

hand or other signal for the discussion leader), for entering and leaving the classroom (lining up or dismissal by rows), for sharpening pencils, for getting materials, and for going to the restroom.

Experienced teachers successfully enlist students in both setting and maintaining standards of conduct. Even very young students know what are reasonable expectations, both for themselves and for what they can expect of other students. Active participation in setting the rules of the classroom contributes to students' feelings of safety in class.

Managing one's own conduct is a difficult skill for most students to learn. It's one thing to say, when the atmosphere is calm, that students should raise their hand to be recognized. But in the middle of a heated discussion, those rules are easily forgotten. Awareness of one's behavior—and being able to change it—requires metacognitive skills that some students may still be developing. Teaching students to engage in such reflection is an important aspect of teachers' responsibilities.

Whatever the details of the standards of conduct, approaches to managing student behavior in well-run classrooms share certain characteristics:

- Expectations are clear to everyone and may be posted in the classroom.
- The standards of behavior are appropriate to the developmental levels of the students and are consistent with the cultural norms of students in the class.
 - Expectations are consistently applied—no favoritism.
 - Teachers are aware of what is going on; they have “eyes in the backs of their heads.” Teachers sometimes influence students' behavior—for example, by calling on a student to redirect the student's attention or by moving nearer to a student.

- Teachers refrain from losing their temper, banging books on a desk, or otherwise demonstrating that they have lost their composure. Students do not fear being physically or orally attacked.

- Any chastisement of conduct focuses on a student's behavior, not on the student. It is carried out so that the classroom rhythm is only minimally disrupted and the student's dignity is maintained.

- Teachers encourage students to monitor their own behavior.

Demonstration

A teacher's skill in managing student behavior can only be observed in the classroom. Standards of conduct, however, must frequently be inferred, because in a smoothly running classroom an observer may not witness explicit attention to those standards. Rather, student behavior indicates that a teacher has established standards at the beginning of the year and has maintained them consistently. Although most teachers can articulate their approach to standards of conduct, implementation is critical. In a well-managed classroom, students themselves will be able to explain the agreed-upon standards of conduct. (See Figure 4.10.)

COMPONENT 2E: ORGANIZING PHYSICAL SPACE

Rationale and Explanation

Use of physical space is important in a total learning environment; the physical surroundings can have a material effect on interactions or the structure of activities. Indeed, one important reason that teachers like to participate in

FIGURE 4.11

DOMAIN 2: THE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT Component 2e: Organizing Physical Space Elements: Safety and accessibility • Arrangement of furniture and use of physical resources				
ELEMENT	LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE			
	UNSATISFACTORY	BASIC	PROFICIENT	DISTINGUISHED
Safety and accessibility	The classroom is unsafe, or learning is not accessible to some students.	The classroom is safe, and at least essential learning is accessible to most students.	The classroom is safe, and learning is equally accessible to all students.	The classroom is safe, and students themselves ensure that all learning is equally accessible to all students.
Arrangement of furniture and use of physical resources	The furniture arrangement hinders the learning activities, or the teacher makes poor use of physical resources.	Teacher uses physical resources adequately. The furniture may be adjusted for a lesson, but with limited effectiveness.	Teacher uses physical resources skillfully, and the furniture arrangement is a resource for learning activities.	Both teacher and students use physical resources easily and skillfully, and students adjust the furniture to advance their learning.

meetings in one another's classrooms is so they can find good ideas they might be able to incorporate into their own setting.

Of course, the use of the physical environment will vary depending on context. Elementary teachers establish "reading corners" and separate spaces for noisy and quiet activities, and teachers at all levels arrange furniture to accommodate discus-

sion sessions or group projects. Organization of space sends signals to students about how teachers view learning: "centers" for exploration, desks facing forward for a presentation, chairs in a circle for a group discussion, or a science lab organized for effective work.

One element of a physical environment concerns safety and accessibility to learning. A classroom must be safe—no dangling

cords or obstructed exits. Chemicals must be stored in a safe place, and when they are used, they must be handled with care. The traffic flow must be efficient, so that, for example, all students can get to the pencil sharpener. Students, including those with special needs, must have accessibility to the board, the teacher, and other learning resources. This may mean that a student with impaired vision or hearing will sit near the front of the room, or a student with a learning disability will be seated so that an accompanying aide can be of assistance without calling undue attention to the student's condition. Such accommodations by the teacher signal respect for the learning needs of all students and a willingness to make necessary adjustments to ensure success.

A second element involves the arrangement of furniture. In today's classrooms, few desks are bolted to the floor, although many teachers still choose to arrange the chairs or desks in rows. For a presentation to the entire class by the teacher, by a visiting expert, or by other students, that may be the best arrangement. But for other types of student activity, such an arrangement may not be optimal. For group work, tables or desks arranged in blocks may be preferable. And if students are expected to discuss ideas, they need to be able to see one another. For a class discussion, desks or chairs arranged in a circle or two parallel horseshoes may be the best arrangement.

Many classrooms are equipped with computers for student use. The placement of these, and student accessibility to them, can have a significant impact on the success of the physical space for learning. It is desirable that they be placed out of the main traffic flow so students can get to them without disrupting other students at work.

A final element is teachers' use of physical resources.

Teaching aids such as boards, flip charts, overhead projectors,

computers and projection devices, and VCRs may be skillfully or poorly used. When used well, they enhance learning and contribute to effective instruction. When used poorly, they detract from learning. Machines that don't work mean that transparencies are out of focus or can't be read, Internet access is disrupted, or videos can't be viewed.

When a classroom is a true community of learners, students themselves become involved in the physical environment and take initiative in making it effective. They may, for example, plan a display of work, move furniture to facilitate a group project, or shift supplies to improve traffic flow. They may lower the shades to block the sun from a classmate's eyes or shut the door to keep out hall noise. It is their room, and they make it work. Naturally, such student involvement can only occur when the teacher cultivates and encourages student participation in establishing the environment.

Some teachers, such as those who move from room to room, have only limited control over the physical environment in which they teach. When teachers teach from a cart, or when they share space with another teacher, they can influence the physical environment far less than teachers who have their own rooms. All teachers must be responsible for a safe environment, but they cannot be held accountable for those aspects of teaching that they cannot control.

Demonstration

Teachers' use of the physical environment can be observed or illustrated on a sketch of the classroom. Teachers may be able to explain how they enhance the physical environment and use it as a resource for learning, but implementation is essential. (See Figure 4.11.)