on walls, planks, and even small blocks of wood for children to write on.
- Chalkboard cloth can be written on, rolled up, carried to class, hung on the wall, erased, and reused. Check the Internet for sources.
- Some artificial leather upholstery fabric makes a substitute writing surface.
- Rolls of butcher paper/commercial wrapping paper can be cut to create charts and visual aids. In Eastern Europe, Volunteers get donations of old wallpaper and use the back side.

#### ***Use limited written materials***

- *Adapting Environmental Education Materials* [ICE No. M0059] provides several ideas for using one copy of written material with a class.
- *Doing without the Photocopier from A to Z: 26 Creative Ideas for Reusable Language Games and Activities.*
- Magazines are great teaching aids.
- *The World Map Project* [ICE No. R0088] shows how to enlarge maps, which works for diagrams as well. These projects are great for cooperative learning.

- *Sources of Donated Books* [ICE No. RE003] and *Sources of Free Periodicals and Databases* [ICE No. RE007] may help you locate materials for your school.

### ***Make or find other teaching materials***

- *Nonformal Education (NFE) Manual* [ICE No. M0042] describes how to use local materials.
- What is discarded by businesses in your community?
- What are you throwing out that might be reused?

“Do what you can, with what you have, where you are.”  
—Theodore Roosevelt

### **Strategy 8: Use project design and management techniques**

Think of classroom management as a project design and management challenge. Here are the steps you and your colleagues (and maybe students) would take to create and manage a project—applied to classroom management.

**Step one** Identify the strengths and needs that currently exist to facilitate teaching and learning.

**Step two** Formulate a vision of “what the ideal classroom would look like.”

**Step three** Collaborate with others to explore alternative ways to achieve the vision.  
(This idea book, local educators, ICE resources, and the Internet offer multiple classroom management tips, techniques and methods.)

**Step four** Prepare a classroom management plan. There is a blank format of a planning guide used in Peace Corps/China and Peace Corps/Jordan at the end of this chapter.

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**Step five** Monitor the classroom management plan to determine if it is being consistently followed and make adjustments as needed.

(You may want to take time each week to reflect individually and with colleagues about what worked and what did not. Also, invite teaching colleagues to observe your class and offer feedback.)

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**Step six** Evaluate to determine if the plan is achieving the desired vision. There is a sample classroom report card at the end of this chapter that is a useful evaluation tool. Consider adapting it and using it near the middle and end of the school term.

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**Step seven** Celebrate successes with your students.

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Be patient with yourself and with your students! Know when to ask for help from your counterpart teacher, headmaster, or Peace Corps staff.

## Examples and Tools

### Sample Classroom Procedures Planning Guide

Classroom procedures usually involve the following themes

#### *How will you handle*

*Talk?*

- Calling on students
- When can students talk and to whom?

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*Movement?*

- When can students get out of their seats?
- Leaving the room during class and at the end of class
- Seating arrangements
- Answer questions sitting or standing

---

*Time?*

- Tardiness and absences
- Homework
- What is being prepared for class?
- Students who finish early

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- Teacher/student relationships?*
- How will you start the year?
  - What will be your routines?
  - How do students speak to the teacher and when?
  - Can students work while the teacher speaks?
  - What are your rewards and consequences and for what?
  - Will you make an agreement with your students about classroom rules?
  - How will you present/teach your students your policies?
  - How will you give instructions?
  - Do you expect your students to take notes? How?

- Student/student relationships?*
- How are students expected to behave toward each other?
  - What kinds of group work will you use?
  - Can students help each other?

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—Adapted from Peace Corps/Nepal

## **Sample Classroom Management Planning Guide**

### ***Rules***

Create three to five positive, clear classroom rules.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

How will you teach these rules?

List the ways in which you plan to follow up your rules.

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***Rewards***

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***Consequences***

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***Classroom procedures***

Include your ideas on addressing student behaviors on these topics and any other relevant procedures you would like to implement.

1) starting class

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2) sharpening pencils

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3) lack of preparation

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4) bathroom/water breaks

---

---

5) checking homework

---

---

6) working in pairs and groups

---

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7) \_\_\_\_\_

---

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8) \_\_\_\_\_

---

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9) \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

10) \_\_\_\_\_

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How will you teach these procedures in the classroom?

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—Adapted from Peace Corps/Jordan and Peace Corps/China

**Sample Classroom Report Card**

Date \_\_\_\_\_ School \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

Subject \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher \_\_\_\_\_ (Student Gender M/F)

*Please read the statements below. On each line, check the box that is closest to matching your opinion about the statement.*

		Almost always	Usually	Seldom	Never
1	I am involved in learning during class.				
2	I understand what it is I am expected to learn.				
3	I am treated with respect in the classroom.				
4	I have enough time to complete my work.				
5	Students are encouraged to ask thoughtful questions.				
6	Students get right to work when the bell rings.				
7	We always get a lot of work done in class.				
8	Class rules are clear.				
9	Students are well behaved during class.				
10	The teacher seems to enjoy teaching our class.				
11	The teacher and the class work well together.				
12	This classroom is a place where I am comfortable and can do my best.				

Younger students might complete the report card using a show of hands.

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## CHAPTER 4

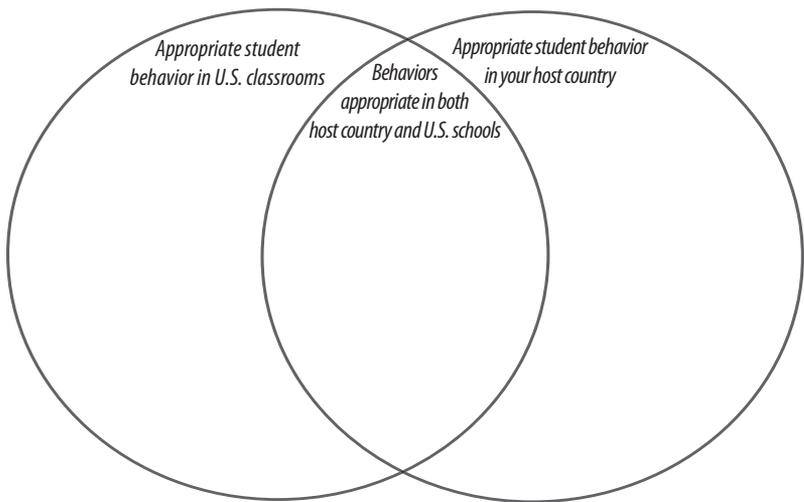
### Managing Disruptive Behavior

#### **What Do You Think?**

*Based on what you have observed so far in your host country and what you know to be true in the U.S., complete this exercise.*



Imagine a successful day of teaching. Describe what your classroom looks like when everyone is behaving appropriately and working productively. What appropriate behavior would you expect? List below.



*Discuss your perceptions of acceptable student behavior with your counterpart teacher to check the accuracy of your observations and to better understand the reasons behind behavioral norms.*



**Key Ideas in This Chapter**

1. *It is easier to teach expected behavior than to correct inappropriate behavior.*
2. *Student misbehavior must be explored in a cultural context.*
3. *Discipline attempts to correct inappropriate behavior through consequences and/or punishment.*
4. *Successful behavior management in the classroom requires fairness and consistency.*
5. *Effective behavior management must be culturally acceptable and treat students with respect.*



Any classroom has the potential to become a well-managed, smoothly running classroom. A good class can become a great class if the teacher has solid, consistent classroom management skills. No one is born with management skills; they are learned. In this chapter Volunteer teachers from several countries share their ideas to help you along the path to becoming a great classroom manager.

**Teaching Expected Behaviors**

Teachers usually have a clear vision of how students are expected to behave, but many teachers forget to share that vision with their students at the beginning of the year. They assume students already know what behavior is expected or that they will pick it up along the way. It's best not to assume anything! You must spend some time at the beginning of the year teaching these behaviors and coming to some common agreement about what appropriate classroom behavior is in your class. After all, each teacher will create a unique classroom culture with his or her students. Be clear with your students from the start about your expectations. The result will be more time spent on teaching and learning and less time on disruptions and discipline. Everyone wins. (See Chapter 3 for ideas on creating and teaching classroom rules and procedures.)

Before you start an activity, make sure students understand the instructions.

### **Example**

In small groups I want you to create two questions about \_\_\_\_\_. I will give you 10 minutes to work. This is how you will do it:

1. After I give the instructions, form groups of four.
2. Discuss what we learned about \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Decide on two questions you can ask about \_\_\_\_\_. One person must write down the questions.
4. When I raise my hand, stop talking and listen to what we will do next.

Let's make sure everyone understands. Please tell me:

- How many students are in a group?
- What is the topic?
- What are you to do?
- What are you to write?
- When will you know you have to stop talking and listen to me?

### **Preventing Student Misbehavior**

- *Establish a working system with rules and consequences for the classroom.*
- *Establish a relationship with students based on respect.*
- *Allow students to participate in the creation of consequences.*
- *Give praise to students for appropriate behavior.*
- *Encourage students to work together in positive and supportive ways.*
- *Involve parents, the parent-teacher association and administration in classroom issues.*
- *Create a committee for students' welfare or students' rights.*

—Adapted from Peace Corps/Tanzania

## Reinforce appropriate classroom behavior

Catch students “doing something right” to reinforce good behavior. Here are some suggestions from Volunteers in Bolivia, Jordan, Kiribati, and Mozambique.

### Letter Game

*Volunteers in Bolivia introduced a motivating game as a strategy for classroom management. When the students are working well and the Volunteer teacher wants to commend them for staying on task, she posts a letter on the wall or board. As the good behavior continues, it is rewarded periodically with another letter, which gets the students excited and motivated to stay focused and positive. These letters spell out a simple reward like “cookies” or “games,” which the students earn with their collective good behavior. This process can be drawn out over several classes, and letters can also be taken away if the disruptive behavior merits.*



### Punch Cards

*Determine six to eight behaviors that you wish to reinforce and reward. List them in the classroom and discuss them with the students. Reward students for these behaviors to reinforce them.*

*To earn rewards, give each child a 3-by-4-inch card. When a student is “caught being good” (doing one of the listed behaviors), punch the edge of his or her card. Students collect punches and use their cards to exchange for things they would like to do. For example, 15 punches might entitle a student to choose a new seat in the classroom, 10 punches might allow a student to wear his/her hat in school one day, and 20 punches might allow a student to select a game to play in class. The reward items are all free. Kids love it when we have a “Punch Exchange.”*

**Cultural note:** *Make sure these positive reinforcements are appropriate in your school.*

—Adapted from Peace Corps/Kiribati, primary school Volunteer teacher

**Reinforce positive student behavior outside of the classroom**

Share the student’s accomplishment with his or her parents. Take advantage of casual interactions, such as when you see parents and students in the community. Or make an effort to discuss positive behavior with parents when they come to school for conferences or programs.

**Why Do Students Misbehave?**

There are several reasons a student may behave inappropriately. Does the reason make a difference? It should if you expect to try to change the behavior.

Stretch your mind a bit by trying to imagine a variety of reasons students might exhibit the behaviors below. Try and come up with at least three explanations for each, including circumstances beyond their control.

**Arrive at school late**

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**Don’t have their books**

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**Speak while others are speaking**

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### Talk to a neighbor when they should be working alone

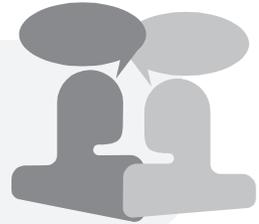
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Add a few of your own—especially behaviors that particularly bother you. Do the same exercise of trying to figure out at least three different explanations for each.

**Compare your reasons with your counterpart or other colleagues.** *Can they suggest additional reasons? Does the reason make a difference as to whether students should be punished or not?*



### Student behavior often reflects cultural norms

#### **Observation activity**

Think about behavior (and inappropriate behavior) in a context broader than just the classroom. Make a point of observing and noting what you see in a variety of locations: in the community in general (on roads, in the market, where people gather); in the family setting; and in informal and formal meetings of adults.

Note what you observe about the following

**What seem to be the behavioral norms** around participating, taking turns, listening to others, being alone or with others, adult/child interactions?

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**What seem to be inappropriate behaviors and how do others respond?**

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**Do you see any patterns?**

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**Do you observe any behaviors that seem acceptable here that would not be in the U.S.?**

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**Conversely, do you observe any behaviors unacceptable here that would be fine in the U.S.?**

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### **Think-Pair-Share Activity**

Discuss your observations with your counterpart or others in your community. You can have some interesting conversations with young people, too.

Some concepts to explore:



#### **Guilt vs. shame**

When you do something inappropriate, do you feel **guilty** because you know better and are responsible for yourself, or do you feel **ashamed** because you have let other people down? These are different orientations and are related to low- and high-context cultures. (See Chapter 2, “Teaching in a Cross-Cultural Context.”)

#### **Isolation**

Were you isolated—“time out” for kids, “grounded” for youth—as consequences for inappropriate behavior? Separating one from friends and family for a period is a disciplinary technique commonly used in some cultures. In others it may be considered cruel as it may damage relationships which are considered of primary importance.

#### **Public humiliation**

Do you recall being disciplined in front of others, or were you more likely told: “See me after class/after dinner”? Public humiliation may be considered damaging for one’s self-esteem or causing loss of face or shaming one’s family.

#### **Choice of consequences/punishments**

Were you ever given a choice, such as “Do you want to miss going to the movies tonight or miss your game on Saturday to write the paper you did not complete on time?” Giving the person a choice of consequences for their inappropriate behavior may be fine in some cultures and unacceptable in others. Offering a choice may be seen as diminishing the authority of the adult.

These are examples of value-related issues that may affect what are considered appropriate disciplinary actions. See what you can discover about these types of issues in your host country.

## Implementing Discipline

Despite your best efforts to engage students in interesting lessons and to provide positive reinforcement of appropriate behavior, some students will misbehave in your classroom and disrupt instruction and learning. What is considered inappropriate behavior and how should you manage it?

The answer to this question depends on: the teacher’s tolerance for certain student behaviors; the instructional situation (e.g., talking is fine during group work, but not during a written test); and the school’s cultural norms.

The table below will help you explore classroom behaviors from your perspective. Read the behavioral descriptions in the first column and use the Volunteer column to check “yes” if you consider the behavior listed to be inappropriate or “?” if you are not sure or it depends on the circumstances. Add other possible misbehaviors.

Is this misbehavior in the classroom?	Volunteer		Host teacher		What might be a useful response?
	Yes	?	Yes	?	
Arriving to class late					
Coming to class without books, supplies					
Coming without homework					
Speaking out loud without raising hand					
Speaking while teacher is speaking					
Speaking while another student is speaking					
Talking with another student when expected to be doing work on own (e.g., math problem, reading silently)					
Looking at someone else’s paper during a test					
Leaving class without permission					
Falling asleep in class					
Not participating					
Not standing when the teacher enters the room					
Text messaging during class					

### **Think-Pair-Share Activity**

*When you have an opportunity, ask a host country teacher to read and rate the same items. Compare your answers.*

- *Where you don't agree, talk to each other about your reasons.*
- *Ask your host teacher to add other items he or she would define as inappropriate. Do you agree? If not, ask about it to find out why the teacher sees it as inappropriate behavior.*
- *See if you can learn about circumstances you might not be aware of or issues that you had not considered. For example, "Why do students arrive late?" or "Why don't they have books?"*
- *Together discuss the final column.*



### **Follow-up Activity**

*It might be informative to have students individually or in small groups fill in a table similar to the one above. You will gain insight as to what they consider appropriate responses from their teachers.*

## **Consequences and/or Punishment**

For the purpose of our discussion, we define punishment and consequence as

### **punishment**

A penalty imposed for wrongdoing

### **consequence**

An act or instance of following something as an effect, result, or outcome

**Consequences** will have their greatest impact when they are immediate, consistent, respectful, and seen by the student as being reasonable. Consequences will be more effective if a

student feels as though he or she has a chance for a fresh start once the consequence has been delivered by the teacher and carried out by the student.

	Student Action	Consequence
<b>Natural/logical consequences</b> bear a direct relationship to the inappropriate behavior. This should be the first choice.	Throwing trash on the floor	Pick up trash or clean the classroom
	Late to class	Stay after school to make up work
	Name calling	Apologize to the person
<b>Unnatural consequences</b> do not logically relate to the behavior, nor do they promote the desired behavior. They may cause emotional or physical pain.	Throwing something at another student	Leave the room
	Talking at the same time the teacher or another student is talking	Slap student
	Not doing homework	Write 100 times, "I will always do my homework."

“Learners who build chairs are not apt to break them. Learners who wash walls are not apt to make them dirty on purpose. If learners are reinforced for keeping their schoolyard neat and clean, they are less likely to throw trash on it.”

—Namibian Ministry of Education

### Behavior Tickets

Every time a student is disruptive, write him or her a "ticket." Consequences? Three tickets might require the student to prepare and give a class presentation on a lesson related to the weekly topic.

—Adapted from Peace Corps/Bulgaria



**Effective consequences for misbehavior**

Consequences should . . .	Rationale	Options or Examples
be gradual, progressing from less severe to more severe as misbehavior is repeated.	This sends the message that students need to understand and follow the expectations. When they repeat the inappropriate behavior, they choose the more severe consequences.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Warning</li> <li>2. Short detention after class or school</li> <li>3. Written plan for improvement</li> <li>4. Guardian contact</li> <li>5. Severe case: Send to principal/ headmaster</li> </ol>
maintain the dignity of the students.	Consequences should be consistent from student to student, and delivery of consequences should always address the particular behavior in question, not the student and his or her behavioral history.	If three students interrupt the teacher during a class period, they all receive a warning.

—Adapted from Peace Corps/Tanzania

**Discipline ideas**

***Competent teachers use a variety of discipline tools.***

Because students have different learning styles and learn at different paces, most teachers realize they need to teach the same material using several methods to ensure learning. It is the same with discipline—one approach does not work for all students or in all situations. The solution is to have a variety of discipline tools from which to choose. Below is a list of promising ideas. See if some of these can be adapted to work for you. There is also a consequences worksheet sample at the end of this chapter.

**Discipline Ideas That Usually Work**

*Put on your business face, stand still for at least 10 seconds (unless there is eminent danger of physical harm to the student or others) and look at the misbehaving student. This gives time for you to think and to get the student's attention. Then speak softly and slowly.*

*Check in to make certain the student knows the behavior you are displeased with. "What are you doing?" If the student says "Nothing," or starts blaming someone else, ask a follow-up question, "What are you supposed to be doing?"*

*Ask "what" not "why." Reserve "why" questions for when you and the student have a lot of time to explore the issue.*

*When a student protests about the consequences of breaking a rule, reply, "You chose to break the rule."*

*To prevent escalation when a student is angry or disrespectful, reply with a neutral comment, "That is your choice" or "I'll remember that."*

*Cut off the student if he/she continues behavior or argues. "Discussion time is over" or, "We can talk about this (name time and place), but right now, (tell student exactly what they are to do)".*

*Use "I" messages. "When you \_\_\_\_\_, I feel disrespected."*

*—Adapted from Peace Corps/Bulgaria, Classroom Management Manual*

**A Primary School Idea**

**The 1-2-3 discipline plan**

Give a one-finger warning, two-finger warning, then a three-finger warning. After three, the student receives an appropriate consequence/punishment.



To provide a visual for this technique and to help students take more responsibility, make a cardboard cutout of a large stoplight and clothespins with student names written on them. When a student receives a “one” warning he clips his clothespin on the green light, a “two” on the yellow light, and a “three” on the red light and moves to the time-out spot. When he has finished his punishment, he removes the clothespin and returns to his regular seat.

“Many times all that is required in order to nip undesirable behavior in the bud is a simple word or action. A stern look (I call this my ‘teacher face’), a word directed at a particular student, group, or the whole class, or even a soft touch on the shoulder will tell students that you do indeed notice what they are doing.”

—Peace Corps/Jordan

**Volunteer-Counterpart Activity**

**How do I handle...?**

Read the discipline situations and write your suggested actions. Discuss with your counterpart which actions might work best given the school’s physical facilities, age of students, teacher’s personality, local culture, and remembering to treat students with respect. If the sample situations aren’t problems for you, write some examples of student behaviors that you struggle with and do the same exercise.



Discipline situation or critical incident	Counterpart's suggested actions	Volunteer teacher's suggested actions
<p>Two students are sitting together and exchanging notes during the lesson. They do not distract the attention of other students, but at the same time they are not listening to the teacher.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>—Peace Corps/Ukraine</i></p>		
<p>While you are writing at the board, a student throws a piece of chalk at you and hits you on the head. From the corner of your eye you saw who it was. When you turn around, it is obvious to you that all the other students saw what happened and know who did it.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>—Peace Corps/The Gambia</i></p>		
<p>Several students are not writing in their copybooks like you asked.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>—Peace Corps/Mauritania</i></p>		
<p>Add a situation from your school.</p>		

—Adapted from Peace Corps/Mauritania

### Considerations for different types of punishments

The charts on the following pages contains typical school punishments from different cultures. Some may not be used where you are teaching for important cultural reasons. And you may find some of these acceptable in your school, although they are things you cannot or would not want to do. Read the first two punishments, why teachers may use them, and why they are unnatural or ineffective. Add some of your own observations. Then, continue with the rest of the chart, filling in the information on uses and effectiveness. You may see some of these used and not understand the rationale. Talk with colleagues to understand their perspectives.

—Adapted from Peace Corps/Tanzania

Punishments	Considerations
Expel student from class	Why teachers may have used this a. Ends disturbance in class b. c.
	Why it is unnatural and may be ineffective a. Student could actually want this b. Student misses lesson c.
Stand in a corner/ time-out	Why teachers may have used this a. Embarrasses student b. c.
	Why it is unnatural and may be ineffective a. Student misses lesson b. May be culturally unacceptable to isolate students c.
Writing lines (copying lines over and over)	Why teachers may have used this a. b. c.
	Why it is unnatural and may be ineffective a. b. c.
No entry—bar student from coming to class	Why teachers may have used this a. b. c.
	Why it is unnatural and may be ineffective a. b. c.

Punishments	Considerations
Detention after school	Why teachers may have used this a. b. c.
	Why it is unnatural and may be ineffective a. b. c.
Manual labor	Why teachers may have used this a. b. c.
	Why it is unnatural and may be ineffective a. b. c.
Physical punishments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• raise hands over head</li> <li>• kneel</li> <li>• stand at attention</li> <li>• push-ups</li> <li>• run laps</li> <li>• caning or beating</li> </ul>	Why teachers may have used this a. b. c.
	Why it is unnatural and may be ineffective a. b. c.
Academic punishments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• prevent from taking test</li> <li>• lower grade</li> <li>• extra schoolwork/ homework</li> <li>• write essay on how behavior affects school</li> </ul>	Why teachers may have used this a. b. c.
	Why it is unnatural and may be ineffective a. b. c.
Other	

## Corporal Punishment

*Corporal punishment is a discipline approach currently unacceptable to most Americans and is noted as Volunteer teachers' most problematic discipline issue.* Unfortunately, there is no quick and easy solution to this complicated issue but there are actions Volunteers can take that may help eradicate corporal punishment over time.

Remember: Anger is one letter away from danger!

—Peace Corps/Malawi

Volunteers are not the only ones troubled by corporal punishment. Hundreds of studies have identified the negative effects of corporal punishment. The United Nations has clearly expressed its view in *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child*. Governments and ministries of education in numerous nations have launched programs to reduce or eliminate corporal punishment. Yet the widespread practice of corporal punishment continues; the voices of those most affected (students) are not being heard.

### **Tanzanian Children Report How They Feel About Corporal Punishment**

- *Children reported hating to be hit, resented the teachers who did it, and loathed being punished for something they had not done or for something over which they had no control. When they received corporal punishment, children reported losing trust and respect for their teachers and feeling bitter toward them.*
- *Children complained that they were often not given a chance to explain themselves—adults often hit them before listening to them.*
- *While children agreed that they should be reprimanded for misbehaving, they strongly felt that they should be given a warning and explanation first.*
- *Children feared schools and their teachers. Often the fear was so great that they felt unable to concentrate on their studies.*
- *Children felt they had little recourse when punished unfairly.*
- *Beatings in school made some children want to avoid school.*
- *Some girls reported being sexually harassed or forced to have sex with teachers under threat of corporal punishment.*

—From Peace Corps/Tanzania

Although the negative effects of corporal punishment are numerous and well documented, the practice continues because it is considered traditional, it often has parental support, and teachers may lack effective alternative discipline skills.

“Isn’t it the problem (behavior) we need to attack? Not the child!”

*Namibian Ministry of Education and Culture*

### Negative effects of corporal punishment

- Provides a model of solving problems through violence
- Dissolves the relationship between teacher and student
- Affects a child’s physical, mental and emotional well-being
- Damages a student’s self-esteem
- Causes student to feel shame and humiliation
- Causes students injuries
- Encourages passive learning and discourages involvement
- Creates feelings of fear and hatred toward the teacher and learning

—Adapted from Peace Corps/Tanzania

### **What can Volunteers do to reduce corporal punishment incidents?**

The corporal punishment situation is different in each country, so consult Peace Corps staff about this sensitive issue. They can advise you concerning corporal punishment laws, cultural norms, and organizations that are working in-country to address this problem. The country director and Peace Corps staff may also be able to share techniques other Volunteers have found to be effective and/or a set of guidelines for responding to corporal punishment incidents.

If corporal punishment guidelines do not currently exist, Peace Corps staff, host country partners, and Volunteer teachers may want to consider formulating a set of guidelines to inform trainees/Volunteers of appropriate actions.

“**Caning of children is a fact of life in Ugandan families and schools.** It is not something that most Americans condone or agree with. To encourage behavior change, you must show how the teachers and/or head teachers will personally benefit from alternate discipline measures, in addition to showing them how to use them. It will not be enough to say ‘it is wrong.’”

—Peace Corps/Uganda

Generally, the strategy Volunteer teachers have found to be most beneficial in addressing the issue of corporal punishment is to build local teachers’ and administrators’ capacity to use other discipline approaches. This capacity building can be achieved through one-on-one discussions with educators, modeling alternative effective discipline approaches in the classroom, mini-workshops, and working with the community to change attitudes.



**Guidelines for Volunteer Teachers Regarding Corporal Punishment****Three things you can discuss**

- *Your own reactions to corporal punishment and what you hope to do instead.*
- *Alternatives with your counterpart teacher and others who are receptive.*
- *The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.*

**Four things you can do**

- *Set a positive role model in the school by illustrating alternative discipline procedures.*
- *Work with head teachers on how they set the tone for discipline, respect, and educational standards for their school.*
- *Request and conduct refresher courses on alternatives to corporal punishment in all of your schools. You must be prepared to provide alternatives which will be effective in Ugandan schools. Recognize that many alternatives used in the U.S. will require additional work for teachers; therefore they may not accept them.*
- *Invite host country national professionals, such as psychologists, lawyers, and human rights advocates, to facilitate a workshop on this sensitive subject.*

**Two things you should not do**

- *Do not be condescending to the teachers/head teachers regarding corporal punishment. It has been a part of their norms and culture for many generations. Change will be slow and take time. Spanking (or paddling) was a common practice in American schools until the 1950s and 1960s. We now feel it is wrong. Many Ugandan teachers truly believe that it is the only way to maintain discipline.*
- *Do not threaten the teacher and/or head teacher with reporting them to the ministry or local officials. If you want them to change their behavior, you need to convert them to another form of discipline. Threats create enemies and accomplish little.*

—Adapted from Peace Corps/Uganda

The corporal punishment ideas presented here are intended to create awareness of possibilities and suggest a few options. *Volunteer teachers will individually have to make decisions on how to deal with each incidence of corporal punishment, taking into account their personal values, cultural norms at the school where they teach, and the quality of their professional relationships with host country teachers and administrators.*

### **Thoughts on Corporal Punishment**

- *Find out why corporal punishment is prevalent in Nepal (social and cultural factors).*
- *Talk to someone about it—a Volunteer, program officer, medical officer, host teacher, or host family.*
- *Share with the school staff how you feel when you see corporal punishment in action.*
- *Have a direct talk with the head sir/miss later. Share your concerns professionally in one-on-one situations. Suggest alternatives.*
- *Work toward creating schoolwide rules with the entire staff, and then implement the policy in every classroom.*
- *Conduct a training to demonstrate alternatives with host country national experts.*
- *Don't set your students up for failure. Let them feel successful as much as possible.*
- *Find an ally to work with—your counterpart, another teacher, a local nongovernmental organization, a parent, a school management committee member, an elder in the community, etc.*
- *Work with local nongovernmental organizations if they can help.*

—Adapted from Peace Corps/Nepal

### **Activity to Promote a Noncorporal Punishment Alternative Discipline Strategy**

*You will need credibility and a good professional relationship with your school administrator to do this activity. It may be more appropriate for your second year of service.*



*Convince your principal, director, headmaster, headmistress, or head teacher to try the following for one month: offer the student a choice. The student can take his or her customary “licks” or develop an action plan that specifically says how he/she will stay out of trouble.*

*Check back with them in a month. What happened?*

*Note: Experience has shown that when given the option, most students chose corporal punishment over planning. From the students’ point of view, “licks” were easier than real change through thought. Instructional consequences can be “tough” discipline!*

Peace Corps/Kiribati worked with UNICEF to publish a booklet, *Don’t Hit & Don’t Shout*, in the I-Kiribati language. Volunteers gave copies to parents and teachers in their host communities. The English language version of the booklet is included in the appendix.

#### **Establish a Student Welfare Committee**

A student welfare committee deals with issues such as conflict resolution, the rights and welfare of students, and the expectations of teachers. Each school should establish a committee.

—Peace Corps/The Gambia

**Appreciate that people in all societies love their children and want the best for them.** Be realistic—cultural norms change slowly. Model effective noncorporal punishment discipline approaches so teachers and school administrators can observe valid alternatives. Find individuals at your school or in your community who are interested in improving students’ education and work cooperatively with them—these are the people who will create sustainable change.



**Use poetry to introduce new ideas to a community or in your classroom.**

***“A Child Learns What He Lives”***

*If a child lives with criticism*

*He learns to condemn*

*If a child lives with hostility*

*He learns to fight*

*If a child lives with ridicule*

*He learns to be shy*

*If a child lives with shame*

*He learns to feel guilty*

*If a child lives with tolerance*

*He learns to be patient*

*If a child lives with encouragement*

*He learns to try his best*

*If a child lives with praise*

*He learns to appreciate*

*If a child lives with fairness*

*He learns justice*

*If a child lives with security*

*He learns to have faith*

*If a child lives with approval*

*He learns to like himself*

*If a child lives with acceptance and friendship*

*He learns to find love in the world.*

—Dorothy Law Nolte

Poem used by Peace Corps/Bulgaria in *Classroom Management Manual* and Peace Corps/The Gambia in *A Guide for Teachers in The Gambia*, 2001.

*A Volunteer in Guyana used poetry with her class of students to capture their interest in learning, to promote self-esteem, and to improve classroom behavior. The class worked on the same poem for a short period of time several times a week, learning the meaning of the verses, what the difficult words meant, and how the message of the poem related to them.*

*Here is an example of a poem used.*

***I Can Make a Difference***

*I can make a difference*

*Little steps at a time*

*Kindness here; smiles there*

*Joviality everywhere*

*Exemplify good nature*

*Fueled by sincerity*

*Harmony promoted*

*Bright moments created*

*Exuberance contagious*

*A ball of chain reaction*

*Goodwill spreads*

*The world a better place*

*I can make a difference*

*By developing potentials*

*Productive, fulfilled, joyful*

*One more able to shoulder the weight*

*I am but a tiny seed*

*Within a multitude*

*But like a purple heart*

*I can make a difference*

## Examples and Tools

### Sample Consequences Worksheet

This worksheet can be done at school or as homework. Unless it is used in an English class, it will need to be translated into the local language. Modify the worksheet to fit your classroom situation. It is appropriate for middle or secondary students.

### *Student Reflections on Inappropriate Behavior*

Please think carefully about your answers. An administrator and/or your parents could read them in the near future.

1. Why are you in trouble? What did you do?

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2. What will you do differently next time?

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3. What help do you need to stay out of trouble?

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## CHAPTER 5

### Assessment, Grading, and Cheating

#### **What Do You Think?**

*Before reading this chapter, think back to your own experience of being “graded” and other forms of assessment.*



1. Did you ever have classes where there was just one test at the end that counted for everything? If yes, how did that system work for you in terms of learning?
2. What other types of test-taking schedules did you experience? How did each help or hinder you in learning the subject?
3. In addition to tests, you probably experienced other types of assessment: homework, projects, oral reports, papers, quizzes, and so on. List the different types of assessments you have experienced and note how each helped or hindered your learning in that class.
4. Were you ever graded on group projects? If so, how did you like the group learning and grading process? Why?
5. In your educational experience, did you ever have to pass a particular test to move to a new level of education or into a type of program you wanted to pursue? If so, how did the need to do well on that test affect how you viewed what you learned in classes and what and how you studied on your own?
6. What has been your experience with cheating: Has cheating always been defined the same? What is cheating? What have been the consequences of cheating in various circumstances? Do you think there are circumstances when cheating is justified? Why or why not?

**Key Ideas in This Chapter**

1. *Ongoing assessment of learning provides students and teachers valuable feedback during the learning process.*
2. *Grades are intended to measure academic accomplishment; therefore, teachers have an obligation to grade as fairly as possible.*
3. *Cheating behaviors are better addressed through understanding and prevention, rather than punishment.*
4. *Cultural norms and traditions shape fair grading practices and attitudes about cheating.*



Assessment and grading are essential tasks for all educators, including Peace Corps Volunteers. Whether you share assessment and grading tasks with a team teacher or have sole responsibility, you are likely to encounter cultural differences that are challenging. Throughout this chapter, Volunteers offer ideas for resolving assessment, grading, and cheating concerns and share time-saving tips.

As a rule of thumb, make daily learning objectives clear and use a variety of assessment tools to ensure that all students have an opportunity to demonstrate mastery of the material. Students will learn more and produce better results and teachers will have an easier time managing the daily life of the classroom.

Try to observe other classes and watch how teachers and students behave. Ask local teachers for their best grading tips, how they assess students, and their cheating prevention techniques. Invite other teachers into your class and request their feedback. Select and adapt ideas to fit your teaching situation and host culture based on your reading, interviews, and observations.

Remember, when planning and implementing your assessment and grading procedures, one size does not fit all. What is natural for teachers and students in one context may appear confusing or unfair to others.

## Discover Your School's Assessment Culture

Schools often have a unique assessment and grading culture based on ministry of education requirements, tradition, as well as the educational philosophies of administrators and teachers. As a new teacher, your assessment and grading policies need to reflect the culture of your host school. A valuable first step is discovering how the grading culture affects student assessment practices.



Review the following questions and select questions to ask a few administrators, teachers, students, and parents. Add additional questions you think are relevant.

- How are students assessed?
- How frequently is student learning evaluated: daily, with a few tests, or with an end-of-the-term examination, etc.?
- Are points awarded for class participation, group work, homework, etc.?
- Does attendance count in assessment and determining grades?
- Are points deducted for late work? If so, how many? Are students allowed to make up missed work?
- Are opportunities provided for extra credit?
- Are students allowed to “toss out” a low test, quiz, or assignment? Are students allowed to retake exams if they do poorly?
- How and when are grades communicated to students, parents, and administrators?
- What percentage of students is usually promoted to a higher class?
- Are there any current assessment and grading policies you would like to see changed?

After completing this activity, work with your counterpart(s) to develop an assessment and grading plan. Review it with your supervisor. Once you have a policy for your class, post it and provide students copies of the policy, or have students write the policy in their notebooks. Make sure the assessment and grading policies and practices are clear to your students, as well as to other teachers, parents, and school administrators.

## Formative Assessment

Formative assessment is the process of collecting information about students' performance for the purpose of making instructional decisions. Timely assessment helps students and teachers identify where students excel and where they need additional help. Quizzes, tests, and assignments provide assessment information, as does informal teacher observation.

Ongoing assessment identifies small learning gaps before they grow into large ones.

Successful assessment begins with learning objectives that clearly describe what students are expected to learn. Once these learning objectives are established, you can decide how to assess student performance.

Effective teachers build formative assessment into their lesson plans. Ongoing, classroom-based assessment helps teachers identify how well students are learning and then make instructional adjustments. Experienced teachers use a variety of



assessment practices throughout a term so students have multiple opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge and skills and teachers have multiple opportunities to help students who may need extra help.

After all, a teacher's main objective is to teach the prescribed learning objectives as effectively as possible to all students. If a teacher is assessing student progress on an ongoing basis with a variety of strategies, students will do better

on whatever nationally prescribed tests are required, and teachers will know with a greater degree of confidence whether or not the course's goals and objectives have been met.

Keep in mind that assessment that leads to a grade may motivate students positively or negatively. Grades seen as unfair can damage student-teacher relationships. The anxiety surrounding

examination grades may cause students to cheat, and there are many reasons students engage in behavior that we might consider cheating. By assessing student learning on an ongoing basis, you and your students will be more confident about the level of mastery of the material and it may deter cheating. Strategies to avoid cheating will also be discussed later in this chapter. By setting clear goals and expectations and assessing progress along the way, you and your students will have a better idea of what your students have really learned if cheating is unavoidable, for whatever reason.

Teachers who assess continuously rather than periodically reduce the risk of students dropping behind, not having the knowledge or skills to tackle new material, becoming discipline problems, or resorting to cheating.

*In Kiribati, Volunteer teachers are encouraged to include the assessment techniques they will use to measure learning objective attainment in their lesson plans. Assessment techniques can be as straightforward as asking the class one or two questions at the end of the period or spot-checking a couple of math problems.*

### **Assessment tools and strategies**

There are many ways to gauge student progress quickly. The following assessment ideas can be adapted to fit a variety of age groups and subjects.

Assessment tools can be used for

- pre-assessment (gather baseline data);
- monitoring progress (formative assessment); or
- post-assessment (evaluation).

Tools to assess and measure learning (or gather evidence)

- Tests (national, local, teacher made)
- Quizzes
- Worksheets
- Performances (skits, role plays, etc.)

- Projects and presentations (including models and experiments)
- Portfolios with sample work and checklists
- Journal entries, writing samples, reports
- Interviews (which can also be taped as pre/post documentation of language or reading proficiency)

### ***Strategies to find out if students feel as if they understand the content***

#### **Which face am I?**

Hang three posters in the classroom: one with a smiling face, one with a neutral face, one with a frowning face. Give each student a sticky note to stick on the poster that best represents his or her present understanding of the material.

#### **Classroom opinion polls**

Have students line up in the classroom to indicate their present understanding of a topic from “confident” to “needing more time” to “understand.” Variations might include

- designating the room’s corners to represent different levels of understanding.
- using physical signals, if culturally appropriate. For example, ask students to use their thumbs to indicate their level of confidence in their mastery of the material. Thumbs up means confidence is high; thumbs sideways means confidence is so-so; thumbs down means they feel they need more time to understand. (Adapt as necessary with appropriate hand signals, or simply use a show of hands for each category.)

#### **Minute paper**

Several minutes before the end of class, stop and ask students to write a “minute paper.”<sup>1</sup> Provide variations of the two questions below for students to address in a couple of minutes. Ask students to hand in their minute papers before leaving.

- “What is the most important thing you learned in class today?”
- “What questions do you have about the material we covered today?”

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<sup>1</sup> Angelo, T.A., and K.P. Cross. *Classroom assessment techniques: A handbook for college teachers*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1993.

You can also do this orally. Taking a few minutes to hear how students respond orally to similar questions can be just as effective as writing minute papers. This might be a better strategy for younger students or for students with lower writing proficiency.

As you review completed minute papers, compare students' answers to the question "What is the most important thing you learned in class today?" against what you think is the most important idea of the class. If the students' answers match yours, you have delivered the curriculum with appropriate balance. If a number of students mention ideas that you consider relatively trivial, you have a clue that you may not be getting your main points across effectively.



Next, look at students' responses to "What questions do you have about the material we covered today?" If students' responses are all over the map, you might conclude that your class had no major sticking point. But if a number of students raise questions about a particular point, you know that you may need to modify your instruction to make that idea more understandable.

### **Muddiest point**

At the end of a class or a lecture, ask students to write for one or two minutes about the "muddiest point" of the lesson (the part of the lesson that is still not understood clearly).<sup>2</sup> Collect papers before students leave, and use the feedback to adjust your teaching, if necessary.

### **One sentence summary**

Ask students to summarize what they learned in one sentence.

### **Bell work**

Use a bell work question or problem to estimate students' understanding of yesterday's lesson.

2 Mosteller, Dr. Frederick. "The Muddiest Point in the Lecture." *The Journal of the Harvard-Danford Center*, Vol. 3, April 1989, Pages 10-21.

**Assessment strategies to find out if students have learned the content**

**Classroom games**

Jeopardy, BINGO, or relays where students have to run to get the right answer, are a few examples. Volunteers who teach English as a foreign language might also check out *Grammar Games* [ICE No. ED102], which has some classic games that could be adapted for other content subjects, too.

**Skits and performances**

Invite groups of students to make up and perform a skit depicting an historical event, environmental concern, parent/youth discussion, etc., to show their knowledge about the topic or life skill.

**Journals**

Teachers can determine if students are grasping key points correctly by reading brief summaries of lessons or other things students write in their journals. Reflecting on what they have learned and writing it in their journal encourages students to develop synthesis and metacognitive skills.

Journals can be very time-consuming to read and evaluate. If you do not have time to read and comment on every journal entry, ask students to put a mark (such as a star or a sticky note) on one or two entries they would like you to read and evaluate. Comment on those; skim others if you have time.

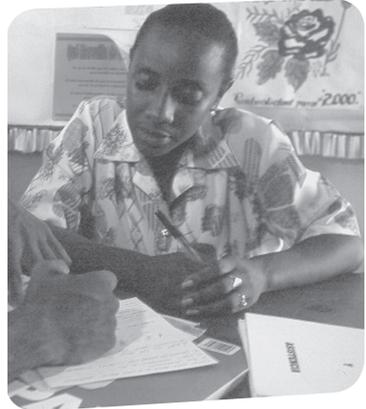
**K-W-L Chart**

Ask students to divide a piece of paper into three columns. Title the first column “what I know,” the second column “what I want to know” and the third column “what I learned.”

<b>K</b> What I KNOW	<b>W</b> What I WANT to Know	<b>L</b> What I LEARNED

Figure from Ogle, D.M. (1986). “K-W-L: A teaching model that develops active reading of expository text.” *The Reading Teacher*, 39, 564.570. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1598/RT.39.6.1>. Copyright © International Reading Association. All rights reserved.

Before you start the lesson, activate students' prior knowledge and ask them to fill in the "K" column and write all they KNOW about the topic you are about to teach. Give them a few more minutes to set learning goals (either collaboratively or individually) and write in the "W" column what they WANT to know about this subject. Collect the K-W-L charts and go on with your lesson. After the lesson (or the unit), return the papers and ask students to write in the "L" column about what they have LEARNED about the subject. After a few minutes of writing, have students share what they have written. As students share, invite the class to add to their own third column. Give students a few minutes to think about the subject and add to their "W" column by writing what else they would like to know. This could be collected and used to develop further lessons on the topic or students could be encouraged to do some independent research. You could also ask students to look back at what they have written in the first column and clear up misconceptions or misinformation that they had before the lesson.



An additional resource is *Tools for Teaching Content Literacy* [ICE No. ED226].

For more ideas on grading and assessment, read Chapter 11 of *Teaching English as a Foreign Language to Large Multilevel Classes* [ICE No. M0046].

### **Using feedback from ongoing assessment**

A clear benefit to assessing student progress along the way is to be able to catch students who have not mastered material before moving on to new material. Once learning gaps are identified, you can modify new lessons or perhaps use some of these ideas to fill in those gaps.

- Pair students who have mastered the material with students who need additional help and offer some peer-teaching time in class or after class.

- If team teaching, have one teacher take aside a group of students who need additional time on a subject and work with those students.
- Consider re-teaching a topic using a different instruction method.
- Arrange more practice by preparing an additional homework assignment or an additional brief review in class.

## Grading

Unfortunately, or perhaps fortunately, there are no hard-and-fast rules about the best way to grade. Grading is an evaluation process—judgments are made about the value of a student’s work and points or grades are assigned.

Grades are used to

- inform the teacher about what students have or have not learned.
- stimulate and encourage good work by students.
- improve students’ capacity to reflect and evaluate their learning.
- select individuals for continued education or recognition.

For some students, grades are also a sign of approval or disapproval—students take them very personally. Because grades affect students’ lives, teachers have a responsibility to develop and communicate a clear, rational grading policy—a policy that students, parents, and school administrators consider fair.

When assigning grades, apply the mantra:  
*Be clear! Be fair! Be consistent!*

A clear, fair, culturally appropriate evaluation policy makes grading easier. And, if you grade carefully and consistently, you can reduce the number of students and parents who ask you to defend a grade. Use the activity completed at the beginning of this chapter to identify culturally appropriate grading practices at your host school.

### **How Do I Handle Grading?**

*Grading can often be a source of stress at school, especially at the end of a semester or term. Students who did not do so well in the beginning of the term suddenly feel pressure from their parents or classmates. They may feel pressure to make up for lost time.*

**The following tips will help you avoid discrepancies in grading:**

**Know the rules.** *Generally, American teachers use more assessments and provide more grades per term than host teachers. Be aware of this as you grade your students, and make sure you understand the grading terms set by the Ministry of Education. Negotiate with your teaching partner(s) how you will assess and grade students.*

**Make your grading criteria clear.** *When you give an assignment, let students know what is expected before beginning the assignment. Tell students what you are looking for in an assignment before they begin working and make sure they understand your expectations and how it will be graded.*

**Explain your grading system.** *Whether you grade on a point system or with a rubric, be sure your students know how your system works from the very beginning of the term. If you explain to them how you calculate their grades, it may help promote self-discipline in terms of staying on top of their grades. In some countries, the students keep a journal or special book to keep track of their grades.*

**Post your grading policy.** *Your grading policy should be posted and available for students, parents, and administrators.*

**Have parents sign tests.** *After you have returned an assignment or test with the grade written on it, have your students get their parents' signature and return it to you. Keep the assignment and test on record in the event of any future dispute about the grade. (Tip: Find out if this would be culturally acceptable in your school.)*

—Adapted from Peace Corps/Bulgaria

## Student-friendly grading practices

- Offer alternative assignments to demonstrate the understanding of a concept or mastery of a skill. Student portfolios are one way to implement this idea.
- Assure consistency by using a scoring guide or rubric.
- Familiarize yourself with the question format of national examinations. Use similar formats with classroom assessments to help students gain proficiency in taking the exams.
- Ask your counterpart or another teacher to review some papers you have scored or graded to determine if your scoring/grading is consistent with the norms in your school.
- Highlight what a student did well in addition to items that were wrong or need improvement.

Rubrics help remove some of the subjectivity of grading. A well-developed rubric helps the teacher and student see areas of strength and weakness and allows students to focus on areas that need improvement. Rubrics help teachers monitor individual and class progress on learning objectives so teachers can adjust instruction accordingly. (See samples at end of chapter.)

- Retest on the same material a week or so later, after providing additional assistance, when most of the class does poorly on a test.
- If students complain, have them write out the specifics of their complaint or justification for a grade change before you begin discussing a complaint.





**Cultural note:** Final grades are not always a teacher's prerogative. In some countries where Volunteers teach, final grades are based on national examinations which favor students with good reading and test-taking skills. National exams may be given in a country's second official language—so proficiency in the test language sometimes becomes more important than knowledge of the subject.

Students may be beaten by parents if they do not achieve an expected grade.

Because resources are limited, only a few students may be allowed to pass national examinations, even though others have the skills and ability to succeed at the next level of education.

Gender inequity may affect grades. In certain societies, girls are at a disadvantage when they miss school or have little study time due to heavy household responsibilities or when a family feels a son's education is more important than a daughter's. In other societies (South Pacific societies are examples), boys' grades tend to be lower than girls' because families grant boys more freedom. Absenteeism and lack of attention to homework are reflected in lower grades and reduce the boys' opportunities for higher education.

In many countries where Volunteers serve, grades play a big role in denying or permitting students' access to the next level of education. The pressure to succeed can cause great anxiety among teachers, students, parents, and administrators. This may lead to cheating on the students' part, or bending and/or manipulating rules and policies by teachers, administrators, and parents.

Volunteers often cringe when students' grades are publicly announced, from highest to lowest in the class, at end-of-school assemblies or published in the paper. This practice may be a longstanding tradition in the community.

Some Volunteers have reported that teachers accept payment for higher grades or that grades are given based on the standing of a student's family in the community.

Culturally based grading practices viewed as unfair may cause Volunteers a considerable amount of stress. Railing about these inequities rarely results in change. A better approach is to model more effective assessment practices and to keep reminding yourself: “A mountain is climbed one step at a time.”

### **Time-saving grading tips**

- Have students exchange papers and score or correct each other’s quizzes and homework as you review them. This practice also reinforces correct answers.
- Establish and teach a standard procedure for the placement of names and dates on student papers. Assign each student a number that corresponds to his or her name in your grade book, and have students place their numbers, as well as their names, on all papers. This facilitates sorting and recording and enables classroom assistants to do these tasks with greater accuracy.
- Lay five or so papers side by side and grade all of one question or problem before moving to the next. This technique saves time and increases grading consistency.

### **Cheating**

Most Volunteers will have to deal with cheating within their classrooms and will find that the issue has cultural implications that may be new and foreign to them. However, it is a student behavior that is better addressed through understanding and prevention, rather than punishment.

How does cheating affect individual and group learning?

- Students do not remember as well when they copy from others as when they do their own work.
- Students are aware when cheating is allowed to occur—the teacher’s credibility is diminished, honest students are disadvantaged, and they may feel compelled to cheat just to keep up.
- Unchecked cheating can become an individual and/or group habit that erodes students’ motivation to learn.



**Cultural note:** Motivation for behaviors perceived as cheating probably differ in individualistic and cooperative cultures. Also, cultural norms play a major role in determining what behaviors are labeled “cheating.”

In a discussion with students, David Callahan, author of “The Cheating Culture: Why More Americans Are Doing Wrong to Get Ahead,” identified three forces driving widespread cheating in the individualistic U.S. culture:

1. a focus on money and winning;
2. fear and insecurity (employment is less secure; students are afraid they cannot get into or pay for good schools); and
3. sleeping watchdogs (those who should enforce a level playing field in society are not doing their jobs).<sup>3</sup>

**Loss of face and cooperative values** are two of the forces that drive cheating in other societies. For example, in many countries students must excel on national tests in order to get into good schools and universities. In other countries, education is the one area where individuals can excel above others.

First try to understand WHY students cheat, WHAT is considered cheating, and HOW cheating takes place before planning how you will prevent cheating in your classroom.

**Brainstorm with your teaching counterparts about what is considered cheating in your own respective cultures and why students cheat.**



<sup>3</sup> Callahan, David. “On Campus: Author Discusses the Cheating Culture with College Students.” *Plagiary*, Vol. 1, No. 4, 2006, Pages 4-5.

Through your discussion with your counterparts, you are likely to find that students “cheat” for several reasons, although the behavior might not be considered cheating in the same way that we think of it in the United States.

**Understanding Cheating**

*Conduct this activity in your classroom at the beginning of the term to help you and your students develop a better understanding of the concept of cheating. Note: Consider having your teacher counterpart conduct this activity if it is culturally more appropriate or if language barriers make discussion difficult.*

**Instructions:** Give small groups time to discuss the three questions below. Ask each small group to present its list to the whole group.

*Discuss the lists’ similarities and differences and what might be done to reduce or eliminate the reasons for cheating.*

<b>What actions are considered cheating?</b>	<b>What are the top five reasons students cheat?</b>	<b>How does cheating affect student learning?</b>
1.	1.	1.
2.	2.	2.
.....	.....	.....

From your discussion with counterparts and students you may discover that:

- In highly collaborative cultures students are expected to help one another. They want to support their friends or siblings to succeed (which is often focused on test scores/grades rather than focused on the learning process).
- Students often take entrance exams to be in a “good school” and those who get in to the good schools are considered especially smart and clever within their communities. Teachers,

administrators, parents, and other students expect them to always get good grades. If one of these students is struggling, others may feel obliged to help them. In such a case, changing grades or promoting a student is not considered cheating.

- In many countries students are placed in classes geared toward one academic profile, such as mathematics, science, social studies, humanities, etc. These students typically will do well within their profile, but they may struggle in other subjects. For example, a gifted physics student may perform poorly on English exams. These students feel compelled to get high grades in all subjects so they can continue to higher levels, so teachers, students, and parents might go to great lengths to make sure the science whiz also gets top grades in English, even if his/her work is not strong in that area.

Keep in mind that in the end, cheaters only cheat themselves, and as difficult as it might be, in some cases it may simply be easiest to 'let it go.'

—Peace Corps/Bulgaria Volunteer

Be slow to make judgments. Remember, school administrators, teachers, and students in other cultures do things in certain ways because it works for them. Your methods may be better for you, but maybe not for them. By all means, share your ideas, but don't be surprised if they are not enthusiastically received.



**Counterpart-Volunteer Teacher Activity**

Along with your counterpart(s), read the following critical incidents from *Peace Corps/Ukraine* and *Peace Corps/Mauritania*. Write down what you would do, and discuss your answers together. Try to agree on teacher actions that support student learning and are culturally appropriate.




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*You teach more than one section of the same class. After you have given a few quizzes, you begin to notice that the students in the class at the end of the day consistently perform better than the students in the earlier class. You realize that students who have taken your quiz are revealing the quiz questions to students who have not yet taken it. (What do you do?)*

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*During the class you noticed that the student answering your question was actually reading the whole answer from an open notebook on her neighbor's desk. (What will you do?)*

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*It is the beginning of the school year and you are administering your first quiz. You notice that many of the students are cheating by looking at each other's papers. The class consists of 50 students sitting very close to each other on benches. There is neither space nor extra benches to separate students. (What will you do?)*

---

*You collect a homework assignment and notice that nearly every one is identical, down to the incorrect answers. You realize that many students have copied their homework from one student. (What do you do?)*

**Ideas to prevent cheating**

Volunteer teachers in many countries have faced the problem of cheating and have developed numerous creative cheating-prevention tactics and some suggested consequences. Adapt the ideas you feel comfortable with and that have merit in the cultural context of your host country.

***Before you administer your first exam***

- Make sure that your test accurately represents what you have taught and that it isn't too difficult. Utilize spot-check assessment strategies prior to big exams to make sure your students are prepared.
- Discuss policies concerning cheating with your director and/or other teachers in your school before implementing innovative ideas.
- Define and, if necessary, demonstrate what cheating is before the first quiz or examination. Discuss what you consider cheating, what is unacceptable, and what you expect from your students. Be sure the consequences for cheating are clear.
- Discuss personal responsibility and accountability as important life skills.
- Provide a grading rubric so students will know the factors on which they will be evaluated.
- Post rules about cheating and review them briefly before each test.
- Establish your exam-taking policies prior to exam time. For example, if you will not allow visits to the restroom during the exam, let your students know in advance.



### ***Make adjustments as you go***

- Give a “practice” test to assess the cheating situation. Modify future tests accordingly.
- Give questions that require short answers rather than fill-in-the-blank or multiple-choice tests so it isn’t easy to copy.
- Ask students to keep their exam papers covered with a piece of extra paper to keep neighbors from easily seeing their exam papers.
- Make multiple versions of the test.
- Use positive reinforcement (or incentives) to encourage students not to cheat (e.g., if no one is caught cheating during a test, the class will get to see a movie/DVD the next afternoon).

### ***Evaluate creatively***

- Use alternatives to tests. A review game is often as effective as a quiz.
- Capitalize on students’ willingness to help each other succeed. Give a test to be completed as a group effort. You will learn a lot about your students as you monitor the group work.
- Allow students to come into the test with “cheat sheets”—notes that they are allowed to use during the test. For example, students may bring in two 3-by-5 cards with notes written on them, or give an “open-note test” where they may use all of their notes from class. This may allay some of the anxiety that test taking provokes. And, the process of making the note cards supports review and learning!
- When possible, give exams that include short essay questions or require personal-experience answers so that students must give original ideas.
- Use a rubric that is distributed before an exam or project. After the exam, have students exchange papers and evaluate based on the rubric.

### ***Change things up, move things around***

- Ask another teacher to come in and help you administer and observe during an exam, particularly if you have a large class.
- Have students place their book bags between themselves and their neighbors to provide a bit of a physical barrier.

- Change the seating assignment on exam days—perhaps alternate boys and girls in a row (or alternate boy bench, girl bench). Separate friends.
- On exam days, move to a larger space and spread out, or build more benches to give students more room.
- Move repeat offenders—preferably closer to you.
- Monitor students closely, and if you see wandering eyes, take out your red pen. Sometimes this silent caution is enough to keep eyes where they should be.
- Rearrange seating so students are not seated near each other. For example: facing outward in a circle so they cannot see the person next to them; seat students in rows far apart, etc.
- Move around during the test so you have many different views of students.

### Consequences for cheating

It is easier and more pleasant in the classroom if negative behavior, including cheating, is prevented, but this is not always possible. You must be ready, willing, and able to assign appropriate consequences when cheating is observed. Remember to be fair and consistent in your approach to all students.



### *Suggested consequences*

#### **General**

- Discuss the problem with the student outside of class. Give the student a chance to explain the behavior and tell the student what will happen in the future if this behavior occurs again.
- Take away privileges, give detention, void the test for everyone, or don't let the student participate in a special event, etc.
- For widespread cheating, give a new assignment or exam, or fail everyone, if culturally acceptable in your school.

#### **Cheating on homework assignments or class assignments**

- Give a failing grade (or do not give a grade) on the original assignment and have the student complete the same or equivalent task after school, under supervision. Determine if you will give full credit or partial credit for the effort.

#### **Cheating on exams**

- Warn your students prior to the exam that anyone caught cheating will automatically receive a failing grade on the exam—stick to this policy if you catch someone cheating.



- If you see someone cheating, quietly remind the whole class during the exam that cheating is not acceptable. If the student persists, consider taking his or her paper away, if it would be culturally acceptable.
- Take test paper away, but give a new one and allow the student to start over using only the remaining time.
- Write a red question mark on the top of the student's test as a warning. Allow one or two red question marks before revoking the examination at the third instance of cheating.

—Adapted from Peace Corps posts in Bulgaria, Mauritania, Mozambique, and Nepal

It is not realistic to expect that you will be able to stop all cheating. But you can model professional assessment and grading practices that facilitate learning and increase awareness of how cheating diminishes a student's ability to learn.

## Examples and Tools

### Sample Rubrics

Rubrics are useful tools to use when trying to communicate your expectations to students about their work. Develop a rubric before you teach a particular topic and before you assign a project. Review the rubric with students prior to starting the unit or project and describe what kind of work product will result in a particular rubric score. When possible, review with your students examples of papers or projects that received certain rubric scores. For example, what would a paper need to look like in order to score a "4" or "advanced" on any of the rubrics below? If the answer is clear in your mind and in your students' minds, you will grade more consistently and your students will have a better idea of what is expected of their work. Students will also have a clearer understanding of why their paper was scored the way it was, and areas in which they need to improve to receive a higher rubric score.

Rubrics can be simple or detailed depending on the assignment. Here are two math rubrics, one detailed and one simple. Adapt the language in the rubrics to better describe an assignment in your classroom.

**Math (Detailed)****Holistic Scale**

Score	Description of Score
4	Uses mathematical language (terms, symbols, signs, and/or representations) that is highly effective, accurate, and thorough, to describe operations, concepts, and processes.
3	Uses mathematical language (terms, symbols, signs, and/or representations) that is partially effective, accurate, and thorough to describe operations, concepts and processes.
2	Uses mathematical language (terms, symbols, signs and/or representations) that is minimally effective and accurate, to describe operations, concepts, and processes.
1	An incorrect response—attempt is made.
0	Off task, off topic, illegible, blank or insufficient to score.

**Source:** Maryland State Department of Education, *Sample activities, student responses and Maryland teachers' comments on a sample task: Mathematics Grade 8*, February 1991.

**Math (Simple)****Holistic Scale**

Score	Description of Score
3	Response is exemplary, detailed, and clear
2	Response is generally correct
1	Response is partially correct, but lacks clarity
0	No response or response is incorrect

**Source:** Temple Independent School District, Temple, Texas.

You can score assignments using more than one scale with a rubric. The previous math rubrics scored assignments using only one scale. The technical writing rubric below scores papers on five different scales (or characteristics). You can adapt the language of each of the characteristics to suit the assignment you are giving to your students, alter the characteristics you will be grading, or adapt the language to better suit the grade level you are teaching.

**Rubric for Technical Writing**

	<b>Organization/ Format</b>	<b>Content</b>	<b>Writing Conventions</b>	<b>Research and Interpret Data/ Information</b>	<b>Appropriate Vocabulary</b>
<b>Advanced</b>	Organizes material in a clear, appropriate, and precise manner.	Material content is clear, relevant, accurate, and concise.	Enhance the readability of the paper.	Correct interpretation of data or information. Analysis and conclusion are based on research.	Articulates appropriate vocabulary and terms associated with the subject matter.
<b>Adept</b>	Organizes material in an appropriate manner, but may lack some clarity or consistency. Presents basic information but may have extraneous material.	Material is appropriate, but may lack a clear connection to the purpose.	Minor errors are present, but they do not detract from the readability of the paper.	Correctly interprets data or information, but analysis or conclusion may not be supported by research.	Some inappropriate vocabulary present, or limited use of appropriate vocabulary.
<b>Unacceptable</b>	Little evidence of a cohesive plan. Little or no description or detail.  Ideas seem scrambled, jumbled, or disconnected.	Little evidence of appropriate content.	Little or no evidence of correct writing. Poor conventions seriously limit the paper's readability.	Incorrectly interprets data or information with little or no analysis or conclusion. Little or no evidence of research presented.	Inappropriate vocabulary and use occurs.

**Source:** Independent School District 196, Rosemount, Minnesota.

**Create your own rubric**

Again, rubrics can be simple or detailed, depending on the assignment given. Typically, the rubric should be similar in complexity to the task assigned—a simple rubric for a minor assignment; a more detailed rubric for a lengthier, more complex project. **As always, make sure that the use of a rubric is culturally accepted and appropriate before implementing it in your classroom.**

Score	Description of Score
Above and beyond	
Solid understanding	
Almost there	
Try again	

Score	Description of Score
😊	
😐	
😞	

	Characteristic	Characteristic	Characteristic
<b>Advanced (or 4)</b>			
<b>Adept (or 3)</b>			
<b>Beginning (or 2)</b>			
<b>Remedial (or 1)</b>			

**Use rubrics creatively**

Rubrics can be used creatively, and in every subject area. For example, you can develop a classroom behavior rubric and use it with your whole class. Determine with your class what kind of behavior would merit a score of “4” (and “3”, etc.) and develop a rubric together. At the end of each day, or each week, have the students grade their classroom behavior according to the rubric and ask them to tell you why they assigned themselves that grade. They will need to think of specific examples to support their grade and in doing so will become more conscious of their behavior. Set up a reward system for consistently high rubric scores to motivate students.

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## CHAPTER 6

### Checking Your Progress

Pause periodically to monitor your classroom management skills and encourage your counterparts or team teachers to do the same.

Adapted below is a tool that Peace Corps/China developed for Volunteers to monitor their progress throughout the year. Complete the exercise by considering each element below and marking your score on the graph. Repeat several times during the first year to see how you are doing. The list may help you isolate classroom management issues on which you could improve.

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#### Managing My Classroom

Analyze your use of classroom management practices by placing a check in the appropriate column after each item. Then add your checks in each column (score four points for each “usually,” two points for each “sometimes,” and zero points for each “never”). Enter the date you did the analysis and your score on the chart above.

	Usually	Sometimes	Never
1. I get students' attention before giving instructions.	_____	_____	_____
2. I wait for students to pay attention rather than talk over chatter.	_____	_____	_____
3. I quickly get students on task.	_____	_____	_____
4. I give clear and specific directions.	_____	_____	_____
5. I set explicit time limits for task completion.	_____	_____	_____
6. I circulate among students at work.	_____	_____	_____
7. I hold private conversations/conferences before or after class.	_____	_____	_____
8. I model courtesy and politeness.	_____	_____	_____
9. I use a quiet voice in the classroom.	_____	_____	_____
10. I use a variety of cues to remind students of expected behavior.	_____	_____	_____
11. I teach students my cues.	_____	_____	_____

	Usually	Sometimes	Never
12. I enrich my classroom (with posters, visual aids, etc.) to improve students' motivation.	_____	_____	_____
13. I remove distractions from my classroom to improve attention.	_____	_____	_____
14. I am aware of the effects of my dress, voice, and movements on student behavior.	_____	_____	_____
15. I use students' names as a subtle way to correct for inattention.	_____	_____	_____
16. I use the proximity of my body to improve classroom control.	_____	_____	_____
17. I communicate positive expectations of good behavior in my class.	_____	_____	_____
18. I have clear and specific rules that I teach my students.	_____	_____	_____
19. I refuse to threaten or plead with my students.	_____	_____	_____
20. I consistently follow through with consequences to enforce rules.	_____	_____	_____
21. I express my expectations in first-person terms ("I want you to use only English during this exercise") to tell students what I want them to do.	_____	_____	_____
22. I use first-person terms ("I need you to listen to each other") to communicate my feelings.	_____	_____	_____
23. I respond to behavior I like with specific personal praise.	_____	_____	_____
24. I use nonverbal and social actions to reinforce behavior of which I approve.	_____	_____	_____
25. I use this specific technique that works well: _____	_____	_____	_____
Total checks per column	_____	_____	_____
Total points per column	x4=	x2=	x0=
<b>Total score (enter on progress chart)</b>	_____ +	_____ +	_____ =

Use of Classroom Management Techniques						
	Date					
<b>high</b> ↑ ↓ <b>low</b>	90-100					
	80-89					
	70-79					
	60-69					
	50-59					
	49 or less					





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# APPENDICES

*Culture and the Ideal Teacher/Classroom* is a session that trainees and their supervisors/counterparts have done as a part of the end-of-pre-service training supervisor/counterpart workshop. Perhaps you can adapt it to use with your counterpart(s).

## **Culture and the Ideal Teacher/Classroom**

Adapted from Peace Corps/Ethiopia

### **Rationale**

This session explores the cultural differences related to education and schools. It allows trainees and supervisors to recognize the gaps that may exist between their educational ideals.

### **Time**

1 hour and 30 minutes

### **Objectives**

Participants will be able to:

- Draw a picture representing their ideal teacher and ideal classroom.
- Make observations about their drawings, deducing basic cultural and value-based differences between the host country and American classrooms.
- Briefly review the potential results of such differences.
- Share personal experiences in which they came into conflict with a Volunteer because of different educational ideals.
- Discuss strategies for minimizing conflict between supervisors and Volunteers.

### **Materials**

Flip chart paper, markers

**Procedure** ||||▶

1. Divide participants into small groups according to nationality. Distribute a piece of flip chart paper and crayons to each group. Ask participants to draw a picture of their ideal teacher and/or ideal classroom. Encourage participants to be imaginative and include anything that they think represents the ideal teacher/classroom. Allow approximately 15 minutes for this.
2. At the end of the given time, ask each group to hang its drawing on the wall. Divide and label the wall: one for the host country supervisors' drawings and one for the American trainees' drawings.
3. Invite all participants to come to the front of the class and look at the artistic exhibition of the ideal teacher/classroom. Allow enough time so everyone can look at and analyze all drawings.
4. Discuss the following questions:
  - Are there any differences between the host country and American drawings? If so, what are they?
  - How did the supervisors represent the classroom/teacher/students? The trainees?
  - What objects are present in one group that are not as prevalent in the other?
  - Why might these differences exist?
  - What cultural beliefs or values may be responsible for these differences?
5. Using the answers provided by participants to the above questions, explain that our ideals—everything we believe to be the best—are based on our culture. In this country, there may be a strong value placed on a teacher-centered classroom, while in the U.S. more value may be placed on a student-centered classroom. One is not necessarily better than the other; they are just different.

6. Briefly review the session on direct/indirect communication, asking participants what could potentially happen when two different cultural values come into contact. [Conflict.] Ask why this conflict occurs. [People believe that their value is best.]
7. Ask supervisors to share any value-based experiences of conflict that occurred in their schools with Peace Corps teachers. In addition, ask any participating Volunteers to share conflicts that they experienced because of this difference in ideals.
8. Conclude by stating that cultural beliefs and values are deeply rooted. It is not realistic to expect Volunteers to transform their classrooms into their ideal. Similarly, supervisors should not expect Volunteers to teach exactly like their host country colleagues. Peace Corps Volunteers have something different to offer their students, and they need to do this within the context of the host country school. The challenge is for Peace Corps Volunteers and supervisors to work together to create a shared ideal, a fusion or hybrid of both American and host country ideals.

Excerpted from *Working with Supervisors and Counterparts*, Washington, DC: Peace Corps, 2002. Pages 70-71. [ICE No. T0121]



## **Don't Hit and Don't Shout**

Peace Corps/Kiribati

This pamphlet is for parents, teachers, head teachers, and principals.

Young children often misbehave because they are bored, sick, tired, or want your attention. Teachers and parents may feel annoyed if they misbehave when you are trying to teach a class or are busy cooking, working in the garden, fishing, talking with other adults, or during a school assembly, church service or community meeting.

This pamphlet talks about

- Why you shouldn't hit or shout at children
- What to do if you find yourself about to hit a child
- Disciplining children without hitting and shouting

### **What to do if you find yourself about to hit a child**

Children learn by copying your behavior, so the best form of discipline is to teach them by setting a good example.

This means encouraging good behavior by showing and telling children what is expected and then praising them for doing it.

So, what can you do if you find yourself about to hit or shout at a child?

#### **FIRST**

- Move away from the child
- Take time to calm down and think about how you can best respond

#### **THEN**

- Go back to the child and talk calmly and clearly about why you didn't like his or her behavior
- Ask the child why he/she behaved that way
- Tell the child that you know he or she can show better behavior
- Tell the child the behavior made you upset and worried
- Ask the child what you can do to help him or her behave properly

- Make sure the punishment you choose is fair (see next page for ideas)
- Get help—talk to another adult if you can

### ***Disciplining children without hitting and shouting***

- Set simple rules and limits and make sure the child knows them
- Give children the opportunity to discuss issues and make decisions together
- Praise and encourage good behavior

### ***Address misbehavior by***

- Withdrawing privileges
- Having the child spend time away from the class or family area in a safe place
- Criticizing the behavior, not the child (Say: “That behavior is not OK!” not “You are hopeless!”)

### ***Here are some things children in the Pacific had to say about what adults could do to help them behave.***

- “Show me what you want.”
- “Don’t expect me to do things I can’t do.”
- “Don’t scream at me—just tell me.”
- “Don’t put me down, tease me or insult me.”
- “Be sure I understand why I am being punished.”
- “Keep your promises.”
- “Say you are sorry when you get things wrong.”
- “Don’t overreact to my mistakes.”
- “Have a sense of humor.”
- “Be firm when you need to, but don’t be nasty.”

### **Why you should not hit or shout at children**

Everyone has the right to feel safe from harm. Hitting and shouting at people causes harm. Children are people too; they are also the smallest and most fragile in your community. Hitting children of any age is never OK.

***Hitting and shouting at children***

- is scary for children and makes them feel insecure, unloved and sad;
- sets a bad example of how to handle strong emotions;
- encourages children to shout, hit, and bully others in the school yard or in the family; and
- encourages children to tell lies and hide their feelings to avoid further hitting and shouting.

***If you hit and shout at children, they learn that***

- violence is acceptable;
- the strong and big may hit or shout at the weak and small; and
- adults can win through violence.

Information from UNICEF

Translated by Peace Corps/Kiribati, November 2005



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## RESOURCES

Materials that have an ICE number are available through Information Collection and Exchange.

***Adapting Environmental Education Materials.* Peace Corps. 1999. [ICE No. M0059]**

This publication walks Volunteers through the steps of evaluating the appropriateness of existing materials to their school setting, determining how useful materials can be adapted, and making those adaptations. It also includes training sessions for skill development and worldwide examples of adaptations to simpler and fewer materials, to local realities, to traditional classroom subjects, and to nonformal youth programs. This is an excellent resource for anyone who teaches. It is a companion to *Environmental Education in the Schools*, [ICE No. M0044] and *Environmental Education in the Community* [ICE No. M0075].

***Classroom Management that Works: Research-based Strategies for Every Teacher.* Robert J. Marzano, Jana S. Marzano, Debra J. Pickering. ASCD. 2003.**

This book draws from more than 100 studies of classroom management to explain the four most important general components of effective classroom management and their impact on student engagement and achievement. It describes the action steps teachers need to take to establish rules and procedures, use effective disciplinary interventions, build positive student-teacher relationships, and develop a sound mental set to get through the most difficult situations. Real classroom stories illustrate how to get every class off to a good start, involve students in classroom management and develop effective schoolwide management policies.

***Community Content-based Instruction (CCBI) Manual.* Peace Corps. 2004. [ICE No. T0112]**

These materials are based on the CCBI approach of using local indigenous knowledge and easily accessible resources to make classroom subject matter more relevant to students while engaging community members in ongoing learning experiences. This can be the best of “place-based” learning for youth or adults, along with community outreach in any sector. See also the participant’s guide: *Working with CCBI: Volunteer Workbook* [ICE No. M0073].

***Culture Matters: The Peace Corps Cross-Cultural Workbook.* Peace Corps. 1997. [ICE No. T0087]**

This illustrated, practical, interactive workbook for Volunteers in all projects guides the reader through the cross-cultural experience, the major concepts in the intercultural field, and presents exercises, stories, quotations and descriptive text designed to aid the Volunteer in successfully adapting to a new culture. The workbook helps Volunteers examine the behaviors and values of people in other countries and offers ways to compare their behavior to that of Americans. The workbook is an excellent resource for trainers and Volunteers. Also available in Spanish, *La Cultura Sí Importa* [ICE No. T0120].

***Doing without the Photocopier from A to Z: 26 Creative Ideas for Reusable Language Games and Activities.* Elaine Kirn. Authors and Editors. 1995.**

This publication provides the reader with ways to save time, money, and energy by creating materials without photocopying them. It also gives reasons why photocopying in many instances is illegal, and gives readers steps to produce materials using their own methods.

***Nonformal Education (NFE) Manual.* Rev. Peace Corps. 2004. [ICE No. M0042]**

The content of the *Nonformal Education (NFE) Manual* is grounded in the theory and practice of some of the great educational thinkers of our time, including Paolo Freire, Howard Gardner, David Kolb, Malcolm Knowles, and Bernice McCarthy. This new manual includes information from previous Peace Corps publications, as well as current research from the field of education. There are field-tested ideas, activities, and tips drawn from the experiences of Peace Corps Volunteers and staff around the world. Not only for education Volunteers, this manual will help any Volunteer who has to teach, train or facilitate in the field. See also *Audio-Visual Communication Handbook* [ICE No. M0020] and *Community Content-based (CCBI) Manual* [ICE No. T0112].

***Idea Book Series: PACA: Using Participatory Analysis for Community Action.* Peace Corps. 2005. [ICE No. M0086]**

Since PACA has now been used in the agency for many years, this idea book was designed to give a focused history and description of PACA, while sharing excellent examples from the field that illustrate how Volunteers and their communities, host country organizations, and Peace Corps projects have used these tools successfully. This book is intended for use by Volunteers to complement pre-service training they received from trainers using the *Participatory Analysis for Community Action (PACA) Training Manual* [ICE No. M0053]. It is also intended to supplement exercises in the core pre-service training manual *Roles of the Volunteer in Development: Toolkits for Building Capacity* [ICE No. T0005]; or reinforce foundational skills during or prior to in-service training—complementing *The New Project Design and Management Workshop Training Manual* [ICE No. T0107].

***Sources of Donated Books.* Peace Corps. 2008. [ICE No. RE003]**

This publication helps Volunteers identify organizations that can provide books and other educational resources to their communities. It provides contact information and guidance on how Volunteers and their community partners can submit requests and receive donations from the organizations listed, and it emphasizes the importance of sustainability in library development activities.

***Sources of Free Periodicals and Databases.* Peace Corps. 2007. [ICE No. RE007]**

This guide is compiled by Peace Corps ICE to provide Volunteers with information on accessing free periodicals, databases, and CD-ROMs that can offer helpful information for primary and secondary projects. Both print and digital titles are included. Volunteers involved with library or resource center development will find this manual of particular value, together with *Sources of Donated Books* [ICE No. RE003].

***Teaching English as a Foreign Language to Large, Multilevel Classes.* Peace Corps. 1992. [ICE No. M0046]**

This publication draws on suggestions from Volunteers working under difficult conditions with limited resources. In particular, it offers ideas and activities to help teachers facing classes of up to 150 students, most without textbooks. Content addresses issues such as student interests and needs, classroom management, theme-based lesson planning, the national curricula, emphasis on rote memorization, and resistance to group work. It aids Volunteers in creating classrooms where students are given opportunities to think critically, work cooperatively, and enjoy the experience of learning.

***Teaching Multilevel Classes in ESL.* Jill Sinclair Bell. Pippin Publishing. 2004.**

This is an updated resource book for teachers working with adults in ESL. It provides concrete suggestions for differentiating instruction for adult learners and uses relevant examples for adults learning a second language.

***The First Days of School.* Harry K. Wong and Rosemary T. Wong. Harry K. Wong Publications. 2005.**

This is considered by many to be the pre-eminent book on classroom management and lesson mastery. The book walks a teacher, either novice or veteran, through the most effective ways to begin a school year and continue to become an effective teacher. This is a basic book on how to teach. The book includes units on: characteristics of an effective teacher; motivating and inspiring students; managing uncontrollable classrooms; getting assignments done and passing exams; and teacher as professional educator.

***The World Map Project.* Peace Corps. 1994. [ICE No. R0088]**

This handbook is based on *The World Map Project Manual* by Returned Volunteer Barbara Jo White and began as a World Wise Schools study guide. It describes procedures for using a grid to construct a world map, along with complementary activities for teaching geography. Users need few materials and can adapt the project to their community, country or region. Drawings, maps and grids are included.

***Tools for Teaching Content Literacy.* Janet Allen. Stenhouse Publishers. 2004.**

The author calls this thin publication a flip chart. It presents effective instructional strategies to help students overcome challenges they face in content reading and writing. Each strategy is covered in one page, which includes a description, when and why you might use it, an example of its use in a classroom, and reference to the research related to its use. Many of the strategies include the use of a form to organize information. Forms are in the appendix and may be copied. This is an excellent resource for anyone who teaches.

***Working with CCBI: Volunteer Workbook. Peace Corps. 2004. [ICE No. M0073]***

These materials are based on the Community Content-based Instruction (CCBI) approach of using local indigenous knowledge and easily accessible resources to make classroom subject matter more relevant to students while engaging community members in ongoing learning experiences. This can be the best of “place-based” learning for youth or adults, along with community outreach in any sector. Also see the trainer’s guide: *Community Content-based Instruction (CCBI) Manual* [ICE No. T0112].

***Working with Supervisors and Counterparts. Peace Corps. 2002. [ICE No. T0121]***

*Working with Supervisors and Counterparts* is organized into three parts. Part I addresses the importance of working with supervisors and counterparts in capacity-building partnerships; provides various ways in which the partner relationships may be defined; and indicates how these local partners can be included in the two-year programming and training cycle of a Volunteer. Part II provides a sample one-day workshop for supervisors and counterparts, as well as additional training ideas and sessions. Part III is a sample handbook for supervisors and counterparts, which provides a template, standard information, and suggested post-specific information.