

# **A Study on Effective Classroom Management Techniques**

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## **1. Introduction**

“Classroom management is defined as methods and strategies, which a teacher usually applies to maintain a classroom environment 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 that they are in a congenial environment that allows them to achieve their objectives.”<sup>1</sup>

“Edmund Emmer and Carolyn Evert <sup>2</sup>state that effective classroom management consists of teacher behavior, which produces high level of student involvement in classroom activities.”

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<sup>1</sup> Classroom Management Definition by Randi McCreary -02.06.2010

<sup>2</sup> [www.pgcps.pg.k12.md.us/~elc/gameplan.htm](http://www.pgcps.pg.k12.md.us/~elc/gameplan.htm)-02.06.2010

Many teachers fail in classroom management as they are unaware of real nature of the problems found in the classroom. We should not forget that classroom management and student achievement is directly related. Teachers should understand this fact. When a classroom is well managed, students tend to be self-disciplined and teachers are stress-free. This will then absolutely result in effective classroom management.

Generally, teacher should understand the developmental progress of students to manage a classroom effectively. Specifically, understanding child and adolescent growth and development, as well as issues of students' cognitive and cultural diversity, is essential for laying the foundation of an effective and positive learning environment in the classroom. Good classroom management is important for student success. For this to happen, teacher has to be well organized and consistent in everything.

Successful teachers are those, who can strike a balance between being a disciplinarian, instructor and manager to elicit the most productive results from students despite the contrary demands made by those students, who create discipline problems in the classroom. Society wants schools to develop citizens, who think creatively. While it seems impossible to develop both creativity and order simultaneously, the best teachers seem to balance them.

## **2. Objective of the study**

The objective of this study was to find out the effective classroom management techniques and how far they are effective as far as the classroom management was concerned. According to the study, which was instrumental in writing this article, it was revealed that the majority of teachers hardly apply the classroom management techniques. This has resulted in the failure of classroom management.

## **3. Research Methodology**

Predominantly, literary survey was conducted referring to various books, magazines and journals, which were based on effective classroom management and visiting web sites related to the subject. Some authors have discussed different approaches regarding effective classroom management techniques, which most teachers don't practice today. They are accustomed to come to the classroom without any preparation and begin to teach. This is really absurd as far as such teachers are concerned. More information could be traced through related literature. In addition to secondary data, primary data were also used in the study. Classroom observation and interviews were the tools of collecting

primary data. Selected classrooms were observed and both teachers and students were interviewed regarding the present study.

## **4. Presentation and Data Analysis**

### **4.1 Physical and psychological needs**

Teachers should be aware of the physical and psychological needs of the students. When these aspects are equally treated only, the anticipated outcome of teaching will come out. Here, physical need means the comfort the students have in the classroom. They should be able to move in the classroom freely and independently. It is also absolutely necessary for the students to have sufficient facilities in the classroom. Psychological need means what their mind needs regarding the lessons and the attitudes their teachers have towards them. Teachers are, therefore, required to cater to both physical and psychological needs of the students in the classroom.

### **4.2 Time management**

Time management is much instrumental in classroom management. Procedures and routines minimize wasted time in the classroom. In a well-managed classroom, teacher has objectives, assignments and a starter activity. All students know exactly what they are to do from the time they enter the classroom to when they leave. They begin to work immediately upon entering the classroom. Punctuality of both teacher and students is considered under time management. Teacher is required to do all activities according to a particular time frame. Otherwise, all such activities will fail.

### **4.3 Motivation, discipline and respect**

According to Allen (1986), classroom management is closely linked to issues of motivation, discipline and respect, which should be developed within students. When a student has motivation, discipline and respect only, his learning will be more effective and successful and ultimately he will be a quality student. That is what we expect through effective classroom management.

Thomas R. McDaniel <sup>3</sup> has highlighted some techniques that a teacher can use in the classroom that will help her achieve effective group management and control.

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<sup>3</sup> [www.honorlevel.com/x47.xml-01.04.2011](http://www.honorlevel.com/x47.xml-01.04.2011)

- Focusing
- Monitoring
- Modeling
- Environmental control

### **4.3.1 Focusing**

Teacher must be sure that she should have the attention of everyone in the classroom before she starts her lesson. She should not attempt to teach over the noise of students, who are not paying attention. Teacher is expected to wait till the students are calm and quiet and get ready for the lesson.

Generally, inexperienced teachers sometimes think that by beginning their lesson while the students are shouting, the class will settle down. Sometimes, this works. But, it very often fails. The focusing technique means that you will demand their attention before you begin. It means that you will wait and not start until everyone has settled down. Experienced teachers know that silence on their part is very effective.

### **4.3.2 Monitoring**

Teacher is expected to move around the classroom while the students are working in their groups or individually. She also should check on their progress. An effective teacher will make a pass through the whole classroom about two minutes after the students have started their assignments. Students, who are not yet quite on task, will be quick to get going as they see her approach.

Teacher does not interrupt the class or try to make general announcements unless she notices that several students have difficulty with the same thing. Teacher uses a quiet voice and her students appreciate her personal and positive attention.

### **4.3.3 Modeling**

According to McDaniel, values are caught and not taught. Students usually learn the values of teachers, who are courteous, prompt, enthusiastic in control, patient and organized. This is a spontaneous process followed by students. It is now clear that everything in the class is not always taught, but caught. Teacher thus becomes a very good model for the students in the classroom.

#### **4.3.4 Environmental control**

A classroom should be a well-ventilated and cheery place so that students enjoy an environment that changes periodically. An effective teacher takes care that the student is not rewarded for misbehavior by becoming the focus of attention. She monitors the activity in her classroom, moving around the room. She anticipates problems before they occur. Her approach to a misbehaving student is inconspicuous. Others in the class are not distracted.

While teaching, the teacher makes effective use of name-dropping. If she sees a student talking or off task, she simply drops the student's name into her dialogue in a natural way. "And you see, Roshan, we are talking about the theme of this drama." Roshan, hears his name and is drawn back on task again. The rest of the class doesn't seem to notice what is happening.

#### **4.4 Confidence in teaching**

Teacher should always show the students that she is confident in her teaching. This means teacher's competence in her subject. For this purpose, teacher is expected to come to the classroom well-prepared and with great confidence. Once the students come to know that teacher is not confident and well prepared, they lose confidence in the teacher and begin to cause noise and disruption. Hence, the teacher should have the responsibility to show the students that she is confident enough in her teaching and well prepared for the day's lesson.<sup>4</sup>

#### **4.5 Sense of Humor**

You know that a great sense of humor reduces barriers and lightens the atmosphere especially during heavy periods. An ability to make your students laugh will carry you far and gain you more respect. It also increases your popularity. Humor is also a significant aspect in classroom management. Sometimes, all it takes is for everyone to have a good laugh to get things back on track in a classroom. Many times, however, teachers confuse good humor with sarcasm. While humor can quickly diffuse a situation, sarcasm may harm your relationship with the students involved. You should use your best judgment, but realize that what some people think as funny others find to be offensive.

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<sup>4</sup>[www.usu.edu/aste/ag\\_ed/.../classroom\\_management\\_principles.doc](http://www.usu.edu/aste/ag_ed/.../classroom_management_principles.doc)-23.03.2010

## **4.6 Patience**

Every teacher is expected to have patience in the classroom in order to maintain a good working relationship with the students. Teacher need to be able to demonstrate patience and should be relaxed and stress- free in the classroom. In other words, she should be friendly with the students and able to maintain a mutual relationship with them. Patience is really a great virtue within a teacher in the classroom.<sup>5</sup>

## **4.7 Fairness**

Teacher should treat all students equally and should not discriminate them for any other reason. Students have a distinct sense of what is fair and what is unfair. You must act fairly for all students if you expect to be respected. If you do not treat all students equitably, you will be labelled as unfair and biased and also students will not be keen to follow your authority and advice. It is an immense damage for your personality as a teacher as well. They will ignore and disrespect you and thus your image as a teacher will be adversely tarnished in and outside the classroom. You should make sure that if your best student does something wrong; he too gets punished for it. Then only, the students are convinced that you remain unbiased in the classroom. At present, in many classrooms, we can observe this pathetic situation. Some teachers show favoritism to some students due to their social status, reputation, richness and competence. This really hurts and embarrasses other students. Hence, teachers should avoid such substandard and unpleasant activities in the classroom.

An ideal teacher should always be fair to all students. Students can easily sense if a teacher becomes partial to any particular student. So you have to treat every student equitably, especially regarding the rules and punishment. Even if the most brilliant student of the class violates the standard rules, he should get the same punishment like others. Otherwise, students would lose all interest in your classroom rules and discipline plan.

## **4.8 Keeping students involved**

Keeping students involved in the lesson is the most effective classroom management plan. Instead of having students raise their hand to respond to a question aloud, you

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<sup>5</sup>[www.classroommanagement101.com/.../skills-needed-for-effective-classroom-management-09.05.2010](http://www.classroommanagement101.com/.../skills-needed-for-effective-classroom-management-09.05.2010)

should have all the students write down an answer to the teacher's question. Not only will the teacher get much more class participation, but the quality of student responses will also improve.

Teacher can pair up students with a partner and share their answers before discussing it as a class. This gives the students a chance to respond without anxiety of speaking in front of the entire class and also allows the teacher to monitor the classroom and talk to various students about their responses. And also, teacher can give students specific time limits to complete tasks and make sure you stick to those time limits.

#### **4.9 Physical arrangement of the classroom**

It is obvious that every teacher knows that a safe, clean, comfortable and attractive classroom can stimulate learning and helps them build a classroom community. But, for many teachers, setting up the physical environment of their classrooms can be quite daunting, especially when faced with older buildings, crowded classrooms and insufficient storage space. You can make the most of your classroom environment by carefully considering your needs and the needs of your students.

Physical arrangement of the classroom is basically very important to effective classroom management. It should be well-cleaned and well ventilated. It should also be spacious enough to accommodate all the students so that they may feel that they are comfortable enough in the learning environment. Seating arrangements should be made so that all the students are capable of seeing the teacher. And the other advantage is that the teacher can have the eye contact on each and every student. Leaving the students in fringe areas is another most important aspect that affects the classroom management. That is, the students are hidden or covered and as a result, teacher fails to reach them. When the classroom is spacious enough only, the teacher can easily move around the classroom paying individual attention to students. He can also make easy access to the students so that he is able to have close relationship with them. This helps to maintain the proximity between teacher and students.

Classroom management can be affected by how the seats are arranged in the classroom. The teacher needs to think about the order of the room and how it will affect the expectations of the students. The seating arrangement also needs to be organized in a way that the teacher can easily move around the classroom and monitor student behavior.

## 4.10 Seating arrangements

Seating arrangement is one of the main aspects of classroom management. Teachers should consider the physical arrangement of the classroom and also they should be aware of the nature of the students involved. Teacher needs to be able to walk around the classroom without moving students' desks here and there. Teachers need to take into account that students seated in the center or front of the classroom tend to interact more frequently with the teacher and the number of behavioral problems tend to increase as the students sit farther from the teacher. Also, students in the back and corners of the classroom are more likely to be off task than those close to the front or to the teacher's desk. There are many seating arrangements that the teachers can use in the classroom. Six common arrangements are cluster, rows, table rows, semi-circle, pairs and centers or activity zones. The best seating arrangement depends on the situation of the class and teacher.<sup>6</sup>

## 4.11 Group work

For effective classroom management, group work activities are indispensable. Hence, teacher is expected to organize them. This technique brings more advantages to students. The most important advantage is providing students with more communicative activities in the classroom. They are also independent enough to discuss with their friends and their communication skills are thus automatically enhanced. Backward students are usually afraid of the teacher and excited and nervous before him. But, when they are in a group, their mentality absolutely changes and tension disappears. They are found to be relaxed and comfortable in group activities. For this purpose also, there should be adequate space in the classroom. Teacher has to deal with two types of groups in a classroom. Sometimes, they are large, sometimes they are small. According to the size of the class, teacher can decide what kind of group activity he should do with the students. Generally, each group should consist of five members along with the group leader. Group leader should be competent enough to deal with all members equally without creating any chaos among his members. Students are really enthusiastic in being involved in group activities. There are many advantages for the students. The most important one is that they are independent enough to work with their colleagues and get the problems solved by the

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<sup>6</sup> <http://ematusov.soe.udel.edu/EDUC390.99F- Seating Arrangements-25.06.2010>



group leader or the teacher. Teacher cannot help all students at once. This is a kind of assigning activities to the students with responsibilities. The next most significant advantage is that the students can be kept involved in an activity for some time. In large a group, some backward students can easily avoid the teacher, whereas in a small group they cannot do so. They are compelled to work with other members. And also, they learn how to work in a particular team and thus their team spirit improves. This group also can work as a team even outside the classroom. The ultimate result is that the bright students become brighter and the poor students also improve their knowledge about the specific subject to some extent. Though there are some demerits in group activities such as big noise and more freedom in the classroom, it is generally a very effective device in classroom management.

Some researchers reveal that cooperative learning has a direct link between student learning and the carefully planned use of cooperative learning. To achieve the best results, teachers should use this strategy selectively rather than all the time. Also, students grouped into pairs or small groups reap the greatest academic benefits in the classroom.

Students can be grouped as follows.

1. Ability based Group
2. Mixed Ability groups
3. Random groups

#### **4.12 Ability based groups**

This is a widely used method of putting students into groups, which involve grouping students with other students of similar abilities. Ability based groups are good to use when you are focusing on a specific concept where the level of understanding in your class is very wide.

#### **4.13 Mixed ability groups**

This is a much preferred method of putting students into groups. These are groups formed by the teacher with a specific focus on getting as wide a level of abilities into one group as possible. The more advanced students can help the more developing students; this helps the developing students through the one on one, guidance and also helps the advanced students by cementing their knowledge and developing their understanding of the ideas in a way necessary to explain it to other people.

#### **4.14 Random groups**

These are simply groups that have a random element in their creation, it could be drawing the name out of a hat or it could be playing a game or activity designed to get students into groups. These groups are good for game based activities where abilities are not the focus, discussion groups and getting to know you games. There are some more activities and games for putting students into groups here.

#### **4.15 Cooperative learning group roles**

Leadership is a personality trait. Through group activities good student leaders can be created. Teachers are expected to produce good leaders as well. At one end, there are those that thoroughly enjoy and search out leadership roles. At the other end, there are those that actively seek a non-participatory status when forcibly involved with a group. When you think back to your group work experience in college courses or your association with committees in your own school, you feel about the leadership. It was your personal leadership style that served as the greatest determining factor in your group participation. This should be promoted in the classroom.

To briefly explain this phenomenon, during a study of cooperative learning in the classroom, the types of leadership can be seen within the various small working groups. Each student was classified by predetermined criteria as a leader, follower or non-participant.

#### **4.16 Teaching equipment**

Teaching equipment also comes under the physical arrangement of the classroom management. Blackboard, whiteboard, overhead projectors, multi media projectors and screen are the most common teaching equipment found in a modern classroom today. Teacher should arrange them so that the students will get the optimum benefit out of them. For instance, students can easily see the blackboard, whiteboard and screen. Moreover, the size of letters should also be clear enough for the students. Using other visual aids in the classroom is also a very important aspect. Hence, the teacher should display them in such a way that all students can easily see them without any difficulty.

#### **4.17 Audibility**

Teacher's voice control plays a very significant role in classroom management. He is expected to adapt his voice according to the group he is dealing with. In other words, he should be audible enough to the students. For example, when teacher is inaudible, students find the entire lesson dull and boring. Therefore, it is the duty of teacher to speak

in the classroom so that students are able to hear him without any difficulty. For this purpose, sometimes he can use a suitable microphone according to the size of the class.

#### **4.18 Tidy appearance**

Tidy appearance of teacher enhances his personality in the classroom. He should be well dressed and look smart before his students. When a teacher comes to a classroom wearing shabby clothes, the image students have towards him is suddenly tarnished. It is the teacher's responsibility to maintain his image among students so that they should respect him. He should always be in formal dress in the classroom and pay attention to his physical appearance as well. In other words, teacher should be a model for his students. Students are highly concerned with the things used by their teacher. They should be kept neat and tidy.

#### **4.19 Ethical behavior**

Teacher's behavior in the classroom is also a very important aspect of the classroom management. He should behave well in front of the students. When the teacher maintains a very good discipline only, the students also follow him and consequently, there is discipline among the students as well. This means every teacher is required to have his ethics in the classroom as a noble professional. Then only, all the students love and respect him. Otherwise, they have a negative impression on him and as a result, a particular conflict begins to develop between teacher and students. This is really detrimental to the classroom management.

#### **4.20 Rapport**

As early as 1966, researchers were studying the behaviors and processes that contribute to successful classroom Management. In that year, Thomas Gordon developed a widely used program called Teacher Effectiveness Training or TET. Gordon's program is founded on the belief that student-teacher relationships are the result of their interactions. He suggests that positive classroom management would include the development of a mutually supportive student-teacher relationship.

#### **4.21 Mutual respect**

Mutual respect is an outstanding characteristic in a good classroom. This means students respect teacher and vice versa. 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, teachers must understand that students are not necessarily willing to give respect to teacher without feeling they have reason.

Students respect teacher for his teaching skills, personal qualities, knowledge, competence, punctuality and professionalism. Teacher is also expected to respect students as individuals and his respect should be obviously shown to them so that they feel it. In this regard, the major role has to be played by teacher. Then only, students begin to respect him. All other classroom management techniques are also based on it. Mutual respect is, therefore, an outstanding factor in managing a classroom in a very effective way.

#### **4.22 Formal authority**

David Hargreaves, a social psychologist in the education field points out that teacher has to use his authority in the classroom. This is known as the formal authority. In other words, teacher must have his command over the class during his lesson so as to keep students under his control without any tension. Through this technique, teacher is capable of maintaining discipline of students as well, which will ultimately contribute to the concentration of students. This does not mean that teacher has his absolute authority on students and they are under his sole dictatorship. Later, his formal authority becomes his personal authority, which adds some value to his personality as well. Anyway, teacher should always be friendly with students and he should not humiliate or insult them.

#### **4.23 Preparation**

Well-managed classrooms are led by teachers, who have prepared themselves and their classroom management plans well before the start of the school year. Part of this preparation for teachers is getting themselves and their classrooms well organized. Organized teachers and classrooms establish a positive learning environment. This kind of organizing encourages students to be more attentive and work hard.

#### **4.24 Punctuality**

Punctuality of teacher also enhances the effectiveness of classroom management. Many negative points reflect on the teacher's personality when he fails to come to the classroom on time. As a result, students also lose their confidence in teacher and they are beyond control. Once teacher is thus delayed for the lesson, which is scheduled to be taught on that particular day, problems emerge there. Ultimately, it adversely affects the effective classroom management.

#### **4.25 Appreciation**

It is important to praise and admire students. In other words, they should be rewarded. When maintaining an effective classroom, giving praise allows students to believe in themselves and the work they are doing. Thus, providing them with such encouragement will generate success and thereby students are encouraged and motivated to be involved in their activities.

#### **4.26 Proximity**

Teacher should also be able to maintain a close relationship with students in the classroom. We call it proximity. This is not an easy task. It is teacher's capability to maintain it. Teacher's tolerance and friendliness with students immensely contributes to proximity. For this purpose, teacher is expected to show a genuine interest in each student and he should treat them equally. Once there is proximity or closeness in the classroom, students feel relaxed and, this results in stress free environment. In other words, they have no fear about communicating with teacher. They may express their views freely without any hesitation or obstacle. Teacher should also have some fun and humor with students in order to keep them lively and relaxed. Some teachers scarcely possess this good quality; instead, they very often create a tense atmosphere in the classroom with a view to avoiding students and their problems. Teacher should be able to work with students as a leader of a particular team both inside and outside the classroom.

#### **4.27 Body language**

Educators, psychologists, anthropologists and sociologists define body language or nonverbal communication as communication without words. It includes various behaviors such as facial expressions, eye contact, touching and tone of voice. The most effective communication occurs when verbal and nonverbal messages function simultaneously. There are some important reasons why we use nonverbal communication. Words have limitations and as a result, we can't express all our feelings. Nonverbal signals are powerful and very impressive. They are also genuine. Some research findings suggest that two-thirds of our communication is nonverbal.

#### **4.28 Interaction**

Teacher-student interaction and student-student interaction in the classroom is another important aspect of classroom management. Through this technique, teacher becomes much closer to students and later the students become closer to themselves. Thus, interaction avoids isolation and lack of communication among students. It has been found

that usually there is lack of communication between teacher and students and among students themselves. Interaction expels this barrier as well.

#### **4.29 Homework**

Teacher can make homework a valuable and effective experience for students, who can be involved classroom activities at home as well. This will indirectly support the effective classroom management. In other words, this means keeping students involved in their academic activities even outside the classroom. However, parents should not be much involved in homework. Students should have the responsibility to attend to their homework. Also, homework must be commented. When teachers provide specific feedback on homework, it becomes a valuable extension of the classroom experience.

#### **4.30 Vigilance**

Teacher should be aware of the activities prevailing in the classroom. Then only, he finds it easy to manage the classroom activities effectively and efficiently. Once students are conscious that teacher is vigilant in the classroom, they are spontaneously controlled and discipline among the students is maintained well without making any extra effort. When discipline problems occur, teacher consistently takes action to suppress the misbehavior of those students, who instigate the problem. When two discipline problems arise concurrently, teacher will deal with the most serious one first.

#### **4.31 Evaluation**

Jack C. Richards (1996) reveals that evaluation is an essential part of classroom management and therefore teacher should evaluate students by the end of the lesson. This determines the performance of both teacher and the students. Through evaluation, drawbacks of both parties can be detected. Evaluation really enhances and promotes the quality of teaching and teacher can easily obtain the feedback of the students through evaluation. Teacher can do evaluation verbally or in written form to see whether the students have understood the lesson properly. This will help both parties overcome their weaknesses and failures.

### **4. Findings, Recommendations and Conclusion**

It is revealed through classroom observation, interviews and literary survey that a teacher has to apply many techniques for an effective classroom management. All these relevant facts have been briefly discussed under each classroom management technique. Teacher may be qualified and competent enough to teach his subject; but if he fails in classroom

management, his qualifications and competence hardly help him to be an effective academic. Hence, it is the duty of all academics and teachers to improve their techniques and devices in classroom management so as to maintain their professionalism in their respective fields.

It was found through observation of classrooms that some teachers seem to be ignoring the physical and psychological needs of the students. This is a basic need and it should be catered to with great attention. Otherwise, the entire learning and teaching process will collapse.

According to Allen (1986), time management, motivation and discipline are the other significant factors, which teachers should properly deal with. Once they fail in these aspects, it will directly affect the classroom management process.

Thomas R. McDaniel points that focusing, monitoring, modeling and environmental control are some other techniques that a teacher can use in the classroom that will help her achieve effective group management and control.

Keeping students involved in the lesson brings both productivity and effectiveness. This rarely happens today. Whenever the teacher is away, the students are used to idle in the classroom.

It was also found that students should be grouped into pairs or small groups. This will reap the greatest academic benefits in the classroom. Ability based groups, mixed ability groups and random groups are suggested for improving quality learning.

David Hargreaves points out that teacher should use his authority in the classroom. This is known as the formal authority, which will easily control the students inside and outside the classroom. The formal authority is also conducive to maintain discipline among the students.

In conclusion, it is also recommended that teachers should pay more attention to their professionalism, ethical conduct, preparation, patience, fairness, vigilance, proximity, tidy appearance, teaching equipment, audibility, body language and personality. When all these techniques are properly applied in classroom management, both teacher and students are able to gain the maximum benefits of teaching and learning process, which is the ultimate outcome of effective classroom management.

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