

Florida Department of Education
Office of School Improvement
“Ride the Wave” to Success in the Classroom



Strategies for Classroom Management

Successful classroom management involves not only responding effectively when problems occur, but preventing the frequent occurrence of problems. The most effective decisions in classroom management are based on a clear concept of the goals and intended outcomes that a teacher wishes to accomplish.

Organization

Rules and procedures should be developed in conjunction with teaching strategies that help students meet their personal and academic needs.

- ◆ Arrange seating in a U-shape, rows or a circle, so that you can see and easily move close to students.
- ◆ Post a daily schedule and discuss any changes each morning.
- ◆ Engage students until you have given clear instructions for the upcoming activity.
- ◆ Encourage students to take responsibility for their learning by determining not to do tasks that can be done by students.
- ◆ Establish routines for collecting homework, distributing papers, etc.
- ◆ Move around the room and attend to individual needs.
- ◆ Provide simple step-by-step directions.
- ◆ Remind students of key procedures associated with the upcoming lesson.
- ◆ Use group competition to stimulate more orderly transitions.
- ◆ Develop transition activities
 - ◆ Implement structured activities that help students make transitions between active periods and quieter learning activities.

Communication

Effective communication is the foundation for good classroom management. Communication skills can be divided into two categories: sending and receiving.

Sending Skills (skills used when speaking to someone):

- ◆ Deal in the present. Information is more useful when it is shared at the earliest appropriate opportunity.
- ◆ Talk directly to students rather than about them. When teachers do this, students are shown respect, and receive accurate information about adults' feelings.
- ◆ Speak courteously. This creates positive role models for students.
- ◆ Take responsibility for statements by using the personal pronoun “I”.
Example: “When I’m interrupted, I get distracted and have difficulty helping other students.”
- ◆ Make statements rather than asking questions. When dealing with students’ behaviors, questions often create defensiveness.

Receiving Skills (techniques for becoming a more effective listener):

- ◆ Use empathic, nonevaluative listening. This makes the speaker feel that he or she has been clearly heard and that the feelings expressed are acceptable.
- ◆ Use paraphrasing, active listening, or reflecting in order to make the speaker feel heard. This allows the listener to become involved in the dialogue.
- ◆ Make eye contact and be aware of nonverbal messages.
- ◆ Suggest strong leadership by using body carriage, facial expressions, and gestures.

Monitoring

Often misbehavior occurs because students find “acting out” more interesting than a boring lesson or more rewarding than another failure experience. Students may also misbehave when they are not involved in the learning activity, do not understand the task, or cannot obtain assistance when it is needed. Following are useful techniques for responding to minor classroom disruptions:

- ◆ Scan the class frequently in order to notice and respond to potential problems.
- ◆ React calmly and quickly to a student’s disruptive behavior in order to create a positive ripple effect.
- ◆ Make positive initial contact with students by praising the positive behavior that competes with the negative behavior.
- ◆ Remind students of the classroom rule or procedure that they are not demonstrating.
- ◆ Make students clearly aware of the rules and procedures and the consequence for violations.
- ◆ Give students clear cues indicating that continuation of a behavior will evoke the specified consequences.
- ◆ Employ consistent consequences for misbehaviors.
- ◆ Inform students that they are choosing the consequence of their behavior.
- ◆ Use consequences which are educational in nature.
- ◆ When one or two students are being very disruptive, focus other students in the class on their task. Then find a time to talk quietly with the disruptive students.

Delivery of Instruction

Leading educators over the past several years have emphasized that quality of instruction is a key factor influencing students’ behavior and achievement. Response to student misbehavior is most effective when it maintains or enhances the student’s dignity and self-esteem and encourages the student to be responsible for his or her own behavior.

- ◆ Involve students in evaluating their own work as well as your instruction.
- ◆ Hand out an outline, definitions, or study guide to help students organize their thoughts and focus their attention.
- ◆ Ask the question and give ample wait time before calling on the student.
- ◆ Vary style as well as the content of instruction in order to address diverse student learning styles.
- ◆ Provide work of appropriate difficulty to complement varying ability levels.
- ◆ Relate materials to students’ lives whenever possible.
- ◆ Be animated, create anticipation, and use activities to catch student interest or increase student motivation to participate.
- ◆ Engage student learning through cooperative group work, competitive teams, group discussions, debates, and role playing.

Information courtesy of the Bureau of Education for Exceptional Students, Florida Department of Education. For more information contact the Florida Department of Education, Office of School Improvement; (850) 487-1023, SC 277-1023 or <http://www.firn.edu/doe/doehome.htm>

Additional Resources and References

Exceptional Student Education Program Development and Services, Florida Department of Education.
850-488-1106 SC 278-1106

The Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System (FDLRS). Contact your district ESE coordinator.

Jones, F. V., & Jones, L. S. (1990). *Comprehensive Classroom Management: Motivating and Managing Students* (3rd ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

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