

Classroom Management

Alison Rourke

What is Classroom Management?

- It's effective discipline
- It's being prepared for class
- It's motivating your students
- It's providing a safe, comfortable learning environment
- It's building your students' self esteem
- It's being creative and imaginative in daily lessons
- ***And . . .***

. . . It's different for EVERYONE!!

WHY?

- Teaching Styles
 - Personality/Attitudes
 - Student population
 - Not all management strategies are effective for every teacher
-
- Try different strategies to see if they work for you

Why is Classroom Management Important?

- Satisfaction and enjoyment in teaching are dependent upon leading students to cooperate
- Classroom management issues are of highest concern for beginning teachers

Principles for successful classroom management

- Deal with disruptive behaviors but also manage to minimize off-task, non-disruptive behaviors
- Teach students to manage their own behavior
- Students *learn* to be on-task and engaged in the learning activities you have planned for them
 - It is more natural to be off-task than on

Techniques for Better Classroom Control

- Focus attention on entire class
- Don't talk over student chatter
- Silence can be effective
- Use softer voice so students really have to listen to what you're saying
- Direct your instruction so that students know what is going to happen

Techniques for Better Classroom Control

- Monitor groups of students to check progress
- Move around the room so students have to pay attention more readily
- Give students non-verbal cues
- Engage in low profile intervention of disruptions
- Make sure classroom is comfortable and safe

Techniques for Better Classroom Control

- Over plan your lessons to ensure you fill the period with learning activities
- Come to class prepared
- Show confidence in your teaching
- Learn student names as quickly as possible



Transition vs. Allocated Time

- Allocated time: the time periods you *intend* for your students to be engaged in learning activities
- Transition time: time periods that exist *between* times allocated for learning activities
 - Examples
 - Getting students assembled and attentive
 - Assigning reading and directing to begin
 - Getting students' attention away from reading and preparing for class discussion

Transition vs. Allocated Time

- The Goal:
 - Increase the variety of learning activities but decrease transition time.
- Student engagement and on-task behaviors are dependent on how smoothly and efficiently teachers move from one learning activity to another

Withitness

- Withitness refers to a teacher's awareness of what is going on in the classroom



A teacher has “withitness” if:

- When discipline problems occur, the teacher consistently takes action to suppress the misbehavior of exactly those students who instigated the problem
- When two discipline problems arise concurrently, the teacher deals with the most serious first
- The teacher decisively handles instances of off-task behavior before the behaviors either get out of hand or are modeled by others

Withitness (continued)

- When handling misbehavior – make sure all students learn what is unacceptable about that behavior
- Getting angry or stressed does not reduce future misbehavior
- Deal with misbehavior without disrupting the learning activity

Jones' study of off-task behaviors

- 99% of off-task behaviors take one of several forms
 - Talking out of turn
 - Clowning
 - Daydreaming
 - Moving about without permission
- Antisocial, dangerous behaviors make up a fraction of the time students spend off-task

Proximity and Body Language

- Eye contact, facial expressions, gestures, physical proximity to students, and the way you carry yourself will communicate that you are in calm control of the class and mean to be taken seriously.
- Be free to roam
- Avoid turning back to class



Cooperation through communication

- Verbalize descriptions of behaviors and never value judgments about individuals
- Verbalize feelings but remain in control
- **DO NOT USE SARCASM**
- Do not place labels (good or bad)
- Do not get students hooked on praise
 - Praise the work and behavior – not the students themselves
- Speak only to people when they are ready to listen

Classroom Rules For Conduct

- Formalized statements that provide students with general guidelines for the types of behaviors that are required and the types that are prohibited
- A few rules are easier to remember than many rules
- Each rule in a small set of rules is more important than each rule in a large set of rules

Necessary classroom rules of conduct

- Maximizes on-task behaviors and minimize off-task (esp. disruptive) behaviors
- Secures the safety and comfort of the learning environment
- Prevents the activities of the class from disturbing other classes
- Maintains acceptable standards of decorum among students, school personnel, and visitors to the school campus

Dealing with misbehaviour

Functions of Behaviour

- Every behavior has a function
- Four primary reasons for disruptive behaviour in the classroom
 - **Power**
 - **Revenge**
 - **Attention**
 - **Want to be left alone (i.e., disinterest or feelings of inadequacy)**

Functions of Behaviour

- Many misbehaviors exhibited by students are responses to a behaviour exhibited by the teacher
- Do not tolerate undesirable behaviours no matter what the excuse
- Understanding why a person exhibits a behaviour is no reason to tolerate it
- Understanding the function of a behaviour will help in knowing how to deal with that behaviour

Dealing with off-task behaviours

- Remain focused and calm; organize thoughts
- Either respond decisively or ignore it all together
- Distinguish between off-task behaviours and off-task behaviour patterns
- Control the time and place for dealing with off-task behaviour
- Provide students with dignified ways to terminate off-task behaviours

Dealing with off-task behaviours

- Avoid playing detective
- Utilise alternative lesson plans
- Utilise the help of colleagues
- Utilise the help of guardians
- **DO NOT USE PHYSICAL PUNISHMENT**
 - A form of contrived punishment in which physical pain or discomfort is intentionally inflicted upon an individual for the purpose of trying to get that individual to be sorry he or she displayed a particular behaviour

Attention Seeking Behaviour

- Attention-seeking students prefer being punished, admonished, or criticised to being ignored
- Give attention to this student when he or she is on-task and cooperating
- “Catch them being good!” – and let them know you caught them

Power Seeking Behaviour

- Power-seeking students attempt to provoke teachers into a struggle of wills
- In most cases, the teacher should direct attention to other members of the class

Behaviour: Rambling -- wandering around and off the subject. Using far-fetched examples or analogies.

POSSIBLE RESPONSES:

- Refocus attention by restating relevant point.
- Direct questions to group that is back on the subject
- Ask how topic relates to current topic being discussed.
- Use visual aids, begin to write on board, turn on overhead projector.
- Say: "Would you summarize your main point please?" or "Are you asking...?"

Behaviour: Shyness or Silence -- lack of participation

POSSIBLE RESPONSES:

- o Change teaching strategies from group discussion to individual written exercises or a videotape
- o Give strong positive reinforcement for any contribution.
- o Involve by directly asking him/her a question.
- o Make eye contact.
- o Appoint to be small group leader.

Behaviour: Talkativeness -- knowing everything, manipulation, chronic whining.

POSSIBLE RESPONSES:

- o Acknowledge comments made.
- o Give limited time to express viewpoint or feelings, and then move on.
- o Make eye contact with another participant and move toward that person.
- o Give the person individual attention during breaks.
- o Say: "That's an interesting point. Now let's see what other other people think."

Behaviour: Sharpshooting -- trying to shoot you down or trip you up.

POSSIBLE RESPONSES:

- o Admit that you do not know the answer and redirect the question the group or the individual who asked it.
- o Acknowledge that this is a joint learning experience.
- o Ignore the behaviour.

Behaviour: Heckling/Arguing -- disagreeing with everything you say; making personal attacks.

POSSIBLE RESPONSES:

Redirect question to group or supportive individuals.

Recognize participant's feelings and move one.

Acknowledge positive points.

Say: "I appreciate your comments, but I'd like to hear from others," or "It looks like we disagree."

Behaviour: Grandstanding -- getting caught up in one's own agenda or thoughts to the detriment of other learners.

POSSIBLE RESPONSES:

- o Say: "You are entitled to your opinion, belief or feelings, but now it's time we moved on to the next subject," or
- o "Can you restate that as a question?" or
- o "We'd like to hear more about that if there is time after the presentation."

Behaviour: Overt Hostility/Resistance -- angry, belligerent, combative behaviour.

POSSIBLE RESPONSES:

- o Hostility can be a mask for fear. Reframe hostility as fear to depersonalize it.
- o Respond to fear, not hostility.
- o Remain calm and polite. Keep your temper in check.
- o Don't disagree, but build on or around what has been said.
- o Move closer to the hostile person, maintain eye contact.
- o Always allow him or her a way to gracefully retreat from the confrontation.

Behaviour: Overt Hostility/Resistance -- angry, belligerent, combative behavior (continued)

POSSIBLE RESPONSES:

- Say: "You seem really angry. Does anyone else feel this way?" Solicit peer pressure.
- Do not accept the premise or underlying assumption, if it is false or prejudicial, e.g., "If by "queer" you mean homosexual..."
- Allow individual to solve the problem being addressed. He or she may not be able to offer solutions and will sometimes undermine his or her own position.
- Ignore behavior.
- Talk to him or her privately during a break.
- As a last resort, privately ask the individual to leave class for the good of the group.

Behaviour: Griping -- maybe legitimate complaining.

POSSIBLE RESPONSES:

- o Point out that we can't change policy here.
- o Validate his/her point.
- o Indicate you'll discuss the problem with the participant privately.
- o Indicate time pressure.

Behaviour: Side Conversations -- may be related to subject or personal. Distracts group members and you.

POSSIBLE RESPONSES:

- Don't embarrass talkers.**
 - Ask their opinion on topic being discussed.**
 - Ask talkers if they would like to share their ideas.**
 - Casually move toward those talking.**
 - Make eye contact with them.**
 - Standing near the talkers, ask a near-by participant a question so that the new discussion is near the talkers.**
- As a last resort, stop and wait.**