

5 Classroom Management Tips for Every Teacher

by Michael Linsin

This week we're going to visit five classroom management tips all teachers can benefit from, new and veteran alike.

But what makes these tips different than the usual fare is that they're so often overlooked, ignored, or just plain forgotten. Sneak a peak into a hundred classrooms and you'll find few if any teachers actually following them.

Those who do, however, those who make these essential tips part of who they are and how they run their classroom, have an uncanny ability to create the kind of happy but peaceful learning experience students love being part of.

They have what students, parents, and fellow teachers struggle to put their finger on when describing those rare individuals with a natural gift for their profession. But the truth is, the ability to create a dream class is available to everyone.

The tips below form the backbone of an approach to classroom management that will pave the way to extraordinary teaching—if only you'll make the commitment to following them.

1. Teach highly detailed routines for every repeatable moment.

Well-taught routines, performed with excellence, are among the clearest indicators of exceptional teaching. They make everything for the teacher easier, save loads of learning time, dramatically cut down on misbehavior, and help students stay focused on what's important.

Begin the first day of school modeling every repeatable moment of your school day. *Show* your students explicitly, step-by-tiny-step, how to enter the classroom in the morning, how to ask a question, how to turn in work, and how to perform every other routine that make up the common movements and transitions of your classroom.

2. Make an unwavering commitment to your classroom management plan.

An inconsistently followed classroom management plan is one of the most common teacher mistakes. It's also among the most detrimental. Because every time a rule is broken, and you let it go, you lose a layer of trust from your students, cause resentment and jealousy, and send the unmistakable message that you don't really mean what you say.

Furthermore, teachers who fail to rely on a clearly defined plan for holding students accountable, inevitably make behavior worse by falling into hurtful methods like yelling, scolding, and sarcasm. They also tend to take misbehavior personally, have poor relationships with students, and experience mountains of stress.

3. Build a behavior-influencing relationship with your students.

Having a positive relationship with students makes everything easier, particularly classroom management. When your students like you and trust you, they'll want to please you, which in turn gives you powerful leverage to influence their behavior. And the best news is, it isn't difficult.

If you're merely pleasant in your interactions with students, if you're open to laughter and seeing the humor in your classroom and in the unique and wonderful personalities of your students, then behavior-influencing rapport will grow naturally. Your students will look up to you and be drawn to you organically and without strategic effort.

4. Spend more time observing and less time micromanaging.

Most teachers talk too much, help too much, and are seen too much. The truth is, micromanagement breeds needy, demanding, and dependent students who expect from you what they can readily do for themselves. Ironically, it also causes them to grow tired of your constant, intrusive presence.

So instead of buzzing around the room, reteaching one student after another, focus your energy on delivering clear-cut, efficient, and high-impact lessons, a thorough checking of understanding, and an expectation of silent, focused, *independent* practice—while you observe closely from a short distance.

5. Take responsibility for your students—both their learning and behavior.

In our profession, perhaps more than any other, it's easy—too easy—to point the finger at outside circumstances. There are dozens of ready-made justifications for why your students misbehave, why they're disrespectful, why they don't listen or do their homework or work together, etc.

But in the end, blaming parents, video games, or the neighborhood they live in, for example, solves nothing and makes creating the classroom you really want an impossibility. It's also akin to giving up on them, pigeonholing their behavior and limiting their potential.

When you take responsibility, however, when you stand up and say, "*It's up to me, right now, and at this school!*" there are no limits.