VII
Psychological Influences

Psychological Models

There are several approaches to behavior change with a strong psychological orientation. Examples include the psychodynamic approach of Mary Wood and Nicholas Long, the rational-emotive approach of Albert Ellis and the personal construct approach of George Kelly. A simplified presentation of Ellis' Rational Emotive theory is provided in the section on crisis counseling. Psychological approaches view the locus for a problem to be primarily within a student.

A problem can have many causes. The following are a few sources of problems that can be addressed within an educational setting. One source of behavior problems that has a psychological component is misperceiving or misconstruing an environmental event. When an environmental antecedent for behavior is not correctly understood, the emotional arousal associated with the event is often inappropriate. Inappropriate emotional arousal usually motivates an inappropriate response. Inappropriate responses are most likely when the antecedent event is experienced as aversive and is construed to be personal and harmful. Another source of behavior problems with a psychological component is an impulsive style of responding to situations. Students need to learn how to assess the potential results of their response tendencies. They must learn to consider alternative responses and make deliberate response choices rather than reactive responses. A third source of behavior problems with a psychological component is the egocentric pursuit of one's goals. Students need to learn that others have goals that are just as dear to them as their's are to them. They must also recognize that interpersonal conflict is frequently the result of a clash of goals. Students need to be taught how to resolve conflict and achieve their goals.

Crisis Counseling

When emotional arousal results in acting-out behavior, crisis counseling may be helpful. The main purpose of crisis counseling is to help a student understand the dynamics behind his or her behavior. Unlike more formal counseling, crisis counseling is usually directive. That is, crisis counseling is teacher-centered. It is necessary for crisis counseling to be teacher-centered because it must be brief. It needs to be brief because teachers seldom have the time for non-directive, student-centered counseling. There are several possible models for crisis counseling. The Rational-Emotive Therapy (RET) model, developed by Albert Ellis and his associates, is one of these models. The RET model focuses on the problem of misperception or maladaptive construing of events referred to earlier. We can represent the model by the sequence A-B-C-D-E. There are at least three styles of counseling based on the RET model. They are crisis intervention, group problem solving and individual therapy. This author has discussed the use of all three styles in another text. Let's examine the meaning of each letter notation in the model.

Activating Event: An activating event is a stimulus to which a student is responding. For example, a remark made by another student.

Belief: A belief is the interpretation or meaning given to an activating event. For example, the remark is interpreted as an insult. The nature of a belief will be clear in a student's self-talk about an activating event.

Consequence: A consequence is a state of emotional arousal such as anger. It is caused by a troubled student's belief about an activating event. Anger may then motivate some action such as striking the student who made the remark.

Disputation: Disputation challenges a troubled student to justify his or her interpretation of an activating event. Disputation also involves exploration of alternative beliefs that could result in appropriate feelings and behaviors.

Effect: An effect is the later outcome of crisis counseling done with a student.

Now, let's look at an illustration of crisis counseling based on the RET model.

A new popular song on the radio has the following line in it, "Short people ain't got no reach." Mr. Waller has taken his class, a group of middle school students, to the school gym to play basketball. As the group walks across the gym, one of the students, Ron, is quietly singing. Ron is singing the part of the song that contains the line about short people. Gary, who is short for his age, is walking behind Ron and suddenly lunges forward and shoves Ron from behind. There is a scuffle between Ron and Gary. Mr. Waller moves in and pulls the two boys apart.

1. The first step in crisis counseling is to remove the student from the crisis environment or situation. The student is then given a cooling-off period to allow the level of emotional arousal to diminish. This is important because it is difficult to conduct a rational discussion with someone who is in a highly charged emotional state.

Mr. Waller asks one of the other students to organize the game and get it started. He then takes Gary by the arm and escorts him back to the classroom. Mr. Waller conducts himself in a calm, matter-of-fact manner. He does not engage in any verbal interaction with Gary about the event. When they get to the room, he asks Gary to take a seat and try to calm down. Mr. Waller then goes and checks on the students in the gym. Mr. Waller's handling of the situation will prevent further conflict. It will also give Gary a chance to be alone for a few minutes to calm down.

2. The second step is to get the student to provide a behavioral description of the activating event.

Mr. Waller returns from the gym and sits down in the seat next to Gary.

Mr. W: "Gary, what was Ron doing when you shoved him in the back?"

Gary: "He was making remarks about short people not being able to play basketball."

Mr. W: "Wasn't he singing some of the lyrics in that new song by Whippoorwill. It sounded like a tape he played the other day during free-time?"

Gary: "Yeah."

3. The third step is to get the student to recognize what he believed about the activating event.

Mr.W: "What did you say to yourself when you heard him singing the song?"

Gary: "I don't know."

Mr. W: "Weren't you thinking: He's putting me down?"

Gary: "Yeah, he was making fun of me and trying to keep anyone from wanting me on their team."

4. The fourth step is to bring out the relationship between the event, the belief about the event, and the response to the event.

Mr.W: "So you said to yourself: He's making fun of me. It was then that you got angry and shoved him?"

Gary: "Yeah, that's about it."

Mr. W: "So, tell me why you shoved Ron."

Gary: "Because I believed he was making fun of me and got mad."

5. The fifth step is to challenge the basis for the belief.

Mr. W: "How do you know Ron was making fun of you?"

Gary: "Because, he was."

Mr.W: "Isn't it possible that he was just singing the song because he likes it?"

Gary: "It's possible."

Mr. W: "You don't really know that Ron was making fun of you, do you?"

Gary: "No."

6. The sixth step is to explore an alternative interpretation of the event.

Mr.W: "What is something else that you could have said to yourself about Ron's singing?"

Gary: "Well, I could've just thought he was singing."

Mr. W: "Yes, you could have thought he was happy about getting to go to the gym, couldn't you?"

Gary: "Yeah, I guess so."

Mr. W: "There was certainly more evidence that he was happy than that he was trying to make fun of you, wasn't there?"

Gary: "Probably."

7. The seventh step is to examine what the behavioral outcome might be if the student uses the alternative belief.

Mr.W: "What if you had believed that Ron was singing the song because he was happy? How would that have changed what you felt and did?"

Gary: "Well, I guess I wouldn't have got mad and shoved him."

Mr. W: "Yes, and you would be in the gym playing basketball right now instead of in here talking with me, wouldn't you?"

Gary: "Yeah, I guess I made a mistake."

8. The final step is to get a commitment from the student to try an alternative interpretation the next time a similar situation arises.

Mr.W: "Well, we all make mistakes sometimes. In the future, I think you need to look at situations more carefully and make sure you have understood them. If you do that, you will be less likely to make this kind of mistake again."

Gary: "OK., Mr. Waller, I'll try not to fly off the handle next time."

Mr.W: "Good. If I bring Ron down here, do you think you can apologize for shoving him?"

Gary: "Yes, I'll apologize. I was probably wrong about what he was doing."

Mr. W: "OK., I'll go get Ron. After you apologize, we can all go back to the gym and play a little ball."

If you think about Mr. Waller's remarks in the illustration, you will see that he was quite directive in his counseling. Mr. Waller's questions always gave Gary a chance to come up with points about the situation on his own. However, he often directly suggested ideas about the situation to Gary. In a formal counseling relationship, Mr. Waller would try to lead Gary to arrive at the critical points about the situation on his own. However, Mr. Waller was not counseling Gary regularly. He was only providing brief, immediate counseling about a crisis situation (see Figure 1). Thus, he needed to be directive to keep the session moving and to allow him to get back to his responsibilities to the group. If Gary needs individual therapy, it would be more appropriate for a school counselor or crisis teacher to conduct the intervention. The time required for regular, formal counseling sessions is too great for a classroom teacher.

Decision Training for Social Competence

Students need a general strategy for assessing social situations. They also need to learn to decide what they should do in those situations. Teach these skills through weekly group instruction on decision making. Before beginning this group activity, some or all the points below need addressing. There may also be other considerations that are unique to your class.

1. The time for and length of the group should be set.
2. The rules that will govern participation in the group; for example, rules for speaking should be set.
3. There should also be a rule that requires closure during each session on the topic under consideration.
4. Determine a proper seating arrangement for the group. Usually, a circular or semi-circular seating arrangement will promote participation better than other arrangements.
5. Seat assignments may be helpful if there are students you need to separate to reduce potential disturbances.

A Summary Guide to Crisis Counseling

1. Remove the student from the situation for a brief cooling-off period.
2. Ask the student for a behavioral description of the activating event.
3. Help the student recognize the belief held about the activating event.
4. Reveal the relationship between the event, the belief about the event and the response to the event.
5. Challenge the basis for the belief.
6. Explore an alternative interpretation of the event.
7. Examine the probable behavioral outcome of applying the alternative belief to the event.
8. Get a commitment to try the alternative belief in a similar situation in the future.

Figure One

Usually, the instruction is initially done by developing role-play scenarios based on problem situations that students frequently face. Give selected students roles to play in a scenario. After the role playing, the participants can discuss the problem situation. The rest of the group serves as an audience and can make contributions to the discussion. After discussing the problem situation, make a decision about how to handle the situation. Next, the role-play participants should act-out the solution. Participant selection should rotate each week so everyone gets a chance to be an active participant. The problem scenario should also change each week to provide a variety of problem situations. Some possible situations for scenarios include the following.

1. Unjust blame.
2. Teasing.
3. Name calling.
4. Rejection.
5. Disagreement.
6. Ridicule.
7. Peer pressure.
8. Criticism.
9. Discrimination.
10. Frustration.

The above list is certainly not exhaustive. Additional ideas for scenarios will arise during day-to-day interactions between students. Be alert for situations that arise among students for other problems you can use to expand your decision-making curriculum.

Before beginning a lesson, select participants to play the roles in a scenario. Give each participant a copy of the scenario to read over or describe the scene and their role in it to them. The student playing the central character should try to imagine that the situation is really happening to him or her.

Here is an example of a scenario based on number (1) above.

William is walking behind Jason in the lunch room. William is carrying a glass of juice. Bif is sitting at a table with his back to William and Jason. As William passes by, he spills juice on Bif's back.

Bif jumps up and yells, "You idiot! What do you think you're doing? You've ruined my new shirt!"

William says, "Hey, man, I didn't do it." He points at Jason, who is right behind him, and says, "He deliberately bumped my arm."

After the participants act-out the scenario, ask the following questions to guide the discussion.

1. What happened?

Ask the student playing Jason to describe what happened. The purpose here is to review the facts to be sure that it is clear to everyone what took place.

2. What do you feel?

Ask Jason to describe how he feels about what happened in the role-play scenario. Jason will probably say that he felt angry. He could, however, report some other feeling such as fear or confusion. At this point, ask other students who watched the role play how they would feel if they were in Jason's place.

3. What do you want to do?

Ask Jason to describe what his first impulse was toward William. If he is angry, it will probably be something inappropriate such as verbally or physically attacking William. Also, seek comments from the students who watched.

4. What will happen if you do it?

Explore with Jason and the group what the most likely results are if Jason attacks William. The goal is to help the students learn to anticipate the likely results of their actions in a problem situation. If they fail to identify the most likely results, you should point them out.

5. What else could you do?

Seek ideas from Jason and the group about other possible courses of action in the situation. The goal is to help the students learn to generate possible alternative responses to a situation. Write the various alternatives on the chalkboard. If the discussion fails to produce important alternatives, you should suggest them.

6. Which response is probably the best one?

Help Jason and the group assess the available alternatives and select the best one. Base the choice on a set of criteria displayed on the chalkboard or on a piece of poster paper. The goal is to help the students learn procedures for selecting a response. Below are some possible criteria. Students should use such criteria to judge the alternative responses. You may need to guide the students as they learn to apply the criteria to various alternative responses.

a. Is it possible to use the alternative in this situation?
b. What is the likely result of using the alternative?
c. Is the probable result a better outcome than the initial response impulse?

7. What are you going to do?

At this point, ask Jason to decide which response is the best choice. Members of the group can also say if they agree with Jason's choice and why or why not. Guide the decision making process if that is necessary. If the consensus is that Jason made a poor choice, he should make another choice.

8. Would you show us how to perform the response?

Once there is a course of action, ask Jason to show how to perform the response. If Jason cannot perform the response, poll the group for someone who knows how to perform the response. Ask this student to make the response. If no one can show how to perform the response, conduct a discussion about the response. Once the response is analyzed, list and sequence the parts on the chalkboard. Jason or another student perform the response.

The process for making decisions teaches students to think about the consequences of acting on impulse, consider alternatives and then make a deliberate or reflective response (see Figure 2). Another way of evaluating alternative responses to a conflict situation could be in terms of what one's goal in the situation is and how important one's relationship is with the other party. The basic responses available in a conflict, in terms of these two criteria, are discussed in the next section on conflict resolution.

Conflict Resolution

Conflict resolution (CR) is an approach to dealing with interpersonal conflict that relies largely on the process of negotiation. This approach has a number of advocates including Thomas Gordon in his Teacher Effectiveness Training (T.E.T.) program and David Johnson in his book Reaching Out.

Johnson makes several useful points in his discussion of CR. First, not every conflict is negotiable. Students need to understand that some issues are not appropriate for negotiation. For example, a conflict with someone over participating in or contributing to an illegal activity should not be negotiated. Students need to be able to say "no" as well as negotiate.

Second, it is helpful for students to learn to recognize different approaches taken by people in conflict situations. Johnson discusses five basic approaches.

1. The Turtle or Withdrawing. Giving up both your goal and the relationship with the other person. This is a useful strategy when dealing with someone who may be dangerous. It is often used when the other party is very angry. It is frequently a temporary strategy used so the other party has a chance to calm down.

A Summary Guide to Decision Training

Ask the student playing the central character in the scenario:

1. What happened to you?
2. How do you feel about what happened?
3. What do you want to do?
4. What will probably happen if you do it?
5. What else could you do?
6. Which response is probably the best one?
   a. Why?
      1. Is it possible?
      2. What's the likely result?
      3. Is this the best outcome possible?
7. What are you going to do?
8. Can you or someone else in the group perform the response?

If no one can perform the response, analyze its parts and sequence them on the chalkboard. Go back to step 8.

Figure Two

2. The Shark or Forcing. Pressing your goals without regard to the relationship with the other person. This is a useful strategy when your goal is very important and the relationship with the other person is not. For example, when you are trying to get the best price on something you are buying.

3. The Teddy Bear or Smoothing. Giving up your goal to protect the relationship with the other person. This is useful when your goal is of little importance and the relationship is very important. For example, when a friend wants to see a particular movie or play a specific game and you don't have a strong preference.

4. The Fox or Compromising. Giving up part of your goal but insisting on achieving part of it also even if it diminishes the relationship with the other person. This is useful when there is a middle ground that partially meets the moderately strong goals of both parties. For example, when you and a sibling must share something such as a TV. or car. Both parties may end up with less access than they would like, but both retain an equitable amount of access.

5. The Owl or Negotiating. Fully meeting your goal and maintaining the maximum possible relationship with the other person. This is useful when an agreement is needed that fully satisfies everyone's needs in a situation. For example, your sibling wants to use the family room for his band to practice and you want to use it for a billiard party. You work out a deal where by the band provides music for the party and you both use the room at the same time.

Third, students need a few general purpose rules to aid them in selecting a strategy for dealing with a problem. Here are several guidelines to consider when in a conflict.

1. Don't ignore conflict.

2. Use humor, when possible, to reduce conflict.

3. Don't engage in win-lose solutions when relationship is important.

4. Compromise when time is short and relationship is important.

5. Initiate negotiation when there is time and the relationship is important.

Gordon recommends CR as one method of resolving teacher-to-student, student-to-student and group-to-group conflicts. Gordon presents CR as a "scientific method of problem solving." The method according to Gordon has six steps:

1. Define the problem (conflict): Involve only the parties to the conflict in the process. All parties must be willing participants. Each session should last long enough to complete at least one step in the process. Have each party clearly and accurately state what they want in the conflict situation and why. The parties should express themselves with "I want...because" messages, not "You should..." messages, e.g., "I want quiet because I can't concentrate when there is a lot of noise," NOT "You should shut up." That is, the statements should reflect what each party wants and why, not the

solution they desire. Write down or record the different wants expressed. In short, the definition of the problem is a statement of the conflicting wants, not the conflicting solutions.

2. Generate potential solutions: Generate as many solutions as possible. Don't require justification or documentation. Don't edit or criticize. If necessary, use open ended questions to facilitate participation. Record the suggested solutions.

3. Evaluate the solutions: Ask the participants to indicate which solutions they don't like. Cross off any solution that anyone objects to for any reason. Have the person who suggested each of the remaining solutions argue their case for the solution. Make sure everyone has an opportunity to express their feelings about the solutions being considered.

4. Make a decision: Test each remaining solution by having all participants imagine how each solution would work in practice. Discuss possible flaws in each solution. Work to achieve a consensus to at least try one of the solutions. Don't permit anyone to be pressured into trying a particular solution. Make sure everyone understands that this will be a trial only and if it doesn't satisfy everyone an alternate solution will be sought.

5. Determine how to implement the solution: Have the participants determine WHAT has to be done to put the solution into practice, WHO will be responsible for what, WHEN the solution will be implemented and HOW to judge if it is being properly carried out. Write down a record of the implementation agreement.

6. Assess the solution: Test the solution after it has been implemented by determining if the problem has reoccurred and if not, if everyone is satisfied with the solution. If the solution fails, repeat the process beginning with whichever step the participants all think appropriate.

Initially, the process of conflict resolution can be taught to students by using hypothetical conflicts in which students role play the characters in the conflict. The process can be taught to all of your students or to a few students who will serve as peer mediators. After you have trained your students or selected mediators in the process, you should look for opportunities to employ the process to resolve real conflicts that arise. In the beginning you will probably have to serve as a facilitator to get your students to use the process. Reinforce any instances where you observe the process being voluntarily used without you having facilitated or prompted its use. Don't forget to employ the process, when appropriate, to handle conflict between yourself and a student. In short, be a good model for what you are promoting.

Illustration

Situation: Bill and Sue are at the back of the classroom, at the computer station, engaged in a heated debate. Ms. Tranquillity goes back to see if she can help them settle their argument.

Ms. T: "What's the problem here. You're disturbing everyone."

Bill: "Sue is hogging the computer and won't let me have a turn."

Sue: "I was here first. He should go find something else to do."

Ms. T: "Well, let's see if we can settle this using the CR strategy we've been practicing in group. Bill why don't you start by telling us what you want."

Bill: "I want to use the computer to type a paper."

Ms. T: "And, why is that so urgent?"

Bill: "Because the paper is due tomorrow and this is the only chance I'll have to type it and it has to be typed."

Ms. T: "Sue, what do you want?"

Sue: "I want to practice my key boarding skills."

Ms. T: "And, why is that so urgent?"

Sue: "Because we are going to have a test tomorrow and I need to practice."

Ms. T: "Well, can either of you come up with a possible solution."

Bill: "I could type my paper and then Sue could practice."

Sue: "Bill could type his paper at home tonight."

Ms. T: "Are there any other solutions?"

Sue: "I could practice and then Bill could type his paper."

Bill: "Sue could type my paper for me."

Ms. T: "Does anything else come to mind?"

Sue: "No."

Bill: "No."

Ms. T: "Sue, how do you feel about Bill's first suggestion?"

Sue: "That won't work. By the time he gets finished I won't have enough practice time."

Ms. T: "Bill, how do you feel about Sue's first suggestion?"

Bill: "I don't have a computer at home, nor a typewriter."

Ms. T: "Bill, how do you feel about Sue's second suggestion?"

Bill: "By the time she finishes typing, there won't be enough time to type the paper."

Ms. T: "Sue, how do you feel about Bill's second suggestion?"

Sue: "Well, I don't think I should do his work for him. Getting a paper ready to turn in is a lot of work."

Ms. T: "Sue, do you have anything in particular that you've got to practice typing?"

Sue: "No. I'm just using some old notes."

Ms. T: "Then, you could just as easily type Bill's paper as the notes?"

Sue: "Yea, I guess so."

Bill: "I've got an idea."

Ms. T: "What's that Bill?"

Bill: "Sue could use my paper for practice and just not worry about the errors. When she has it all typed in, she should have enough practice and she can turn the computer over to me so I can edit it and print it."

Ms.T: "It looks like we only have one solution that might work both of you. Sue, would Bill's last suggestion satisfy you?"

Sue: "Yea, I could do that, if it's OK. with Bill."

Bill: "It sounds like a good deal to me."

Ms T: "OK, we have about 50 minutes left in the period. It's about 2:10 right now. Sue look at Bill's paper and tell me if you can have it typed by 2:40."

Sue: "Yes, it looks like I could be finished with it by 2:40."

Ms. T: "Will that be enough practice for you?"

Sue: "Yes, that would be about the same amount I planned to do."

Ms.T: "Bill, do you think the remaining 20 minutes will be enough time for you to edit and print the paper?"

Bill: "Yes, if Sue is any good."

Sue: "I'm real good. I bet I'm better and faster than you are."

Ms.T: "OK, let's not start another argument. Let's just get going and get this done."

Sue: "All right."

Bill: "Fine. Just be sure I get my 20 minutes."

Sue: "You'll get it."

Ms. T: "We're agreed then. Sue, you get to work on the computer. Bill, you need to find something else to work on until Sue finishes. I'll keep an eye on the time see how things are coming.

In this illustration the teacher is in the role of mediator. The teacher helps Bill and Sue negotiate and arrive at a solution to the problems that is satisfactory to both. If Bill and Sue were trained in conflict resolution they could have negotiated this conflict for themselves without the teacher's assistance. Likewise, if there were trained peer mediators in the class, Bill and Sue could have requested negotiation assistance from one of them. A summary of the process illustrated is in Figure Three.

Group Psychology

Several writers, such as Mary Bany and Lois Johnson as well as Fritz Redl, discuss the role of group psychology as it applies to classrooms. Writers on group psychology base their work on several assumptions about groups. Three basic assumptions follow.

1. Groups have their own psychology, separate from that of the individuals that make up a group.
2. Group psychology results in behavior for the group that is different from the behavior of individuals.
3. A major influence on group psychology is a group's perception of persons who have authority over it. In educational settings this includes the role of teacher.

A Summary Guide to Conflict Resolution

A student must determine:

1. If the conflict is over an absolute or relative issue.

    a. If absolute, stand fast.

    b. If relative, seek a solution.

In seeking a solution, a student must decide:

2. How important one's goal is?

3. How important the relationship is?

After deciding about the importance of the goal and the relationship, choose a strategy to resolve the conflict:

1. Withdraw from the situation.

2. Force your goal.

3. Smooth over the conflict.

4. Compromise your goal.

5. Negotiate your goal.

    a. Define the problem

    b. Generate possible solutions

    c. Evaluate the solutions

    d. Decide on a solution

    e. Determine how to implement the solution

    f. Follow-up assessment of the solution

Figure Three

There are four basic characteristics of functional classroom groups. The first functional characteristic is cohesiveness. Group cohesiveness depends largely on communication and cooperation. For good group cohesiveness to develop, there must be an atmosphere that promotes good communication. In particular, the class atmosphere must be one that encourages an exchange of ideas and opinions among the members of a group. That is, the atmosphere should encourage communication from student-to-student and from students-to-teacher. An emphasis on teacher-to-student communication is not conducive to group cohesiveness.

A group should be free to provide feedback to individuals about their performance in the group. Further, positive feedback from members of a group, or the teacher, about group performance aids the development of cohesiveness. Therefore, class guidelines about appropriate communication are very important. There should always be ample opportunities for students to express their ideas and opinions. However, students must recognize that freedom of expression requires respect for everyone's ideas and opinions. The use of classroom organization for communication is also important. For example, use seating arrangements that encourage communication. Also, plan a class schedule that allows frequent opportunities for communication and interaction among group members.

Group success promotes cooperation among members of a group. That is, accomplishing group goals increases a group's sense of effectiveness. The perception, by the members of a group, that the group is an effective organization promotes further cooperation among the members. A significant source of feedback about the achievement of a group is the group's ability to generate rewards. Therefore, you must make sure there are suitable rewards available to a group for accomplishing its goals. It is also important to help a group set goals that are realistic and that it can accomplish.

One technique for promoting cooperation among members of a newly formed group is to use cooperative learning tasks or jigsaw lessons. The basic form for a cooperative learning task is a group assignment. Every member of a group should receive some essential piece of information needed for the task. No one member can have all of the information needed. Tell individual members they should share their information with the group only when asked. When asked, they should answer only specific questions. This will both promote interaction among the group's members as well as aid in the development of question-asking skills. A group's efforts should result in a single product. All members of a group are equally responsible for the group's product. When deserved, there should be positive feedback about a group's efforts. There should also be a group reward for success at its task. An example of a task for a cooperative learning group might be to produce a report on a country. Each member of the group should receive information on one aspect of the country. For example, only one student would have information on each of the following: Customs, resources, trade and industry, and politics.

The second functional characteristic is coordination. A group must learn to organize its efforts to accomplish a goal. The classroom teacher is a secondary leader of a group. As the group's expert, you have a macro-management role to play. This means you must set up the overall guidelines for pursuing goals. In addition, there will be a primary leader of a group who is a student

member of the group. The student leader has responsibility for micro-management of a group's goal-directed activities. One essential responsibility of a primary leader is to help a group develop a plan for accomplishing its goal. While leadership of a group is important for coordination, leadership should not be authoritarian. Therefore, you must have a mechanism for group decision making. For example, one method is consensus on or majority agreement to a particular course of action. Decisions reached through this process must be binding on all members of a group, including the student leader.

The third functional characteristic is structure. Here, structure refers to status relationships, roles, norms and goals within a group. According to social psychologists, such as Rudolf Dreikurs, individuals need social recognition and status. A major source of such recognition and status is groups. Children and youth meet this need largely through the family and peers groups. Educational groups within a classroom qualify as peer groups. Status achieved within such a group depends on one's ability to make unique contributions toward the success of a group. Therefore, you must help each member of a group show his or her strong point to the classroom group. A valuable ability doesn't have to be an academic skill. Organization skills, creativity, presentation skills, artistic ability, technical skills, communication skills and social skills may be the source of an individual's status within a group.

A student may seek group recognition through inappropriate strategies. These can include attention, power, revenge or isolation strategies. Such strategies can be very detrimental to group success. Some common symptoms of such strategies follow.

1. Attention seeking may lie behind such behaviors as: Clowning, cutting-up, whining or complaining.
2. Power seeking may lie behind such behaviors as: Stubbornness, arguing, bragging and lying or being bossy.
3. Revenge seeking may lie behind such behaviors as: Vandalism stealing, blaming, gloating or vicious competitiveness.
4. Isolation seeking may lie behind such behaviors as: Ineptness, helplessness, dependence or social withdrawal.

Students who employ these strategies have not met their group status needs. Therefore, you should take steps to help such students find a better way to contribute to the group. Appropriate group participation will lead to satisfaction of the need for status.

While there are many possible roles that may arise within a classroom group, there are four common roles. First, there is the role of leader. A leader's behavior is often contagious, since other members of the group will imitate the behavior of the leader. Contagion, of course, can be either good or bad depending on the behavior modeled by a leader. A group produces its own leader. A natural leader that comes from within a group may not be the same individual as an appointed leader. When there is both a natural and an appointed leader, a power struggle may develop. Such a struggle will be detrimental to the development of an effective group. If the natural leader wins the struggle, a likely outcome, the struggle may become a struggle between the natural leader and the teacher. An

appointed leader is often seen as a proxy for you and gets a negative response from the group. Therefore, try to identify natural leaders and develop a positive leadership alliance with them.

You must also recognize that the natural leader may change as the situation changes. The natural leader in a recreational group may not be the same individual in a science group. The first step in developing a positive leadership alliance is to avoid a potential power struggle. You can avoid this by appointing someone to a leadership role who is a natural leader. The second step is to provide an incentive for the natural leader. An incentive to coordinate the basic goals of the group with your goals.

Second, there is the role of clown. A clown can fill either a negative or positive role. When a clown fills a negative role, his or her behavior may vary widely. It can range from simple attention seeking that is disruptive to revenge seeking behavior that is cruel. When a clown fills a positive role, his or her behavior will be friendly and supportive. Such behavior can serve to defuse potentially explosive situations in a group through humor. Therefore, when a clown arises within a group, try to determine if the individual fills a negative or positive role. A negative clown is probably a student using attention seeking as an inappropriate strategy for achieving status. When a clown arises that is filling a positive role, no action is necessary. A positive clown uses legitimate ways of achieving status within a group and makes a positive contribution.

Third, there is the role of instigator. An instigator can be either positive or negative. When an instigator is in a positive role, he or she is usually a natural leader. A positive instigator can give task-oriented leadership to a group. The instigator's skill at manipulating and acting through others can be a positive contribution toward achieving group goals. When an instigator is in a negative role, he or she is usually a defeated leader. A leader who has lost a power struggle with a more able natural leader or with an appointed leader. Defeat of an instigator by an appointed leader means defeat by a proxy for the teacher.

The motivation for a negative instigator is either power or revenge. A negative instigator can be very detrimental to the success of a group. Therefore, you must determine if an instigator's motivation is negative or positive. If there is negative motivation, determine if it is a power or revenge strategy. If power or revenge is an instigator's strategy, help the individual find a better way of achieving status within a group. It is often difficult to identify instigators due to their skill at acting through and manipulating others. Negative instigators are particularly difficult to identify because they hide behind misdirection and subterfuge.

Fourth, there is the role of fall-guy. The role of fall-guy is always a negative role. The role will only arise in a group that is under negative leadership and is therefore working at cross purposes with the teacher. The fall-guy, in such a group, achieves status within the group by taking the blame for misbehavior. The fall-guy insulates trouble makers from punishment.

When a willing fall-guy is not available, a group under negative leadership, will usually choose a scapegoat to fill the role of blame taker. A scapegoat can be either a weak individual or subgroup within a larger group. The primary difference is that a fall-guy is a willing member of a

group and a scapegoat is a victim of a group. Therefore, you must make punishment certain for those actually guilty of misbehavior. You must avoid punishing a fall-guy or a scapegoat. Next, you need to deal with the larger issue of negative leadership. Only by successfully dealing with this larger issue will the problem be constructively solved.

Another structural aspect of a group is its behavioral norms or expectations. Groups develop a set of performance and behavioral expectations for their members. These group norms limit competition between individuals within a group and help accomplish the goals of the group. Obviously, group norms may either aid or impede educational goals. Group norms are easily seen in a group's reaction to a stranger. If the stranger is a new student, a group's behavior will often be an exaggerated demonstration of the group's norms. The exaggeration quickly communicates the "ground rules" for group participation to the new student. Thus, a new student can be either positively or negatively indoctrinated and absorbed into the group in a minimum amount of time.

When the stranger is an adult, such as a supervisor, a group will exaggerate the behavior that arises from its norms. If the norms are congruent with your goals, the exaggerated behavior will reflect positively on you. The group will make the teacher look good in the eyes of the stranger. If the norms are at odds with the your goals, the exaggerated behavior will reflect negatively on you. The group will try to make you look bad in the eyes of the stranger.

Further, groups may have both formal and informal goals. In educational groups, the formal goals are usually task related. You should not impose formal goals but negotiate them with the group. Imposed goals may reduce or end a group's motivation for accomplishing the goals. Imposed goals may even create hostility and resistance to accomplishing the goals. Informal goals are those that naturally evolve out of interaction within a group. Informal goals will usually be congruent with a group's perception of the formal goals. If the formal goals are imposed and negative, a group's informal goals may be to thwart the formal goals. If the formal goals are agreed upon and positive, the informal goals will support the formal goals. Agreed upon formal goals that lead to congruent informal goals promote both cohesiveness and achievement within a group.

It is in your interest to work with students to set goals rather than dictate them. Cooperative goals are somewhat harder to set for several reasons. First, an atmosphere conducive to free expression of ideas and opinions by students to you must be present. If there is no such atmosphere, students say what they think you want to hear rather than what they think. Under such conditions, it is not possible to arrive at cooperatively set goals. Second, you must sell your goals to the students. Third, you must be willing to negotiate and make compromises.

The fourth functional characteristic is group self- discipline. To be fully functional, a group should feel that it has a role in disciplining itself. Use a group problem-solving approach for routine discipline problems. This approach to group discipline promotes self-discipline within a group. There are several procedural steps for group problem-solving.

1. Set the ground rules for all participants in a group to follow. For example, set rules to guide speech and to limit the length of each session. Sessions can run from ten minutes to an hour. The lower the developmental level of the students the shorter the session should be.

2. Set up guidelines for the leader of the session such as the following.

   a. Encourage all members to participate.

   b. Try to get balanced input; that is, get input from as many group members as possible.

   c. Don't allow blaming and griping during a discussion and don't respond to it if it occurs.

   d. Ignore poor grammar, slang and speaking style.

   e. If you think someone in the group is lying, let the group challenge it.

   f. Keep the discussion focused on the problem.

   g. Require a solution for the problem by the end of the session.

3. Use a routine format for each session. The following is an example of such a format.

   a. Define the problem: The teacher or the group leader should describe the problem. Ask members of the group to share their experiences with and feelings about the problem.

   b. Propose solutions: Ask the members of the group to propose any possible solutions to the problem that they can think of.

   c. Judge the proposals: Set criteria against which you can judge each proposed solution, such as the following.

      1. Is the proposed solution possible?
      2. Is it likely to produce the desired effect?
      3. Is it likely to produce any undesirable side-effects?

   d. Select a solution based on the evaluation. If more than one solution appears possible, select the solution by a routine decision-making procedure, for example, majority vote. If none of the solutions appear appropriate, go back to (b) and recycle.

   e. Discuss the solution and determine how to carry it out.

   f. Carry out the proposed solution according to the agreed on procedures.

   g. After a trial period, of two or three weeks, reconvene the group to check how the solution is working.

All teachers need to be aware of basic group psychology. Understanding and using group psychology can produce desirable effects such as more efficient learning and better behavior.

7
Activities

1. Develop a description of an hypothetical (or real) activating event that is misconstrued, leads to negative emotional arousal and results in acting-out behavior. Conduct a simulated Crisis Intervention session.

2. Develop a role play scenario (story) for one of the ten problem situations for decision making. Conduct a simulated decision making session.

3. Develop descriptions of student conflict situations that illustrate each of Johnson's five goal and relationship combinations. Indicate what response the central character in the description should probably make.

4. Develop a role play scenario (story) for a conflict resolution lesson. Conduct a simulated negotiation using a mediator.

5. You can facilitate the development of cohesion in your classroom through the use of jigsaw lessons. Describe a lesson that could be taught using this approach and how you would conduct it.

6. A major component in coordination is cooperation. Describe a process that could be used by student work groups to select a leader, agree on task goals and make decisions.

7. Briefly describe a problem student that you have had experience with that you think fits one of the four student roles discussed in the chapter. Indicate what kinds of behaviors each student engaged in that led to you assign them a particular role.

8. Structure in a classroom is important for behavior management. If the formal structure is perceived negatively, the informal structure will be directed at resistance. Describe a procedure you could follow to cooperatively set classroom rules with the students in your classroom. The rules should address both conduct and classroom policies pertaining to things like late assignments.

9. Group participation in discipline will promote responsible behavior. Describe a process, other than the one discussed in the chapter, through which a class could discipline its members relative to the conduct rules established in Activity eight.