

Classroom Management is Prerequisite for Effective Teaching

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***Abstract:** Classroom management refers to the wide variety of skills and techniques that teachers use to keep students organized, orderly, focused, attentive, on task, and academically productive during a class. When classroom-management strategies are executed effectively, teachers minimize the behaviors that impede learning for both individual students and groups of students, while maximizing the behaviors that facilitate or enhance learning. Generally speaking, effective teachers tend to display strong classroom-management skills, while the hallmark of the inexperienced or less effective teacher is a disorderly classroom filled with students who are not working or paying attention. Classroom management is the way in which an educator delivers the classroom curriculum, lessons and the environment they provide for their students. There are many strategies that are used to provide students of all ages with an effective learning experience. Classroom management strategies create consistency in the classroom, keep students on task, and set consequences to correct students' wrong behaviors.*

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Classroom management is defined as the methods and strategies an educator uses to maintain a classroom environment that is conducive to student success and learning. Although there are many pedagogical strategies involved in managing a classroom, a common denominator is making sure that students feel they are in an environment that allows them to achieve.

Key Elements for Effective Classroom Management

Classroom management is the use of procedures and teaching techniques that promote a safe and efficient learning environment. For primary school teachers, disciplinary method and behavioral expectations are central to this system. As students age, the managerial style of instructors may change to assist students in the development of self-guided learning. Although every teacher will have a unique style of management to meet each class' needs, the same elements can be found consistently.

Classroom Design

Although often overlooked, the first element of classroom management is intentional design. Use the positioning of our desks, displays, storage and equipment to create a warm and welcoming room. This should be done during summer vacation prior to the arrival of students. Make sure we have removed all unnecessary and distracting items from our classroom. This is also a good time to check our room for safety hazards.

Rules

Develop rules that foster respect, caring and community in our classroom. Make our expectations for behavior clear at the beginning of the year by reviewing these rules with students. Continue to reinforce our rules throughout the course, and post them in a visible location. Consider having students sign a contract that shows they have read the rules with their parents and understand how to behave properly.

Discipline

Classroom rules must have concrete consequences. Students will test the limitations of each teacher from the very first day of school. Be firm, fair and consistent. Begin by warning a student and having them confirm their knowledge of the classroom rules. Follow-up continued disruption by issuing demerits, detention, or other official reprimands. Never, hit, harass, embarrass or yell at students-this is counterproductive, unprofessional and often illegal.

Scheduling

Keep our class in order by staying on time and on task. Do classwork during class time, leaving plenty of room for in-class assignments. Cramming work and instruction too close to other activities can lead to disruptive behavior and poor comprehension. There should be space before and after every room change, lunch, and recess for students to settle down. Having a regular daily schedule helps us and our kids prepare for upcoming tasks. Be firm but fair with due dates. Always leave room for extenuating circumstances. Never leave room for procrastination.

Organization

Stay organized inside and out. Keep our student files, assignments, lesson plans and administrative paperwork in order. It sets a good example for our students and keeps us from wasting instructional time looking for materials. Share this system with our students. Post the classroom calendar, homework schedule and assignments on the board. Allow students to see how we take notes. It helps them distinguish irrelevant information from essential details. Encourage self-directed learning by providing students with their own agenda (notebook). We may require students to have their notebooks checked at home or during class.

Instructional Technique

Although we may not have flexibility over the content of our curriculum, teachers are able to convey information as they see fit. Tailoring our instructional technique to the grade level, subject area, and students is very important. A hands-on demonstration of electricity will keep 8th graders engaged, but may prove chaotic in a 3rd grade classroom. Vary the style and intensity of our lessons. Follow-up lecture-style sessions with relaxed group activities. Consult our colleagues for ideas for new lessons. Learn about each of our student's learning style. (What is their learning curve? How do they learn best? Do they work well in groups?) These observations are crucial when fitting our teaching style to our student's needs.

Communication

Communication is the most important aspect of classroom management. It is essential to have clear and consistent lines of communication with our administration, colleagues, students and parents. Without it we will lose the respect of peers, the attention of students, and the cooperation of parents. Be responsive to the concerns of others. Be flexible and willing to accommodate reasonable requests.

Respect

An important part of classroom management is respect. Before any instruction begins, a mutual amount of respect must be developed between student and teacher. Students must understand that there are certain rules that they must follow to ensure their success. Similarly, instructors must understand that students are not necessarily willing to give respect to an instructor without feeling they have reason. Setting guidelines for the classroom will help develop the respect that is needed so students can do their best.

Consistency

Order and organization make a classroom run smoothly. Having a consistent set of procedures and routines that the students are familiar with will help the classroom run like a well-oiled machine. Many educational experts, including Harry Wong and Fred Jones, emphasize the importance of having a set of procedures that are practiced and revisited from day one. This might include having a procedure for lining up for lunch or handing in papers. The less time that students have to be off-task the more likely the teacher will be able to have quality classroom management.

Proximity

Proximity helps instructors manage what is going on in the classroom. Walking around the room and standing next to students who may be causing a problem will usually eliminate the problem

quickly. It is important for instructors to know that their standing in one place in the classroom will make students feel as if they are allowed to do what they would like.

Seating Arrangement

Classroom management can be affected by how the seats are arranged in the classroom. The instructor needs to think about the order of the room and how it will affect what their expectations of the students. For example, if the instructor chooses to put the desks in pairs or groups, they need to be realistic about the fact that there is bound to be some amount of socializing. The seating arrangement also needs to be organized in a way that the instructor can easily move around the room and monitor student behavior.

Trial and Error

Any style of classroom management is going to involve some trial and error. Finding out what works with students and allowing the class to develop into a safe and secure environment takes time. The most important element of classroom management is allowing our students an opportunity to understand that our rules are a part of giving them the best education possible.

The objectives of classroom management

The objectives of classroom management are for students to gain behavioral, social and academic success in a structured environment that caters to tolerance, exemplary behavior and learning. Effective classroom management means implementing strategies that create a safe, fair and rule-based learning environment for children to flourish in. Prompting and assisting students to understand the procedures and expectations of the teacher and classroom through positive reinforcement, high expectations and discipline instills independence and enhances student growth.

Structure/Preparedness

The goal and result of a well-managed classroom is structure. Teachers provide structure through creating and staying on a schedule, planning curriculum and extension activities and exhibiting preparedness. Student's model behavior and work after the teacher, so modeling responsibility, pride, appropriate language and high expectations helps students do the same. Classroom structure is maintained through rule-based procedures such as morning routines that focus kids on an academic task when first entering the classroom, center routines that promote moving from one center to the next when cued, lining up for lunch or recess, getting books out at the beginning of each class, cleaning the classroom, and packing bags before dismissal.

Rule-Based Behavior

A goal of classroom management is a sound and rule-based environment that represents a setting where learning occurs. A system of rules and consequences that define and promote tolerance of classmates and teachers through respect and high standards for individual and group behavior results in a safe learning environment that students feel comfortable entering and participating within. Rules should be written, posted and implemented to exhibit positive discipline including specifics such as sharing materials, taking turns, raising hands, cleaning, using respectful language, and completing class work and homework within designated time limits. Reviewing the rules daily and referencing them to showcase or reward students who are obeying, or to discipline those who are disobeying with a warning, reprimand or consequence leads to consistency and establishes the teacher as the authority figure of the classroom.

Academic Achievement

Student academic achievement is an objective of classroom management. Teachers create student achievement through upholding high expectations by alerting students to the quality of behavior and work that is accepted within the classroom and school. This occurs through ongoing encouragement, positive peer pressure, adherence to rules and modeling. Conferencing with students and parents regularly provides communication and a forum in which to assert expectations. Class discussions on effort and using exemplary student work as proof of reaching and surpassing goals establishes students as role models, helping others aspire to gain attention for above-average work. Posting high-achieving work or behavior awards on bulletin boards builds self-esteem and pride in children, influencing them to continue exceeding expectations.

Differentiated Instruction

Classroom management achieves the goal of teachers catering to the individual student by providing different types of modalities for kids to gain and apply knowledge. Classrooms that engage students in learning and following procedures offer more opportunities for teachers to implement effective instruction through experiential learning activities and differentiated instruction to students on a one-on-one basis or in small groups. An educator can entrust a well-managed class to follow procedure and directions while she attends to varying student needs and ability levels.

Role of Students for Classroom Management

It is the teacher's job to formulate a classroom management plan to facilitate the development of an effective learning environment. The student also has an obligation in the development of a quality learning environment. Following individual rules or expectations is just the beginning. In addition to complying with posted rules, students should be expected to show respect for self and others and meet all behavioral and academic expectations.

Comply With Behavioral Expectations

Students should strive to comply with all behavior expectations. Behavioral expectations that are verbally outlined and posted as part of the classroom management plan should be incorporated into each child's daily routine and life skill set. Each student deserves access to a quality educational environment, but unless each student endeavors to contribute to the development of that environment, that environment won't exist. A quality educational environment will exist if all students make an attempt to comply with all behavioral expectations.

Comply With Academic Expectations

It is imperative that students strive to comply with all academic expectations in the classroom. This is not only for the benefit of the individual student, but also for the benefit of the entire class. Collaborative learning environments, in the form of partner and group work, necessitate a contribution from each student. If students are striving to meet all academic expectations, they will prepare outside assignments and study so that they can make a viable contribution to a collaborative environment.

Show Respect

Showing respect for self and others is one of the most important things a student can do to contribute to a quality learning environment and reducing disciplinary distractions. Simple actions such as waiting until recognized before speaking and raising a hand before speaking demonstrate self-respect and respect for others. Being attentive, listening and refraining from interrupting when others are talking also demonstrate a respect for others. Showing respect for others will reduce disruptions in the classroom.

Don't Be Late

Being tardy to class can cause a major disruption for all students in the class and negatively impact the academic progress of the student who is tardy. When a student is tardy, he enters the classroom after instruction has begun, and the attention is drawn away from the teacher to the door when the student enters the class. Instruction is halted momentarily while the student finds his desk, settles in and the teacher catches the student up to the current point in the lesson. Additionally, information that was missed as a result of being tardy is not always completely conveyed in the catch-up period.

Strategies for effective classroom management

Create routines for entering the gym or outside play area, getting out equipment, beginning games, putting equipment away and exiting class. Once students know what to expect, they will be able to channel their excitement and energy into meaningful action.

Learn our students' names this is the singular most important tactic in ensuring an efficient classroom. Teachers who take the time to learn the names of all students can provide timely feedback (positive or corrective) as needed from across the gym and often stop off-task behavior before it involves other students

Back to Wall When teaching, circulate around the gym with our back to the wall. This allows us to always face the students and stop off-task behavior as it is getting started. Turning our back on students might encourage students to engage in off-task behaviors.

Proximity Control Teachers who are successful with class management are constantly moving. If, as a result of scanning the classroom, the teacher sees behavior that is detrimental to the learning environment, the teacher can move within close proximity to the perpetrator(s) and undesirable behavior will often cease. It is said that good teachers have eyes in the back of their heads. The ability of teachers to know what is going on even if they are not watching a student or group of students is a skill that comes from knowing the students we teach. We need to be scanning the learning environment and processing what is happening in the gym. With practice we will be able to watch one student while talking with another.

Verbal Positive Reinforcement "I like the way Susie and Mark walked to put away their equipment. Susie and Mark, please put the equipment away again so we can all watch." Positively pinpointing students reinforces the students who are on task and encourages students who are off task to do what is asked.

Consequences for Behavior Having consequences clearly posted next to the gym rules and consistently enforcing them, is a strong step for encouraging students to take responsibility for their own actions. If we do this.....then this will happen!

Establish Clear Expectations and Consequences

Teachers can establish clear expectations for behavior in two ways: by establishing clear rules and procedures, and by providing consequences for student behavior. Past research has stressed the importance of establishing rules and procedures for general classroom behavior, group work, seat work, transitions and interruptions, use of materials and equipment, and beginning and ending the period or the day. Ideally, the class should establish these rules and procedures through discussion and mutual consent by teacher and students.

Along with well-designed and clearly communicated rules and procedures, the teacher must acknowledge students' behavior, reinforcing acceptable behavior and providing negative consequences for unacceptable behavior.

Teachers can build effective relationships through these strategies:

Using a wide variety of verbal and physical reactions to students' misbehavior, such as moving closer to offending students and using a physical cue, such as a finger to the lips, to point out inappropriate behavior. Cuing the class about expected behaviors through prearranged signals, such as raising a hand to indicate that all students should take their seats. Providing tangible recognition of appropriate behavior-with tokens or rewards. Employing group contingency policies that hold the entire group responsible for behavioral expectations. Employing home contingency techniques that involve rewards and sanctions at home.

1. Establish Clear Learning Goals

Teachers can also exhibit appropriate levels of dominance by providing clarity about the content and expectations of an upcoming instructional unit. Important teacher actions to achieve this end include:

- Establishing and communicating learning goals at the beginning of a unit of instruction.
- Providing feedback on those goals.
- Continually and systematically re-visiting the goals.
- Providing summative feedback regarding the goals.

2. Exhibit Assertive Behavior

Teachers can also communicate appropriate levels of dominance by exhibiting assertive behavior. Assertive behavior differs significantly from both passive behavior and aggressive behavior. Tips to using assertive body language:

- Maintain an erect posture, facing the offending student but keeping enough distance so as not to appear threatening and matching the facial expression with the content of the message being presented to students.
- Use an appropriate tone of voice, speaking clearly and deliberately in a pitch that is slightly but not greatly elevated from normal classroom speech, avoiding any display of emotions in the voice.
- Persist until students respond with the appropriate behavior. Do not ignore inappropriate behavior; do not be diverted by a student denying, arguing, or blaming, but listen to legitimate explanations.

3. Appropriate Levels of Cooperation

Cooperation is characterized by a concern for the needs and opinions of others. Although not the antithesis of dominance, cooperation certainly occupies a different realm. Whereas dominance focuses on the teacher as the driving force in the classroom, cooperation focuses on the students and teacher functioning as a team. The interaction of these two dynamics-dominance and

cooperation-is a central force in effective teacher-student relationships. Several strategies can foster appropriate levels of cooperation:

- **Provide Flexible Learning Goals** Just as teachers can communicate appropriate levels of dominance by providing clear learning goals, they can also convey appropriate levels of cooperation by providing flexible learning goals. Giving students the opportunity to set their own objectives at the beginning of a unit or asking students what they would like to learn conveys a sense of cooperation. Giving students this kind of choice, in addition to increasing their understanding of the topic, conveys the message that the teacher cares about and tries to accommodate students' interests.
- **Take a Personal Interest in Students** Probably the most obvious way to communicate appropriate levels of cooperation is to take a personal interest in each student in the class. All students appreciate personal attention from the teacher. Although busy teachers-particularly those at the secondary level-do not have the time for extensive interaction with all students, some teacher actions can communicate personal interest and concern without taking up much time.
- **Use Equitable and Positive Classroom Behaviors** Programs like Teacher Expectations and Student Achievement emphasize the importance of the subtle ways in which teachers can communicate their interest in students. This program recommends many practical strategies that emphasize equitable and positive classroom interactions with all students. Teachers should, for example, make eye contact with each student. Teachers can make eye contact by scanning the entire room as they speak and by freely moving about all sections of the room. Deliberately move toward and stand close to each student during the class period. Make sure that the seating arrangement allows the teacher and students clear and easy ways to move around the room. Provide appropriate wait time for all students to respond to questions.

4. Awareness of High-Needs Students Classroom teachers meet daily with a broad cross-section of students. In general, 12-22% of all students in school suffer from mental, emotional, or behavioral disorders, and relatively few receive mental health services. The Association of School Counselors notes that 18 percent of students have special needs and require extraordinary interventions and treatments that go beyond the typical resources available to the classroom. Although the classroom teacher is certainly not in a position to directly address such severe problems, teachers with effective classroom management skills are aware of high-needs students and have a repertoire of specific techniques for meeting some of their needs. Marzano summarizes the five categories of high-needs students and suggests classroom strategies for each category and subcategory.

- **Passive students fall into two subcategories: those who fear *relationships* and those who fear *failure*.** Teachers can build strong relationships with these students by refraining from criticism, rewarding small successes, and creating a classroom climate in which students feel safe from aggressive people. The category of **aggressive students**

comprises three subcategories: *hostile, oppositional, and covert*. Hostile students often have poor anger control, low capacity for empathy, and an inability to see the consequences of their actions. Oppositional students exhibit milder forms of behavior problems, but they consistently resist following rules, argue with adults, use harsh language, and tend to annoy others. Students in the covert subcategory may be quite pleasant at times, but they are often nearby when trouble starts and they never quite do what authority figures ask of them. Strategies for helping aggressive students include creating behavior contracts and providing immediate rewards and consequences. Most of all, teachers must keep in mind that aggressive students, although they may appear highly resistant to behavior change, are still children who are experiencing a significant amount of fear and pain.

- **Students with *attention*** problems fall into two categories: *hyperactive* and *inattentive*. These students may respond well when teachers' contract with them to manage behaviors; teach them basic concentration, study, and thinking skills; help them divide tasks into manageable parts; reward their successes; and assign them a peer tutor.
- **Students in the *perfectionist*** category are driven to succeed at unattainable levels. They are self-critical, have low self-esteem, and feel inferior. Teachers can often help these students by encouraging them to develop more realistic standards, helping them to accept mistakes, and giving them opportunities to tutor other students.
- ***Socially inept* students** have difficulty making and keeping friends. They may stand too close and touch others in annoying ways, talk too much, and misread others' comments. Teachers can help these students by counseling them about social behaviors.

Conclusion: Classroom management is crucial in classrooms because it supports the proper execution of curriculum development, developing best teaching practices, and putting them into action. Classroom management can be explained as the actions and directions that teachers use to create a successful learning environment; indeed, having a positive impact on students achieving given learning requirements and goals. Educators sometimes therefore describe good classroom management as the creation of a positive learning environment, because a term calls attention to the totality of activities and people in a classroom, as well as to their goals and expectations about learning. Thus we can conclude that classroom management is a prerequisite for effective teaching.

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