

Classroom Behavior and Management for Teachers

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Abstract

Teachers who strive for excellence will incorporate a vast array of behavior management approaches in order that all children are engaged in a meaningful learning environment. Effective teachers creating and maintaining an orderly, productive classroom environment has long been viewed as one of the essential elements in teaching competence. Research has also shown that a number of management variables are also correlated with pupil achievement and success.

While there are a variety of ways to define behavior management, for the purposes of this publication, behavior management interventions can be defined as all those actions (and conscious inactions) teachers and parents engage in to enhance the probability that children, individually and in groups, will develop effective behaviors that are personally fulfilling, productive and socially acceptable (Walker & Shea, 1999; Shea & Bauer, 1987). Teachers who strive for excellence will incorporate a vast array of behavior management approaches in order that all children are engaged in a meaningful learning environment.

First impressions are important and really do matter. The effective teacher starts the first day of the year by setting a standard for how the rest of the year should follow. Start the year off with a discipline plan in place that allows students a set of expectations for behavior (Richardson & Fallona, 2001). The effective teacher must gain the student's respect from the start by maintaining control and establishing a sense of order. A good discipline plan must be incorporated the first day of school and enforced (Charles, 2008).

An effective teacher should have a discipline plan with routines, rules, and consequences. The discipline plan can be teacher-made or made through teacher-student collaboration. The first few weeks of school should be spent going over procedures and rules. During the first few weeks of school, you should spend time teaching, practicing, and re-teaching procedures so that they become routines. This will set the scene for learning the remainder of the year. Students appreciate knowing the teacher's expectations (Brophy, 2006).

Teachers should treat students equitably. Fairness can be interpreted in different way. Moral intelligence is demonstrated by being fair. An effective teacher is trustworthy and maintains a classroom environment that is safe, predictable, and successful (Santrock, 2009). Teachers who are perceived as unfair are not respected. As teachers, we need to be sure not to allow prejudice or negative feelings affect the way we react to our students or their diverse needs. Our job as teachers is to teach all students. We must give every student the same chance for success (Charles, 2008).

All classrooms will have disruptions. It is imperative that you deal with classroom disruptions immediately and with little interruption of your class momentum. McGinnis, Frederick, and Edwards (1995), suggested strategies likes writing names on the board, a stern look, or moving in proximity to the disruptive student can help deter the offending student. If the teacher continues teaching and deals with the problem at hand with little commotion, the class can stay on track.

The effective teacher avoids confrontations in front of students. The teacher should remain calm and diffuse the situation as soon as possible. Confrontations are embarrassing and uncomfortable for the teacher and the student. If the teacher is not able to get the situation under control immediately the student should be removed from the classroom and handled away from the other students (Emmer, 1994).

A teacher with a sense of humor helps establish a relaxed climate and is more approachable (Richardson & Fallona, 2001). Humor can sometimes diffuse a tense situation and help to break things up. It allows the teacher to bring the attention back into focus. Sometimes all it takes is for everyone to have a good laugh to get things back on track in a classroom.

Effective teachers keep high expectation in their class. Although expectations should be set high, the teacher must be certain that the expectations are attainable. They expect their students to behave. Everyday should begin with the teacher stating their expectations to the students. High expectations lead to higher performance and tell the students that their teacher believes in them which in turn give the students belief in themselves. When students know what the teacher expects they will try hard to meet these expectations (Emmer, 1994). High expectations encourage the students and help motivate students to learn and behave if they, now that their teacher believes in and thinks well of them.

Being prepared is essential to being an effective teacher. It is better to over plan and run out of time than to run out of lessons. Teachers should avoid free time which may lead to behavior problems. Free time allows the children to get bored and they will look for something to entertain them. Free time indicates an unprepared or disorganized teacher and invites noise and disruptions. Early finishers activities should be planned from a selected list of activities and always have academic enrichment as its goal (McGinnis, Frederick, & Edwards, 1995). When students are not engaged in fun and interesting activities they will develop their own fun and interesting activities that may not be cohesive to learning and following classroom rules.

One of the worst things a teacher can do is to not enforce rules consistently. Consistency provides stability and predictability. When a teacher is consistent, students know what is expected of them and they know their boundaries which gives them a sense of safety. If one day a misbehavior is ignored and the next day the teacher disciplines someone for the smallest infraction, students will quickly lose respect for the teacher. When implementing a discipline plan, teachers should be fair and logical. If rules are not implemented consistently, students will not know what is expected of them and will cease to follow the rules (Emmer, 1994).

Effective teachers are selective and specific in their rules. Classroom rules should be written in a concise, logical and positive way. Rules should be short, clearly stated and visible in the classroom. Rules should be established at the beginning of the year and reviewed as needed. Consequences should also be posted in the classroom. Teachers should make sure all students understand the rules as well as the consequences. Knowing and understanding the consequences ahead of time is paramount to improved cooperation and achievement (McGinnis, Frederick, & Edwards, 1995). Parents should also be made aware of the rules and consequences so that they understand and support the teacher.

Start each day with a clean slate. Effective teachers start teaching their class each day with the expectation that students will behave. This establishes the mental well being of all students and sets the environment for success (Charles, 2008). Teachers should let students know that everyday is a fresh new day with new opportunities. This presents students who have broken rules in the past with the opportunity of beginning again. If students think that the teacher will hold their past behavior against them, they will begin to lose motivation in the class (Santrock, 2009).

In closing, creating and maintaining an orderly, productive classroom environment has long been viewed as one of the essential elements in teaching competence. Not only is there little argument as to the importance of these elements from the common sense point of view, but research has also shown that a number of management variables are also correlated with pupil achievement (Evertson, 1994).

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