

# **THE EFFECTIVE TEACHER AND CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT.**

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## **Introduction**

Classroom management is a cornerstone of effective teaching. Effective classroom management is essential for creating a learning environment that is conducive to both teaching and learning. An effective teacher possesses a combination of skills, qualities, and practices that create a positive and productive learning environment. An effective teacher uses classroom management strategies to create a safe, supportive, and orderly learning environment. This paper explores the characteristics of an effective teacher in the context of classroom management.

## **An Effective Teacher**

An effective teacher is someone who not only imparts knowledge but also inspires and empowers students to reach their full potential. Brophy (1986), Defines an effective teacher as someone who maximizes student learning by creating a supportive and challenging environment, using effective instructional strategies, and maintaining a focus on student outcomes. For Stronge (2007), effective teachers are those who not only teach well but also exhibit personal characteristics such as caring, fairness, and respect, which contribute to the development of positive teacher-student relationships. We can rightly say then that an effective teacher is characterized by a combination of strong content knowledge, effective classroom management, adaptability, student-centered approaches, and emotional intelligence.

## **Characteristics of an Effective Teacher**

1. **Strong Subject Matter Knowledge:** Effective teachers have a deep understanding of the subjects they teach and are able to convey complex ideas in a way that is accessible to students. Shulman (1987) emphasizes the importance of teachers possessing both content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge, which allows them to present material in a manner that is understandable and relevant to students.
2. **Classroom Management Skills:** Effective teachers create structured and well-managed classrooms that provide a conducive environment for learning. Marzano, Marzano, and Pickering (2003) argue that effective classroom management is a critical aspect of successful teaching, impacting student behavior and academic achievement.
3. **Adaptability and Differentiation:** Effective teachers recognize the diverse needs of their students and adapt their teaching strategies accordingly. Tomlinson (2001) discusses the importance of differentiated instruction, which involves tailoring teaching methods to accommodate different learning styles, abilities, and interests.
4. **Student-Centered Approach:** Effective teachers place students at the center of the learning process, encouraging active participation and fostering a sense of ownership over their education. Hattie (2009) highlights the significance of teachers creating a student-centered learning environment, where feedback, metacognitive strategies, and student engagement are prioritized.

5. **Empathy and Emotional Intelligence:** Effective teachers exhibit empathy and emotional intelligence, understanding and addressing the emotional and social needs of their students. Goleman (1995) suggests that emotional intelligence is crucial in teaching, as it influences how teachers interact with students and manage the emotional climate of the classroom.

## **The Role of the Effective Teacher**

An effective teacher is not just a dispenser of knowledge but a facilitator of learning. According to Marzano, Marzano, and Pickering (2003), classroom management is arguably the foundation of a successful classroom environment. They establish clear expectations, enforce rules consistently, and build positive relationships with students.

Kounin (1970), emphasized the concept of "withitness," which refers to a teacher's ability to be aware of what is happening in all parts of the classroom at all times. This vigilance allows the teacher to prevent potential disruptions before they escalate. Kounin's research suggests that effective teachers are proactive rather than reactive, which significantly impacts classroom management and student behavior.

## **Classroom Management**

Classroom management is a fundamental aspect of teaching that directly influences the effectiveness of instruction and the overall learning experience. It refers to the techniques, strategies, and procedures that teachers use to maintain an organized, productive, and focused classroom environment. Effective classroom management is not merely about controlling behavior but about creating a space where all students can thrive academically and socially. Classroom management is critical for fostering an environment conducive to learning. According to Emmer and Evertson (2016), effective classroom management is essential for both student engagement and academic achievement. When a classroom is well-managed, students can focus on learning without the distractions of disruptive behavior. This not only benefits students academically but also contributes to their social and emotional well-being.

## **Factors That Facilitate Good Classroom Management**

Good classroom management involves more than just maintaining order; it is about fostering a positive learning atmosphere, ensuring that instructional time is maximized, and promoting student engagement and academic success. Effective classroom management strategies are essential for maintaining a productive learning environment. Wong and Wong (2009) argue that the most effective teachers have a plan for classroom management that they implement from the first day of school. This plan often includes procedures for everything from turning in homework to transitioning between activities. Various factors contribute to successful classroom management, including clear expectations, consistent routines, positive teacher-student relationships, and culturally responsive practices, these include:

### **1. Clear Expectations**

Establishing clear expectations is one of the foundational elements of good classroom management. Teachers need to set clear rules and guidelines from the beginning of the school year to ensure that students understand what is expected of them. According to Marzano, Marzano, and Pickering (2003), the most effective classrooms are those in which expectations

are clearly communicated and consistently enforced. Clear expectations help prevent misunderstandings and reduce the likelihood of misbehavior.

To facilitate this, teachers should involve students in the process of creating classroom rules. When students have a say in the rules, they are more likely to follow them. This collaborative approach also helps students feel a sense of ownership and responsibility for their behavior.

## **2. Consistent Routines**

Consistency is key to good classroom management. Consistent routines help students know what to expect, reducing uncertainty and anxiety. As Wong and Wong (2009) note, a well-managed classroom operates like clockwork because students know the routines and expectations for every part of the school day. These routines might include procedures for entering the classroom, turning in assignments, transitioning between activities, and even how to ask questions during a lesson.

Establishing these routines early and practicing them regularly helps reinforce their importance. When routines are consistent, students are more likely to stay on task and less likely to engage in disruptive behavior.

## **3. Positive Teacher-Student Relationships**

Building positive relationships with students is a crucial factor in effective classroom management. Students are more likely to respect and cooperate with a teacher they feel connected to and supported by. According to Pianta, Hamre, and Allen (2012), positive teacher-student relationships are a significant predictor of student engagement and achievement. These relationships are built on trust, respect, and open communication.

Teachers can foster positive relationships by showing interest in their students' lives, being empathetic, and providing support when needed. Additionally, positive reinforcement and encouragement can go a long way in motivating students and promoting a positive classroom environment.

## **4. Culturally Responsive Practices**

In today's diverse classrooms, culturally responsive teaching is essential for effective classroom management. Culturally responsive practices involve recognizing and valuing students' cultural backgrounds and incorporating them into the learning process. Gay (2018) emphasizes that culturally responsive teaching acknowledges the cultural diversity of students and uses it as a vehicle for learning. By being culturally aware and responsive, teachers can create an inclusive environment where all students feel respected and valued.

This approach not only enhances student engagement but also reduces the potential for cultural misunderstandings that could lead to behavior issues. For instance, a behavior that may be considered disrespectful in one culture might be a sign of respect in another. Understanding these differences allows teachers to manage their classrooms more effectively.

## **5. Proactive Classroom Management Strategies**

Proactive strategies are designed to prevent problems before they occur. These include anticipating potential issues, setting up the classroom environment to minimize disruptions, and using positive reinforcement to encourage desired behaviors. Jones (2000) suggests that proactive management strategies focus on creating a positive classroom environment where students are motivated to engage in learning rather than misbehave .

One example of a proactive strategy is the use of "non-verbal signals" to manage behavior quietly and efficiently. For instance, a teacher might use a hand signal to indicate that it is time for students to quiet down or refocus on the task at hand. Such techniques help maintain order without interrupting the flow of instruction.

## **6. Effective Communication**

Effective communication is another critical factor in good classroom management. Teachers must communicate clearly and respectfully with their students to avoid misunderstandings and ensure that instructions are followed. According to Hattie (2009), teachers who communicate expectations clearly and provide constructive feedback tend to have classrooms that are well-managed and conducive to learning.

Effective communication also involves active listening. When students feel that their voices are heard, they are more likely to engage positively with the teacher and the classroom community. This two-way communication fosters mutual respect and understanding, which are essential for maintaining a harmonious classroom environment.

## **7. Classroom Environment**

The physical and emotional environment of the classroom plays a significant role in classroom management. A well-organized and welcoming classroom can enhance student engagement and reduce the likelihood of misbehavior. Weinstein, Romano, and Mignano (2010) argue that the physical arrangement of the classroom can either support or hinder the teacher's ability to manage the classroom effectively. A well-organized classroom should have clear sightlines, easy access to materials, and designated areas for different activities. Additionally, creating a classroom environment that feels safe and inclusive helps students feel comfortable and ready to learn.

## **Factors That Militate Against Effective Classroom Management**

Various factors can undermine the efforts towards effective classroom management, leading to a chaotic or unproductive classroom. These factors may stem from the teacher, the students, the environment, or external influences. These includes:

### **1. Inconsistent Enforcement of Rules**

One of the primary factors that undermine effective classroom management is the inconsistent enforcement of rules. When teachers fail to apply rules and consequences consistently, students may become confused about what is acceptable behavior. Marzano, Marzano, and Pickering (2003) highlight that inconsistency in enforcing rules leads to a lack of respect for authority

and can result in increased misbehavior. This inconsistency can also cause students to test boundaries, leading to further disruptions.

Teachers must be clear, fair, and consistent in applying classroom rules to maintain order. Inconsistent enforcement not only diminishes the teacher's authority but also disrupts the learning environment, making it difficult for all students to succeed.

## **2. Poor Teacher-Student Relationships**

Another significant factor that can hinder effective classroom management is poor teacher-student relationships. A lack of mutual respect and trust between teachers and students can lead to an adversarial classroom environment. Pianta, Hamre, and Allen (2012) assert that teachers who do not establish positive relationships with their students may struggle to maintain control in the classroom. When students feel disconnected from their teacher, they are less likely to engage in learning and more likely to exhibit disruptive behavior.

Teachers who do not invest time in building rapport with their students may face challenges in managing the classroom effectively. Positive teacher-student relationships are essential for creating a respectful and cooperative learning environment.

## **3. Lack of Preparation and Organization**

A teacher's lack of preparation and organization can severely impact classroom management. When lessons are not well-planned, transitions between activities are chaotic, or materials are not readily available, students may become disengaged and restless. Wong and Wong (2009) emphasize that "Effective classroom management begins with thorough preparation and organization; without it, even the best-behaved students can become distracted and disruptive. Unprepared teachers often struggle to keep students on task, leading to increased opportunities for misbehavior. This disorganization can create a learning environment where students feel uncertain and unmotivated, further complicating classroom management efforts.

## **4. Student Diversity and Classroom Size**

Student diversity, including cultural, linguistic, and ability differences, can present challenges to effective classroom management. While diversity enriches the learning experience, it can also complicate the implementation of a one-size-fits-all approach to classroom management. According to Gay (2018), teachers who are not equipped to manage diverse classrooms may inadvertently marginalize some students, leading to disengagement and behavioral issues. Large class sizes can exacerbate these challenges, as it becomes more difficult for teachers to address the individual needs of each student. Weinstein, Romano, and Mignano (2010) argue that managing a large classroom with diverse learners requires differentiated strategies, and failure to do so can result in widespread classroom management problems. When students feel their needs are not being met, they may act out, disrupting the learning environment.

## **5. External Pressures and Distractions**

External factors such as societal pressures, family issues, and technological distractions can also interfere with effective classroom management. Students who experience stress or instability at home may bring these issues into the classroom, resulting in behavioral problems. Additionally, the increasing presence of technology in classrooms can be both a tool and a

distraction. According to Hattie (2009), while technology can enhance learning, it can also become a significant distraction if not managed properly. Teachers must navigate these external pressures while maintaining control of the classroom. This requires flexibility and adaptability, as well as a deep understanding of the external factors that may influence student behavior.

## **6. Ineffective Communication**

Ineffective communication between teachers and students can also undermine classroom management. When instructions are unclear or confusing, students may become frustrated and disengaged, leading to behavioral issues. Hattie (2009) notes that effective classroom management depends heavily on clear communication; when students do not understand what is expected of them, misbehavior is more likely to occur. Moreover, a lack of active listening on the teacher's part can lead to misunderstandings and conflicts. Teachers who fail to listen to their students' concerns or feedback may inadvertently create an environment where students feel misunderstood or neglected, further complicating classroom management.

## **7. Inadequate Professional Development**

Inadequate professional development is another factor that can impede effective classroom management. Teachers who lack training in classroom management techniques may struggle to maintain control, especially in challenging situations. Jones (2000) asserts that ongoing professional development is essential for teachers to stay updated on the latest classroom management strategies and to refine their skills. Without proper training, teachers may rely on outdated or ineffective methods, leading to frustration and increased classroom disruptions. Continuous professional development ensures that teachers are equipped with the tools and knowledge needed to manage their classrooms effectively.

## **The Impact of Effective Classroom Management on Student Achievement**

Effective classroom management is directly linked to student achievement. Hattie (2009) conducted a meta-analysis of factors influencing student achievement and found that classroom management had a significant effect size of 0.52, indicating its strong impact on learning outcomes. Hattie concluded that effective classroom management not only minimizes disruptions but also maximizes instructional time, leading to improved academic performance.

Moreover, research by Emmer and Evertson (2016) supports the idea that well-managed classrooms provide a structure that allows for more effective teaching and learning. They state, teachers who implement effective classroom management techniques create an environment where students can focus on learning without the distractions of misbehavior.

### **Some Key Attributes of an Effective Teacher:**

#### **1. Strong Communication Skills**

- **Clear Instruction:** Explains concepts in a way that students understand.
- **Active Listening:** Pays attention to students' questions and concerns.
- **Engagement:** Encourages discussion and participation, making students feel heard and valued.

#### **2. Deep Knowledge of Subject Matter**

- **Expertise:** Has a thorough understanding of the subject they teach.
- **Continuous Learning:** Stays updated with the latest developments in their field.
- **Contextual Understanding:** Relates content to real-world situations, making it relevant and interesting.

### 3. Classroom Management

- **Structured Environment:** Establishes clear rules and routines.
- **Positive Discipline:** Maintains order without being overly strict or punitive.
- **Proactive:** Anticipates potential issues and addresses them before they escalate.

### 4. Adaptability

- **Differentiated Instruction:** Tailors teaching methods to meet the diverse needs of students.
- **Flexibility:** Adjusts lesson plans based on the class's progress and feedback.
- **Problem-Solving:** Quickly adapts to challenges, whether they are technological, behavioral, or related to the curriculum.

### 5. Empathy and Patience

- **Understanding:** Recognizes the individual challenges and strengths of each student.
- **Supportive:** Provides emotional and academic support when students struggle.
- **Patience:** Maintains composure when dealing with difficult situations or slower learners.

### 6. Passion for Teaching

- **Enthusiasm:** Demonstrates excitement and energy in the classroom, which can inspire students.
- **Dedication:** Goes above and beyond to ensure student success.
- **Love for Learning:** Continuously seeks to improve their own teaching methods and subject knowledge.

### 7. High Expectations

- **Encourages Excellence:** Believes in students' abilities and challenges them to reach their full potential.
- **Goal-Oriented:** Sets clear objectives and helps students work towards achieving them.
- **Accountability:** Holds students accountable for their work, fostering a sense of responsibility.

### 8. Technological Proficiency

- **Integrates Technology:** Uses educational technology to enhance learning experiences.
- **Stays Updated:** Keeps abreast of new tools and platforms that can improve teaching.
- **Digital Literacy:** Teaches students the skills needed to thrive in a digital world.

### 9. Cultural Competence

- **Inclusive Practices:** Recognizes and respects the diverse backgrounds of students.
- **Culturally Responsive Teaching:** Incorporates students' cultural references in lessons.
- **Global Awareness:** Promotes an understanding of global issues and diverse perspectives.

## 10. Reflective Practice

- **Self-Assessment:** Regularly reflects on their teaching practices to identify areas for improvement.
- **Feedback Seeking:** Welcomes feedback from students, peers, and supervisors.
- **Continuous Improvement:** Implements changes based on reflection and feedback to enhance teaching effectiveness.

## 11. Collaboration and Teamwork

- **Works Well with Colleagues:** Collaborates with other teachers, administrators, and staff to improve the educational environment.
- **Parent-Teacher Partnerships:** Engages with parents to support student learning and development.
- **Community Involvement:** Connects classroom learning to the broader community, fostering a sense of belonging and relevance.

## 12. Motivational Skills

- **Inspires Students:** Helps students find their intrinsic motivation for learning.
- **Encourages Resilience:** Teaches students to persevere through challenges and setbacks.
- **Promotes Self-Efficacy:** Builds students' confidence in their ability to succeed.

## Dos and Don'ts of Effective Classroom Management

### Dos:

1. **Set Clear Expectations:**
  - Establish rules and procedures from the beginning. Make sure students understand what is expected of them.
2. **Be Consistent:**
  - Apply rules and consequences consistently. Consistency helps build trust and respect.
3. **Build Positive Relationships:**
  - Get to know your students and show that you care about their well-being. Positive relationships can improve behavior and engagement.
4. **Use Positive Reinforcement:**
  - Acknowledge and reward good behavior and achievements. This encourages students to continue behaving well.
5. **Be Fair and Respectful:**



- Treat all students with respect and fairness. Avoid favoritism or discrimination.
- 6. **Stay Calm and Collected:**
  - Manage your emotions and maintain composure, even in challenging situations. Students take cues from your behavior.
- 7. **Be Prepared:**
  - Plan your lessons thoroughly. Engaged students are less likely to cause disruptions.
- 8. **Encourage Student Participation:**
  - Involve students in discussions, group work, and decision-making processes. This fosters a sense of responsibility.
- 9. **Use Proactive Strategies:**
  - Anticipate potential issues and address them before they escalate. Redirect misbehavior early.
- 10. **Communicate with Parents:**
  - Keep an open line of communication with parents regarding their child's progress and behavior.

#### **DON'Ts:**

1. **Don't Yell or Lose Control:**
  - Raising your voice or losing your temper can escalate the situation and damage your relationship with students.
2. **Don't Use Sarcasm or Humiliation:**
  - Sarcasm and public shaming can harm students' self-esteem and create a hostile environment.
3. **Don't Ignore Misbehavior:**
  - Allowing small infractions to go unchecked can lead to bigger problems later. Address issues promptly.
4. **Don't Overreact:**
  - Not every situation requires a severe consequence. Match your response to the severity of the behavior.
5. **Don't Be Inconsistent:**
  - Inconsistent enforcement of rules can confuse students and lead to more misbehavior.
6. **Don't Take Misbehavior Personally:**
  - Students' behavior is often not a reflection of you. Stay objective and focus on solutions.
7. **Don't Overload Students with Rules:**
  - Too many rules can be overwhelming. Focus on a few key expectations that cover most situations.
8. **Don't Dismiss Students' Concerns:**
  - Listen to students' perspectives. Ignoring their concerns can lead to disengagement and resentment.
9. **Don't Isolate Yourself:**
  - Collaborate with colleagues and seek support when dealing with difficult classroom management issues.
10. **Don't Forget to Reflect:**
  - Regularly assess what's working and what isn't. Adapt your strategies based on experience and feedback.

## Conclusion

Classroom management is an essential component of effective teaching. By establishing clear expectations, fostering a positive classroom climate, and employing proactive strategies, teachers can create an environment where students are engaged, motivated, and successful. Effective classroom management not only minimizes disruptions but also enhances the overall learning experience, contributing to better academic and social outcomes for students. An effective teacher is proactive in managing the classroom, using strategies that not only prevent disruptive behavior but also promote student engagement and academic achievement. To conclude, it is important to state here that it is not enough to be a teacher, what is important is how effective one is. And so, to all my dear teachers I ask, are you an effective teacher?

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