

Introduction

If you cannot keep your students in their seats, you have no chance of achieving classroom control. Frequently, teachers tell me that they have several problems going on simultaneously and wonder which one to target first for modification. Invariably, I recommend out-of-seat behavior (if it is on the teacher's list). When students are out of their seats, there is no end to the trouble they can get into. They can go to another part of the classroom to speak to a classmate. They can poke another student in the back. They can damage classroom property.

Of course, there are good reasons for students to be out of their seats. But the behavior should be under the control of the teacher not at the whim of the student. A student can get up to sharpen a pencil, work on the computer, or use the restroom. But these actions should only be engaged in with the permission of the teacher or when they conform to classroom rules. In this way, the teacher can regulate the number of children who are out of their seats and for how long, and obtain classroom control.

The problem of out-of-seat behavior has been around for as long as there have been schools. Yet there are steps a teacher can take to reduce this problem without too much difficulty. This book focuses on a set of steps that can be applied to out-of-seat behavior as well as to other classroom management problems.

Steps for Modifying Behavior

I. Choose a Behavior To Modify

In this case the choice is simple. Out-of-seat behavior is the behavior to modify. If other behaviors are a problem, they can be dealt with later. Meanwhile, when out-of-seat behavior is reduced, other problems sometimes also diminish, or disappear, and student productivity sometimes increases.