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Ms. W. is a 2nd year teacher with a 6th grade class. She is still unsure of herself and her abilities. There are many days she feels absolutely powerless to deal with behaviour of some of her students. Her students are well aware of her insecurities, and certain students take advantage of her whenever they can. One particular problem she has is that a small group of children are constantly out of their seats talking with one another during work time. During a maths lesson we observed Ms. W. looking disconcertedly at three students who were out of their seats and talking by the pencil sharpener. After several minutes she allowed the children to talk and eventually walked up to them and asked them to "please try to sit down and get to work". The students said they would as soon as they eventually sharpened their pencils. Five minutes later they were still there and she again went up to them, this time stating, "I just don't know what to do with you kids. If you don't do your work that's your problem. I give up with you!" The children started toward their seats, but got side-tracked talking to another child whose seat was on the way. In frustration, Ms. W. threw her hands up in the air and just shook her head. When we spoke with her about the situation after class she stated, "I've learned it doesn't work to get on the children, they are impossible kids who really don't listen to what I say anyway. I am so frustrated with this class I could just scream".

2

Mr. T. is a 5th grade teacher. He believes the only way to get children to behave is with "iron-fisted" discipline. To say the least, he believes in being tough on the children "for their own good". His new class has been particularly difficult for him. He has several students who have had a history of defying teachers. One of them, Michael, was disruptive the day we observed. During the class discussion, Michael would constantly poke his neighbours and make fun of those children who were responding to Mr. T's questions. Upon observing Michael's behaviour Mr. T. walked over to him, grabbed him by the arm and shouted "I have had it with you, young man. If you act like a "fool" I'll treat you like one. If I catch you acting that way again, you will be sorry you were ever in my class". Several of the children sitting by Michael began to giggle as Mr. T. berated Michael. Michael sat there fuming, plotting how he would get back at the teacher and the children who had laughed at him. When we spoke with Mr. T., he shared that he didn't like getting so angry with Michael but he just did not know what else to do with him.

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Ms. L. was a 1st grade teacher. She was a skilled and confident professional. She believed children needed firm, positive limits and was prepared to do what she could to help set such limits in her class. There were several children in her class who had difficulty controlling aggressive behaviour, Paul being a particular problem. When we were present, Paul was upset and began to hit a boy he was playing with. Ms. L. went up to Paul and firmly told him, "Paul, stop fighting". She continued with "Paul, I will not tolerate your fighting. You have a choice, either stop fighting in this class, or I will send you to the corner whenever you fight". Paul began to protest "I don't want to go to the corner". Ms. L. responded "then you will have to control your temper and not fight". Paul was well behaved and played appropriately the rest of the day. In our conversation with Ms. L., she emphasised that she did not like to discipline children, but she knew they needed the limits only she could provide in the classroom. She concluded, "Paul knew I meant what I said. I have sent other children to the corner when they need it, and I would send him too".