

Classroom Management

Tier 1

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Teachers with effective classroom management skills establish and enforce a well-monitored system of rules and procedures that deter inappropriate and off-task behavior (Emmer, Evertson, & Anderson, 1980), leading to increased student academic engagement and achievement. These skills enhance teaching ability (National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, 2008) and are related to positive academic performance and decreased inappropriate behavior (Arbuckle & Little, 2004). Additionally, if implemented appropriately, classroom management strategies can decrease teacher burnout (Aloe, Amo, & Shanahan, 2014), and promote a positive school climate (Mitchell & Bradshaw, 2013). Schools in all settings (i.e., rural, suburban, urban) report student behavior problems in the classroom, indicating the overall need for classroom management training regardless of school location (Coalition for Psychology in the Schools and Education, 2006). Researchers surveyed teachers and found that classroom management is one of the most challenging aspects of teaching (Merrett & Wheldall, 1993).

Unfortunately, most teachers feel underprepared in the area of classroom management and express the need for additional support and these skills are often inadequately taught in teacher-preparation curricula (Melnick & Meister, 2008; Ritz, Noltemeyer, David, & Green, 2014; Brophy, 1988)

What is Classroom Management?

Classroom management is a broad topic that generally describes a group of strategies that “seek to establish and sustain an orderly environment so students can engage in meaningful academic learning” (Evertson & Weinstein, p. 4, 2006). Kratochwill (n.d.) described skills involved in classroom management:

- Developing caring relationships with students;
- Organizing and implementing effective instructions that optimize student learning;
- Using group management strategies that facilitate student engagement;
- Promoting student development of social skills and self-regulations;
- Using appropriate interventions that target student behavioral issues;
- Monitoring student progress; and,
- Anticipating potential problems.



The purpose of classroom management strategies is to maintain a learning environment that promotes positive interaction, access to learning, and enhanced student achievement (Aloe, Amo, & Shanahan, 2014; Emmer, Evertson, & Anderson, 1980), while also sustaining control over students' problematic behavior (Mitchell & Bradshaw, 2013). Classroom management strategies need to be tailored to each classroom because of varying student characteristics, student cultural backgrounds and language skills, and developmental and mental health needs.

What do we know about Classroom Management?

The topic of classroom management is supported by a large body of literature in the field of educational psychology research. Many researchers dedicate their academic career to improving classroom management and numerous books have been written on the topic. A general search of "classroom management" using Academic Search Premier, EBSCOhost, and PsycINFO yielded 3,862 scholarly peer-reviewed journal articles and books ranging in published dates from 1909 to 2015. Although

classroom management has been heavily studied, researchers continue to work on identifying classroom management principles and on translating research findings into practice. The literature on classroom management is vast. Much of the literature focuses on identifying the evidence base for specific strategies or skills. It is beyond of our scope to provide a thorough review of all possible classroom management strategies.

However, researchers have attempted to scientifically review the classroom management literature to determine which practices are evidence-based. Simonsen and colleagues (2008) used similar evidence-based standards to those of the What Works Clearinghouse, and found 21 general classroom management practices that met the criteria as evidence-based. The researchers considered classroom management strategies evidence-based if they met the following three criteria: (1) evaluated using sound experimental design and methodology; (2) demonstrated to be effective; and (3) supported by at least three empirical studies published by peer-refereed journals (Simonsen et al., 2008). The strategies are grouped into five empirically supported characteristics of effective classroom management (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Evidence-based Practices Reviewed by Simonsen et al., 2008

Evidence-based Practices
1. Maximize Structure and Predictability
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High classroom structure (e.g., amount of teacher directed activity) • Physical arrangement that minimizes distraction (e.g., walls, visual dividers, etc.) and crowding
2. Post, Teach, Review, Monitor, and Reinforce Expectations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post, teach, review, and provide feedback on classroom expectations • Active supervision
3. Actively Engage Students in Observable Ways
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rate of opportunities to respond (OTRs) • Response cards • Direct instruction • Computer assisted instruction • Classwide peer tutoring • Guided notes

4. Use a Continuum of Strategies to Acknowledge Appropriate Behavior

- Specific and/or contingent praise
 - Classwide group contingencies
 - Classwide group contingencies in combination with other strategies (i.e., self-management and peer-monitoring, establishing and teaching expectations, social skills training)
 - Behavior contracting
 - Token economies
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5. Use a Continuum of Strategies to Respond to Inappropriate Behavior

- Error corrections for academic performance and behavior
 - Performance feedback
 - Differential reinforcement
 - Planned ignoring plus contingent praise and/or instruction of classroom rules
 - Response cost
 - Timeout from reinforcement
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Classroom Management

The literature suggests that classroom management strategies should be comprehensive in that they aim to evoke student cooperation, minimize student misconduct, facilitate interventions when misconduct occurs, facilitate academic activities, and maximize student engagement (Brophy, 1988). There are four necessary components to ensure that classroom management is comprehensive and effective (Jones & Jones, 2010).

1. Positive Climate. In order to prevent many classroom problems, teachers should cultivate positive relationships and appropriate classroom behavior standards to create clear expectations and a safe environment (Jones & Jones, 2010). Teacher-student relationships and peer relationships can increase students' sense of safety and comfort in the classroom. Also, establishing community support and positive parent-teacher relationships is beneficial (Jones & Jones, 2010).

2. Empirically Supported Strategies. Teachers should use strategies that are empirically supported and selected based on the individual needs of the classroom and students. It is necessary to ensure that students' basic needs are met, because students learn and behave best in

these conditions. When students exhibit difficulties, teachers need to assess and understand the needs of the student in order to evoke desired and successful behavior, as well as select an effective classroom management strategy (Jones & Jones, 2010).

3. Incorporate Instructional Methods. Effective classroom management strategies utilize instructional methods that facilitate optimal learning and meet the unique needs of students. Such instructional methods should actively engage students so that they are motivated to learn and behave well (Jones & Jones, 2010). Simple instructional changes such as offering students a choice can reduce the likelihood of problem behaviors while increasing academic engagement (Lane et al., 2015). Visit the linked webpage for more information on instructional choice.

4. Foster Student Autonomy. Classroom management should include a variety of counseling and behavioral methods that facilitate student autonomy and foster self-monitoring of their own behavior (Jones & Jones, 2010). Researchers have identified a variety of ways that teachers can promote student autonomy (Dickinson, 1992). Teachers should encourage and praise students for being independent and convinc-

ing students that they are capable of learning independently. Dickinson (1992) suggests that teachers deliberately set up opportunities for students to exercise their independent learning.

Classroom management strategies tend to be organized under two types of strategies: proactive and reactive. Proactive approaches focus on the antecedents (i.e., the event that occurs before the behavior) and consequences (i.e., the event that occurs after the behavior) of student behavior in an attempt to prevent student misbehavior. Reactive approaches primarily focus on the consequences of behavior rather than the antecedents (Ritz et al., 2014).

Researchers recommend utilizing proactive preventative approaches before implementing reactive approaches because they are less intensive and aversive for the student and teacher (Ritz et al., 2014). Proactive approaches are beneficial because they focus on teaching and motivating students to behave appropriately through providing praise and attention for desirable behavior while decreasing the likelihood of inappropriate behavior occurring in the future. Additionally, proactive approaches aim to promote academic engagement by focusing on appropriate behavior and reducing the need for discipline (Ritz et al., 2014).



Although proactive preventative approaches to classroom management are recommended as first-line strategies, there are times when reactive approaches are necessary to prevent and reduce student misbehavior. Following proactive approaches, nonintrusive reactive strategies should be used before intrusive reactive strategies. Examples of nonintrusive strategies are ignoring, redirecting, and providing verbal warnings (Ritz et al., 2014). Examples of intrusive reactive strategies include verbal reprimands, overcorrection, response cost, and timeout.

Descriptions of a Sample of Classroom Management Strategies

Again, while explanations of all of these methods are beyond the scope of this brief, several empirically supported strategies were selected to illustrate appropriate ways to manage classrooms. The methods also relate to the four areas of knowledge and skills necessary for classroom management, as discussed earlier by Jones and Jones (i.e., positive climate, empirically supported strategies; incorporate instructional strategies; foster student autonomy; 2010).

Managing the physical environment. An important factor of classroom management is managing the physical learning environment. Teachers need to create an environment that is comfortable, safe, and responsive to the needs of their students. Teachers and administrators might need to assess and make changes to the physical environment to enhance optimal student functioning. Teachers might ask themselves, "Is this room arrangement, the furnishing, the use of wall and floor space, the lighting, etc. appropriate for my students?" They might also consider assessing the teaching materials used such as assignments, visual displays, classroom expectations and rules, and technology that are motivating and appropriate for the skills of the students. Time is also important to assess. Teachers should consider whether the daily schedule, routines, transitions, and lesson pacing are appropriate for their specific students. When teachers realize that a major-

ity of their students struggle with writing, they might consider moving writing time toward the beginning of the day rather than at the end when students are “checked out” and have “nothing to work for.”

Establishing and teaching rules. Students need consistent expectations to aid in positive behavioral performance (Lane, Pierson, Stang, & Carter, 2010), and a well-developed classroom rule system provides students with clear expectations. Rules are most beneficial when there is a short list of approximately three to five rules that are positively and clearly stated. An example of a positive, clear statement is, “Voices are off in the hallway,” and a non-example is, “No talking in the hallway” (Jones & Jones, 2010). When school expectations and rules are established, taught, and reinforced, students will receive more reinforcement at more consistent and higher rates, increasing the likelihood that they will engage in positive, appropriate behavior in the future (Sugai & Horner, 2002).

Instruction and reinforcement for appropriate behavior. Among the many interventions that have short- and long-term positive influences on student behavior (Poduska & Kurki, 2014), researchers report that the most effective behavior management strategies are those that decrease inappropriate behavior by teaching an appropriate behavior to replace the current inappropriate behavior (Ritz, Noltemeyer, Davis, & Green, 2014). Teachers should provide explicit instruction of appropriate behaviors and not assume that all students know and understand what behavior is expected of them. Further, punishing students for inappropriate behavior rather than using positive approaches does not provide students with the opportunity to learn an appropriate replacement behavior (Matheson & Shriver, 2005). For instance, if students blurt out answers and talk over each other, teachers should consider teaching and praising hand raising rather than reprimanding students who blurt out.

Individual and group reinforcement and contingencies. One of the most researched strategies that a teacher can implement is providing immediate and specific reinforcement for a student’s appropriate behavior (Webster-Stratton, 1999). Reinforcement is most effective when immediate and specific because students learn that appropriate behavior produces the reinforcer (e.g., praise, positive attention, sticker, token economy), which motivates students to behave appropriately in the future. When praise is used, it must be used appropriately. Lane and colleagues (2011) recommend that praise be specific, appropriate, and contingent with the intent to provide feedback to a student on his or her behavior or work (e.g., “Tom, I like how you are working on spelling with your voice off”).

Group contingency refers to the utilization of reinforcement of student behavior contingent on a group’s performance of appropriate behavior (Tanol, Johnson, McComas, & Cote, 2010). A well-researched example of a group contingency program is the Good Behavior Game (GBG), which is an international, empirically supported strategy for improving classroom management (Nolan, Houlihan, Wanzek, & Jenson, 2014). Good Behavior Game requires students in the classroom to successfully work as a team to meet a predetermined goal before receiving access to reinforcement. View the provided link



for more information on the Good Behavior Game Program Brief. Group contingency strategies can also be effectively used as a reactive approach (e.g., response cost) to decrease inappropriate behavior (Tanol et al., 2010). For instance, if the class does not meet an expectation or goal, the teacher could remove a classroom privilege. However, it is important to note that researchers recommend positive approaches (e.g., providing a class wide reward) rather than reactive approaches (e.g., taking away a class wide privilege).

Preventative and low-intensity strategies.

Preventative approaches allow teachers to decrease the initial occurrences of classroom disruptions, therefore, making teachers more effective classroom managers. Researchers have identified several key strategies that help teachers effectively manage their classrooms (Lane, Menzies, Bruhn, & Crobori, 2011; See Figure 2).

Other low-intensity ways to increase students' attention and feelings of responsibility is for a teacher to arrange randomized student

Figure 2. Preventative and Low Intensity Strategies taken from Kounin (1970) and Lane, Menzies, Bruhn, and Brobori (2011)

Active Supervision	Visually scanning, moving about, and interacting with students while supervising a classroom or other designated area.
Pacing	Moving through a lesson with appropriate momentum. Instruction should be smooth and focused and should eliminate common teacher behaviors that slow down the pace.
Proximity	Standing in close physical proximity in order to cue a student to appropriate behavior. Do not stand so close as to appear threatening.
Overlappingness and With-it-ness	Attending to more than one classroom event at a time and communicating to students, verbally or nonverbally, that the teacher is monitoring all students' activities.

participation (e.g., draw from a jar of pop-sicle sticks with student names on the sticks to determine who will respond). Further, the teacher can design lessons to include concurrent-active participation (i.e., multiple students performing) and concurrent-passive participation (i.e., one child is performing, while other students are actively participating). All of these easy to use, preventative and low-intensity strategies are designed to engage students in class content while preventing problem behaviors from occurring.

Conclusion

Classroom management is an important skill for effective teachers; it is linked to a decrease in teacher burnout and an increase in teacher self-efficacy and improved academic outcomes for students. Teachers, regardless of grade taught or geographic area, report the need for better training in classroom management skills. There are a huge number of potential specific skills and activities which may represent effective classroom management, although these

may be clustered into several useful groups. There is also a huge array of literature describing classroom management skills, and many of these have demonstrated effectiveness in research studies.



Related Strategy Briefs:

School Climate & Culture, Staff-Student Relationships, Parent & Family Involvement, and Evidence Based Practices.

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Resources on Classroom Management

The resources here address the topic of Classroom Management from a variety of perspectives and sources, and are simply prospective resources which we could identify. This list is not comprehensive, and no endorsement of these resources should be implied.

Websites

Successful Schools, Inc.

<http://successfulschools.org/about-us>

This site is housed in Boulder, Colorado. It is a site dedicated to turning research into practice. The program offers school educators professional development to enhance their skills. Some areas that they provide training in include: response to intervention, positive behavior supports and intervention, classroom management, and functional behavior strategies. They pride themselves on customizing their services to meet the unique needs of individual districts and schools.

The Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) and the Department of Special Education and Rehabilitation Counseling (SERC) at the University of Kentucky

<http://www.state.ky.us/agencies/behave/homepage.html>

The two departments have collaborated to create a webpage on student behavior. Their primary purpose is to disseminate effective practices to schools, parents, and other professionals. The resources provided will provide assistance to people that deal with challenging and problematic behavior displayed by children and youth in the

Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports, OSEP Technical Assistance Center

<http://www.pbis.org/default.aspx>

This website is primarily for schools, families, and communities that are within a district or school system that implements Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS). This site provides a wide range of resources: research, presentations, trainings, videos, etc. This website is helpful for people who want to implement PBIS and for people who are currently implementing PBIS. For more information on PBIS, visit this website or read the PBIS Strategy Brief.

Online-Stopwatch

<http://www.online-stopwatch.com/classroom-timers/>

This website provides numerous resources for educators and other school personnel. More specifically, this resource aids in classroom management through time management. You will find a variety of fun stopwatches and timers that can be downloaded and used in the classroom.

PBIS World

<http://www.pbisworld.com/>

This website was created by a school district PBIS Coach with the intention of making PBIS implementation seamless for educators within his district. The site is very user friendly. It provides target behavior-specific resources as well as data tracking resources.

Pendergast Assistive Technology Resource Center

<https://sites.google.com/a/pesd92.org/pendergast-assistive-technology-resource-center/electronic-resources/behavior-interventions-beyond-the-behavior-plan>

This website has a compilation of resources that are helpful for classroom management. The site provides information on well managed classrooms, tier 1 behavior intervention ideas, visual schedules, behavior tracking charts, and resources on social skills.

Blended Teaching through Literature

<https://sites.google.com/a/pesd92.org/pesd92readingresources/multi-tiered-systems-of-support-for-behavior>

This is a website that is aimed towards educators and elementary school students. This website provides a list of books that appropriately address a variety of issues that young students may be having. The website is affiliated with Pendergast Elementary School District and Boys Town.

Review360: Behavior Matters

<http://r360.psiwaresolutions.com/>

This is a website that provides a variety of resources to educators. Some of the resources include: videos, a variety of 'solutions', and newsletters and articles. The solution topics that can be found are: improving student behavior and school climate, implementing a complete RTI/PBIS package, universal screening, addressing bullying, working with students with emotional and behavioral disabilities, and working with students with intellectual disabilities. This website is affiliated with Pearson.

Technical Assistance Center on Social Emotional Intervention for Young Children

<http://challengingbehavior.fmhi.usf.edu/>

This website provides presentations, publications, system procedures, and individualized interventions. It also provides information about training opportunities and finding consultants.

Behavior Advisor/Dr. Mac's Behavior Management

<http://www.behavioradvisor.com>

This is a website that provides a variety of “positive and respectful strategies and interventions for promoting appropriate behavior.” The website is intended for professionals who work with students. Also, he provides free lesson plans, podcasts, videos, and intervention strategies. There is also a section for parents.

Books**Classroom Management for Elementary Teachers (9th Ed.)**

Evertson, C. M., & Emmer, E. T. (2012). *Classroom management for elementary teachers (9th ed.)*. New York, NY: Pearson.

ISBN-13: 978-0132693264

This book was written for elementary school teachers. Specifically, the book discusses ways in which a teacher can implement an effective classroom management system in an elementary-school classroom. Skills, approaches, and strategies are discussed.

Classroom Management for Middle and High School Teachers (9th Ed.)

Emmer, E. T., & Everston, C. M. (2013). *Classroom management for middle and high school teachers (9th ed.)*. New York, NY: Pearson

ISBN-13: 978-0132689687

This book was written for middle and high school teachers. Specifically, the book discusses ways in which a teacher can implement an effective classroom management system in a middle- or high-school classroom. Skills, approaches, and strategies are discussed.

Comprehensive Classroom Management: Creating Communities of Support and Solving Problems (10th Ed.)

Jones, V., & Jones, L. (2012). *Comprehensive classroom management: Creating communities of support and solving problems (10th ed.)*. New York, NY: Pearson.

ISBN-13: 978-0132697088

This book is a comprehensive resource for research-based classroom management methods and strategies. Specifically, this book discusses positive learning environments, individual behavior change plans, specific management strategies, and classroom management principles. Also, real-life examples are discussed.

Effective Supports for Students with Emotional and Behavior Disorders

Jones, V., Greenwood, A., & Dunn, C. (2016). *Effective supports for students with emotional and behavior disorders*. Boston, MA: Pearson.

ISBN-13: 978-0-13-357108-0.

This book is intended for individuals who are seeking to advance their knowledge and skills in supporting students who are experiencing emotional or behavioral disorders. It is intended to assist in providing information on implementing a wide range of proven methods for helping these students.

Handbook of Classroom Management: Research, Practice, and Contemporary Issues

Evertson, C. M., & Weinstein, C. S. (2006). *Handbook of classroom management: Research, practice, and contemporary issues*. New York, NY: Routledge.
ISBN-13: 978-0805847543

This book thoroughly discusses the topic of classroom management. It clearly defines the term as well as discusses teachers' managerial tasks. Additionally, this book discusses current literature and promotes conversation for future research. The book showcases 10 different sections written by experts in that area.

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