

Understanding and Managing Children's Classroom Behavior

Creating Sustainable, Resilient Classrooms

Second Edition

Sam Goldstein, PhD

Robert B. Brooks, PhD



John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

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For Janet, Allyson, and Ryan, and for my mother-in-law
Lynn Kirsh, whose great resilience is an inspiration.

S. G.

With love and appreciation to my wife Marilyn; my sons
Rich and Doug; my daughters-in-law Cybèle and Suzanne;
and my grandchildren, Maya, Teddy, Sophia, and Lyla. You
have all added much joy and meaning to my life.

R. B.

Only in quiet waters do things mirror themselves undistorted.
Only in a quiet mind is adequate perception of the world.

—Hans Margolius

When dealing with people, let us remember we are not dealing with creatures of logic, we are dealing with creatures of emotion, creatures bustling with prejudices and motivated by pride and vanity.

—Dale Carnegie

Science is nothing but developed perception, interpreted intent, common sense rounded out and minutely articulated.

—George Santayana

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Foreword

LAWRENCE LEWANDOWSKI, PhD

This book, authored and guided by Goldstein and Brooks, has been revised to include the most up-to-date research on the understanding and management of challenging behavior in children. It is unique in that it has both breadth—covering nearly every element of classroom environments a teacher might encounter—and depth—providing detailed analysis and advice on each element. It is organized and written in a way that sophisticated concepts and research can be understood easily and incorporated into the classroom. I hope every teacher in training is required to read it in the context of dealing with students with special needs and/or challenging behaviors. This book does such a thorough job of explaining the characteristics of various disabilities, behavioral disorders, and emotional states that any professional in the field would be wise to keep it as a desk reference.

Changes in our society and educational system have created classrooms of diverse learners with wide-ranging differences and complex needs. Coupled with mandates to improve learning outcomes, leave no child behind, and strict educator accountabilities, teachers' responsibilities have never been greater. Both classroom teachers and support staff can rely on this book to help them meet those responsibilities. It is a comprehensive, instructive, and practical guide that will help any teacher do a better job of meeting the academic, cognitive, social, developmental, and emotional needs of students.

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It is encouraging to see a book that focuses on students' strengths and abilities rather than on their clinical symptoms and shortcomings. *Understanding and Managing Children's Classroom Behavior* also emphasizes effective strategies that can help children learn and grow in competence and confidence. If teachers apply the techniques and strategies outlined in this book, they will surely help educate a generation of competent, resilient, and emotionally healthy individuals and prepare them to handle the complex challenges of tomorrow.

I would put this book in a class by itself. It would be ideal as the core text for educators in training and continuing education classes. Every teacher needs to become better acquainted with the knowledge in this book, and no other source presents this information in such a readable and useable way. My daughter is studying to become an elementary school teacher; I will give her a copy of this book as soon as it is published. Thanks to Sam, Bob, and an all-star cast of experts for this outstanding resource.

Professor of Psychology
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Foreword

ROBERT H. PASTERNAK, PhD

In 1980, I began more than a decade of work at a state institution for incarcerated juvenile delinquents. While much discussion occurred bemoaning the purportedly high recidivism rate among juvenile delinquents, it soon became apparent that the empirical evidence supported the identification of two distinct subgroups: those that were able to successfully return to the school and community; and those that were unsuccessful and entered the adult criminal justice system. I was able to conduct a research project on the variables that discriminated between these two subgroups, and learned that resilience and a sense of optimism were critically important to those young people who were able to benefit from their incarceration and return to school, community, and family.

Sam Goldstein and Bob Brooks have written eloquently about these issues in this book, and contribute to the body of literature providing educators and consultants with the information they need to become knowledgeable about the concepts of resiliency, and learned optimism. While I studied the seminal work of Emmy Werner and others, I found that many teachers were unaware of the concept of resiliency, and the key role that they and members of the learning community can play in fostering resiliency in all students, including students with disabilities.

During my tenure as the Assistant Secretary for the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services at the U.S. Department of Education (2001–2004), I had the privilege of serving on a number of

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Presidential Commissions, including the President's New Freedom Commission on Mental Health. This Commission noted the lack of mental health services in our schools, and the sad reality that the majority of students who need mental health services in schools don't receive them. This book helps teachers and other members of the learning community become aware of the biopsychosocial factors related to student success, and the need to nurture these skills in America's classrooms. Although No Child Left Behind places needed emphasis on accountability, outcomes, results, and the development of proficiency in academic skills, many students continue to struggle to become proficient due to behavioral and emotional problems. Teachers must learn the science of teaching reading and math to address struggling students, however, this book provides the critically needed information required to meet the behavioral and emotional needs of today's students.

Special educators are cognizant of the fact that students in the category of "Emotionally Disturbed" exhibit the worst results of any disaggregated category among the 13 categories of students with disabilities eligible to receive special education and related services. While a paucity of data exist to suggest the reasons for these unacceptable and chronically poor results, teachers who understand the biopsychosocial factors underlying the behaviors exhibited by their students have a dramatically higher probability of effectively educating their students and helping them become proficient in the areas of reading and math. This book helps teachers acquire these skills and improve their ability to serve all students, particularly those who exhibit behavioral and emotional problems requiring intervention.

Former Assistant Secretary for the
Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services
U.S. Department of Education

Preface

In 1647, a law known as the “Old Deluder Law” was enacted in Massachusetts to promote education among the commoners. The first sentence of the act revealed that its real purpose was to forestall Satan, the old deluder, from gaining souls by providing the masses knowledge of the scriptures. In knowledge, a reservoir of strength to guide behavior could be found. By the close of the American Revolution, numerous social, economic, democratic, and political forces came into play, making education vital for a new nation. Formal education helped citizens attain material wealth and power. As the United States grew, schooling became increasingly necessary for successful industrialization, scientific achievement, and government. By the early 1800s, state boards of education were enacted. On July 3, 1839, three young women reported for the first teacher training program. Today, there are hundreds of colleges and programs with over 100,000 students preparing for the public service of teaching. The new millennium has led to an increased effort to, as President George Bush advocates, leave “no child behind.” There has been an increasing emphasis on effective methods and strategies coupled with new insight and understanding that success is based not just on the acquisition of knowledge but on building strengths and abilities as well as developing the mindset of the effective learner.

As the United States assimilated millions of immigrants in the twentieth century, education achieved a paramount role in creating the American melting pot. Although Horace Mann wrote in the 1850s of children whose school behavior was less than acceptable, only in the past

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35 years has students' behavior toward each other and toward their teachers become of prominent concern to educators. In this text, we define behavior broadly to include academic performance, communication, and socialization as well as relationships. As noted in the first edition of this book and still true today, it is an unfortunate statement of our times that in some school systems ensuring the safety of teachers from their students and managing student misbehavior to the point of severe violence has become a higher priority than the job of preparing children to become functional adults.

The first edition of this book was not written only in response to this epidemic of misbehavior, violence, and indignity in the schools. Rather, its purpose was to contribute to the movement to bring education in an effective way into the twenty-first century. Methods of education, the design of curricula, the management of student behavior, and the development of emotionally healthy individuals are increasingly less based on philosophical or hypothetical ideas but find their tenets in scientific research blended with practical experience. Our focus is to mesh the curricula and methods of education with the fast-paced technological drive of our society. The age of the isolated one-room schoolhouse or, for that matter, the larger but disconnected school in which children are mere numbers is changing. In this rapid communication age, every school must create connected citizens, to each other, to their teachers, to their families, and to their communities.

The first edition of this book was structured on a clinical model of children's classroom behavior and functioning. Chapters were divided based on clinical conditions (e.g., Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, depression, anxiety, learning disabilities). This completely rewritten second edition reflects a shift away from categorical models of understanding assessment and intervention, to dimensional models that speak to qualities of thinking, feeling, and behaving that either facilitate development and behavior or cause risk and adversity.

In addition to a significant change in focus, this second edition contains 11 new chapters, 3 extensively rewritten chapters, and 4 chapters that have been modified and updated from the original edition. Additionally, there is a new appendix addressing language milestones in school-age children and two new Forewords. There are also 16 new contributors to this book in addition to the return of three contributors from the original volume. As such, this second edition serves more as a companion to, rather than a replacement for, the first edition.

Preface

As with the first edition, Parts I and II provide essential background information and offer a thorough overview of current knowledge about children's behavior, emotions, development, learning, and, most importantly, resilience or protective factors. Classroom consultants will find an extensive, research-based presentation of these phenomena, their definitions, causes, and interventions as they relate to the educational setting. There are also a number of new chapters in this second edition.

Part III strongly reflects the significant shift toward creating sustainable classrooms by focusing on the mindsets of effective teachers and students. We take a protective approach consistent with our work in resilience. We move away from a deficit model and instead focus on identifying and harnessing strengths as a means of coping with adversity. We move away from a model that suggests that symptom relief equates with changing long-term outcome. We have come to appreciate that the qualities of resilience, the qualities we describe and define in this book, provide a critical foundation to foster and facilitate school success. We move away from a "fix it" approach to a model that begins by appreciating the differences within each child and teacher, identifying strengths and assets, and building on those.

We are very pleased that so many of our colleagues have agreed to contribute to this book, lending their knowledge and expertise. Mark Steege and colleagues provide a working model to complete functional behavioral assessments in the classroom. Jack Naglieri and colleagues provide a cogent overview of the relationship between thinking, learning, and behavior in the classroom. Lauren Braswell provides an update of her chapter in the first edition, focusing on cognitive behavioral approaches in the classroom. Educator Sandra Rief provides practical strategies for teachers to improve self-regulation. Janay Sander and colleagues focus on helping consultants assist teachers in creating climates in the classroom to promote emotional health and assist in working with children experiencing internalizing problems related to depression and anxiety. Emily Warnes and colleagues provide an extended contribution from the first edition focusing on facilitating social skills in the classroom. Myrna Shure focuses her thinking model on bullies and victims in the classroom, offering a problem-solving approach to treatment and prevention. Larry Diller contributes to a chapter providing an overview of medications and their relationship to behavior in the classroom.

This text cannot stand alone. It will not replace caring, conscientious, well-trained teachers nor will it serve as a substitute for a curriculum that engages children, making them active participants in their

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education, holding their interest, bringing a love for education, and most importantly, preparing them to be world citizens in the twenty-first century. We believe the first edition of this book accomplished its goal by contributing to a humanistic approach to understanding human behavior and education. It is our hope and intent that this second edition continues and fosters this important work.

SAM GOLDSTEIN, PhD
ROBERT BROOKS, PhD

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S. G.
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PART

I



Background

CHAPTER

1

Introduction

SAM GOLDSTEIN AND ROBERT BROOKS

It has been more than 10 years since the publication of the first edition of this book. During that time, there has been an increased emphasis on assessing the effectiveness of schools to teach basic skills, especially in the areas of mathematics, reading, and language. Terms such as *high stakes testing*, *accountability*, and *merit pay* have become a major part of the educational landscape. Some educators have lamented a focus on what they perceive to be “teaching to the test,” while others believe holding schools accountable for student success is long overdue.

At the same time that educators are feeling the pressure of high stakes testing, there is a renewed awareness that the social/emotional dimension of a student’s life must not be neglected (J. Cohen, 1999). This awareness has been prompted, in part, by events such as the Columbine High School shootings, as well as the impact that the attack on the World Trade Center in New York City on September 11, 2001, has had on our nation’s psyche. Unfortunately, rather than embracing the need to educate the “whole” child, a dichotomy has emerged prompting some educators to perceive that nurturing a student’s emotional and social health is mutually exclusive from the task of teaching academic skills (Brooks, 2004). However, it is our position that strengthening a student’s sense of self-esteem and emotional well-being is not an “extra” curriculum; if anything, a student’s sense of belonging, security, and self-confidence provides the scaffolding that supports the foundation for enhanced learning, motivation, and self-discipline. Required is an educational atmosphere

capable of instilling what we have called a *resilient mindset* in students. The schools must now provide social, emotional intervention hand-in-hand with academic education (Merrell, 2002; Weist, 2003). In fact, a sustainable school environment must be capable of meeting the social, emotional, and academic needs of all students (Elias, Zins, Graczyk, & Weissberg, 2003).

This second edition reflects our shift away from efforts to just manage classroom behavior toward the creation of a framework to develop sustainable classroom environments by shaping the mindsets of educators, students, and consultants. In this book, we examine the components of effective educators. Such educators are capable of appreciating the forces that truly motivate students, even those with behavioral and developmental challenges. These educators are capable of recognizing that their activities in the classroom day in and day out contribute not just to students' self-esteem and resilience, but it also provides an essential foundation for successful transition into adult life.

Our hope for the future lies in our children; children instilled with the skills necessary to create a sensible world. The more effective teachers are in developing and implementing strategies for fostering learning and a sense of competence and optimism in their students, the better chance students have for success. The more effectively consultants can articulate the components of effective mindsets for teachers and students, the more they make these frameworks conscious guides for educators. When students are actively involved in the learning process, when they feel connected and make contributions, discipline as author E. B. White once wrote, "Will take care of itself."

This second edition is built on our work over the past 10 years to bring a resilience model into the schools. The basic feature of resilient children is that their self-esteem and sense of competence are intact or if damaged, capable of repair. Resilient children possess feelings of hope and optimism, of ownership and personal control. They are nurtured by charismatic educators capable of providing experiences to reinforce their strengths and enhance their feelings of self-worth. In such an environment, all children, even those with challenging behavior can flourish. We acknowledge the goal for all students is to develop self-esteem, self-respect, and compassion first and foremost. The school environment, as the late Dr. Julius Segal noted and Dr. James Comer reminds us, is a prime location for resilience to be nurtured. The mindset of effective educators and productive consultants provides a framework for understanding the life-long impact adults can have on their students based on day-in and day-out classroom activities. Unlike our previous book that