

# Monitoring Interactions with Students

(Excerpt from *The Solution Book*, Topic Booklet E)

## Monitoring Interactions with Students

**Identify a 30-minute period when it is the most difficult to be positive because of frequent behavior problems.** This is often the half hour before lunch or the half hour before students go home. Do not try to monitor interactions all day; focus only on the 30-minute period during which most behavior problems occur. It should be the period when positive interactions most need to increase.

**Record this period using an audio or video recorder.** While an audio recorder is less intrusive, a video recording will allow you to analyze nonverbal feedback. The purpose of recording the period is to give you an objective means of monitoring your interactions with students.

**Explain to your students why you are recording the class. (optional)** If you wish to discuss the recording session with your students, the discussion might go as follows:

*"I'm concerned about the number of problems we've been having during math. I'm afraid that we aren't making as much progress as we could be. So I want to record our lesson today to see if I can*

*determine ways to improve the way the period goes. It's possible that I spend too much time giving you directions or reminding you about what you should be doing. If that's the case, we'll all have to change the way we've been behaving. I'll have to stop scolding you so often, and you'll all have to cooperate by behaving maturely and listening to my directions the first time they are given.*

*"Tonight, I'll listen to the tape so I can decide what needs to be done. I'll let you know the outcome tomorrow. Does anyone have questions?" (Turn on the tape.) "Please get out your math books and turn to page 47."*

A discussion of the recording lets students know that you're interested in improving how the classroom functions. It tells students that everyone shares responsibility for how smoothly each period goes. It also indicates that everyone can work at doing things better—even the teacher. The only disadvantage to discussing the plan is that some students may misbehave just to see how you will react. If this possibility makes you uncomfortable, you need not discuss the recording session with your students.