Attempts to avoid failure or embarrassment
Dealing With Displays of Inadequacy. If children have been sufficiently rebuffed in their efforts to gain attention, they may become so discouraged that they behave like blobs. When they do not achieve their goals of attention or power or revenge, they may just give up. These children wish to be left alone. They believe that their case is hopeless and want their teachers to believe it, too. Many teachers do give up on these children.

Students who display inadequacy do so for one of the following reasons:

1. They are overly ambitious. This is probably the most frequent cause of giving up. These children despair of not doing as well as they want to do. If they cannot be first, make the best grades, be the leader, be the star athlete, or the like, they refuse to put forth any effort. Children with debilitating overambition will not participate in an activity unless it provides them an opportunity to prove their superiority. These children must be helped to see how they defeat themselves. They must learn to continue trying even though others may outperform them.

2. They are overcompetitive. Some children are convinced that they have no chance to do as well as others. They believe that they are not good enough to be successful, and comparisons with others usually serve only to confirm their belief. Unfortunately, parents and teachers sometimes try to motivate these children by making such comparisons: "When I had your sister in my English class, she was my best student." "Why don't you do as well on your tests as your brother?" These comparisons should be avoided for all children, but especially for those who are overcompetitive.

3. They are oversensitive to pressure. Students who are oversensitive to pressure feel that they cannot do as well as others expect. They therefore refuse to live up to others' expectations. Two of the misfortunes of our present educational system are the emphasis on avoiding mistakes and the practice of trying to motivate children through criticism.
and competition. Teachers need to tell children that they are all right as they are and to remove pressure by being less critical. Children need to learn and grow in a less competitive environment. They must be given sufficient time to achieve at their own speed.

Teachers must learn never to give up on students who believe themselves to be inadequate. They must provide these students an abundance of support and encouragement. Encouragement is especially needed when students make mistakes. These students need to feel successful and accepted for what they are. Because of the competitive environment found in most schools, students who are more successful are likely to reject their less productive peers. One of the most important duties teachers can perform is to help other students accept those who feel inadequate.

Pause and Consider
1. Without consideration for the specifics of Dreikurs' discipline approach, how critical is it to determine the motives of students before dealing with associated behavior? Explain your reasoning.
2. Explain what you would have done in each of the following situations described in the text that is consistent with Dreikurs' logical consequences approach: (a) David and Ms. Edwards, (b) Gordon and Mr. Larsen, and (c) Tui and Mr. Bingham.

PREVENTING DISCIPLINE PROBLEMS

It is obviously better to prevent discipline problems than to correct them after they occur. Unfortunately, many children have long-standing problems that need correction. These tenacious problems are often extremely difficult to solve. Misbehavior that has become a habit is very resistant to change. Children may be convinced that their way of behaving is the only one that can adequately satisfy their needs. Dreikurs suggests several procedures that can be used not only to deal with these problems but to prevent them as well.

Encouragement Versus Praise

Encouragement is a useful technique for preventing discipline problems because it corresponds so well to children's goals. Children seek approval, and encouragement provides a legitimate means of receiving it. Encouragement focuses on effort rather than achievement; it thus gives positive feedback to children who are trying hard but may be somewhat unsuccessful. Encouragement stimulates them to continue trying. When encouragement is properly given, students gain status and satisfaction more from learning than from relative achievements. Test scores, for instance, have less value than learning itself. Children who have been encouraged accept themselves as they are, even when they are less than perfect. Encouragement can also solidify their place in the group. They can feel that they are contributing members of the group and that the group accepts their efforts as valid. In this process, students become aware of their strengths without undue focus on their weaknesses. When children exhibit more realistic confidence in their abilities, they are less likely to cause discipline problems.

Praise needs to be differentiated from encouragement. Praise focuses on the level of accomplishment or achievement; encouragement highlights the value of learning. Praise is given for high achievement and is ordinarily reserved for those who are more successful according to some measure of performance. Praise fosters the idea that only test performance is worthy. Students who receive praise for their efforts do not work for self-satisfaction.