

children and adolescents need. We become truly eclectic not when we try to have one approach that fits all, but when we know when and how to switch to another approach when a child or group demands it—as was the case in the following example of a student teacher having to switch approaches and methods.<sup>1</sup>

### When Tried and True Approaches and Methods Fail

One student teacher had an excellent reputation as a graduate teaching assistant in the university's laboratory school. There, she excelled in applying a constructivist approach to behavior and classroom management and using a nonauthoritarian approach and getting children to discuss and negotiate their conflicts. However, when she took a part-time job in a large, urban after-school program, her nonauthoritarian approach and guidance methods completely failed. The children ignored her and continued to misbehave. Eventually, she learned how to adapt by adopting a more authoritarian, but still caring, approach and by using methods designed to provide more direction and give her more control.

## Defining Approaches

When speaking about their own approach to behavior and classroom management, wise educators everywhere are apt to speak about the need for building relationships, teaching students how to behave properly, **supporting development**, being organized, and **accommodating diversity**. That is, **relationship building, learning, development, organization**, and accommodating diversity are apt to be core concepts in almost any developed, effective approach to behavior and classroom management.

### Meanings Given to Core Concepts

However, the meanings of relationship building, learning, development, organization, and accommodating diversity are apt to differ from one approach to another. For example, approaches that concentrate on having children behave in a certain way (raise hands at meeting time, follow the rule about no talking during study hall, etc.) are likely to use the term *development* to refer to the acquisition of “good” or appropriate behaviors. In contrast, approaches derived from a constructivist tradition, one that emphasizes finding ways to actively involve students in problem solving, are likely to use the term *development* to refer to mental processes and the acquisition of mental tools needed for a child to eventually become a responsible, caring adult. Adopting one meaning of development