

Classroom management

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Classroom management is a term used by [teachers](#) to describe the process of ensuring that classroom [lessons](#) run smoothly despite [disruptive behavior](#) by [students](#). The term also implies the prevention of disruptive behavior. It is possibly the most difficult aspect of teaching for many teachers; indeed experiencing problems in this area causes some to leave teaching altogether. In 1981 the US [National Educational Association](#) reported that 36% of teachers said they would probably not go into teaching if they had to decide again. A major reason was "negative student attitudes and discipline".^[1]

According to Moskowitz & Hayman (1976), once a teacher loses control of their classroom, it becomes increasingly more difficult for them to regain that control.^[2] Also, research from Berliner (1988) and Brophy & Good (1986) shows that the time a teacher has to take to correct misbehavior caused by poor classroom management skills results in a lower rate of academic engagement in the classroom.^[3] From the student's perspective, effective classroom management involves clear communication of behavioral and academic expectations as well as a cooperative learning environment.^[4]

[Classroom](#) management is closely linked to issues of [motivation](#), [discipline](#) and [respect](#). Methodologies remain a matter of passionate debate amongst teachers; approaches vary depending on the beliefs a teacher holds regarding [educational psychology](#). A large part of traditional classroom [management](#) involves behavior modification, although many teachers see using [behavioral](#) approaches alone as overly simplistic. Many teachers establish [rules](#) and procedures at the beginning of the [school year](#). According to Gootman (2008), rules give students concrete direction to ensure that our expectation becomes a reality.^[5]

They also try to be consistent in enforcing these rules and procedures. Many would also argue for positive consequences when rules are followed, and [negative consequences](#) when rules are broken. There are newer perspectives on classroom management that attempt to be [holistic](#). One example is [affirmation](#) teaching, which attempts to guide students toward success by helping them see how their effort pays off in the classroom. It relies upon creating an environment where students are successful *as a result of their own efforts*.^[6] By creating this type of environment, students are much more likely to want to do well. Ideally, this transforms a classroom into a community of well-behaved and self-directed learners.

Techniques

Corporal punishment

Until recently, [corporal punishment](#) was widely used as a means of controlling disruptive behavior but it is now no longer fashionable, though it is still advocated in some contexts by people such as [James Dobson](#).

Rote discipline

Also known as "lines," rote discipline is a negative [sanction](#) used for [behavior management](#). It involves assigning a disorderly student sentences or the classroom rules to write repeatedly. Among the many types of classroom management approaches, it is very commonly used.

Preventative techniques

Preventative approaches to classroom management involve creating a positive classroom community with mutual respect between teacher and student. Teachers using the preventative approach offer warmth, acceptance, and support unconditionally - not based on a student's behavior. Fair rules and consequences are established and students are given frequent and consistent feedback regarding their behavior.^[7] One way to establish this kind of classroom environment is through the development and use of a classroom contract. The contract should be created by both students and the teacher. In the contract, students and teachers decide and agree on how to treat one another in the classroom. The group also decides on and agrees to what the group will do should there be a violation of the contract. Rather than a consequence, the group should decide on a way to fix the problem through either class discussion, peer mediation, counseling, or by one on one conversations leading to a solution to the situation.

Preventative techniques also involve the strategic use of praise and rewards to inform students about their behavior rather than as a means of controlling student behavior. In order to use rewards to inform students about their behavior, teachers must emphasize the value of the behavior that is rewarded and also explain to students the specific skills they demonstrated to earn the reward. Teachers should also encourage student collaboration in selecting rewards and defining appropriate behaviors that will earn rewards.^[8]

Systematic Approaches

The Good Behavior Game

The Good Behavior Game (GBG) is a "classroom-level approach to behavior management" ^[9] that was originally used in 1969 by Barrish, Saunders, and Wolf. The Game entails the class earning access to a reward or losing a reward, given that all members of the class engage in some type of behavior (or did not exceed a certain amount of undesired behavior). The GBG can be used to increase desired behaviors (e.g., question asking) or to decrease undesired behaviors (e.g., out of seat behavior). The GBG has been used with preschoolers as well as adolescents,

however most applications have been used with typically developing students (i.e., those without developmental disabilities). In addition, the Game "is usually popular with and acceptable to students and teachers."^[10]

Discipline with Dignity

According to its founders, Discipline with Dignity is one of the most widely practiced behavior management philosophies in the world. Founded by Dr. [Richard Curwin](#) and Dr. [Allen Mendler](#), the program is utilized in more than 12 different countries. Discipline with Dignity provides an in-depth flexible approach for effective school and classroom management. With a strong focus on developing responsibility, it is a comprehensive, practical program that leads to improved student behavior through responsible thinking, cooperation, mutual respect, and shared decision-making.

Tools for Teaching

[Tools for Teaching](#) is a classroom management method created and taught by Fred Jones on speaking tours and in the eponymous book series

Positive Classrooms

[Positive Classrooms](#) developed by Dr. Robert DiGiulio sees positive classroom management as the result of four factors: how teachers regard their students (spiritual dimension), how they set up the classroom environment (physical dimension), how skillfully they teach content (instructional dimension), and how well they address student behavior (managerial dimension).

Assertive Discipline

[Assertive discipline](#) is another systematic approach of classroom management. Lee and Marlene Canter discuss the ideas behind this approach in several published books.

Discipline without Stress, Punishments or Rewards

Discipline without Stress (or DWS) is a K-12 discipline and learning approach developed by Dr. Marvin Marshall described in his 2001 book, *Discipline without Stress, Punishments or Rewards*.^[11] The approach is designed to educate young people about the value of internal motivation. The intention is to prompt and develop within youth a desire to become responsible and self-disciplined and to put forth effort to learn. The most significant characteristics of DWS are that it is totally noncoercive (but not permissive) and takes the opposite approach to Skinnerian behaviorism that relies on external sources for reinforcement.

Classroom management as a process

In the *Handbook of Classroom Management: Research Practice and Contemporary Issues* (2006),^[12] Evertson and Weinstein characterize classroom management as the actions taken to

create an environment that supports and facilitates academic and social–emotional learning. Toward this goal, teachers must (1) develop caring, supportive relationships with and among students; (2) organize and implement instruction in ways that optimize students’ access to learning; (3) use group management methods that encourage students’ engagement in academic tasks; (4) promote the development of students’ social skills and self–regulation; and (5) use appropriate interventions to assist students with behavior problems.

Dr. Tracey Garrett also describes classroom management as a process consisting of key tasks that teachers must attend to in order to develop an environment conducive to learning. These tasks include: (1) organizing the physical environment, (2) establishing rules and routines, (3) developing caring relationships, (4) implementing engaging instruction and (5) preventing and responding to discipline problems. [Classroom Management Essentials](#), created by Dr. Tracey Garrett, is the first classroom management app for the iPad, iPhone and iPod touch that guides teachers through the tasks involved in the process of classroom management.

Classroom management as time management

In their introductory text on teaching, Kauchak and Eggen (2008) Kauchak, D., and Eggen, P. (2008). *Introduction to teaching: Becoming a professional* (3rd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc. explain classroom management in terms of time management. The goal of classroom management, to Kauchak and Eggen, is to not only maintain order but to optimize student learning. They divide class time into four overlapping categories, namely allocated time, instructional time, engaged time, and academic learning time.

Allocated time

Allocated time is the total time allotted for teaching, learning, and routine classroom procedures like attendance and announcements. Allocated time is also what appears on a student's schedule, for example "Introductory Algebra: 9:50-10:30 a.m." or "Fine Arts 1:15-2:00 p.m."

Instructional time

Instructional time is what remains after routine classroom procedures are completed. That is to say, instructional time is the time wherein teaching and learning actually takes place. Teachers may spend two or three minutes taking attendance, for example, before their instruction begins.

Engaged time

Engaged time is also called time on task. During engaged time, students are participating actively in learning activities—asking and responding to questions, completing worksheets and exercises, preparing skits and presentations, etc.

Academic learning time

Academic learning time occurs when students 1) participate actively and 2) are successful in learning activities. Effective classroom management maximizes academic learning time.

Common mistakes in classroom behavior management

In an effort to maintain order in the classroom, sometimes teachers can actually make the problems worse. Therefore, it is important to consider some of the basic mistakes commonly made when implementing classroom behavior management strategies. For example, a common mistake made by teachers is to define the problem behavior by how it looks without considering its function.^[13]

Interventions are more likely to be effective when they are individualized to address the specific function of the problem behavior. Two students with similar looking misbehavior may require entirely different intervention strategies if the behaviors are serving different functions. Teachers need to understand that they need to be able to change the ways they do things from year to year, as the children change. Not every approach works for every child. Teachers need to learn to be flexible. Another common mistake is for the teacher to become increasingly frustrated and negative when an approach is not working.^[13]

The teacher may raise his or her voice or increase adverse consequences in an effort to make the **approach work. This type of interaction may impair the teacher-student relationship. Instead of** allowing this to happen, it is often better to simply try a new approach.

Inconsistency in expectations and consequences is an additional mistake that can lead to dysfunction in the classroom.^[13] Teachers must be consistent in their expectations and consequences to help ensure that students understand that rules will be enforced. To avoid this, teachers should communicate expectations to students clearly and be sufficiently committed to the classroom management procedures to enforce them consistently.

Tips Ten Tips for Classroom Management

Learn how to improve student engagement and build a positive climate for learning and discipline for grades K-12. We've all heard this about students: "If they are engaged, they are managed." And this is absolutely the truth. But we still need rules, routines, trust, and student ownership to make a classroom run smoothly and effectively. This guide will address those practical aspects of managing a classroom, with suggestions and resources appropriate for grades K-12.

1. Build Community
2. Design a Safe, Friendly, and Well-Managed Classroom Environment
3. Include Students in Creating Rules, Norms, Routines, and Consequences
4. Create a Variety of Communication Channels
5. Always Be Calm, Fair, and Consistent
6. Know the Students You Teach
7. Address Conflict Quickly and Wisely
8. Integrate Positive Classroom Rituals
9. Keep It Real
10. Partner with Parents and Guardians