

Professional Resources

Basic Classroom Management Guidelines

1. Plan lessons that are well organized and fully developed. Show all the components of the teaching/learning cycle using a variety of strategies and activities that reflect multiple learning styles.
2. Be orderly by having a good room arrangement, a traffic area free of congestion, a professional space and an attractive environment. Keep the students visible to the teacher and instructional presentation visible to students.
3. Be motivated, enthusiastic, interested, and well informed about what you are teaching. This is catching. If you sound bored with the materials, the students will be, too.
4. Give clear, explicit instruction of expectations before moving students to activities. Check for understanding to make sure everyone knows what is expected. Start seatwork as a group or under close supervision; provide a model.
5. Keep students actively engaged in all parts of the lesson. It gives them less opportunity or reason to be off-task.
6. **Choose nonverbal over verbal communication when redirecting individual off-task behaviors.**
7. Monitor your class constantly and redirect inappropriate behaviors promptly.
 - ◆ watch the whole class for inappropriate behavior, appropriate materials on desk, failure to follow directions, signs of confusion, etc. SCAN THE ROOM OFTEN especially during presentation of lesson.
 - ◆ move around the room as much as possible.
 - ◆ provide a model; use prompts.
 - ◆ look for opportunities to praise students for appropriate behavior.
 - ◆ remind students of correct procedure or have students tell you what is expected.
8. Prevent discipline problems by planning for them; anticipate the problem before it happens.
9. Develop strong communication with parents. Do not wait for a crisis situation to develop. Call often with praise and be sure to identify yourself.

Note: Approval and guidance of a cooperating teacher is required before any written or verbal communication is initiated with parents.
10. Use humor, creativity and love! Never embarrass a student. If you need to discuss behavior, arrange to do it privately.
11. Expect the best from your class, and you will get it. Attitude is extremely important in the discipline process.
12. Successful managers have these traits:
 - ◆ “with-it-ness” – awareness of what is going on and the ability to communicate it.
 - ◆ overlapping – ability to do more than one thing at a time.
 - ◆ smoothness of transitions – no wasted time.
 - ◆ momentum- correct lesson pace.
 - ◆ group alertness – ability to keep students’ attention.
 - ◆ accountability – know how each student is learning.

Specific Management Strategies Early Childhood

Movement of Students in the Classroom

To move students from one group to another:

1. Move students by recognizing those who are using appropriate behaviors. "I can see you are ready, so you may go over to Table One."
2. Set time limits for movement. "Get into your groups in the next 30 seconds."
3. Move students using a transition from the lesson. (e.g., If you have short, curly hair like the character in our story, you may go to the carpet.) Use clothing styles, colors, and physical characteristics, anything that will move students a small group at a time.
4. Play soft music and tell students that when the music stops, they must be in the designated area. Students have to move quietly to hear the music.
5. Sing a song together as groups move; everyone should be in place when the song is finished.
6. Spell a word that has something to do with the lesson. Praise student movement between letters; everyone should be in desired places when spelling is complete.
7. Make color-coded shapes for the students' desks. Students are called by these. "Red cars, please meet me on the rug."

Reinforcing Positive Behavior

To encourage appropriate behaviors:

1. Use specific, verbal praise. "Thank you for setting a good example by ...". " you put a lot of thought and effort into this paper."
2. Write notes to students expressing positive messages.
3. Celebrate with the class for a good day with an appropriate "academic" activity. "Everyone worked so well today, we have an extra five minutes to read."
4. Reward students with no cost coupons for privileges such as: computer time, free time, etc.
5. Have student's role play appropriate behaviors. "Let's model how we should react when someone bumps into us."
6. Give table points for cooperative group behaviors.
7. Present "Good Job" tickets/stickers/bonus bucks.
8. Have lunch with teacher/friends in the room.
9. Provide class recognition and praise: "Class, let's all say **good job** to Michael for his..."
10. Drop marbles in a jar loud enough for students to "hear" the praise.
11. Reward the class for an "All-Star Day" (No names on board, etc.)
12. Have students earn letters that spell out a mystery word (**popcorn**).

Redirecting Whole Class Behavior

When the entire class is off-task:

1. Use a signal to cue students to focus on you for directions (e.g., turn off lights, tap on blackboard).
2. Use a soft voice or whisper.
3. Recognize those groups giving appropriate behaviors and thank them for focusing on you.

4. Silently look at your watch and keep track of the seconds/minutes the class has “wasted” and that they owe you. They can pay you back during free time or after the bell rings. (Students need to know ahead of time that this is your policy.)
5. Use varied clapping patterns that students echo, or clap a sequence of patterns ending with hands in lap.
6. Use chants that require students' immediate responses such as:
 - “1, 2, 3 -Stop and look at me. 3, 2, 1-I like what you have done.”
 - “If you can hear my voice, clap once.” (Student claps once.) “If you can hear my voice, clap twice.” (Student claps twice.) Continue until all students are listening and clapping.
 - Teacher says, “Give me five.” Students count down with the teacher. 5=eyes watching, 4=ears listening, 3=mouths shut, 2=hands still, 1=brain thinking.
7. Use fraction or percentages to let students know how many are paying attention until you reach 100%. “One-half of the class is looking at me; now three-fourths are with me.”
8. Add a letter to spell a designated word. (e.g. spell RECESS on the board by adding a letter each time the class is following directions appropriately. When the word is complete the class has earned 5-10 minutes extra recess time.
9. Use the game of “Simon Says” substituting the teacher’s name for Simon’s. Continue until all students are participating, then proceed with the lesson.

Redirecting Individual Off-task Behaviors Verbally

When an individual student is off-task:

1. Use the individual’s name in a comment without interrupting the lesson. (This is especially effective if you use the student’s name in a positive manner: “. . .the example that ___ gave us yesterday really fits in this context”). You can also ask the student a question, using her/his name in front of the question: “___, why do you think the main character acted in that manner?”
2. Use specific, positive comments that refocus a negative behavior. “___, I want you to have plenty of time to do quality work.” or “The whole class can work better when everyone is quietly working.”
3. Give a positive direction or reminder followed by *thanks* and not *please*. Be definite without asking. “Remember our rules for listening. Thanks.” Then move on, expecting the student to comply.
4. Use a strategic pause. Say the student’s name in a firm tone, followed by a pause for attention, then give the direction, or give “the look”.
5. Use proximity praise. (Praise students around the one who is off-task.)

Redirecting Individual Off-task Behavior Using Nonverbals

To refocus students without disturbing the rest of the class:

1. Use direct eye contact while continuing the lesson.
2. Move into the student's space and stand next to her/him continuing what you were doing. You can also touch or whisper desired expectations.
3. Give nonverbal praise or redirection. (Thumbs up or thumbs down, OK signal, smile, nod.)
4. Shake your head or give a stern look to an individual.
5. Use a timer; when it goes off, students know to put pencils down and look at teacher.

6. Take any distracting objects away from the student.
7. Touch student as you pass by him.
8. Tap student's work or point to the place he should be.
9. Signal for student to move from area where she is distracted or causing distractions.
10. Move and stand beside a student who is not paying attention.
11. Stand quietly in front of the room and wait for **all** students' attention.
12. Point to your watch to remind a student that time is running out.
13. Have students use signals to identify when they are ready to move on or listen. (e.g. pencils laid down on desk, papers turned over, books closed)
14. Place notes on the board with messages of what is expected next.
15. Point to the procedure for an activity or class rule they need to follow.
16. Ring a bell for "Stop, Look and Listen".
17. Put a finger to your lips to mean quiet.
18. Move continuously around the class.

Specific Management Strategies Middle/ Secondary

Movement of Students in the Classroom

To move students from one group to another:

1. Give all of the needed directions before you begin an activity to reduce problems before students move into groups.
2. Set time limits for movements (e.g. in the next 30 seconds, I would like for you to move into your groups).
3. Signal those students for movement who are attentive and using appropriate behaviors (e.g. I can see that Table One is ready to pick-up their materials).

Reinforcing Positive Behavior

To encourage appropriate behaviors:

1. Use verbal praise such as, "I see that one table is set-up to begin." Be sincere and do not use praise to manipulate students.
2. Write notes to students expressing positive messages.
3. Call parents and give verbal praise of the student.
4. Reward students with coupons for privileges for computer time, free time, homework exemption, or seat change.
5. Reward the class for a good day with appropriate verbal praise and an award such as, "Everyone worked so hard today that I will give you ten minutes to read whatever you want at the end of the period."
6. Reward the class occasionally with a "no homework night".
7. Give individuals, groups, or whole class a reward when they show hard work and/or cooperative work efforts.

Redirecting Whole Class Behavior

When the entire class is off-task:

1. Ask for the students' attention while simultaneously giving a signal to cue students to focus on your directions (e.g. Raise your hand until students raise their hand, turn off lights, use a bell or chime signal, or tap on the desk).
2. Change your inflection to a soft voice or whisper to gain attention.
3. Recognize the groups or individuals who are on-task and praise them by name (e.g. Thanks, Julie, for being prepared for the next activity).
4. Look at your watch and keep track of the time that the class has wasted. Students must then pay you back after the bell rings.

Redirecting Individual Off-task Behavior Verbally

When an individual student is off-task:

1. Ask the disruptive student a question, using her/his name in front of the question to summon attention (e.g. Charles, why do you think this was one of the main causes of the war?)
2. Use the individual's name in a comment without interrupting the flow of the lesson. Using a student's name is especially effective if you first use it in a positive manner (e.g. Do you remember when Charles stated yesterday that one of the causes centered on the imbalance of power?)
3. Use specific, positive comments that refocus a negative behavior, "Michael, I want you to have plenty of time to do quality work." Or, you could say, "I know that you will do better if everyone is quietly working."
4. Give a positive direction, followed by a "thanks." Avoid the use of "please." It is better to be definite, (e.g. Remember our rules for listening). Then move on, expecting the student(s) to comply.
5. Praise the other students by stating, "Thanks for all of you who are being such active listeners."
6. Use a strategic pause in the middle of your statement to the class. Say the student's name in a firm tone, followed by a pause for attention, and then continue with the lesson.
7. Ask the student, "How can I help you improve your behavior in class?"
8. Never embarrass a student in front of the class. If you need to discuss behavior with the student, arrange for this privately.

Redirecting Individual Off-task Behavior Using Nonverbals

To refocus students without disturbing the rest of the class:

1. Give the "teacher look" that communicates distress at the student's behavior. (Practice at home in the mirror before you try it in class since students have seen "the look" before.)
2. Move into the student's space and stand there next to her/him continuing what you were doing. You may also whisper desired expectations to the student. It may be necessary to state, "See me after class."
3. Choose appropriate gestures and facial expressions to express your concerns. Shake your head and give a stern look to the individual student off-task. Signal by pointing your finger for the student to move from the area in which he is distracted or causing the distractions.
4. As you continue the lesson, use your tone of voice, eye contact, and proximity to the student to alter behavior.

5. Move continuously around the room to monitor students. Move and stand beside a student who is not paying attention until the student is back on task. Touch the student on the shoulder (if allowed) as you pass by; you may want to follow up with eye contact. Tap student's work or point to the place she/he should be.
6. Take any distracting objects away from the student. Student may pick-up the object at a later time.
7. Stand quietly in front of the room and wait for ALL students' attention.
8. Point to the procedure for an activity or the class rule students need to follow on a class chart in front of the room.
9. Place notes on the board or overhead (e.g. what you expect, directions, steps to follow).
10. Point to your watch to remind students that time is running out.
11. Use a timer for classroom activities. When the timer rings, students know to put their pencils down and look at the teacher. You, however, need to explain to your students this procedure early in the semester. Watch for students who become anxious when timed.
12. Have students use signals to identify when they are ready to move on or listen, (e.g. pencils down, papers turned over, books closed).
13. If at all possible, remove a disruptive student from the room to discipline. To discipline a student in front of her/his peers may invite an incident from the student in order to "save face" in front of others.



Suggestions for Observation of Classroom Procedures, Instruction and Management

These questions are designed to help you focus on important classroom procedures and utilize your observation time wisely.

A. Classroom Routine - (Details are important!)

1. Starting procedures

- What does the teacher do as students arrive in the classroom?
- Does she/he have instructions on the board or activities for engagement?
- How are class roll, lunch count, etc. conducted?
- How does she/he move into the first lesson?

2. Distribution of materials

- Are instructional materials ready for use?
- What are student responsibilities regarding materials?

3. Restroom procedures

- May students move freely to the restroom?
- Are passes available to use under certain guidelines?
- Must the teacher give permission before a student may be excused?

4. Lunch procedures

- How are students dismissed at the end of each period, for lunch, for special circumstances, etc.?
- How are elementary students given lunch tickets, taken to the cafeteria and picked up, etc.?

5. Other “housekeeping tasks”

- How are students guided in the upkeep of the room and learning materials?
- How are students selected, instructed and held accountable for duties?

B. Record Keeping

1. Attendance

- Are there any special codes used by the teacher?
- Does she/he allow students to assist?

2. Grading (Watch carefully how the teacher grades papers – accuracy is a must!)

- Does the teacher use different types of evaluation symbols? (e.g., 100%, √, +)
- How is the grade book set up? (tests in red ink, computer program, etc.)
- How does she/he deal with participation grades?

3. Referrals

- How are disciplinary actions and follow-up procedures handled?
- How are other referrals (e.g., speech, counselor) handled?

C. Classroom Management (Influenced by school and individual teacher policies)

1. Discipline plan

- What are the rules?
- How were they chosen?
- How are they enforced? (praise, consequences)

2. Tardy policy
 - How is the policy enforced?
 - What does the teacher/school feel are acceptable excuses for tardiness?
3. Seating arrangement
 - How does the teacher determine seating? (alphabetical, discipline)
 - Is there any flexibility? (Can they move at different times or do they need to stay in their seat for the entire period?)
4. Grouping
 - Are students grouped for projects, reading, etc.?
 - How does the teacher determine this grouping?

D. Teaching Procedures (Look for a sequence of events that allows the students to achieve objectives.)

1. Lesson
 - a) Introduction and teaching
 - How is the purpose of the lesson set?
 - How does the teacher motivate students' interest?
 - How does the teacher relate lesson content to the students' prior knowledge?
 - What type of questioning is used to determine student understanding?
 - b) Student activities
 - How are students monitored for degree of understanding?
 - How does the teacher produce a smooth transition from teaching procedures to student practice?
 - How are students kept on-task?
 - c) Enrichment/re-teach activities
 - What creative opportunities are provided to extend the understanding of those who successfully complete the lesson?
 - What modifications and re-teach opportunities are provided for those who have not mastered the objective?
 - d) Closure
 - How does the teacher involve the students in a brief review of the lesson objective?
 - e) Evaluation
 - How does the teacher evaluate whether the lesson's goals were achieved?
 - How does the teacher readjust the lesson if needed?
2. Homework/Make-up work/Late work/Tutorials
 - How does the teacher grade homework?
 - What is the policy for late work?
 - What is the policy for students who have been absent?
 - What is the policy for helping students before, during, or after school?
3. Transition techniques/Fillers
 - What special devices or techniques does the teacher use to connect the subjects and move into the next learning activity?
 - If the teacher has extra time, how does he/she keep students involved, motivated, and on-task?

E. Student/Teacher Interaction and Management Techniques

- How are students recognized during classroom discussion? How do students gain the teacher's attention? (e.g., raising hand, coming to teacher's desk, signals)
- How does the teacher bring all students into the learning environment and keep them on-task?
- How does the teacher redirect off-task behaviors?
- What nonverbal signals are used?
- How are appropriate behaviors reinforced?
- How are students moved from whole group to small group and vice-versa?
- How is the classroom discipline plan implemented?

F. Parent/Teacher Interaction

- How does the teacher communicate expectations of the child to parents?
- How does the teacher deal with problems or communicate praise to parents (how often, in what manner)?

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“Nine tenths of education is encouragement.” -- Anatole France

* From the College of Education and Human Development, Texas A & M University, Student Teaching Handbook, <http://www.coe.tamu.edu/sthandbook/index.php>

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