


Classroom management skill includes the things a teacher must do toward two ends:

1. Foster student involvement and cooperation in all classroom activities
2. Establish a productive working environment

A well-managed classroom has a set of procedures and routines that structure the classroom. (See Chapters 19 and 20.) The procedures and routines organize the classroom so that the myriad of activities that take place there function smoothly and stress free. These activities may include reading, taking notes, participating in group work, taking part in class discussions, participating in games, and producing materials. An effective teacher has every student involved and cooperating in all of these activities and more.

Unit C will help you accomplish the dual goals of fostering student involvement and creating a productive working atmosphere so you can be a very effective teacher. In an effective classroom, there is structure that provides for an environment conducive to learning. The students are working; they are paying attention; they are cooperative and respectful of each other; they exhibit self-discipline; and they remain on task. All materials are ready and organized; the furniture is arranged for productive work; and a calm and positive climate prevails.

Characteristics of a Well-Managed Classroom

 You expect a department store to be well managed. When asked what that means, you would probably list some of these characteristics:

- The store: Its layout, organization, and cleanliness
- The merchandise: Its display, accessibility, and availability
- The staff: Their management, efficiency, knowledge, and friendliness

The Characteristics of a Well-Managed Classroom⁷

1. Students are deeply involved with their work, especially with academic, teacher-led instruction.
2. Students know what is expected of them and are generally successful.
3. There is relatively little wasted time, confusion, or disruption.
4. The climate of the classroom is work-oriented but relaxed and pleasant.

The First Days of School
Harry & Rosemary Wong

pp. 83-86

Techniques to Help You
Implement the Four
Characteristics of a
Well-Managed Classroom

Characteristics	Effective Teacher	Ineffective Teacher
1. High level of student involvement with work	Students are working. (See page 123.)	Teacher is working.
2. Clear student expectations	Students know that assignments are based on objectives. (See page 238.)	Teacher says, "Read Chapter 3 and know the material."
	Students know that tests are based on objectives. (See page 246.)	"I'll give you a test covering everything in Chapter 3."
3. Relatively little wasted time, confusion, or disruption	Teacher has procedures and routines. (See page 165.)	Teacher makes up rules and punishes according to his or her mood.
	Teacher starts class immediately. (See page 123.)	Teacher takes roll and dallies.
	Teacher has assignments posted. (See page 124.)	Students ask for assignments repeatedly.
4. Work-oriented but relaxed and pleasant climate	Teacher has invested time in practicing procedures until they become routines. (See page 176.)	Teacher tells but does not rehearse procedures.
	Teacher knows how to bring class to attention. (See page 182.)	Teacher yells and flicks light switch.
	Teacher knows how to praise the deed and encourage the student. (See page 184.)	Teacher uses generalized praise or none at all.

Too many teachers do not teach.

They do activities.

And when problems arise, they discipline.

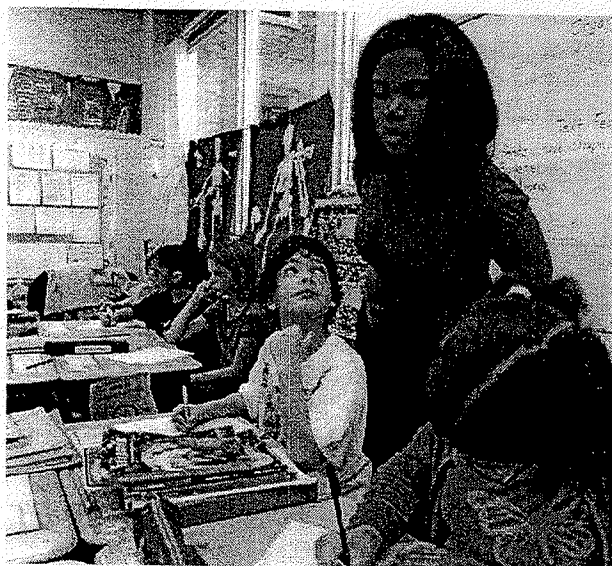
Many classrooms are unmanaged.

And when classrooms are not organized,
little is accomplished in them.

The Best Discipline Is Good Curriculum

by Kelley Dawson Salas

During my first year of teaching, I tried everything to get my students to behave. Behavior charts, individual plans. Class incentives, class consequences. Tricks, threats. Rewards, punishments. Strict attitude, friendly attitude. Yelling, reasoning, sweet-talking, pleading for sympathy.



Barbara J. Miner

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One day, I wrote the word “celebration” on the board and promised the class they could have a party if they behaved for the whole day. I crossed each letter off one by one. By noon we all knew they’d never make it. In short, I was desperate.

Discipline is an exhausting part of the job that never really goes away. The message that most of us get is that to be a good teacher, you must first be a good disciplinarian. You must control your students’ behavior. Only then, when your classroom is under control, can you begin to teach. I disagree.

No teacher has to wait until the students are “under control” to start teaching them worthwhile stuff. It’s actually the other way around. Over and over again, I have found that the moment I start to teach interesting, engaging content, I experience immediate relief in the area of discipline.

During my first year, my classroom was pretty wild. (Don’t hold it against me; I know you’ve been there!) But it made sense to me that my students acted the way they did. I was a brand-new teacher, totally inexperienced. My students wanted more than I could offer them, and they were bored and confused much of the time. I didn’t really see how forcing them to behave would change that.

It took some time, but eventually I quit working so hard at controlling my students’ behavior and started focusing on my own: What was I teaching? What methods

was I using? What was I doing to engage, to teach students so that they would not be bored and disruptive?

I looked at what I was doing in social studies: plodding through a textbook that was inaccurate, boring, and disconnected from my students’ lives. I decided to teach some lessons about the Civil Rights Movement, and to have the

VOICES FROM THE CLASSROOM

“Equity and justice must come to life in your classroom. It is in your classroom that students will experience the world, a world that opens possibilities for their developing hearts and minds. Always do what is in the best interest of your students. You are preparing them for a future that we can only imagine. Don’t shortchange them because of external pressures.”

—Kathy Williams

class write and perform a play about the Montgomery bus boycott. It was an extremely rough first attempt at writing and teaching my own curriculum, but for our purposes, it worked. I was engaged, the students were engaged, and we all spent a lot less time dealing with discipline.

In my subsequent years of teaching, I've had similar experiences. Every time there's a slump in my teaching—yes, even though I work hard, it happens—kids get bored (I get bored, for that matter) and discipline gets hairy. It's like a rumbling that slowly turns to a roar and ultimately demands action: If you don't plan some good curriculum, things are really going to get out of control here.

Of course, it's important to have rules and consequences, and to apply them consistently while teaching interesting content. I find it works well to remind kids frequently why an ordered environment helps them learn, to show them how rules and consequences help create a classroom where real learning can happen. Also, when I'm teaching something I really believe is worth my students' time, I feel more authority to demand a high standard of behavior.

Even the best curriculum can't magically solve all behavior issues. Our society creates a lot of pressures and problems for kids, and they often bring these to school. Students witness violence, live in poverty, struggle to help hardworking parents, and watch a ton of TV, much of it inappropriate. Some students have serious problems that will not go away without specific intervention. It may help to work with the school psychologist, social worker, or administrators in these cases. Teachers can also push for schoolwide preventive programs like anti-bullying, anger management, or peer mediation. These can have a great impact on behavior.

VOICES FROM THE CLASSROOM

"Set clear, high expectations for all students. Don't feel sorry for kids. They don't need your pity; they need you to give them tools and knowledge to navigate the education system. Don't excuse them from homework or higher-level skills or more challenging work. They need clear and consistent high expectations."

—Linda Christensen

I'm now in my fourth year of teaching, and I'm still struggling to create all the curriculum I need to motivate and engage my 4th graders for six hours a day. Whenever I feel overwhelmed by the size of that task, I try to remind myself to think small: I go back to my first year and remember that back then, even one good lesson was sometimes enough to tip the scales from boring, intolerable, and out of control to what I could at least call "manageable."

Each year, I am building upon those lessons and offering better and better curriculum to my students. I know discipline issues will never completely disappear from my classroom. But I also know good curriculum goes a long way toward making my classroom run smoothly. And engaging curriculum is more than just a fix for behavior headaches. It can also get kids to think deeply, care about our world, and help them learn to make positive changes.

As a bonus, I feel less foolish now that I don't have to stand at the front of the class and take away my students' celebration one letter at a time.

Good instruction is good classroom management

Robert Slavin explains how exciting, engaging lessons can solve most problems in the classroom

WITH THE SOUND OF THE SCHOOL BELL STILL echoing in the hall, Julia Carter started her high school English class.

"Today," she began, "you will become thieves. Worse than thieves. Thieves steal only your money or your property. You —" (she looked around the class and paused for emphasis) "—will steal something far more valuable. You will steal an author's style."

During her speech, the students sat in rapt attention. Two children, Mark and Gloria, slunk in late. Mark made a funny "Oops, I'm late" face and did an exaggerated tiptoe to his desk. Ms. Carter ignored both of them, as did the class. She continued her lesson.

begin, I'd like you to move your desks together and start planning your compositions. Ready? Begin."

The students moved their desks together smoothly and quickly and got to work. During the transition, Ms. Carter called Mark and Gloria to her desk to discuss their lateness. Gloria had a good excuse, but Mark was developing a pattern of lateness and disruptiveness. Ms. Carter asked Mark to come after school to make a plan to improve his behavior. He then returned to his group and got to work. The students worked in a controlled but excited way through the end of the lesson, thoroughly enjoying "stealing"

who will misbehave. While Ms. Carter's focus is on preventing behavior problems, she is also ready to intervene when necessary to see that students' behaviors are within acceptable limits. For some students, a glance, physical proximity, or a hand on the shoulder is enough. For others, consequences might be necessary. Even in these cases, Ms. Carter does not let behavior issues disrupt her lesson or her students' learning activities.

There is no magic or charisma that makes a teacher an effective classroom manager. Setting up an effective learning environment is a matter of knowing a set of techniques that any teacher can learn and apply.

Effective use of time

The first focus of classroom management must be on how time for instruction and learning can be maximized.

GG In Ms. Carter's class, students know that if they are late, they will miss something interesting, fun, and important. As a result, almost all of them are in class and ready to learn when the lesson starts **GG**

While Ms. Carter talked, Mark made an exaggerated show of getting out his books. He whispered to a neighboring student. Without stopping her lesson, Ms. Carter moved near Mark. He stopped whispering and paid attention.

"Today you will become Hemingway. You will steal his words, his pace, his meter, his similes, his metaphors, and put them to work in your own stories."

Ms. Carter had students review elements of Hemingway's style, which the class had studied before.

"In a moment," she said, "you're going to get your chance to become Ernest Hemingway. As usual, you'll be working in your writing response groups. Before we start, however, let's go over our rules about effective group work. Who can tell me what they are?"

The students volunteered several rules: Respect others, explain your ideas, be sure everyone participates, stand up for your opinion, keep voices low.

"All right," said Ms. Carter. "When I say

from Hemingway. The classroom sounded like a beehive with busy, involved students sharing ideas, reading drafts to each other, and editing each other's compositions.

Creating an effective learning environment

The most effective approach to classroom management is effective instruction. Students who are participating in well-structured activities that engage their interests, who are highly motivated to learn, and who are working on tasks that are challenging yet within their capabilities, rarely pose any serious management problems. The vignette involving Ms. Carter illustrates this. She has a well-managed class — not because she behaves like a drill sergeant, but because she teaches interesting lessons, engages students' imaginations and energies, makes efficient use of time, and communicates a sense of purpose, high expectations, and contagious enthusiasm. However, even a well-managed class is sure to contain individual students

Preventing lost time

Making good use of all classroom time is less a matter of squeezing out a few more minutes or hours of teaching each year, than of communicating to students that learning is an important business worthy of their time and effort. If a teacher finds excuses not to teach, students might think that learning is not a serious enterprise. In studying an outstanding inner-city Baltimore elementary school, a journalist described a third-grade teacher who took her class to the school library, which she found locked. She sent a student for the key, and while the class waited, the teacher whispered to her students, "Let's work on our doubles. Nine plus nine? Six plus six?" The class whispered the answers back in unison. Did a couple of minutes working on addition facts increase the students' achievement? Of course not. But it probably did help to develop a perception that school is for learning, not for marking time.

Preventing late starts

A surprising amount of instructional time is lost because the teacher does not start teaching at the beginning of the period. A crisp, on-time start to a lesson is important for setting a purposive tone to instruction. If students know that a teacher does not start promptly, they might be laddadadical about getting to class



on time. This attitude makes future on-time starts increasingly difficult. In Ms. Carter's class, students know that if they are late, they will miss something interesting, fun, and important. As a result, almost all of them are in class and ready to learn when the lesson starts.

Preventing interruptions

One important cause of lost allocated time for instruction is interruptions. Interruptions may be externally imposed, such as announcements or the need to sign forms sent from the principal's office, or they may be caused by teachers or students themselves. Interruptions not only cut directly into instruction time, but also break the momentum of the lesson, which reduces students' attention to the task at hand.

Avoiding interruptions takes planning. For example, some teachers keep a box where students and others can put any forms, and then they deal with them while students are doing independent or group work or after the lesson is over. Anything that can be postponed until after a lesson should be postponed.

Handling routine procedures

Teachers should develop routines for simple classroom tasks. For example, many teachers establish a routine that students are only called to line up for lunch when the entire table (or row) is quiet and ready to go. It then takes seconds, not minutes. Exactly how tasks are done is less important than students knowing clearly what they are to do. Many teachers assign regular classroom helpers to take care of distribution and collection of papers, taking messages to the office, and other routine tasks

that are annoying interruptions for teachers but that students love to do. Use student power as much as possible.

Getting students' attention

Teachers need a method for getting students' attention quickly. Many use a "zero noise signal" in which they raise their hand and teach students to raise their own hands, stop talking, and listen. They then praise the groups that comply first. Other teachers use a bell or a tambourine for the same purpose.

Maintaining a rapid pace of instruction

Teachers who cover a lot of content in each lesson have students who learn more. A rapid pace also contributes to students' interest and time on task.

Minimizing time spent on discipline

Whenever possible, disciplinary statements or actions should not interrupt the flow of the lesson. A sharp glance, silently moving close to an offending student, or a hand signal, such as putting finger to lips to remind a student to be silent, is usually effective for the kind of minor behavior problems that teachers must constantly deal with, and they allow the lesson to proceed without interruption.

Effective classroom management is just informed common sense. Exciting, engaging lessons with real "pizzazz" solve most problems, and simple strategies for effective use of time, like those discussed in this article, add to a sense of purpose and prevent most disciplinary problems. Teachers still need to be ready to deal with more serious problems,

but in a well-managed, well-taught class, these should be rare. Happy, productive, successful kids are generally well-behaved, and well-managed classes let teachers focus on content rather than discipline.

Portions of this article are adapted from Slavin RE (2012), *Educational Psychology: Theory and Practice* (10th edition). Boston: Pearson.

About the author

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Further reading

Charles CM (2008), *Building Classroom Discipline* (9th edition). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Emmer ET and Evertson CM (Eds.) (2009), *Classroom Management for Middle and High School Teachers*. Upper Saddle River: Pearson Education Group.

Jones V and Jones L (Eds.) (2010), *Comprehensive Classroom Management* (9th edition). Upper Saddle River: Merrill.

Classroom Routines

Effective teachers have routines in place for many classroom activities. The routines are adapted to the level of the students; for example, dismissal routines in a grade one classroom would be more specific and directed than in a high school classroom.

Routines to practice with your students may include the following activities:

- Entering and leaving the room
- Being prepared for class
- Participating in class discussions
- Asking and answering questions
- Coming to attention
- Participating in fire drills and emergency procedures
- Listening during announcements
- Sharpening pencils
- Handing in work
- Working in cooperative groups
- Finishing work early
- Finding directions for assignments
- Distributing supplies and materials
- Behaving during interruptions
- Behaving in assemblies.
- Marking peers' work
- Arriving late for class

What Works:

Create a classroom environment that provides structure and support and reinforces positive behaviour. Set your standards high; be clear and realistic in your expectations.

Classroom conflict is more likely to be reduced if you:

- Are in the classroom when students arrive
- Are organized and prepared before each lesson
- Insist that everyone be treated with a wholesome respect
- Listen to student opinions and consider their feelings
- Maintain your sense of humor and tolerant attitude
- Assist children to make appropriate choices
- Teach students to live with mistakes and take them in stride
- Use a quiet, friendly tone of voice
- Show faith in the child and build on strengths
- Help children to increase their feelings of self-esteem
- Believe that all children are capable and lovable
- Are low-key, consistent and matter of fact
- Use realistic, logical consequences, and enforce them

What Does Not Work:

- Preaching, nagging, criticizing and shouting
- Using praise instead of encouragement
- Punishment as a way to teach appropriate behaviour
- Accepting excuses, bargaining or blaming
- Put-downs, sarcasm, embarrassment or humiliation
- Rescuing children rather than teaching problem-solving skills
- Acting hastily without knowing the implications of your actions
- Punishing the whole class for the misdeeds of a few

Checklist for a productive classroom environment

- ✓ Areas in classroom created for specific activities
- ✓ Seating arranged so teacher can easily get to each student
- ✓ Moderate room temperature. Warm classrooms lead to lethargic, inattentive students
- ✓ Assign student seating in an organized way and don't allow constant changes
- ✓ Students seated far enough apart so innocent moves by students are not distracting
- ✓ Just the amount of furniture to be functional; avoid unnecessary furniture
- ✓ The entrance to your room does not cause distractions to students during lessons
- ✓ Traffic flow routes to the bathroom and pencil sharpener, for example, do not cause distraction
- ✓ There is a place in your classroom, away from the rest of the class, where you can have a private conversation or give a private reprimand to an individual student
- ✓ The board is visible to all students during lessons and is clean and uncluttered
- ✓ The lighting in the room is adequate
- ✓ Bulletin boards are attractive and not cluttered with "old work."

Learn North Carolina @ <http://www.learnnc.org/newlnc/carepak.ns>

Think About Procedures For...

- Book distribution
- Turning in work
- Format of work
- Handing back assignments
- Homework
- Grading--recording grades, extra credit, portfolios
- Housekeeping procedures--clean up, supply storage
- Rewards and incentives
- Communicating with parents
- Signals for students' attention
- Daily routines--beginning of day, transition times, independent and group work
- Agenda use and motivators

Classroom Management: New Teacher Self-Reflection Tool

The following questions are designed for teacher self-reflection. You may wish to use a selection of the questions as conversational starting points within your mentoring relationship and as prompts for planning and revising your Individual NTIP Strategy.

- 📖 What strategies have I found to be most successful in getting to know my students and building respectful relationships with them? Are there other strategies I would like to try?
- 📖 In what ways am I encouraging the development of respectful peer relationships among students? (such as role play, group discussion)
- 📖 What evidence do I have that my classroom environment is safe, inclusive and learning-focused?
- 📖 In what way does my classroom environment reflect the theme of diversity as a strength?
- 📖 What have I noticed about how each student responds to my classroom management strategies?
- 📖 What strategies have I used when faced with challenging behaviours? Were these effective? How do I know?
- 📖 What time management strategies am I using to maximize uninterrupted learning time?
- 📖 How do I collaborate with my students in setting classroom norms, rules and procedures?
- 📖 Can all of my students identify and explain the routines and expectations in the classroom? If not, how am I addressing this?
- 📖 How have I established norms of collaboration in the classroom?
- 📖 What have I noticed about my students' ability to apply norms of collaboration to their classroom activities?
- 📖 What strategies am I using to handle transitions in my classroom?
- 📖 How are my students responding to the strategies I am choosing?
- 📖 In what way(s) have I intentionally designed my classroom space to facilitate whole group, small group, paired and individual work?
- 📖 To whom am I turning when I have a question about classroom management?
- 📖 What kind of support or new learning do I feel I need next in order to manage my classroom learning environment even more effectively?
- 📖 ?

Using This Tool

The use of this material is optional and you are invited to use only the strategies and tools that are specific to your needs and interests.

Things that increase behaviour issues in the classroom

- Unstructured activities
- Transition Times
- Inconsistent use of rewards or punishment
- Irrelevant academic tasks
- Competitive game and activities
- Unpredictable teacher reactions
- Unclear expectations
- High stimulation environments and activities
- Delays & interruptions in classroom routines or activities
- Feelings of powerlessness

Things that decrease behaviour issues in the classroom

- Structured activities and routines
- Consistent use of positive reinforcement
- Calm and predictable teacher responses to disruptions
- Academic tasks that engage students' interest and imagination
- Clear expectations for behaviour & achievement
- An environment which is calm and structured
- Feelings of competence