COLLABORATING With **Students** in **Instruction** and **Decision Making**

The Untapped Resource

Richard A. Villa
Jacqueline S. Thousand
Ann I. Nevin

Foreword by Paula Kluth and Peyton Goddard

2010

9 Students as Collaborators in Responsibility

Our students will not care how much we know, until they know how much we care.

—Craig & Gould (2007, p. 112)

In this chapter, we ask you to consider the following questions:

1. How do you define the concept of "responsibility"?
2. How does the Self-Discipline Pyramid help students develop responsibility?
3. How do students develop "controls from within"?

A CIRCLE OF COURAGE DEFINITION OF RESPONSIBILITY

In Chapter 1, we introduced a Circle of Courage conceptualization of the desired outcome of education; that is, courageous youth whose sense of self-worth is strong due to their basic needs for belonging, mastery, independence, and generosity being met through the guidance of and collaboration with adults. The purpose of this chapter is to focus attention on achieving the Circle of Courage education outcome of *independence* or responsibility through adults collaborating with students to foster the learning and use of responsible behavior.

Do you agree that there are two dimensions of responsibility? The first dimension is *flexibility*—an ability to respond or to exhibit "response-ability." Van Bockern and colleagues (2000), who elegantly described the Native American Circle of Courage framework, identified a few of the flexible behaviors of courageous and resilient youth: "social competence, problem-solving skills, autonomy, and a sense of purpose and of the future"(p. 60). The second dimension of responsibility is *accountability*—a sense of personal ownership or internal self-discipline. Again, Van Bockern and colleagues

elaborated, directing educators to construct experiences that "seek the child's inner control, a self-efficacy that allows the child to do the right thing when he or she is not under surveillance" (p. 71). This inner control and self-efficacy also is known as self-discipline.

Given this two-dimensional definition of responsibility, then as educators, it becomes our responsibility to be flexible and accountable in order to increase children's behavioral flexibility and accountability or self-discipline. What are ways educators can collaborate with students to develop responsibility and self-discipline?

THE SELF-DISCIPLINE PYRAMID

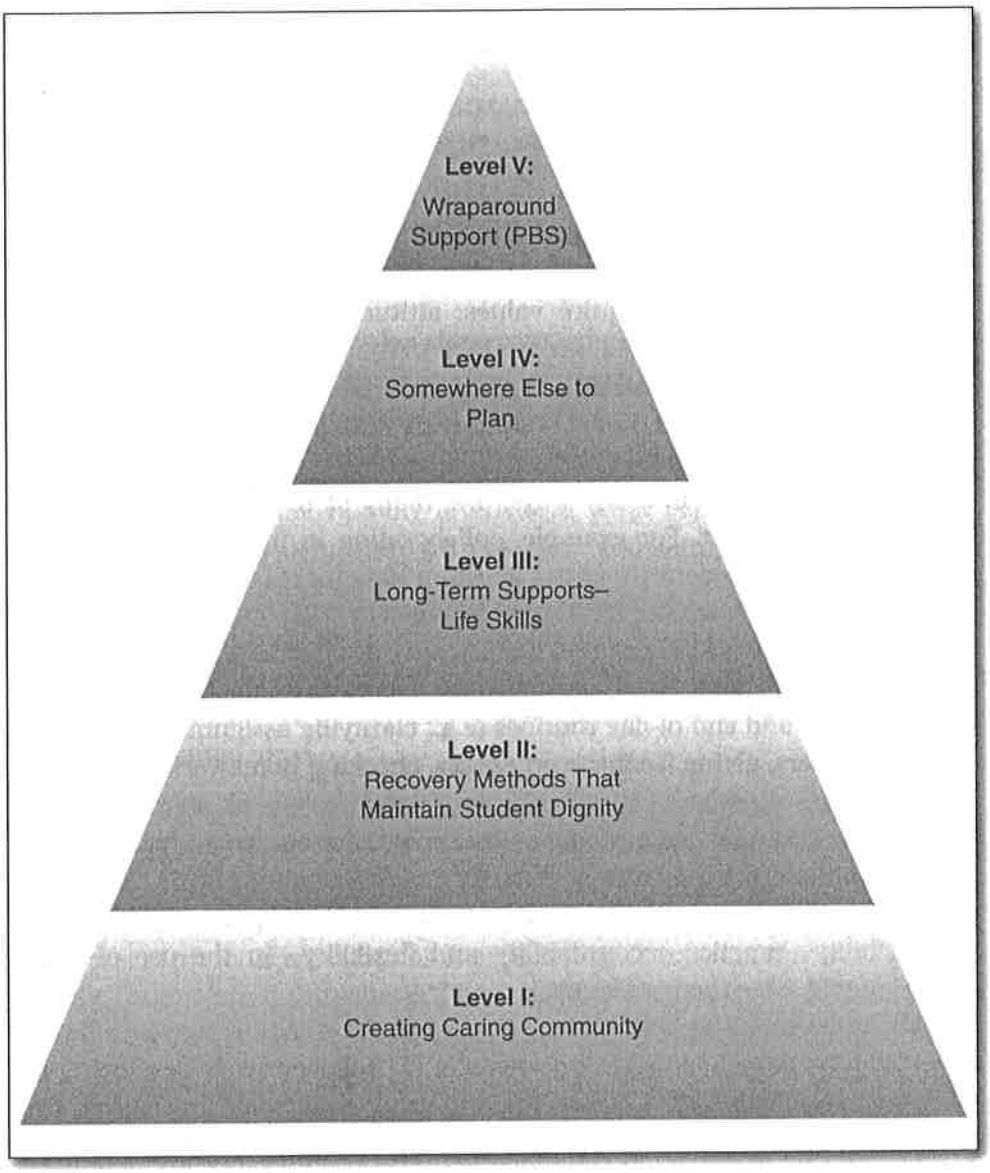
Developing student responsibility is no less demanding a task than teaching any other curriculum area: it requires educators to think carefully and reflect, provide complex instruction throughout the school years, and have patience. The authors conceptualize an effective system for collaborating with students to develop responsibility or self-discipline as a five-level pyramid, shown as Figure 9.1. The strength of the self-discipline pyramid is its base, where the focus is upon developing a classroom climate of caring and positive interdependence. The second level of the pyramid includes recovery methods that maintain student dignity and engage student reflection when class expectations are violated. The third level of the pyramid represents long-terms supports, which include the teaching of social skills and problem-solving methods as well as activating extra supports, such as personal contracts, for students who need them. The fourth level represents a "somewhere else" place where students can go on a short-term basis when they are unable to resolve a conflict or issue at the classroom level. The pinnacle of the pyramid involves assembling a support team of caring individuals to develop a plan with a student that will result in long-term behavior change.

What follows are descriptions of strategies, structures, and procedures for supporting the development of student responsibility at each of the five levels of the self-discipline pyramid. It should be noted that the five-level pyramid conceptualization presented in this chapter is different from the three-tiered Response to Intervention (RTI) and schoolwide Positive Behavior Support (PBS) approaches to behavioral intervention.[1] The five-level pyramid described in this chapter is meant to be an idea jogger for educators collaborating with students to develop responsibility and self-discipline (Villa, Udis, & Thousand, 2002). In contrast, RTI and PBS are systematic approaches for problem-solving inappropriate behavior through interventions at different levels (tiers) of intensity.

Some RTI and PBS strategies useful in supporting students experiencing behavioral problems are more about altering teacher behavior (e.g., using differentiated instruction techniques, greeting students at the door, knowing the multiple intelligence strengths of students) or instituting systems of motivation (e.g., token economies with contingent rewards and privileges) than teacher

[1] For more details about Positive Behavior Supports (PBS), Response to Intervention (RTI), and the PBS-RTI interface, see the Web site maintained by the U. S. Office of Special Education Programs Technical Assistance Center, www.pbis.org, and Sandomierski, Kincaid, and Algozzine (2007).

Figure 9.1 Self-Discipline Pyramid



and student collaboration. These strategies, although important and useful, are outside the scope of this chapter.

Also, the authors wish to acknowledge in advance that many of the concepts or approaches represented in the next five sections of this chapter are expanded in the writings of esteemed colleagues Richard Curwin and Allen Mendler. Their book *Discipline with Dignity* (Curwin, Mendler, & Mendler, 2008) is an important resource in guiding teachers to affirm approaches to managing the classroom that promote respect for self and others. Additionally, literally hundreds of strategies and structures for developing student responsibility and dealing with every type of discipline issue can be found in the *Win-Win Discipline* text (Kagan, Kyle, & Scott, 2004), which is primarily authored by the renowned cooperative group learning author, Steven Kagan. We strongly

recommend that readers interested in effective classroom discipline procedures and additional ways in which to promote responsible student behavior extend their reading of these authors.

Creating a Caring Community: The Base of the Self-Discipline Pyramid

It is within the context of a caring relationship that the concept of responsibility acquires meaning. Central to the learning of responsibility is that students perceive the adults in the school as caring about them. Stated otherwise, if students are to acquire values, attitudes, and behaviors that are "response-able" (flexible and accountable), the adults in their lives (i.e., teachers) need to have a systematic approach for developing relationships with and among their students. Collaborating with students to develop responsibility starts with engaging students in co-creating a caring classroom community. A teacher can do this in many ways, and many of these already have been examined in this text. For example, collaborating in instruction by having students work in cooperative group learning structures (see Chapter 2) or as actual co-teachers (see Chapter 4) are obvious ways that students take responsibility for their own learning and the learning of classmates. When teachers collaborate with stable, heterogeneous base teams (see Chapter 2) to accomplish morning and end-of-day routines (e.g., clarifying assignments, updating absent members, giving feedback on papers, checking homework) or supporting teammates to prepare for upcoming tests, students are taking responsibility by being individually accountable to teammates for ongoing support. When students are expected to use previously taught small-group interpersonal social skills in their cooperative groups, they have the opportunity to develop responsibility—practice accountability and flexibility—in the use of social skills that will serve them a lifetime.

At the base of the pyramid are three additional major ways to develop responsibility; namely, engaging students in (1) collaboratively developing the classroom social contract; (2) learning and using predictable procedures, routines, and signals; and (3) using class meetings to check in on the social contract, plan, make decisions, and problem solve as a community.

Collaborative Development of the Social Contract

Equity among students and adults in educational decision making is more likely to promote active student participation and a climate of mutual respect than a situation in which adults make the decisions alone. One area of great importance to student life is student accountability for behaving within the limits of agreed-upon behavioral and social norms established by the school community. *Social contract* is the term that Curwin and colleagues (2008) used for the process of teachers and students jointly developing and implementing the values, norms or expectations, and consequences of classroom behavior. Social contracts should reflect the democratic decision-making process of government. Further, teachers want students to buy into and own the social contract. Therefore, active involvement of students in developing norms, logical consequences that teach

and remind students about accountable behavior and the values upon which it is based (e.g., do onto others as you would have them do onto you, all who come in will be safe and will learn), is key to the ultimate success of the social contract.

Steps to develop the social contract. Kagan and colleagues (2004) described a process used by high school teachers for generating norms, which we have modified based upon a video example of norm development shown in the *Ways We Want Our Class to Be* video series produced by the Developmental Studies Center (1996). Consider this or a variation of this sequence of steps as one way to collaborate with students to develop the social contract.

Step 1. Have students develop classroom values by having them close their eyes and leading them through a guided visualization of all of the parts of the day. Ask them to picture what an ideal school day would look and sound like and how people would treat one another and things.

Step 2. Students individually brainstorm what behaviors represent this ideal school. They then share with partners and jointly write their ideas on slips of paper.

Step 3. Students post their ideas on the board or wall and are asked if they see any categories of ideas that belong together. Categorical labels (no more than four or five) are written on the board. Students then stand and categorize their initial ideas.

Step 4. Students in groups examine each category and come up with two or three positively stated behaviors or expectations that operationalize these values. We use the term *expectations* rather than *rules*. The term *rules* often connotes for students external control, whereas the term *expectations* can represent personal expectations or expectations for one another in a community. To illustrate, if the value is "Everyone feels safe," an expectation might be "When upset, we tell someone how we feel and try to solve the problem."

Step 5. Expectation statements are posted under the category in which they belong, and students are asked if a "good teacher" list would be different or similar. The expectations are then combined or modified, and the class is asked if they can live with the list. By then, they usually have ownership and "vote" yes.

Step 6. The list is memorialized in writing and sent home as a social contract for the parents and student to sign.

Step 7. The values and list of expectations are posted and referred to regularly when a discussion is needed about whether a given behavior falls within or outside of the boundaries of the expectations and what is the best way to help a student to stay within the class's social contract.

Curwin and colleagues (2008) suggested that to demonstrate equity, students develop at least a couple of expectations for their teacher. For example, an expectation might be that the teacher does not drink coffee in class if students cannot drink sodas or, stated positively, the beverage

students and teachers drink in class is water. These authors also recommend testing students on the content of the social contract so they cannot claim ignorance of expectations. Further, to increase collaboration on the part of those students who have difficulty staying within the boundaries of the social contract, they suggest following the lead of a suburban middle school in which

- a "student council of poor achievers" and "in-trouble students" (different labels were used) was created to help set school policy [and]
- students who served detention were given the job of commenting on how school climate could be improved. (Curwin et al., 2008, p. 26)

Predictable Procedures, Routines, and Signals

In addition to the social contract and expectations, procedures, routines, and signals assist students with becoming accountable for their learning and behavior by offering them known, predictable, and practical ways of participating in the classroom community. *Procedures* are practiced steps of behaviors that reoccur in the classroom. Potential classroom procedures range from how to enter a classroom; transition from individual desks to cooperative groups; ask for help; or respond to an earthquake, tornado, or fire. As with the learning of any task or a social skill, the teacher collaborates with students to help them discover why this procedure is important and what it looks and sounds like through modeling, guided practiced, and reinforced distributed practice. Once a procedure is learned, it can be strung together with others to create a *routine* that allows students to be self-directed or flexible in taking ownership for the way the class operates. A typical beginning-of-the-day routine might be for students to enter the class, greet the teacher, pick up personalized file folders in which homework and teacher-read work are exchanged, engage in a three-minute "bell work" transition task, and listen to the morning announcements read by a classmate on a predetermined rotating basis.

Signals are nonverbal or brief verbal cues taught and rehearsed that save transition time. Signals are for both the teacher and students. For example, the authors use the "signal on" quiet signal when wanting our students or audiences to transition from collaborative conversation or work. This signal's procedure is as follows: (1) the instructor raises his or her hand, saying, "Signal on"; (2) learners stop conversation, raise one hand, and turn their attention to the instructor; and (3) learners prompt others who have not heard or seen the signal. In our experience, this has reduced transitions to five seconds or less. Of course, the signal can be varied, and students surely can suggest signals. In a variation that uses a "call–response" format, the teacher calls out, "Goodness gracious!" and students respond with "Great balls of fire."

Student signals include traditional ones, such as raising a hand to ask a question or request to speak or giving a thumbs-up to indicate being finished. Other hand signals or gestures can be created to indicate the need for more think time (e.g., pointing to the side of the head) or that the information is "over my head" (e.g. waving a hand over the top of the head). For teams, the "three before me" signal indicates that members have conferred with at least three

classmates and still have an unanswered question. The procedures are described as follows:

> If an individual student has a question, he/she is not to hold up a hand and interrupt the teacher. Rather, the student is to . . . ask his/her shoulder partner [person seated adjacent to him/her]. If the shoulder partner cannot answer the question, then the two students have a pair question and they are to ask their face partners. If all four students . . . cannot answer the question, then they have a Team Question. They signal the teacher . . . by each holding up a hand. Four hands up is the signal to the teacher that the team has exhausted their resources. (Kagan et al., 2004, p. 18, 19)

To hold team members accountable for trying to answer the question, when the teacher comes over, anyone may be asked to state the question.

Class Meetings

John Dewey (cited in P. Fairfield, 2008) noted,

> Democracy is much broader than a method for conducting government. . . . [It is] a way of life. . . . Its foundation is faith that each individual has something to contribute. . . . The interactive participation of all individuals is the keynote of democracy as a way of life. (p. 82)

Class meetings are interactive forums for students to listen to and take the perspective of others, have their voice elicited and heard, and participate in democratic decision making about things that matter to them. Class meetings can range from a few minutes to 30 or more minutes, depending upon the students' age, complexity of the topic, and the students' interest level. Regularly scheduled (daily, weekly) class meetings allow students to develop "moral" habits in behavior, feelings, and judgment under teacher guidance but without teacher-imposed solutions. Regularly scheduled meetings also let students know their issues will be brought up and addressed.

There are three types of class meeting items. The first type is planning and decision-making items, such as planning for how to support a substitute teacher or making decisions as to what to include in the class social contract. Another type is check-in items, such as checking in on how well the class did to support the substitute teacher or periodically assessing how well the class is following the class expectations. Consciousness-raising activities, the third type of agenda item, are those where the class examines a community problem (e.g., teasing, bullying on the playground, name-calling) and rather than blaming culprits, focuses upon using problem-solving strategies, such as those presented in Chapter 5, to generate and agree upon solutions.

Class meetings also are a time for students to build community by appreciating one another's demonstration of responsible behaviors. Appreciations can be structured into the meeting agenda by using strategies such as those used for group processing in cooperative groups presented in Table 2.4. Celebrations of

individual and group successes also should be structured into class meeting agendas. For example, after being taught the SODAS IF problem-solving script (see Chapter 5), two students who had stepped in and mediated a conflict on the playground using the SODAS IF script might report out how they used the script successfully to come up with an agreeable solution.

Recovery With Accountability: Level Two of the Self-Discipline Pyramid

When a student or students step outside of the boundaries of norms and expectations, recovery methods can be engaged to remind students of expectations and get them back on track. We deliberately use the term *recovery* versus *disciplinary response* to emphasize that the goal here is not to blame or shame students but to engage supports to maintain or re-engage responsible involvement in instruction and learning. Typical low-level recovery strategies that do not break the flow of instruction include proximity or "management by walking around"; eye contact or "the look"; and expectation reminder signals, such as pointing to the class norms and expectations poster. Recovery strategies that momentarily break the flow of instruction and, at the same time, maintain student dignity are verbal reminders or reteaching of expectations (e.g., "Remember, the expectation is. . . ." or "Let's take a moment to review how we want our class to be.") and redirection (e.g., Right now, you are/feel. . . . That's fine, *and* what you need to do is. . . . ").

For recovery strategies to be most effective and truly build student "response-ability," some type of follow up is advised. Scheduling a follow-up conversation, either as an individual conversation or a consciousness-raising problem-solving agenda item for a class meeting, promotes future accountability and flexibility by having students reflect upon a behavior and find a more responsible alternative.

Peer mediation, described in Chapter 8, is an additional recovery method whereby students collaboratively engage with classmates as supports to defuse anger and redirect students to productive solution finding. When students disrupt or disengage because they are unsure of what to do or when the curriculum is too difficult or too easy, extra supports, such as informal momentary peer tutoring or natural peer supports such as classroom buddies, can be engaged to help clarify content, model responsible choices for a classmate, and guide the classmate to make those choices. Students also can be engaged as instructional decision makers, developing accommodations and modifications for others or themselves. Chapter 3 describes how to set up peer tutoring and partner learning systems. Chapter 6 provides processes and examples for students to use in supporting one another in instructional decision making.

In summary, at this second level of the self-discipline pyramid, the teacher and students prompt and support one another to recover instructional involvement. The recovery strategy often involves using established structures (e.g., peer tutoring, conflict mediation), the social skills and problem-solving and self-control scripts, and the cooldown procedures that are taught as long-term life skills at the next, third level of the pyramid.

Long-Term Supports—Life Skills: Level Three of the Self-Discipline Pyramid

The third level of the self-discipline pyramid represents a host of skills and procedures that are long-term supports for success in and outside of school. Long-term supports include students learning, practicing, and using social skills, problem-solving methods, and self-control scripts; establishing and using a cooldown procedure; and activating extra supports, such as personal contracts, for students who need additional structure.

Teaching Social Skills

None of us are born with social skills; instead, social skills are learned. All of the collaborative structures and arrangements described in this text work only if students have and use a repertoire of interpersonal, academic, and small-group social skills. We often hear teachers, pressured to cover the requisite academic standards, resist teaching and then holding students accountable for using social skills, claiming that it takes too much time away from the real curriculum. We would argue that teachers cannot afford *not* to teach social skills. These skills enable students to abide by the classroom and social contract and live by the values underlying this contract. They are skills that contribute to students' current and future quality of life. Further, they are skills identified as essential to the vast majority of jobs today, which involve some sort of on-site or interdependent global teamwork.

It is beyond the scope of this chapter to construct a curriculum on social skills. Many well-established programs are available (e.g., Goldstein, 1999). However, Chapter 2 identifies some essential social skills for the small-group interpersonal collaboration required for effective cooperative group learning. Curwin and colleagues (2008) also identified essential social skills often lacking among students who get in trouble; namely, greeting others, making eye contact, making a request, getting someone's attention, following instructions, accepting criticism, and resisting peer pressure. Kagan et al. (2004) identified nearly 200 resources for developing not only social skills but other life skills in the personal (self-knowledge, goal setting, organization), affective (expressing feelings, relaxation), motivational (learned optimism, self-talk), cognitive (e.g., memory, moral reasoning), and physical (nutrition, play) domains.

Similarly to developing classroom procedures, the teacher collaborates with students so that they (a) learn, (b) see a model, (c) practice what the social skill looks like and sounds like, and (d) understand why a particular social skill is important to learn and use now and in the future. Posters explaining the steps involved in using the learned skills serve as reminders to students of what they know and can do interpersonally and can be used to prompt recovery at the second level of the pyramid.

Teaching Problem-Solving and Self-Control Scripts

For students to have flexibility and accountability in problem solving at any level of the self-discipline pyramid, they must have familiar problem-solving and

self-control procedures or scripts that they can activate for themselves or others, when needed or requested. Chapter 5 offers a host of tools students can use in problem solving. It describes 12 awareness plans that enhance problem solving; the generic Osborn-Parnes Creative Problem Solving (CPS) process, which can be adapted for almost any challenging situation; the simplified SODAS IF variation; and a Quick Brainstorm With the Kids variation that focuses students' creative thinking upon the brainstorming of ideas to improve their own situations. Chapter 6 provides examples of students and teachers working together to use CPS to correct curriculum, instructional, and discipline mismatches.

The "What are you doing?" helping script is specifically designed for adults to collaborate with students to help them take ownership of their behavior when it does not conform to the classroom or school social contract and expectations. Ideally, all students and adults in a school learn, rehearse, and systematically use the script to interrupt behaviors outside of the norms. This script leads to a plan and a commitment for engaging in alternative behaviors in the future that fall within the boundaries of the agreed-upon expectations. Systematic use of this script turns violations of norms into learning opportunities for students, as well as opportunities to get back into alignment with social contract expectations. The ultimate goal of learning and using the script systematically is for students to stop and think before acting and realize that it is easier to make a good (i.e., expectation-following) choice rather than having to go through the script with an adult if they make a bad (i.e., expectation-violating) choice. The script goes as follows:

1. What are you doing?
2. Is it helping? OR
   Does it comply with expectations? (If not, which expectation does it violate?)
3. How will you solve the problem? OR
   What could you do instead (that falls within expectations)?
4. Is this something you can really do?
   (Optional: Do you need help or a reminder to do this? What would help?)
5. When will you start? For how long can you do this?
6. What will you get out of following this plan?
7. Congratulations, you made a good plan/choice/decision!

We particularly like the script known as STAR—**S**top, **T**hink, **A**ct, **R**eview—which is a variation of the "What are you doing?" script. The STAR script is easy for students to complete at their desks or in a cooldown area, described in the next section. See the script in Figure 9.2 and notice the addition of the affective questions at the beginning and end of the script (i.e., "Right now I am feeling . . . ," "Now I am feeling . . . ."), which acknowledge and honor the emotions students experience when they are in distress and make poor choices. The addition of these affective questions helps students to recognize that making a better choice can lead to feeling happier and less frustrated,

angry, worried, sad, or bored. Students can feel more deeply respected when teachers ask, "Is there anything else you would like to say?"

A *self-control* script is a problem-solving script in which a student engages in self-talk to exert self-control. For example, if you reword the "What are you doing?" script above so that *you* is changed to *I*, the script now is a "What am I doing?" self-control script, which a student can think through alone and even memorialize as a written commitment to action.

Scripts can use acronyms to assist recall of the steps. Recall the SODAS IF problem-solving script described in Chapter 5 and consider the following three self-control scripts. The first two, STOMA and WIN, were described by Curwin

Figure 9.2 STAR Review Plan Script

STAR Review Plan

Student _____
Teacher _____
Date _____

Right now I am feeling: (circle one)

happy OK frustrated angry worried sad bored

	What did I do?
Stop	What happened because of what I did?
	What expectations (rule[s]) did I forget?
	What else could I have done?
	1.
	2.
	3.
Think	What might have happened if I acted differently?
	1.
	2.
	3.
Act	What do you plan to do the next time?
Review	Is there anything else you would like to say?
	Now I am feeling: (circle one)
	happy OK frustrated angry worried sad bored

and colleagues (2008, p. 151); the third script, POP, is used by preschool and primary school teachers in Nebraska (Personal communication, Richard Villa, April 17, 2009).

STOMA

Stop before you do anything.

Take a breath; think about what happened and what you want to do.

Options: What are the consequences of each choice?

Move on it (make a choice).

Appreciate yourself (for not losing control and doing your best).

WIN

What is the problem?

Identify possible solutions.

Narrow it down to the best choice.

POP

Problem?

Options?

Plan?

Cooldown and Planning Procedure

Kagan and Kagan (2008) described a simple cooldown procedure for intervening when students' emotions begin to "warm up." It can be used with an entire class or individual students. Teaching the cooldown procedure is a Level Three intervention; implementing it is a Level Two recovery action. As with all procedures and social skills, the procedure is described, modeled, and rehearsed, and the rationale for needing a cooldown time and place in order to regain composure is discussed. Students can collaboratively agree on the place, duration, and activity options (e.g., draw, journal, read, practice deep breathing) for cooldown. A nonverbal signal or a physical cue (e.g., a miniature fan or plastic ice cream bar) is agreed upon to signal that a student is to go to the cooldown area. If the entire class is asked to cool down, a verbal signal is used. For example the verbal cue might sound like "Ladies and gentlemen, we all need to use a two-minute cooldown. Everyone [e.g., close your eyes, rest your head on your desk] while I play our calming music."

Implementing cooldown begins with a reminder. For the class, it might sound like "Emotions feel like they are warming up. I believe we can calm down without using our cooldown procedure." For an individual, the reminder would be private and in the form of a signal, a short note, or a quick conversation, which might sound like this: "Rich, I believe you can manage your feelings so we don't need to cool down."

When implementing cooldown for an individual student, that student may be asked to use any of the problem-solving scripts described above to reflect upon what occurred and later confer with the teacher to make a plan. Cooldown does not excuse a student from work missed while in cooldown. Accountability for work is part of this procedure.

Personal Contracts

Individual teacher-student contracts are an excellent example of student-teacher collaboration for responsibility. Contracts assist a student with learning to keep commitments and follow through on agreements and plans. As with problem-solving and self-control scripts, the basic steps of contract development are to identify a problem and explore solutions, options, and results in a commitment to arriving at a solution. To motivate student participation, it also is important to communicate, up front, that the contract is being created out of the teacher's care and concern for the student and articulate how abiding by the contract will benefit the student in the short and long term. The student and teacher also discuss and agree upon a payoff or incentive that motivates the student to follow through and a logical consequence (inclusive of revisiting the plan and examining the temptations that led to breaking of the contract). Finally, a timeline and monitoring or data collection system is agreed upon. This all is recorded in a written agreement signed by both parties and, perhaps, the family. Figure 9.3 shows a contract and recording system developed by Jan Israel, an educational psychologist, and a student named Rich. Notice how simple this contract and self-monitoring system is. As you can see, Rich was successful in achieving his contracted goal within the time frame set out by his contract. Contracts, when crafted collaboratively in concrete, student language and with teacher validation of student input and suggestions, are powerful tools for promoting student self-control.

Somewhere Else to Plan—The Planning Room: Level Four of the Self-Discipline Pyramid

The fourth level of the pyramid represents a "somewhere else" place for students to go when they are not able to calm down or resolve a conflict or issue within the classroom. Virtually every classroom social contract and the accompanying expectations articulate in some way that students and teachers have a right to be safe, free from threat and disruption from learning. When a student refuses or is emotionally too out of control to use the in-class cooldown procedure or engage in planning using a problem-solving script, the solution is not to expel the student from the class and school but to create an opportunity for calming, thinking, planning, and committing to a plan to move forward. When a student disrupts the learning process in the classroom, he or she is invited to deal with the distress in a safe, controlled physical space staffed by adults knowledgeable about the school's chosen planning script (e.g., "What are you doing?" script). This space is referred to as the Planning Room, because the goal is for a student to (a) come to an emotional state where rational thinking can occur and (b) through a planning process under adult guidance, craft a written plan

Figure 9.3 Sample Behavior Contract and Recording System

Behavior Contract

I *Rich* understand I have a problem with:

Not doing what I am asked to do the first time I am asked.

I *Rich* understand I do this on an average of:

Five times a day

I *Rich* understand that if by *October 27th (in 3 weeks)*,

I average not more than *two times a day*,

I will earn the following reward:

A $10.00 gift certificate for Jamba Juice™

Rich Villa
Student Signature
Jan Israel
Teacher Signature

Recording System

Week	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Week 1	0	///	0	///	0
Week 2	/	0	/	/	/
Week 3	/	/	0	//	0

Key: / = each incident of not doing what is asked the first time asked.

Results: 13 incidents/14 days = 0.9 incidents/day (which is a lot fewer than 2/day!)

SUCCESS! Enjoy Jamba Juice™ with your friends!

for re-entering the classroom in a "response-able" way (i.e., being *accountable* for the disruption and choosing a better way of dealing with the situation in the future).

Table 9.1 suggests gatekeeping procedures for entering and exiting the Planning Room. There may be variations of these procedures, depending upon the policies and practices of a school (e.g., a student might first see a designated administrator or guidance person to determine if the Planning Room is the appropriate option). However, what remains constant is that students get a chance to take responsibility for their own behavior, practice using planning and problem-solving tools they can use the rest of their lives, re-enter the classroom with dignity maintained, be acknowledged for taking responsibility, and experience pride in working through to a solution.

It is absolutely essential not to mix functions of the Planning Room (e.g., study hall, time-out, detention, resource room) to ensure that the room does

Table 9.1 Planning Room Gatekeeping Procedures

Step 1. The decision to send a student to the Planning Room

Sending a student to the planning room is last-resort response after all other interventions (i.e., reminder, warning, calming in cooldown, planning in cooldown) have been unsuccessful at helping a student to re-engage. If a student does *not* agree to plan or if a student's behavior clearly indicates an inability (e.g., too emotionally distressed) to think clearly at the moment or an unwillingness to plan, say, "Jon, I am unable to plan with you. I need you to go to the Planning Room. Thank you."

Step 2. Getting a student to the Planning Room

The sending teacher fills out a form indicating the student's behavior. In schools where students change classes, the teacher also indicates a good time to return the student to class or a good time to meet with the student to review the plan, (e.g., "Send back ASAP." "Send back 5 minutes before class ends." "Please have the student see me at [time and place within 24 hours] so we can schedule a meeting to review the plan." If a student needs to be accompanied to the Planning Room, follow the procedure that was agreed upon to ensure the student makes it to the Planning Room.

Step 3. Getting a student back to class

Any plan developed by a student ultimately must be approved by the referring teacher, although the Planning Room teacher gives first approval. After a student writes a plan judged satisfactory by the planning room teacher, the student returns to the classroom with the plan and either returns to his or her desk or the cooldown area to wait for the teacher to review the plan. It is understood that the teacher will review the plan as quickly as possible (i.e., within 10 minutes). If the plan is acceptable to the referring teacher, the teacher signs it, and the student rejoins classroom activities. If the plan is not acceptable, the teacher has three choices: (1) have the student return to the Planning Room to revise the plan, (2) have the student stay at the desk or in the cooldown area and revise the plan, or (3) schedule a time to work with the student to revise the plan. In some schools, the Planning Room teacher goes with the student to the classroom.

Step 4. Increasing support to repeat visitors

After a student has been in the Planning Room two or three times during a marking period, a letter is sent to the parents explaining this, with a request to take some time to talk with their child about how school is going and how they might offer support.

After four or five visits to the Planning Room, a meeting is called, inviting the student, the referring teacher(s), a peer or two, the Planning Room teacher, and a designated administrator to engage in developing a more comprehensive support plan with and for this student. The purpose of this meeting is *not* to identify punishments or make threats! The purpose is to identify underlying causes and find solutions.

not become a dumping ground, place of punishment, or a place that stigmatizes students. A space is needed for the Planning Room. Ideally, it should be removed from the main traffic of the school and have enough room to accommodate at least three to four students at a time. The Planning Room also needs to be "staffed" with a trained adult throughout the day. In one of the author's schools with no budget for staff, the teachers considered the Planning Room so

important, they rotated spending a planning period a week as the Planning Room teacher. Whether one person or several people staff the room, whoever is staffing should be trained and proficient in problem solving, anger management, social skills instruction, and guiding a student through the steps of the "What are you doing?" planning script or whatever planning script is used.

A Planning Room is *not* magic; it is *not* a quick fix; it does *not* work for all students all of the time. It *is* a place for developing short-term solutions that build a student's sense of self-control. For this reason, the authors are very strong advocates of the Planning Room being an essential component of any school's system for promoting student responsibility.

Unfortunately, in the current zero-tolerance and "three strikes, you're out" climate fostered by federal, state, and local policies, this fourth-level "safety net" segment of the self-discipline pyramid has been overlooked. In most schools, it is completely missing as a way to teach and hold students accountable for socially responsible behavior. The authors suggest that rather than *zero tolerance*, what is needed to promote student responsibility is *zero indifference* to the students whose behaviors can make classrooms uncomfortable and sometimes unsafe. A Planning Room and the planning and problem-solving processes that occur there represent and signal zero indifference rather than zero tolerance to the very students who need the most support to behave within the boundaries of classroom and societal norms.

Individualized Wraparound Support: Level Five of the Self-Discipline Pyramid

Every student is entitled to a free and appropriate public education (FAPE). This implies that the educational experience is one in which students experience academic and social/emotional growth. Consequently, any behavior that interferes with a student's learning process needs to be addressed for the benefit of the student, as well as his classmates and the learning environment. The fifth and top level of the self-discipline pyramid involves processes for collaborating with an individual student for whom responsible behavior is an issue and an area in need of intensive support. The process for increasing support to repeat visitors to the Planning Room described in Step 4 of Table 9.1 is an example of intensive, individualized wraparound support.

Uniquely useful at the top of the pyramid is the process for developing a Positive Behavior Support plan. For a student eligible for special education, the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA) requires a student's Individual Education Program (IEP) team to address any behavior that interferes with the student's learning or the learning of others by developing a Positive Behavior Support (PBS) plan (Bombara & Kern, 2004). A PBS plan should be developed for any student for whom behavior impedes learning. However, it is mandatory for a student with an IEP who exhibits difficult behavior.

To develop a PBS plan requires a team inclusive of the student to assemble to try to detect and understand what the function of a behavior is for the student; that is, why a chronic difficult behavior is occurring. The process of researching and hypothesizing the function of the behavior is referred to as a functional

behavioral assessment (Steege & Watson, 2009). A student may or may not be aware of the function of his or her behavior. Therefore, the first step involves gathering information to determine what need a student is trying to fulfill through the behavior. Is the student trying to gain attention? Does the behavior indicate boredom or a need to expend energy? Is the behavior an attempt to avoid or escape a situation. Is it related to impulsivity and self-regulation?

Based upon observations of and interviews with the student, as well as interviews with others—teachers, parents, peers—who know the student in multiple contexts, a function of the behavior is hypothesized and agreed upon. Then an individualized PBS plan is developed and implemented. Essentially, a PBS plan is a teaching plan that specifies what the student will do and what teachers and family members will do to alter the environment and teach and reinforce behaviors to replace the behaviors of concern. For more information on the specifics of positive behavior interventions, see the *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*, available online at http://pbi.sagepub.com.

The Making Action Plans (MAPs) futures-planning process and the student-led IEP procedures described in Chapter 7 also are examples of self-determination processes in which a support team of caring individuals assembles to develop a plan with a student intended to result in long-term educational gains. If behavioral change is a targeted educational outcome, then both of these processes can serve as powerful wraparound supports for a student with behavioral challenges.

SUMMARY

> *In the powerful environments of schools or other group settings, relationally-oriented practices enable children and youth to develop "controls from within."*
>
> —VanderVen & Brendtro (2009, p. 3).

This assertion, made by the coeditors of an issue of *Reclaiming Children and Youth* entirely devoted to examining ways in which to develop controls from within, is based upon the concepts of Fritz Redl who, in the 1940s and 1950s, pioneered strengths-based, caring, and collaborative versus coercive approaches for working with troubled and troubling youth (Redl & Wineman, 1952). We endorse and support their statement, particularly when thinking about how to foster responsibility—flexibility and accountability—as controls from within for children and youth.

Do you see the approaches included in the self-discipline pyramid (see Figure 9.1) as relationally oriented and collaborative? Can you picture how you might work with other teachers and students in your school to promote student flexibility in and accountability for their behavior through teacher-student collaboration rather than more traditional, externally imposed discipline procedures? How might you use the self-discipline pyramid conceptualization of developing controls from within to approach your administration or school board about ways to improve student behavior? How might you engage students to experiment with some of the structures and strategies described in

this and other chapters to develop responsibility? What do you do that goes beyond the ideas presented in this chapter and expands one or more of the five levels of the self-discipline pyramid?

In closing, we remind the reader that this chapter in no way is meant to be a comprehensive treatment of discipline procedures but rather an idea jogger to just what the title says—collaborate with students to develop responsibility. We hope it does just that!