

Regis University

## ePublications at Regis University

---

Regis University Student Publications  
(comprehensive collection)

Regis University Student Publications

---

Spring 2008

# Classroom Management: Strategies for First Year Middle School Teachers

Joy Easter  
*Regis University*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://epublications.regis.edu/theses>



Part of the [Education Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Easter, Joy, "Classroom Management: Strategies for First Year Middle School Teachers" (2008). *Regis University Student Publications (comprehensive collection)*. 82.  
<https://epublications.regis.edu/theses/82>

This Thesis - Open Access is brought to you for free and open access by the Regis University Student Publications at ePublications at Regis University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Regis University Student Publications (comprehensive collection) by an authorized administrator of ePublications at Regis University. For more information, please contact [epublications@regis.edu](mailto:epublications@regis.edu).

**Regis University**  
College for Professional Studies Graduate Programs  
**Final Project/Thesis**

# **Disclaimer**

Use of the materials available in the Regis University Thesis Collection ("Collection") is limited and restricted to those users who agree to comply with the following terms of use. Regis University reserves the right to deny access to the Collection to any person who violates these terms of use or who seeks to or does alter, avoid or supersede the functional conditions, restrictions and limitations of the Collection.

The site may be used only for lawful purposes. The user is solely responsible for knowing and adhering to any and all applicable laws, rules, and regulations relating or pertaining to use of the Collection.

All content in this Collection is owned by and subject to the exclusive control of Regis University and the authors of the materials. It is available only for research purposes and may not be used in violation of copyright laws or for unlawful purposes. The materials may not be downloaded in whole or in part without permission of the copyright holder or as otherwise authorized in the "fair use" standards of the U.S. copyright laws and regulations.

Classroom Management:  
Strategies for First Year Middle School Teachers

by  
Joy Easter

A Research Project Presented in Partial Fulfillment  
Of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Education

REGIS UNIVERSITY

January, 2008

## ABSTRACT

### Classroom Management: Strategies for First Year Middle School Teachers

This project is presented in the form of a guidebook, which is intended to assist first year teachers with tools to help them develop effective classroom management techniques. The author reviews the relevant history and theories in the educational literature so that teachers are better able to make conscious and educated decisions on how to most effectively reach their students. The author also addresses specific benefits, strategies, and techniques for establishing a well-managed classroom. The main goal of this project is to lay a foundation for years of potential career satisfaction through the application of strong management skills.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
1. INTRODUCTION .....	1
Statement of the Problem .....	1
Purpose of the Project .....	2
Chapter Summary .....	2
2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE .....	4
U.S. History of Leadership in the Classroom .....	4
The Age of the Common School Revival (1812-1865) .....	5
Modern American School System (1865-1918) .....	6
Educational Expansion (1918-Present) .....	7
The History of Educational Philosophies .....	10
Idealism .....	11
Realism .....	12
Perennialism .....	13
Pragmatism .....	13
Summary .....	14
Human Developmental Theories .....	15
Cognitive Development According to Piaget .....	16
Theories of Social and Cognitive Development According to	
Vygotsky .....	18
Moral Development According to Kohlberg .....	19
Ego Development According to Loevinger .....	22
Summary .....	25
Classroom Management .....	26
Meet the Basic Needs of Students .....	27
Teamwork .....	27
Build Relationships with Students .....	28
Love and Logic Approach .....	28
Organization in the Classroom .....	30
Establishment of Rules, Standards, and Routines .....	31
Summary .....	32
Chapter Summary .....	32
3. METHOD .....	33
Target Audience .....	33
Organization of Guidebook .....	34
Peer Assessment .....	34

Chapter Summary . . . . .	34
4. RESULTS . . . . .	35
Introduction . . . . .	35
Classroom Management Guidebook . . . . .	36
Chapter Summary . . . . .	66
5. DISCUSSION . . . . .	67
Contribution of the Project . . . . .	67
Limitations . . . . .	67
Peer Assessment . . . . .	68
Recommendations for Future Research and Study . . . . .	69
Project Summary . . . . .	69
REFERENCES . . . . .	70
APPENDICES	
A. Getting to Know the Student Handout . . . . .	73
B. Time-Out Journal . . . . .	75
C. Parent Questionnaire . . . . .	77
D. Classroom Management Style Chart . . . . .	79
E. Supplemental Reading . . . . .	81

## LIST OF FIGURES

1. Classroom Arrangements .....	39
2. 1st Day of School Checklist .....	42
3. Teacher Checklist for Classroom Procedures .....	43
4. Advice on Relationships Between Teachers and their Students .....	47
5. Ways to Connect with Students .....	48
6. Character Traits Students Appreciate in Their Teachers .....	49
7. Inspiring Students to Problem Solve .....	58
8. Helping Students Learn How to Solve their Own Issues .....	59
9. Hierarchy of Positive Incentives Diagram .....	60

## Chapter 1

### INTRODUCTION

In order for instructors to begin teaching academic subjects effectively, first, they must establish a productive learning environment that is well organized and cohesive from the beginning of every school year. Classroom management is the fundamental element in these effective learning environments. Unfortunately, it is not an effortless skill to master. It takes thoughtful planning and constant reinforcement. Initially, it may seem extremely difficult for first year teachers to establish classroom management because, typically, they have never done it before. During their training as student teachers, their cooperating teachers turned the class over to them after their management techniques were in place. Wong and Wong (2005) stated that, “what happens on the first days of school will be an accurate indicator of your [teachers’] success for the rest of the school year” (p. 3). If that statement is accurate, it is crucial for all teachers, especially beginning teachers, to be prepared so that they can continue to enjoy teaching.

#### Statement of the Problem

Initially, many first year teachers are not fully prepared for their leadership role as a teacher. According to Gunderson and Karge (1992) and Haselkorn (1994; both cited in Walsdorf & Lynn, 2002), during the first 2 years of teaching, as many as 40% of instructors leave their profession. One factor that contributes to this is teachers’ limited experience in classroom management, which may be due to lack of: (a) mentorship, (b) inconsistency, and (c) consequences and/or disorganization. According to Wong and



Wong (2005), classroom management refers to the organization of “students, space, time, and materials” (p. 84) so that an optimum learning environment can be established. In this type of classroom, students know what is expected of them and, usually, teachers have fewer behavioral issues. If teachers are ineffective in their classrooms, frequently, they have feelings of low self-efficacy, which can be a factor in decreased job satisfaction. Barquist, Hogelucht, and Geith (1997) and Brouwers and Tomic (1998; both cited in Evers, Gerrichhauzen, & Tomic, 2000) found that students’ unmanageable behavior in the classroom could be a likely cause of teacher burnout. Consequently, the knowledge of and skill with effective classroom management strategies is crucial for beginning teachers and their career satisfaction.

### Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this project was to present first year teachers with information that will enhance their development in classroom management. This is presented in the form of a guidebook. Effective learning environments are examined and discussed. In addition, the author discusses the benefits of learning classroom management skills in order to establish a basis for years of potential career satisfaction.

### Chapter Summary

In summary, it is this researcher’s position that classroom management skill development is a crucial element for effective academic learning to take place. It is especially important for first year teachers to be trained in how to establish an effective learning environment in the first days of school so that their experience is positive, and they can grow in the profession. In Chapter 2, the Review of Literature, the researcher provides evidence to support this objective and identifies the important factors that

pertain to the development of effective classroom management. In Chapter 3, Method, the project goals, target audience, guidebook organization, and peer assessment plan are discussed in detail.

## Chapter 2

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Education in the United States has continued to evolve throughout its history. Numerous theories on educational philosophy and child development have contributed to this progression. These theories have generated teacher training and educational enrichment programs, which have improved teacher efficacy and effectiveness. Some practices and theories are beneficial to hold onto, while others are important to remember so that they are not repeated in the future. It is important to study and learn from the past so that educators are equipped to further develop and improve the U.S. school system. Teacher training and educational practices for students need continual improvement because 40% of beginning teachers still leave their profession after only 2 years of teaching (Gunderson & Karge, 1992; Haselkorn, 1994; both cited in Walsdorf & Lynn, 2002). The goal of this literature review is to inform the reader about the history and theories behind U.S. education so that they are more able to make conscious and educated decisions on how to most effectively reach their students. The purpose of this project was to develop a guidebook that provides first year teachers with the tools that will help them establish effective classroom management.

#### U.S. History of Leadership in the Classroom

In the beginning of U.S. education, there was no formal training for teachers so they received minimal instruction in classroom management (Pulliam & Van Patten, 1999). Over time, new beliefs were formed about educational standards that led to

improved teacher effectiveness. Finally, all students were required to attend school. Throughout the years, teachers slowly became more educated on how to effectively teach students, and they were eventually held accountable for their students' learning. The teachers of one room classrooms, who had no peers or mentors, were finally replaced by teaching staffs of larger schools that provided: (a) support systems, (b) collaboration, and (c) teamwork. Educators have improved drastically from the beginning of U.S. education, but there is always room for improvement. When educators study the past, they are able to learn from successes and failures as they look toward the improvement of education in the future.

#### *The Age of the Common School Revival (1812-1865)*

During the Colonial era, some teachers might have held college degrees, but there was no professional training for them as educators (Pulliam & Van Patten, 1999). It was not until after 1825 that limited training for teachers was provided. In the beginning of the nation, in academic schools and women's seminaries, a basic overview was provided on simple elementary subjects and a few instructions on "keeping school" (p. 136). For a long time, it was sufficient for teachers to know only their subject material, without being educated in psychology or teaching methods.

The request for free education became the goal of the U.S. people in the years 1812-1865, which is referred to as the "age of common school revival" (Pulliam & Van Patten, 1999, p. 98) by educational historians. In the beginning of this revival, the founders of the U.S. schools did not feel it necessary to provide an equal educational opportunity for all people. Legislators were not quick to establish educational laws and enforce them, mainly because it was difficult to evoke the tax laws that were necessary to

fund these free schools. At the time, most schools were not public and required tuition, so education for the mass population was not available. A limited number of free public schools were located in New England, primarily. These public schools were disheartening for a number of reasons. The facilities were poorly lit, and supplies such as: (a) chalkboards, (b) chalk, and (c) textbooks were scarce. Teachers were inadequately trained for the task of teaching throughout the entire school district. In addition, the discipline was severe and cruel. The use of lashes and rods on students was one of the methods of discipline in the early 19th C. (Gutek, 1986). Another method used was to hang signs that announced a student's misbehavior around his or her neck. In some schools, students who were truant too many times would be tied to posts or tied up in blankets and forced to stay the night at school. According to Braun and Edwards (1972), many teachers were referred to as "social failures and vagabonds" (p. 86). Highly educated people were not motivated to teach because the salary and working conditions were so undesirable.

### *The Modern U.S. School System (1865-1918)*

The years between the Civil War and World War I are known as the "modern American school system" (Pulliam & Van Patten, 1999, p. 119) era. An improved educational system was needed because of the vast population growth in the U.S. This was credited to the expansion of the West and the development of agriculture and industrial growth. In 1860, the population was just over 30 million. By 1920, the rapid increase in immigration resulted in a U.S. population of over 100 million. At this time, the majority of public schools consisted of an 8 year elementary school and a 4 year high school. In contrast to the previous era, all students were expected to attend school in their

primary years. Furthermore, the curriculum was enhanced, teachers and administrators were professionally trained, and a substantial amount of funding went toward school buildings and needed supplies.

Institutions, termed normal schools, were established in the 19th C. to train teachers (Pulliam & Van Patten, 1999). Normal schools were 2 year educational programs that are similar to the high schools of today. Usually, teachers who attended normal schools participated in a type of student teaching as well as a class on “mental philosophy” (p. 136), which had no theoretical support for its methods. Unfortunately, only one-third of public educators in the 19th C. and in the beginning of the 20th C. were normal school graduates. The majority of public school educators had little or no education beyond elementary school.

Unfortunately, education in the South did not begin to improve until 30 years after the Civil War (Pulliam & Van Patten, 1999). In the 1900s, Southern education still lagged behind the Northern schools. In comparison to Northern schools, in the Southern schools: (a) there were shortened school terms, (b) there were high rates of illiteracy, (c) administration was inadequate, (d) teachers were not highly trained, and (e) tax support was minimal.

#### *Educational Expansion (1918-Present)*

Since World War I, educational growth, alterations, and disputes have surfaced over the years (Pulliam & Van Patten, 1999). Finally, most students were expected to attend school past the elementary grades. Teacher training in 2 year normal schools was replaced with 4 year colleges. In 1920, there were 45 colleges where teachers were trained. However, by 1940, there were four times that number. The first oversupply of

educators came during the Depression because careers in education were not affected as dramatically as the rest of the job market. Higher educational standards for teachers were developed. After World War II, more than two-thirds of all high school graduates went on to colleges or universities. It was evident that teachers were more qualified to educate others than ever before in U.S. history because: (a) they were now required to obtain a 4 year college degree, (b) they received specialized training in specific fields of study, (c) they participated in student teaching, and (d) received training in educational methods and psychology (Pulliam & Van Patten).

Another drastic change in U.S. education came when the one room school houses, which were once popular in rural areas, were replaced with larger schools (Ellis, 2006). Originally, these rural schoolhouses were located at distances close enough for schoolteachers and students to walk to from their homes. In 1919, there were 190,000 one room schools located throughout the U.S. However, these teachers lacked adequate supervision and specialized training (Pulliam & Van Patten, 1999). Also, these facilities were expensive to maintain, and educational supplies were scarce. Due to these factors, there are fewer than 400 one room schools left today (Ellis). Currently, bus transportation is used as a means to consolidate the scattered populations in rural areas. The advantages of larger schools include: (a) team teaching, (b) collaboration in specialized programming, (c) mentorship programs for beginning teachers, and (d) increased choices for elective coursework.

Teachers in training have found that field experience is highly beneficial to their education (Pulliam & Van Patten, 1999). In 1972, the Ohio Commission of Public School Personnel Policies (n.d. as cited in Pulliam & Van Patten) reported that 78% of

students in the educational program felt that student teaching was the most effective part of their training. Also, it was found that the time allotted for student teaching was: (a) insufficient, (b) inadequately managed, and (c) came too late in the program. In 1980, students in Florida and Oklahoma were required to spend an additional year as interns at schools before they received their certification. The problem with this requirement was that teacher interns were not paid enough to justify an additional year of training, which added up a 5 year program. Currently, in Colorado, an extra year of internship is not required, but the State does require 800 hours of field experience including student teaching before application for a teacher license (Gianneschi, 2006). During student teaching in Colorado, approximately 15 weeks of field experience is required. Also, after teachers are certified and begin their first job, there are mentorship programs in some school districts to help beginning teachers succeed.

In 2001, the No Child Left Behind Act (Wikipedia, 2006) was established to improve the standards of education. Based on this controversial Act, schools are evaluated on student test score performance. The goal is that 100% of the students should achieve academic proficiency by the years 2013-2014. Also, teachers are expected to be highly qualified in the area they teach; they must, therefore, be certified by the state in the subjects they teach. This Act is another means to attempt to improve the U.S. school system.

Currently, educational spending goes toward: (a) teacher training, (b) the provision of technological improvements in education, and (c) the study of innovative ways to meet the needs of every student (Pulliam & Van Patten, 1999). In addition, advanced teaching methods and innovative curricula have been developed due to the



advancement of psychology and highly developed theories of learning. As people look for ways to further improve student education, schools will continue to evolve.

### The History of Educational Philosophies

The definition of philosophy, according to Neufeldt and Guralnik (1988), is “love of, or the search for, wisdom or knowledge” (p. 1014). Pulliam and Van Pattern (1999), reported that, also, philosophy addresses issues such as “the nature of truth, what is real, and what is of value” (p. 18). Educational philosophy in the U.S. has developed slowly over the years. In the beginning, schools were simple in regard to organization, courses of study, and ideals. There were minimal conflicts as long as parents supported the teaching of: (a) history, (b) spelling, and (c) religion. Currently, schools have become more complicated due to conflicts in: (a) religious ideas, (b) philosophies, and (c) multicultural values. People argue continuously over controversial issues such as which curriculum to teach and how it should be taught. According to Pulliam and Van Patten, “We must alter the schools to meet current and future needs, but we can never be free of the influence of the past” (p. 2). It is important to understand how historical events have shaped the school of today.

The most essential educational practices originated in Europe (Pulliam & Patten, 1999). Prior to the 20th C., U.S. citizens supported educational philosophies based on idealism and realism. Even though many policy makers still agree with these viewpoints, pragmatists (e.g., people who believe in logical conclusions), among others, have recently questioned these philosophies. It is important that teachers understand and agree with the overall educational philosophy of the school board, because the board needs the support of its faculty. If a teacher’s educational philosophy is not congruent with the mainstream

at their school, his or her enthusiasm to teach may become lessened. Furthermore, through their study of educational philosophies, teachers are better able to identify and articulate their beliefs about how they would like to conduct their classroom.

### *Idealism*

The definition of the philosophy of idealism is that “things exist only as ideas in the mind rather than as material objects independent of the mind” (Neufeldt & Guralnik, 1988, p. 669). Plato was the source of this ancient philosophy, which is focused on the spiritual realm of humans and the way they think and reason. According to Plato, the only thing that really exists in a person’s experience is their “mental or spiritual” (Pulliam & Van Patten, 1999, p. 23) viewpoint. Idealists believe that education should teach “pure ideas” (p. 23) so that students are able to base their thoughts on those principles. An example of a pure idea is the word, justice. According to Pulliam and Van Patten, after a person understands the meaning of this term, he or she can evaluate human actions as just or unjust. Idealists believe that all educational subjects should be interwoven together. Also, they believe that philosophy and theology are at the highest level of academic subjects because they cause students to think abstractly. This belief might explain why idealists do not highly regard vocational subjects that are directed toward job preparation.

Ralph Waldo Emerson (n.d., as cited in Pulliam & Van Patten, 1999) was a philosophical idealist. He believed that education should be “like a religious conversion, it would challenge man’s total loyalty and it would be a lifelong process” (Mayer, 1966, p. 378). Like Plato, Emerson believed that, if humans accepted their role in society, there would be no conflict. According to Emerson, education should be an individual discovery, which stimulates the mind. Education should encourage students to become

free thinkers. Teachers should be genuine and speak truthfully with their students. They should encourage their students to drastically change their ways of thinking. “They [teachers] are our guides and they are the symbols of man’s irresistible search for creativity and progress” (Mayer, p. 379).

### *Realism*

According to Neufeldt and Guralnik (1988), the definition of realism is “the doctrine that material objects exist in themselves, apart from the mind’s consciousness of them” (p. 1118). Realists believe that people discover knowledge through their senses from actual existence and experience. Education should consist of physical material so that students are able to examine and test mental concepts and abstractions (Pulliam & Van Patten, 1999). In order for students to understand the world outside of school, their curriculum should be organized into independent subjects because the universe is organized systematically. Realists believe that education should reflect the order of the universe, and knowledge is the pursuit of this order. The personality of a teacher is less important than how effective he or she is at teaching knowledge about the world (Ozmon & Craver, 1976). Realists support the method of lecture because all students need to receive basic facts. “Man’s grasp of knowledge and the enjoyment of a better life have come as a result of a slow but steady accumulation of facts” (Ozmon & Craver, p. 58). According to Ozmon and Craver, Johann F. Herbart was a realist who believed that students should stay busy all the time and that corporal punishment is acceptable when necessary. Furthermore, most realists believe in teaching “accountability and performance based” (p. 60) education.

### *Perennialism*

According to Pulliam and Van Patten (1999), the founders of Perennialism believed that academics should center on simple “moral, ethical, aesthetic, and religious principles” (p. 27) derived from Western culture. They held traditional thoughts and values about the nature of people and education. These traditional thoughts and values consisted of beliefs about religious idealism and were based on the assumption that the same ethical principles pertain to everyone all the time. One core belief is that, essentially, knowledge is stable, and truth does not change. Adler and Hutchins were founders of Perennialism (n.d., as cited in Pulliam & Van Patten), and they developed the Great Books Program in 1946, which answered modern questions through the works of classical authors. The Perennialism education consisted of “history, language, mathematics, logic, literature, the humanities, and the sciences” (p. 27) that stimulate the mind. According to Mayer (1966), Hutchins believed that “truth is absolute and that the great books of the past could guide the present” (p. 392). In addition, Hutchins believed that genuine education develops one’s understanding so that one is able to determine right from wrong and truth from falsehood.

### *Pragmatism*

As reported by Neufeldt and Guralnik (1988), pragmatism is a philosophy in which logical conclusions are derived from the concepts of meaning and truth. Mayer (1966) added that pragmatism does not include those theories that are based on a single doctrine, and it is focused on the interests of the student. William James (n.d., as cited in Pulliam & Van Patten, 1999) was a founder of pragmatism who believed that “truth is not absolute but depends on the ‘workability’ or consequences of an idea in actual life” (pp.

28-29). Also, Dewey (n.d., as cited in Pulliam & Van Patten) was considered one of the founders of pragmatism, but he termed his philosophy, instrumentalism. He believed that democracy should begin in the classroom. School is a society that consists of individualism that should be appreciated. Students should learn how to cooperate while they participate in the solution of issues in group situations. Dewey suggested that, even though student self-expression should be taught, it could result in behavioral problems if students are not engaged in the learning activity. That is why teachers are responsible for the motivation of students so that authentic learning can take place, and discipline issues do not arise. In addition, Dewey was against teachers who imposed their will onto students because “no genuine community spirit could prevail” (p. 385). Dewey believed that traditional school theory was teacher centered, which stifled the moral development of students by its “static and absolutistic tendencies” (p. 385).

### *Summary*

The philosophical beliefs reviewed here represent only a few of the numerous philosophies on education. Some philosophies are based on the assumption that human behavior and the realities of their environment are consistent with no hope of change. Other philosophies are based on the issues of current educational problems in an attempt to discover future possibilities to advance learning. It is important to study and learn from these philosophies as well as others in order to continue the improvement of the educational system. According to Pulliam and Van Patten (1999), “philosophy may be the best tool we have for clearing away the barriers and reaching agreement on educational policy” (p. 46).

## Human Developmental Theories

Developmental psychology is focused on changes in humans that occur over time through the influences in their lives (Lefrancois, 1992). According to Morrison (1990), child development is “the sum total of the physical, intellectual, social, emotional, and behavioral changes that occur in children from the moment of conception through the adolescent years” (p. 3). Psychologists and theorists study how the human mind and emotions work. Also, they focus on how the environment influences humans, which includes the effects that teachers have on their students. According to DeVries and Kohlberg (1987), “The work of translating any psychological theory into educational practice is much like the work of translating physiological knowledge into medical practice. Just as medicine relies on facts provided by physiology, education can profit from facts provided by child psychology” (p. 15).

There are several reasons why it is crucial for teachers, especially first year teachers, to study and understand several theories on human development when they establish classroom management techniques in their classroom. First, teachers have a general idea of student capabilities, depending on their age level. Second, teachers have a greater awareness of student motivations at different stages of life. Third, theories can inform teachers about how to promote positive working environments for different age levels. Fourth, emotional and social needs in students can be further identified and addressed. Finally, effective employment of these developmental theories has the potential to generate: (a) self-discipline, (b) social interaction, and (c) self-reliance in students (Nakamura, 2000).

### *Cognitive Development According to Piaget*

To make sense of the environment in which one lives, Piaget (n.d., as cited in Santrock & Yussen, 1992) believed that humans organize their experiences by joining one idea to another according to the order of importance. Children comprehend knowledge through active participation in their environment, not by mere observation of others (Lall & Lall, 1983). Also, people develop their perceptions as they adjust their thoughts when they encounter new stimuli.

Piaget (n.d., as cited in Lall & Lall, 1983) identified four overlapping concepts that are a part of cognitive development (Santrock & Yussen, 1992). Assimilation is the first concept in which the mind takes in new knowledge and stores it with previous information. Accommodation is the second concept, wherein the mind takes in the new information and adapts it with existing knowledge so that the thought processes can be adjusted (Lall & Lall; Santrock & Yussen). Schema is the third concept, in which thoughts or knowledge are arranged to organize and direct people's understanding. Equilibration, Piaget's fourth concept, explains how people move from one level of thought to the next. In this fourth concept, there is conflict in the mind when people try to make sense of their environment. After the issue is settled in the mind, stability is established. Piaget used these concepts to describe what happens in the four stages of cognitive development.

Piaget's (n.d. as cited in Mooney, 2000) Sensorimotor Stage is the first stage of cognitive development, from birth through 18 months. In this stage, babies respond to their environment unintentionally. Piaget believed that intelligence starts when babies react deliberately to things around them. During this stage, babies depend on their senses

and physical movement to discover and understand their surroundings. At the end of this stage, infants discover that things exist even when the items are not: (a) physically present, (a) heard, or (a) felt. Piaget termed this major achievement, Object Permanence.

The Preoperational Stage is the second stage that appears in children around 18 months through 6 years old (Mooney, 2000). Piaget (n.d. as cited in Mooney) maintained that children are egocentric, that is, they think only in terms of how things pertain to themselves. Children collect information from their experience, rather than from what others tell them. As they draw conclusions from their limited experiences, usually, incorrect generalizations are formed. At this stage, children are unable to focus on more than one concept at a given time. As an example, it is difficult for a child to understand that his or her aunt is also their grandfather's daughter. Also, words are taken literally so adults need to be very clear about exactly what they intend. Teachers are encouraged to help students develop their thinking skills by the presentation of real life issues, ask "open ended questions" and provide "open-ended activities" (p. 74).

The Concrete Operational Stage is the third stage that appears in children around 6-11 years old (Mooney, 2000). During this stage, children are able to retrace their steps and remember past details. They are able to solve problems in their minds because complex thinking begins to develop during this stage. "Logical reasoning replaces intuitive thought as long as the principles can be applied to specific or concrete examples" (Santrock & Yussen, 1992, p. 278). Children begin to focus on similarities and differences between things. Furthermore, they are able to hold numerous ideas and concepts of something in their minds at a given time.



The Formal Operational Stage is the fourth stage that appears in adolescence around 11-16 years old (Mooney, 2000). Throughout this stage, adolescents develop thinking skills that are both logical and abstract. They start to form moral opinions based on their experiences. They begin to think in terms of the possibilities in life and, occasionally, fantasize about their future. In addition, they can envision ideal characteristics about themselves, others, and the world. Also, they are able to use problem solving techniques to: (a) solve a problem, (b) form a hypothesis and (c) set up a step-by-step method to test it in a purposeful fashion (Santrock & Yussen, 1992).

#### *Theories of Social and Cognitive Development According to Vygotsky*

One of the most important concepts developed by Vygotsky (n.d., as cited in Santrock & Yussen, 1992) was the zone of proximal development (ZPD). This concept is based on the idea that students who could not master a skill on their own are able to master it with the help and encouragement of adults or peers who have already mastered the skill. According to Vygotsky, teachers need to be acutely sensitive to where individual students are in their learning process. Through careful observation, teachers can plan lessons that support students' "emerging abilities" (Mooney, 2000, p. 84). In addition, teachers should pair students because they can learn from one another.

Vygotsky believed that interaction played a crucial role in cognitive development, unlike Piaget (n.d., as cited in Mooney), who thought learning was more of an internal process. Until educators became aware of Vygotsky's work, they followed Piaget's thought that most students develop in the same sequence of stages physically and cognitively. The U.S. curriculum was based on Piaget's cognitive stages in regard to the students' cognitive development. Unlike Piaget, Vygotsky believed that students' cognitive

development is affected not only by their physical development, but also by their environment and interaction with others (Mooney). According to Vygotsky, teachers should develop a curriculum that expands the cognitive development of students and stretches their capabilities.

Vygotsky (n.d., as cited in Santrock & Yussen, 1992) believed that the development of thought processes and language in people develop separately, but eventually come together. Children must first learn how to speak in order to communicate with others. Once they do this for an extended period of time, they are able to begin to internalize their thoughts. This transition period from external to internal speech takes place between ages 3- 7. During this time, children talk to themselves out loud until they are able to mentally process things without speaking. According to Vygotsky, young children who spend a great deal of time thinking out loud become “more socially communicative” (p. 288). This theory extends Piaget’s (n.d., as cited in Santrock & Yussen) beliefs about language and thought. Vygotsky claimed that language is “socially based” whereas Piaget’s focus was on “children’s egocentric and nonsocially oriented speech” (p. 288). In addition, Vygotsky felt that children speak to themselves in order to monitor their actions and direct themselves (Duncan, 1991, as cited in Santrock & Yussen). Piaget maintained that the beginning stages of speech were self-centered and lacked mental and social maturity (Santrock & Yussen).

#### *Moral Development According to Kohlberg*

Kohlberg authenticated and redefined Dewey and Piaget’s (n.d., both cited in Lall & Lall, 1983) theories in regard to moral development. Kohlberg organized moral development into three levels with two stages in each category. He felt that relationships

with people, on many different levels of authority, affect cognitive development, which guides people from the first stage of moral development to more developed stages.

Through relationships and observation, people learn about “rules, standards, and motivations” (Lall & Lall, p. 27). According to Kohlberg, everyone follows the same order of developmental stages, but not everyone reaches the last stage (Klausmeier & Goodwin, 1975, as cited in Lall & Lall). Even though 50% of people are able to rationalize at the highest level of moral development, only 10% attain this level (Kohlberg, 1975, as cited in Lall & Lall). Presented in the following section is a discussion of Kohlberg’s levels and stages of moral development.

Generally, Kohlberg’s (n.d., as cited in Lall & Lall, 1983) Preconventional Level of moral reasoning is found in childhood development. The person is aware of the expectations and laws of his or her society, but only in the terms of the pursuit of pleasure or the avoidance of punishment. At this level, human action is purely self-centered. Stage 1 in the Preconventional Level is the “punishment and obedience orientation” (Lall & Lall, p. 26). A person in this stage views things as morally wrong only if there is a consequence to an action. Also, he or she believes that everyone shares the same viewpoint. Stage 2 in the Preconventional Level is the “The Instrumental-relativist orientation” (Lall & Lall, p. 26). Positive behavior results in meeting the needs of one’s own desires. When a person is interested in the needs of others, it is only because it will personally benefit him or her as well.

Kohlberg’s (n.d., as cited in Lall & Lall, 1983) Conventional Level of moral reasoning is common in adolescents and adults. During this level, expectations in society are followed and valued because it is the acceptable thing to do without immediately

thinking of the punishments or rewards that will follow (Lall & Lall). Stage 3 in the Conventional Level is the “interpersonal concordance or good boy-nice girl orientation” (Lall & Lall, p. 26). People reject or accept behaviors, according to the social rules of society. Individuals try to live up to expectations because they have learned that they may receive respect and gratitude. Rules are followed only to perceive the “stereotypical social roles” (Wikipedia, 2006, p. 2). Stage 4 in the Conventional Level is the “authority and social order maintaining orientation” (Lall & Lall, p. 26). The motivation to uphold rules is to preserve a functioning society. Ethical reasoning in a culture goes beyond being accepted as an individual. Members of the public have a responsibility to uphold laws so that numerous people do not violate them.

Kohlberg’s (n.d., as cited in Lall & Lall, 1983) Postconventional, Autonomous, or Principle Level of moral reasoning is where individual people purposefully establish a set of ethical values and convictions that are grounded and which are not associated with a particular culture or individual authority. Stage 5 in the Postconventional Level is the “social-contract legalistic orientation” (p. 27). People critique and review issues before they identify their own entitlements and standards. The belief at this stage is that everyone should be respected for their own different principles and standards. Also, there are no perfect choices. Stage 6 in the Postconventional Level is the “Universal-ethical principle orientation” (p. 27). Individuals choose what is right according to their own conscience and convictions. “Moral reasoning is based on abstract reasoning using universal ethical principles” (Wikipedia, 2006, p. 3). Laws can be broken if they are unjust. In this stage, people do things based on whether they believe it is the correct

thing to do, not just because it is legal or illegal in society. According to Kohlberg, even though Level 6 exists, few people achieve it routinely (Wikipedia).

### *Ego Development According to Loevinger*

Ego Development is the theory conceptualized by Loevinger (1976) that explains a series of steps in mental progression that occur in the development of human personality when the ego interprets personal experiences. DeVries and Kohlberg (1987) defined Loevinger's ego development theory as "conscious reflections and insights regarding the self's psychology" (p. 12). Purposefully, Loevinger did not provide average ages with her stages because, in her opinion, it refers back to "classical child psychology study of socialization" (p. 14). She maintained that it is more important to know what people in each stage have in common than their age. Ego development includes eight stages and two transition levels in which characteristics do not suddenly appear and disappear from one phase to the next. "What changes during the course of ego development is a complexly interwoven fabric of impulse control, character, interpersonal relations, conscious preoccupations, and cognitive complexity, among other things" (p. 26).

The first stage, the Presocial Stage starts at birth, when it is believed that babies have no egos (Loevinger, 1976). The first thing that babies learn is how to make a distinction between themselves and the environment around them. They learn that their surroundings consist of inanimate objects that form a balanced surrounding. If a person remains in this stage, he or she is labeled autistic.

The Symbiotic Stage occurs after babies can differentiate themselves from the consistency of the objects around them (Loevinger, 1976). The relationship of mutual

dependence with the mother or care provider is maintained (Mahler, 1968, as cited in Loevinger). When children begin to use language to communicate, they begin to discover their individuality.

The Impulsive Stage is when children assert themselves in order to form their individuality (Loevinger, 1976). At this stage, children use the words “no” or “do it myself” with force and impulse. Children have a strong desire for relationships with others, but they appear demanding and self-centered. Also, children are able to morally judge people in terms of how they are personally treated. Impulsive behavior is controlled through: (a) threats, (b) punishments, or (c) rewards. During this stage, children are concerned with the present, as opposed to the past or future. If people stay at the Impulsive Stage, they may be labeled as “uncontrollable or incorrigible” (p.16).

The Self-Protective Stage is when children begin to resist impulses because they are able to “predict short-term punishments or rewards” (Loevinger, 1976, p. 17). During this stage, children understand rules, but “getting caught defines an action as wrong” (p. 17). Typically, when children are caught breaking a rule, they do not blame themselves, instead, they tend to make excuses or place accusations onto others. These people are in the pursuit of pleasure because it is the only thing that is intrinsically good. If a person stays in this stage, he or she might be labeled as “opportunistic, deceptive, or preoccupied with control” (p. 17).

The Conformist Stage occurs only if a person feels secure in his or her environment (Loevinger, 1976). These people associate their own well being with their family and/or group of friends. The conformists follow group rules in order to gain approval, not because they are afraid of being disciplined. In addition to following rules,

the conformist observes differences in groups, but not necessarily individual differences within their own group. They view everyone in their group as being much the same. Conformists put their faith and love into their group, but may distrust outsiders. Lastly, a person's behavior is judged on his or her actions, not by his or her intentions.

The Self-Aware Level is considered a transition from the Conformist Stage to the Conscientious Stage (Loevinger, 1976). In this level, individuals become more aware of themselves, along with openness to numerous choices in circumstances. They begin to realize that they cannot reach the perfect model of social standards in their society. The emotions of people at this level are predictable and not clearly expressed. During the Self-Aware Level, people realize that the world is more complex with many different decisions to make.

The Conscientious Stage is when people begin to take ownership for their actions (Loevinger, 1976). They are able to set distant goals and rationalize how things should be. Also, they develop a sense of responsibility, while they analyze and judge their own actions. In regard to following rules, conscientious people choose which rules to follow after a careful examination. If they disregard a law intentionally and get caught, they are more likely to feel no remorse unless they hurt another person. Conscientious people feel obligated to lead others away from errors that they have made in the past. Achievement is based on the person's standards, not by the standards of society. People in this stage are able to describe themselves and others more accurately because they are aware of emotions and motives. Interpersonal relationships are possible because people can understand and accept different points of view. According to Loevinger, only a few 13 and 14 year old adolescents can reach this stage.

The Individualistic Level is the transition from Conscientious to Autonomous Stages (Loevinger, 1976). At this level, not only can people tolerate themselves and others but, also, they can appreciate individuals' unique personalities. There is a continuous struggle to become emotionally independent, but building relationships requires people to rely on each other. People begin to move beyond moral judgments or reflections toward internal conflicts.

The Autonomous Stage occurs when people are able to successfully identify and deal with inner conflict (Loevinger, 1976). Autonomous people view the world as "complex and multifaceted" (p. 23). They are able to combine and fuse concepts together that appear to lack association (Frenkel-Brunswik, 1949, as cited in Loevinger). Autonomous people understand that people need to be independent and self-directed but, also, they can grasp the constraints of autonomy. In addition, they realize that relationships can be very rewarding and cherished. At this stage, "self-fulfillment" (p. 23) becomes a common ambition. Furthermore, people are able to discuss their "feelings vividly and convincingly, including sensual experiences, poignant sorrows, and existential humor" (p. 24).

The Integrated Stage is the last and final stage in Loevinger's (1976) theory of ego development. According to Loevinger, many people never reach this stage. A person in this stage excels or surpasses the limits of conflict. Also, they are able to achieve their full potential and completely work out their identity.

#### *Summary*

Teachers can use developmental theories to determine what their students are able to accomplish at different stages of life. Also, these theories can be used to direct



teachers on how to encourage personal growth in every student. Furthermore, teachers who understand human development may find it beneficial when they establish classroom management techniques in their classroom because they have more informed understanding about how their students think. The theories mentioned in this paper are only a few of many that are worthy of study. As researchers and psychologists continue to study how the mind works, there will always be new and innovative approaches that can be used to direct and inspire students.

### Classroom Management

There is a saying, “You can lead a horse to water, but you can’t make him drink.” William Glasser used this quote in his book, *Control Theory in the Classroom*, to illustrate how teachers cannot force students to learn, but they can establish environments where students have the desire to be taught. After writing that statement, his good friend Madeline Hunter commented that if you want the horse to drink, try putting some salt in his oats, to which Glasser completely agreed. Teachers who are innovative and creative will try new tactics until they get through to their students (Burke, 1995).

Classroom management means more than the implementation of rules and consequences. It means establishing boundaries and structure in a classroom that are also energetic and rewarding. Teachers who manage their classrooms well teach students how to get their needs met while benefiting others in society. Every teacher has the ability to manage their class effectively if they are organized, consistent, and willing to objectively evaluate their methods and change them when necessary.

### *Meet the Basic Needs of Students*

There is an old theory that if teachers are just strict enough, they can make students work (Burke, 1995). Glasser, on the other hand, believes the American public fails to understand that students will not learn in an environment that does not meet their needs (Glasser, 1988). According to DiGiulio (2000), humans have the following basic needs: “(a) feel safe, (b) to survive, (c) to love and be loved, (d) to be part of a group, and (d) to grow in wisdom and self-knowledge” (p. 14). Glasser stated that, if students do not feel accepted by others at school, they will pay little attention to academics because of their basic need to belong is not met.

There are a number of discipline programs that are based on stimulus/response psychology where students receive minor punishments (Burke, 1995). This method only works with students who want to follow the rules, but need occasional reminders that they are breaking the rules. For those students who are not getting their basic needs met, these methods tend to be ineffective.

### *Teamwork*

There have been extensive research studies and writings on the effective use of small learning groups at the University of Minnesota and Johns Hopkins (Burke, 1995). Glasser believed that most people feel significant only as a team member (Glasser, 1988). In many American classrooms, students are told to work independently, which implies not to: (a) share, (b) compare, (c) talk, or (d) help other classmates (Burke). This teaching approach is inconsistent with the basic human need for relationships where interaction takes place. Through group learning, students are frequently recognized by their peers for their accomplishments. This can result in confidence and self-esteem.

Glasser (1988) believes that, in teamwork environments, a teacher should act as a facilitator, one who lectures occasionally, but overall provides leadership, support, and encouragement to the members of each team. It is important for teachers to view themselves as managers because, if they start to act as a worker, they may try to “stimulate the students, and, in doing so, they will treat the students more as objects and less as human beings” (Burke, p.11). A superb manager of a classroom will try to persuade students that it is in their best interest to work hard and produce results. In Glasser’s control-theory school, students realize that “knowledge really is powerful” (Burke, p.11).

#### *Build Relationships with Students*

A sales person once said, “You can’t make people angry and sell them something at the same time” (Fay & Funk, 1995, p. 20). This statement is true for teachers as well. Teachers cannot oppose or argue with students and then expect students to cooperate with them. The best teachers are the ones who generate a positive rapport with their students. When referring to self-concept, psychologists state that people will accomplish tasks for the ones they admire (Fay & Funk). If students have respect for their teachers, they tend to behave and work hard because they want their teacher’s approval.

#### *Love and Logic Approach*

The Love and Logic approach has four main principles that were established by Fay and Cline (1995). The first principle is “A student’s self-concept needs to be either maintained or enhanced” (p. 109). High self-esteem is developed in students when they have positive influences from which to learn. They are able to model acceptable actions by watching how their mentors conduct themselves.

The second principle is “Control is a shared commodity” (Fay & Funk, 1995, p. 109). It is important and much easier to get students’ cooperation than to attempt to control them. It is human nature to seek independence over one’s life. According to Fay and Funk, when we do not receive personal control, we try to control others (Fay & Funk). This leads to power struggles that result in win-lose situations. If teachers give their students choices and ownership over their decisions, they will ultimately gain more control over their classroom (Fay & Funk).

The third principle is that “Consequences need to be served up with compassion, empathy, or understanding, rather than anger” (Fay & Funk, 1995, p. 110). People tend to make changes in their lives only after they have experienced extreme emotional or physical pain or pleasure. When students can admit that they are responsible for the misbehavior, they are more receptive to learn from their mistakes. It is equally important for a teacher to administer a consequence that coincides with the misbehavior. If the teacher genuinely empathizes with their students, they may respond more appropriately with the consequence. In addition, when a teacher shows compassion he or she validates the person’s pain without condoning what they have done. The philosophy of Love and Logic is: “Consequences will do the teaching; empathy will lock in the learning” (Fay & Funk, p. 171). Fay stated, “Empathy drives the pain of the consequence down into their little hearts, where it can be converted into wisdom” (Fay & Funk, p. 171).

The fourth principle is that “Thinking needs to be shared” (Fay & Funk, 1995, p. 110). In order for teachers, students, and parents to solve problems, they must think clearly without letting emotions distort their perspectives. Teachers can encourage everyone to think through problems by validating how others feel through effective

listening. Also, teachers can ask thought provoking questions and model appropriate behavior. Another aspect to this principle is to teach students how to respond and handle situations that do not go as planned. If people have the skills and attitude to anticipate change and embrace whatever comes their way, they will be more successful in life (Fay & Funk).

### *Organization in the Classroom*

The structure of a classroom either enhances or diminishes the efforts of establishing a class that is well managed. According to DiGiulio (2000), “disorder wastes time and hinders students from reaching their educational potential” (p. 5). Jones (1987, 2001, as cited in Hardin, 2004) believes the layout of a classroom to be the “centerpiece” of managing a classroom. The physical arrangement of furniture and school supplies will affect traffic flow, volume level, and interaction with others. In addition, DiGiulio states that a teacher’s desk should not be positioned in front of the classroom because it limits the instructor’s movement and decreases proximity to the students.

One study (Dinsmore, 2003) indicated that room environments are associated with student behavior. Dinsmore found that 81% of middle school students out of 54 students surveyed believed that they were “more likely to be on-task if the classroom had an inviting and comfortable atmosphere” (p. 19). Dinsmore focused on: (a) soft lighting, (b) plants and (c) mellow music as the main factors for establishing the room environment. Seventy-six percent of students felt that the use of soft lighting in the classroom affected their environment positively (Dinsmore). Sixty-five percent of students believed that mellow music helped create an enjoyable atmosphere (Dinsmore).

Only 40% of students felt that plants played a role in determining an environment that was appealing (Dinsmore).

According to Nakamura (2000), the layout of the classroom “has a direct impact on the: (a) health, (b) safety, (c) comfort, and (d) motivation of both students and teacher” (p. 249). Factors that contribute to students overall well being include: “(a) ventilation, (b) heating, (c) illumination, (d) glare, (e) noise, (f) size, and (g) color” (p. 249). Doyle (1987, as cited in Nakamura) determined that students’ mindsets and the way they control themselves are affected by the physical space of the classroom, which ultimately affects their academic achievement. Textile items in the classroom also communicate meaning. Soft items such as: “(a) plants, (b) small animals, (c) area rugs, (d) soft and (e) warm colors, and (f) bean bags” are believed to produce feelings of security and contentment (Sommer, 1974, as quoted in Nakamura, p. 250). Other research (Maslow & Mintz, 1956; Horowitz & Otto, 1973; Sommer & Olson, 1980; all cited in Nakamura) indicated that environments that are aesthetically pleasing persuade actions or reactions of people.

#### *Establishment of Rules, Standards, and Routines*

Jones believes that teachers should instruct rules, standards, and routines just like they would teach any other subject (Edwards, 1997). There should not be any misunderstandings or confusion about what is expected of students. For that to happen, teachers need to spend a great deal of time at the beginning of each school year discussing the rules, standards, and routines with their students. In order for teachers to gain the support of their students, they should involve them in discussions of the rules.

### *Summary*

There are many variables that contribute to effective classroom management. When these variables are addressed correctly, students' social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development is enhanced (Horsch, Chen, & Nelson, 1999). Teachers have a complex job that is demanding, but it can also be a highly rewarding endeavor. With the right: (a) methods, (b) skills, (c) attitude, (d) determination, and (e) passion, teachers can make an incredible difference in young peoples lives.

### *Chapter Summary*

Study of the history of the U.S. school system is the key to understanding how it continues to evolve today. This includes the study of theories on educational philosophy and child development. It is vital for teachers to study and learn from the history and theories that have impacted education so that they are better equipped to establish an effective learning environment for their students. It is equally important to develop and maintain classroom management skills so that productivity, organization, and cohesiveness are enhanced. In Chapter 3, the method, target audience, guidebook organization, goals, and peer assessment plan are described as they pertain to this project.

## Chapter 3

### METHOD

Many first year teachers are naïve and overly idealistic when they begin their careers. Unfortunately, they may find themselves relatively alone and overwhelmed by the demands placed on them by their school administration. According to Graziano (2005), beginning teachers are required to take on “a full schedule of classes, create their own lesson plans, and develop teaching techniques and classroom management strategies in relative isolation” (p. 41). According to the staff of the National Center for Education Statistics (2001, as cited in Graziano), 38% of teachers transfer to other schools or quit their profession because they lack administrative support, and 32% leave due to working conditions. It is important for first year teachers to equip themselves with strategies to prevent the stresses that come with their new job responsibilities. The purpose of this project was to develop a guidebook on classroom management techniques for beginning teachers that will help them establish an effective learning environment.

### Target Audience

A crucial aspect in the education of students is to establish a classroom that is well managed. This project was developed for beginning teachers who instruct middle school students, but it may be applicable for primary school and high school teachers as well.



## Organization of the Guidebook

The guidebook in this project was developed and based on numerous resource materials and research studies. Effective learning environments are examined and discussed in the guidebook, which includes sections on classroom organization, design, and aesthetics. In addition, the author identifies specific classroom management strategies that can be used to encourage student learning, including positive reinforcement and tips on motivating students. Some of the other topics addressed in the guidebook include the benefits for developing relationships with students and establishing rules and consequences. The main goal of this project is to establish a basis for years of potential career satisfaction through the application of these techniques.

## Peer Assessment

Three colleagues received a hard copy of the classroom management guidebook for review and assessment. They provided informal feedback and suggestions for improving the guidebook. In addition, each colleague was asked to write comments on the readability, relevancy, and reliability of this material. Their feedback is discussed in Chapter 5.

## Chapter Summary

With all the demands placed on beginning teachers, it is important to establish a classroom that is well managed. Through this project, the author uses knowledge gained from the literature review to provide first year teachers with helpful tools on classroom management. Presented in Chapter 4 is the guidebook on how to establish an effective learning environment through classroom management.

## Chapter 4

### RESULTS

#### Introduction

Every teacher has the ability to create environments in which students can learn more effectively and efficiently. For this to happen, teachers need to continuously try innovative tactics until they are able to meet their students' needs. Effective classroom management is one element to the equation that all teachers need to establish for learning to take place. Classroom management means setting boundaries and structure in a classroom that are both energizing and rewarding. Students also learn how to get their needs met while benefiting others in their community when teachers implement successful classroom management. All teachers have the ability to manage their class effectively if they are organized, consistent, and willing to objectively evaluate their methods and change them when necessary. The following project, *Classroom Management: Strategies for First Year Middle School Teachers* is an excellent resource for building an environment that is well managed.



# Classroom Management: Strategies for First Year Middle School Teachers

By Joy Easter



## **Introduction**

There is a saying, “You can lead a horse to water, but you can’t make him drink.”

William Glasser used this quote in his book, *Control Theory in the Classroom*, to illustrate how teachers cannot force students to learn, but they can establish environments where students have the desire to be taught. After writing that statement, his good friend Madeline Hunter commented that, if you want the horse to drink, try putting some salt in his oats, to which Glasser completely agreed. Teachers who are innovative and creative will try new tactics until they get through to their students (Burke, 1995).

Classroom management means more than the implementation of rules and consequences. It means establishing boundaries and structure in a classroom that are also energizing and rewarding. Teachers who manage their classrooms well teach students how to get their needs met while benefiting others in their community. All teachers have the ability to manage their class effectively if they are organized, consistent, and willing to objectively evaluate their methods and change them when necessary.

## **Classroom Organization, Design, and Aesthetics**

The first aspect of classroom management is to establish a classroom environment that is well organized and aesthetically pleasing. Jones (1987, 2001, as cited in Hardin, 2004) believes the layout of a classroom to be the “centerpiece” of managing a classroom (p.66). The physical arrangement of furniture and school supplies will affect traffic flow, volume level, and interaction between others.

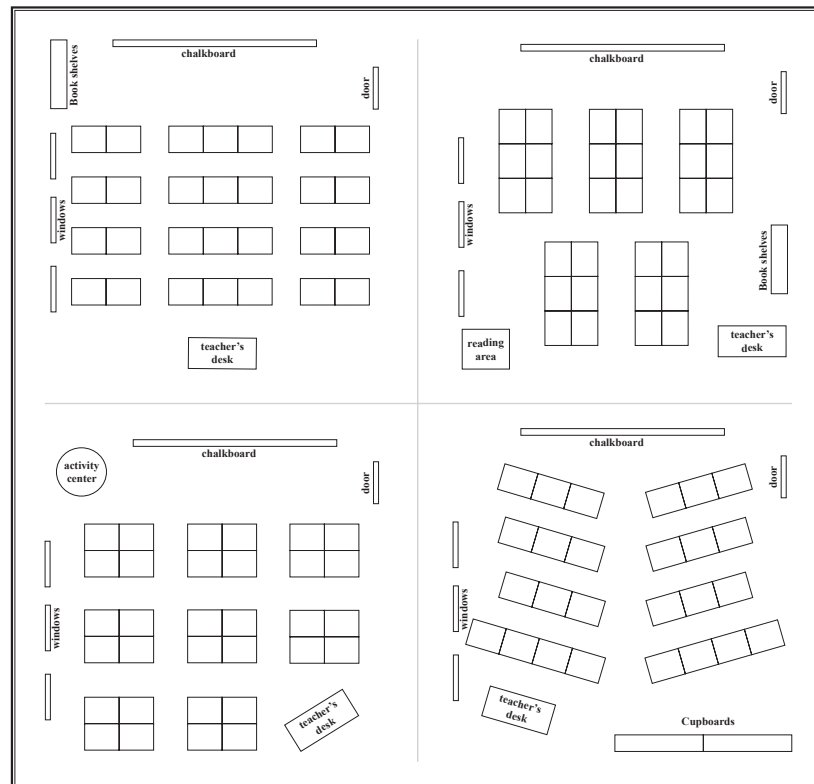
When organizing the classroom, it is important to have a clear objective on how the teacher wishes to instruct his or her students. Teachers must decide how they want to run their classroom. Whether they plan to maximize group activities or lectures, the arrangement of the classroom can either help or hinder this process. Teachers must also decide which direction students' desks should face and where to place their own desk accordingly. If students' desks are in groups, it supports cooperative learning, but it can also promote distractive socializing. If desks are arranged in rows, the teachers are able to notice on-task behavior easier and it minimizes student distractions, but small group learning may be hindered.

When designing the classroom, it is helpful to literally draw out the classroom to scale on paper. Include every item in the classroom (every piece of furniture, windows, pencil sharpeners, electrical plugs, bulletin boards, trash cans, etc.). After arranging the classroom, pay attention to natural traffic patterns, areas that tempt students to be distracted, and areas that obstruct the view of students. Figure 1 shows some examples of different classroom arrangements.

If the teacher plans on several different seating arrangements to utilize both lecture and small group learning, students should be taught how to move around the room in a timely manner. If students need to arrange their desks from rows to clusters, a teacher should mark off the floor, in advance, where the desks' legs should be placed when the activity is over.

If there are designated areas in the classroom such as reading areas, labs, or learning centers, there must be a system for organizing materials and supplies at these locations.

Figure 1. Classroom arrangements.



It is helpful to teach students how to pick up the centers by placing everything back in specific places. Labeling containers and folders to indicate where items belong is also beneficial.

Before the first day of school, teachers should decide whether or not to assign seats to their students. No matter what the teacher decides, it is important to inform the students that seat assignments are subject to change. To maintain control of the classroom, teachers need to observe the interactions between their students and make changes when necessary. An example of this is reassigning seats to students who are more easily distracted around specific classmates. Also, students who have hearing or visibility impairments should sit in specific areas that are conducive to their learning.

There are several ways to chart seat assignments. One way is to draw a diagram of the desks on paper, scan it into the computer, and print off copies. Then, with a pencil, fill in the diagram with students' names. Another way is to print off a seating chart on a clear transparency and use erasable markers to write in the students' names. Alternatively, sketch out the seating chart on folders and store assignments or lesson plans for each class.

### **Establishing Expectations, Procedures, and Routines**

It is crucial for all teachers, to be fully prepared on the first day of school because “. . . expectations are created; the foundation of routines and procedures are established; and first impressions are formed” (Partin, 2005, p. 7). If a teacher does not cover all their bases, students may gain incorrect perceptions on how the class will be conducted the rest of the school year. Also, it is beneficial for first year teachers to withhold his or her inexperience to their students. Students infer what kind of teachers they have in the first few minutes of class. Students may analyze their teacher's personality, question how they will be treated, and what their boundaries will be. When addressing the students it is important to be firm as well as positive about expectations in the classroom. In addition, teachers should smile at their students and show enthusiasm when introducing the subjects they will teach throughout the school year. It is important to remember that one's body language should match one's words. It is very difficult to recover from an imperfect first day, so it is crucial to be prepared. Wong and Wong (2005) stated that, “what happens on the first days of school will be an accurate indicator of your [teachers'] success for the rest of the school year” (p. 3). Figure 2 is a checklist of items that should

be covered on the first day of school.

Many behavioral issues can be avoided if students are taught procedures in the classroom. Procedures are taught to inform students how to conduct themselves through a series of steps. When teachers establish and reinforce what is expected of their students, everyday activities should flow smoothly and potential disorder is usually eliminated because routines are established (Nakamura, 2000). It is important for teachers to never assume students know how to properly behave themselves. It is very important to be very specific when teaching students what is expected of them in the classroom.

Many teachers overlook essential components that affect the way classrooms function such as “student movement, downtime, and talking” (Nakamura, 2000, p. 245). These three components should be taught to every student and enforced. Student movement refers to how a group of students should move from one place to another. Downtime refers to what students should do and how they should behave when they are finished with the current assignment. Student talking refers to the volume level students should use and when it is appropriate to talk.

It is essential to teach students how to manage themselves without the teachers’ direction (Nakamura, 2000). Routines encourage students to be self-disciplined so they are not relying on the teacher’s assistance or direction all the time (Nakamura). If students do not know exactly what is expected from them, they will feel misunderstood and insecure (Nakamura). That is why it is important to establish an environment that is predictable and straightforward. Figure 3 is a list of questions that are intended to help the teacher address crucial procedures that make managing a classroom flow smoother.



Figure 2. First day of school checklist.

- ✓ Post the teacher's name and room number right outside the classroom door in plain view.
- ✓ Print your name on the board.
- ✓ Print the schedule on the board.
- ✓ Have supplies and materials ready.
- ✓ Have the first day's lesson plans completed.
- ✓ Greet students with a smile at the door as the students enter the classroom.
- ✓ Have students work on something as soon as they enter the room.
  - Worksheet on current issues or academics
  - Personal survey
  - Short assignment written on the board
- ✓ Assign seats to students
  - Have seating chart on an overhead projector as students enter the room
  - Have nametags already on the desks
  - Have students make their own nametags for their desks
- ✓ Take attendance and check pronunciation of students' names
- ✓ Introduce yourself clearly and slowly
- ✓ Explain how you expect to be addressed
- ✓ Make sure your body language shows self-assurance and choose your words carefully. The goal is to create a friendly, but professional environment.
- ✓ In one or two minutes, give your students a glimpse of who you are and your background: family life, interests, pets, education, or experiences.  
(DO NOT advertise your inexperience.)
- ✓ Go over rules in the classroom.
- ✓ Start introducing routines and procedures.
- ✓ Assign any work that must be completed by the following day.
- ✓ Show enthusiasm in your voice when explaining what they will be learning over the school year.

Figure 3. Teacher checklist for classroom procedures.

- ✓ Do the students know what is expected of them when they walk through the classroom door? What are these expectations?
- ✓ Do the students know what they need to do before they leave the classroom? What are these expectations?
- ✓ Have the students been taught the procedures for using the restroom, getting a drink, leaving the classroom, and getting out of their seat?
- ✓ Do the students know what materials they need to bring to class? Do they know what they need to do if they forget to bring their materials? Do the students know how to share supplies?
- ✓ Have the students been taught what is expected of them when their work is done?
- ✓ Do the students know the rules on raising their hands and speaking in turn?
- ✓ Has the teacher taught his or her students how to label their paper, whether or not they should use pens or pencils, and whether or not they should write in cursive?
- ✓ Does the teacher have a signal he or she uses when he or she is about to instruct the students and are they aware of the sign (i.e.: clapping pattern, lights off, a saying a phrase such as “freeze” or “5-4-3-2-1”)?
- ✓ Has the teacher instructed the students what the procedures are for turning in homework and the consequences for late homework?
- ✓ Do students know what the absentee policies are?
- ✓ Do the students know the academic goals and expectations for the year?
- ✓ Do the students have classroom jobs?
- ✓ Do the students know the consequences and positive rewards for the actions they choose?
- ✓ Do the students know what the daily schedule looks like?
- ✓ Do the students know what to do in the case of an emergency (fire drills, tornado drills, lockdowns, etc.)?
- ✓ Do the students know what noise levels are acceptable in class?
- ✓ Do the students know when it is acceptable to use the pencil sharpener?

## **Academic Preparation**

New teachers may discover that managing their class seems to dominate over academic planning. Veenman (1984; as cited in Kronowitz, 1999) stated that inexperienced teachers have reported that discipline is their biggest concern. However, if teachers are able to engage their students in learning, management concerns may fade from the forefront (Kronowitz). In order for this to occur, teachers need to be well organized and prepared to teach. Inexperienced teachers should write down detailed curriculum plans, so they are able to organize their thoughts and review their lessons ahead of time (Paston, 1973). In addition, teachers who organize their lesson plans tend to remain focused on the main objectives while they teach.

Another valuable skill in academic preparation is time management. According to a study by Bullough (1989), discipline issues arise from lack of lesson planning. When lessons are not long enough and assignments are finished early, it results in disruptions. According to Breaux (2003) “If you give a student nothing to do, he’ll find something to do, and it usually won’t be what you had in mind” (p. 19). That is why Breaux believes teachers should always over plan. When students finish lessons earlier than the majority of the class, they should be given activities that will further enrich their learning. Every minute in class should go towards educating students.

## **Time Saving Ideas**

Every teacher can use ideas to help them save time and energy. Mundane tasks or issues can take time away from academics. When these issues are addressed, more time can be devoted to learning. Listed below are clever ideas that may help solve this dilemma.

✓ Assignments need to be made up by students who are absent due to a multitude of reasons. For teachers, it is much easier for them to prepare and make copies of a weekly assignment sheet at the beginning of every week rather than making daily lists for each student who is absent.

✓ Play music or use an egg timer to encourage students how to accomplish tasks in minimal time. Have the students finish a task before the song ends or the buzzer goes off.

✓ Every student should be involved in helping around the classroom. Tasks should rotate weekly so that everyone has an opportunity to help out.

### **Examples:**

- A pencil monitor who is in charge of a pencil box with a sign-out sheet. The monitor's responsibility is to hand out and collect pencils from students who forget or lose their writing instruments.

- A supply monitor is responsible for passing out materials for projects.

- Alternative monitors fill in for jobs when others are absent.

✓ Devise a notebook for students to fill out when they come to class late.

Divide each page into five sections—date, name, reason for tardiness, and arrival time.

Also, have a place where students can attach their late passes. Late passes are tardy excuses from another teachers or administration. Have the notebook located by the classroom door.

### **Developing Relationships with Students**

There is an old theory that if teachers are just strict enough, they can make students work (Burke, 1995). Glasser, on the other hand, believes the American public fails to

understand that students will not learn in an environment that does not meet their needs (Glasser, 1988). According to DiGiulio (2000), humans have the following basic needs: “to feel safe, to survive, to love and be loved, to be part of a group, and to grow in wisdom and self-knowledge” (p. 14). Glasser stated that, if students do not feel accepted by others at school, they will pay little attention to academics because of their basic need to belong is not met. Figure 4 lists advice on how to build rapport with students.

There are a number of discipline programs that are based on stimulus/response psychology where students receive minor punishments (Burke, 1995). This method only works with students who want to follow the rules, but need occasional reminders that they are breaking the rules. For those students who are not getting their basic needs met, these methods tend to be ineffective.

Teachers should invest time into developing relationships with their students. First, try to memorize students’ names during the first week of school depending on the amount of students a teacher has. It is a sign of respect and shows that you care. Also, it is extremely valuable to learn what motivates students, what concerns they have, and what their educational needs are. Talk candidly with your students individually before and after class. Figure 5 lists several ways to connect and develop relationships with students. A teacher should never try to become friends with their students, but they should build relationships of mutual respect. If mutual respect is established, students tend to behave and work hard because they want their teacher’s approval. Figure 6 lists character traits students find most appealing in their favorite teachers.

*Figure 4.* Advice on relationships between teachers and their students.

**1.** Interact with students as if they were well-respected adults. No matter how the student is acting, a teacher needs to treat him or her with dignity.

**2.** Nonverbal language is extremely powerful because it expresses more meaning than words. Overtime, words are easily forgotten, but facial expressions are hard to forget.

**3.** The best way to teach students how to gain high self-esteem is to model what it looks like. Show them that everyone is an individual with their own strengths and limitations.

**4.** Work on the progression of showing trust between the teacher and his or her students. Just like relationships between adults, trust takes time. As students show their maturity, give them more liberties and responsibilities.

**5.** Students should be taught that they are valued as individuals. In addition, students should learn how to respect themselves and others.

**6.** Always acknowledge what a student is feeling, whether or not the behavior is condoned. If a teacher disregards or overlooks a student's feelings, it is as if he or she is attacking their utmost being.

**7.** Teachers have the ability to improve a student's self worth.

**8.** Most students misbehave because they are trying to cover up a weakness or they are retaliating against something or someone. The students are better in the long run if teachers work with these students to address their issues.

**9.** When teachers are able to understand the mind-set and worldview of their students, they are better equipped to teach and develop relationships with them.

**10.** No matter what a student's ability level is, make sure everyone's workload is manageable so that success can be achieved.

*Figure 5. Ways to connect with students.*

- ✓ Always remember to have a professional relationship with your students. Be careful of what you say and do. Students do not need another friend, but they can always use positive mentors in their lives.
- ✓ Write short notes to students about their personal accomplishments, concerns, interests, and their suggestions on how to improve things in the classroom. Encourage them to respond back and keep up with it throughout the school year. Emailing students may work more effectively, but hand written notes also work well.
- ✓ Put together welcome bags for new students, so they feel welcomed and informed about their new surroundings. The bags may include a special pencil or pen, a coupon for something at the school store, a list of school supplies, a copy of the classroom rules and policies, a welcome letter to them and their parents, and a coupon from a local business.
- ✓ Have students fill out a questionnaire at the beginning of the school year. Appendix A contains a sample form. This questionnaire will help a teacher learn more about his or her students.

Figure 6. Character traits students appreciate in their teachers.

**1. Realness**—Students need to see their teachers as more than authority figures. They need to see teachers as real people with thoughts, feelings, and life experiences. It's easier to relate to a teacher when he or she allows students to get to know them on a deeper level. One way to do this is to share anecdotes with students from their own lives.

**2. Courtesy**—Teachers should always show consideration towards others by up holding polite manners of social conduct.

**3. Fairness**—Teachers need to treat all their students equally. Students should never perceive that a teacher favors some students over others.

**4. Reestablishing Contact**—When a teacher needs to reprimand a student, tension builds between them. After the incident is over, a teacher needs to show the student that she or he does not hold any grudges by interacting with the student in a positive way around some other context.

**5. Humor**—It is important to make light of certain situations by turning issues into humorous moments. Students also enjoy when their teachers can kid around with them on occasion.

**6. Respect**—Refers to having a distinct sense of worth. When teachers respect themselves and others, they look for the best in everyone. In addition, teachers who respect themselves and others teach by example that all individuals should be treated fairly.

**7. Active Listening**—If a teacher restates what the student says, it confirms that the teacher is truly listening.

**8. Appearance**—Teachers need to dress professionally.



## **Defining Rules and Consequences**

Rules and consequences are necessary to help students understand their boundaries, keep everyone safe, and maintain order. Some teachers make all the rules and list them on classroom walls, while others allow their students to help establish them. There are teachers who believe in writing down several rules and others who believe in minimum rules. Whatever works for each individual teacher, it is important that all students understand the rules and consequences in their classroom.

Fay and Funk (1995) believe in enforcing only one rule in the classroom. That rule is “You can do anything you want in this class, provided it doesn’t cause a problem for anyone else” (Fay & Funk, 1995, p. 107). This rule helps students learn how to be considerate of others. It also gives students freedom to act in a number of ways, while giving boundaries that are enforced. This rule teaches students a set of values to live by because they learn how to think of others needs. Fay and Funk believe that if students are taught this principle, it will give them “consistency and structure” (p. 109).

Partin (2005) believes that teachers should not attempt to make a rule for every imaginable misbehavior. He believes in limiting classroom rules to around five to seven. When establishing a rule, it is important to make them clear and defined.

Some teachers may want to involve their students in establishing the rules and consequences for the classroom. It is important for students to know that whatever they decided, it must reflect the general rules and consequences of the school. Classroom rules cannot supersede any rules that are already in place.

When a student breaks a rule, have the consequence fit the misbehavior. In many

instances it is acceptable to make the student wait for his or her consequence. This approach helps the teacher think logically through the scenario without disrupting instructional time with the rest of the class.

### **Working with Behavior in the Classroom**

- Build a rapport with students by making time to listen to them.
  - Teach students how to solve their own problems.
  - Never embarrass students in front of others. Help them “save face.”
  - Students will best learn appropriate behavior from what they see modeled.
  - Teach and demonstrate empathy so that students will learn how to bestow it upon others.
- 
- Help students develop their self-worth by giving everyone important tasks that contribute to the classroom.
- 
- When correcting a student’s behavior, use a calm, self-controlled tone.
  - Have the mindset that every student has gifts and abilities that should be fostered. It is important to promote the positive, instead of the negative.
  - Involve parents in their children’s education and development.
  - When students are disobedient in the classroom, find out the root of the problem so that change can occur.

### **Creative Ways to Handle Discipline**

- If a couple of students are whispering and not paying attention to the lesson, the teacher should stand next to the disrupters and continue teaching.
- When a student is trying to be the center of attention by using inappropriate

language, obscene gestures, or being openly defiant, there are a number of ways to handle the situation. The teacher can stop

***“You control the discipline problems.  
They do not control you.”***  
(Fay & Funk, 1995, p.43)

talking completely and stare at the disrupter without showing emotion. The teacher can bring their voice level down to a whisper so that the rest of the class will either ignore the disrupter or tell him/her to be quiet. The teacher can also ignore the disrupter.

- When a student has chosen not to follow the rules in the classroom, the teacher can give the student a writing assignment. Appendix B is an example of a form that can be used.

- If a student has been continuously defiant or disruptive, a teacher should give the student two choices. “Do you want me to call your parents today or at the end of the week?” If the teacher calls that day, the conversation will address the student’s current

***“Students base their behavior  
on the examples set by the  
adults in their lives.”***  
(Fay & Funk, 1995, p.155)

inappropriate behavior. If the teacher waits to call the parents at the end of the week, the student has time to change their behavior. That way, when the teacher speaks with the parents, the conversation

will be on a positive note. When students are given choices, they will learn how to take responsibility for their own actions because they are made accountable.

- If a student is continually disrupting class, pull them aside in private and ask them the following questions, What are you doing? Is it helping you? Is it against the rules? How will you change it? (Glasser, 1988). Then have the student write down their

action plan to change. Discuss what they have written and meet with them to review their progress.

- If a teacher is at a loss for what to do about a student's misbehavior or if the timing is not ideal, it is completely acceptable to delay his or her consequences.

According to Fay and Funk (1995), teachers should meet these students on their own time and terms. When interacting with misbehaving students, the conversations need to be brief with minimum questions and conversation

***“A mistake can be a great teacher, proven the child is allowed to experience the consequences of the mistake. However, it is the empathy expressed by the adult that drives the pain of the consequence into his or her heart and turns experience into long-term memory and wisdom.”***

(Fay & Funk, 1995, p.39)

on the teacher's part. Fay and Funk believe that teachers should only deal with an issue with a student between five and twenty seconds. An examples of this approach is as follows:

**Teacher:** Brian, do you why you chose to disrupt the class?

**Student:** No.

**Teacher:** I'm sorry you cannot think of an answer. Well, I'm busy right now. I'm going to have to think through what I'm going to do about what you have done. When I find time to address this issue, I'll let you know what I've decided. Until then, lets move on with the lesson.

The conversation continues in short increments until the student is willing to corporate. The student can also come up with a proper solution to his misbehavior with the teacher's guidance. According to Fay and Funk (1995), teachers need to shift their

thinking from, “What do I say to the student?” to “What do I ask the student?”

### **Tips on Managing Classroom Behavior**

Here is a list of helpful tips on how to establish a well managed classroom that have proven to be beneficial according to Partin (2005).

- Learn classroom management from veteran teachers who have become experts in their field. Observe and talk with them on how they developed their methods of management.

- Teachers need to anticipate that students will test their limits of appropriate and inappropriate behavior. When these opportunities arise, it is important to respond quickly, remain calm, and never over react.

- It pays to be overly prepared for a lesson. Lessons run more smoothly when teachers have all the necessary materials on hand and all the equipment is set up and ready to be used. Students are more likely to stay on task when there are no distractions and transitions from one activity to another flow effortlessly.

- Some misbehavior occurs when students are bored. If lessons are engaging, fast-passed, interactive, and well organized, it is more likely that students will stay on task.

- Every student needs to understand the expectations and rules of the classroom. Never assume students should already know how to behave. Instead of dwelling on what is unacceptable in the classroom, a teacher should focus on high expectations. Teachers should expect positive behavior and high academic performance from every student.

- According to Partin (2005), eye contact is the “most powerful tool in maintaining classroom control” (p. 25). Partin also stated that eighty percent of all

potential misbehavior could be diffused if a teacher has direct eye contact with students in a timely manner. A teacher should scan the classroom every minute by focusing on groups of students. Pay close attention to the furthest areas of the classroom where it is hard to gain direct eye contact with students.

- Most effective teachers develop an instinct for anticipating possible problems and intervening before issues arise. Teachers must continually monitor their classroom. Always sit or stand facing every student in class. It is easier to monitor the entire class when a teacher paces the room continuously instead of sitting or standing in one place.

- Silence is powerful. It gives a teacher time to think and remain calm. It also gives students time to comply with the expectations. When dealing with a student's behavior, maintain direct eye contact and pause after each directive given. Say no more than what is necessary, remain calm, and do not show frustration or anxiety.

- Learn how to ignore certain behavioral infractions while class is in session, especially when a teacher suspects that a student is trying to bait him or her into a dispute. The teacher can handle the issue after class, giving him or her time to think through what to do about the student's misbehavior.

- Never quarrel with a student in front of the class. Offer to speak to the student privately.

- As a last resort, send students to the principal's office or call their parents. If issues cannot mainly be resolved between the student and the teacher, it may suggest that the teacher has a problem with classroom management.

- Never send a student to sit in the hallway. It is a liability issue and the student

may find it enjoyable.

- Document academic or behavioral issues that arise. The documentation should also list what steps the teacher took to correct the issues. This information may become useful if a teacher needs to consult other teachers, parents, and the principal.

### **Offering Choices to Students while Setting Limits**

The best part of giving students choices is it helps them feel in control. Most teachers that follow this principle seem to get effective cooperation out of their students (Fay & Funk, 1995). According to Teaching with Love and Logic, there are a few

***“Do I want to control kids or do I want to obtain their cooperation?”***  
(Fay & Funk, 1995, p.139)

guidelines when teachers give students choices. Firstly, teachers need to be comfortable with every choice they give their students. Secondly, the decision a student makes about an issue should only affect his or her own life. Therefore, the teacher should carefully think through the choices they present to their students. Thirdly, teachers must never give a student a choice unless they are willing to allow the student to reap the consequences of their decisions. Fourthly, the only time a student should not be given a choice is if a student is in danger of hurting themselves or others. Lastly, teachers should be prepared to make a choice for a student if he or she does not decide within ten seconds.

A teacher’s verbal delivery is crucial when he or she gives a student choices. Examples on what to say are as follows:

“You are welcome to \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_.”

“What would be best for you \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_.”

“ Would you rather \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ .”

“Feel free to \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_.” (Fay & Funk, 1995, p. 31).

When teachers are reasonable and allow students to make their own decisions most of the time, there is no longer a need to fight for control. The teachers who follow this approach of shared control, are more likely to get cooperation from students when the teacher needs to make the decision on occasion (Fay & Funk).

***“I can treat everyone with  
“dignity and respect” (values)  
while not enslaving myself to  
treating everyone “the same”  
(system)”  
(Fay & Funk, 1995, p.102)***

According to Fay and Funk (1995), students learn from their mistakes if they must face the consequences of their actions and when adults show empathy. Consequently, if an adult reprimands a student, they may become angry towards the adult out of self-preservation and the life lesson could be squelched. The lesson could be forgotten if this occurs. The following is a good example of how to help a student learn from their mistakes.

**Example:** A student forgets his permission slip, so he can’t go on the fieldtrip. The teacher can show empathy by saying “I’m so sorry you can’t go on the fieldtrip. We are going to miss you. In the future, what could you do to avoid this situation.” The student can then respond with potential solutions to the problem.

***Consequences + Empathy = Learning***  
(Fay & Funk, 1995, p. 37)

Power struggles can be avoided if students are allowed to make choices for themselves. **“When we make a demand, we own the wise choice, leaving the child**



**with only one way to win the power struggle—by making a foolish choice”** (Fay & Funk, 1995, p. 8) If teachers give students choices, students have numerous opportunities to make wise decisions. Figure 7 and 8 list ways to teach students how to solve problems.

*Figure 7.* Inspiring students to problem solve.

- ✓ **Ask questions that require students to think**
- ✓ **Permit students to solve problems that affect them.** A teacher should be there to offer solutions and direct the student, but ultimately the decision belongs to the student.
- ✓ **Minimum judgmental responses.**
- ✓ **Allow students time to think.** If teachers give students enough time to process the information, they will have the ability to make the best decision.

Figure 8. Helping students learn how to solve their own issues.

- **Step 1—Empathy** (Fay & Funk, 1995, p. 95)

“I’m so sorry, I bet that makes you sad.”

- **Step 2—Send the “Power Message”** (Fay & Funk, 1995, p. 95)

“What have you decided to do about it?”

“I would like to hear your thoughts.”

- **Step 3—Offer choices** (Fay & Funk, 1995, p. 95)

“Would you like to know what others have done with your predicament?” The adult can offer a wide range of choices from poor decisions to wiser decisions.

- **Step 4—Have the student state the consequences** (Fay & Funk, 1995, p. 95)

“If you make that choice, how will that work out?”

- **Step 5—Give permission for the student to either solve the problem or not solve the problem** (Fay & Funk, 1995, p. 95)

“I wish you the best. I hope the decision you have made works out.”

*“Have no fear. If the student is fortunate enough to make a poor choice, he or she may have a double learning lesson.”* (Fay & Funk, 1995, p.95)

## Positive Reinforcement

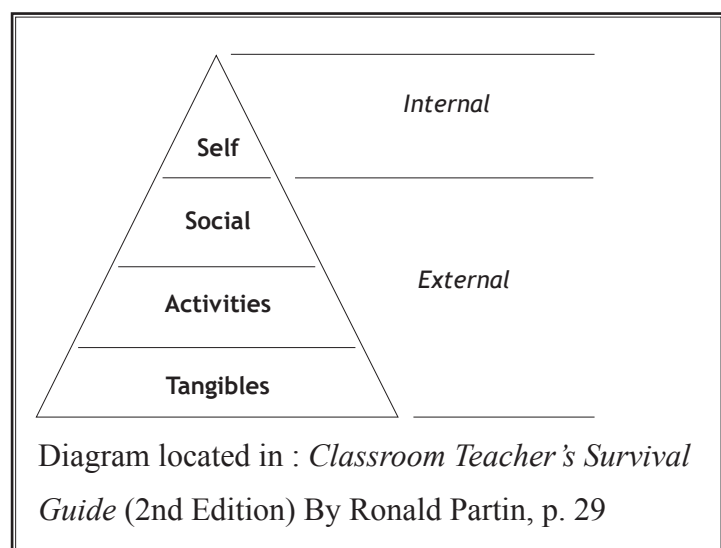
In an ideal world, all students would come to class eager to learn because of an internal drive for self-motivation. According to Partin (2005), most students need extrinsic rewards to continue doing what is expected of them. Even though a teacher should instruct students how to work for intrinsic incentives, extrinsic rewards are not immoral. It is of course human nature to yearn for approval and appreciation from others.

Unfortunately, there are no universal incentives that work on all students. Public praise from a teacher, for instance, may elicit positive behavior from most students. However, this type of incentive may backfire on the teacher if a student gets ridiculed from his or her peers.

According to Partin (2005), there is a hierarchy of positive incentives (see figure 9). The lowest level is called Tangibles, which are concrete rewards that people can either smell, touch, or taste. Examples of this are candy, stickers, or popcorn.

The second level is called Activities, which are extra privileges. These incentives may include an extra recess, being the line leader, or playing a game. The third level is called Social Rewards, which implies acknowledgement and

Figure 9. Hierarchy of positive incentives diagram.



gratitude shown by the teacher or other students. Examples include grades, certificates of excellence, nonverbal gestures of approval, and positive comments. The fourth and highest level is called Intrinsic Reinforcement on the rewards pyramid. The awards come from within each individual. Students at this level learn for the sake of learning, strive for self-satisfaction, and are open to constructive feedback.

### **Tips for Motivating Students through Positive Reinforcement**

- Help students work their way up to the top of the rewards pyramid, by never offering lower-level incentives.
- Students should never be ignored when they consistently work quietly and never get into trouble. Teachers should find ways to praise them.
- When praising a student, teachers need to be specific with their words. Instead of saying “good job” the teacher should elaborate.
- If public praise seems to bother some students, private recognition may work better.
- It is also a good idea to vary the rewards so that they do not lose their effectiveness.

### **Building Strong Relationships with Parents**

It is in a teacher’s best interest to develop an ongoing relationship with the parents or guardians of his or her students. When parents become allies with the teacher, behavioral and academic goals can be reinforced outside the classroom. Parents can also be a positive influence in their children’s schools if teachers are willing to show parents how they can participate and volunteer. The following is a list of ideas to help cultivate

teacher-parent relationships.

**1.** Write parents letters or email and send them out before school starts. In the letter, teachers can introduce themselves and write about the upcoming school year. Teachers can also invite the parents to become involved in the school community during the school year. In the letter, impress upon the parents that they play a vital role in their children's education. The teacher can also list specific ideas on how parents can get involved. Parents can demonstrate their talents or hobbies, help out with activities, donate items, or volunteer to do menial work.

**2.** Send home a questionnaire to the parents at the beginning of the school year that asks questions about their children. The answers from the questions will help the teacher understand each student better on a personal level. It will also show parents that you care about their children. Appendix C contains a sample form.

**3.** Write short, positive notes about their children's achievements or behavior in class throughout the year. During the first week of school, a teacher may choose to mentally make note of the students who could possibly need more focused attention during the school year. The positive notes could begin with these students. The parents who typically receive negative remarks about their children would probably greatly appreciate a few positive comments at the beginning of the school year. These notes can be hand written or emailed, depending on what works best for the parents. This task can seem daunting because of the time factor, so if teachers set aside a few minutes a week to write two or three parents, it may become routine.

4. Teachers who want to build a rapport with parents can also send a letter home during the first week of school that lists the teacher's goals for academic achievements and behavioral expectations. The letter can also list an action plan for positive rewards and consequences. If teachers want to insure that parents received and read the letter, it should be signed and returned by a certain date.

5. Teachers need to talk to parents right away if their students are struggling academically. Do not wait until the grades are posted. If parents are aware of the situation, they can team up with the teacher to devise a plan of action.

6. When a student is having an ongoing issue with low grades or behaving inappropriately, it is best to develop a student contract with his or her parents corporation. The contract may have a checklist of expectations and a place for both the teacher and the parents to sign daily or weekly. When a student abides by the agreement, he or she will be rewarded accordingly.

7. A suggestion before contacting parents is to tactfully find out the living arrangements of the students before contacting their home. It is never a good idea to make assumptions about the students guardians. It is possible that a student lives with only one parent, foster parents, grandparents, older siblings, or other relatives. It is also possible that a student has recently lost a parent or a parent is incarcerated. If a teacher knows the background of their students, he or she can avoid potentially awkward moments.

8. Another way to reach out to parents is to designate one evening a month as an informal teacher/parent conference. The teacher might want to provide refreshments as a gesture of kindness. Parents can stop by anytime between certain hours to learn more

about what their children are learning and discuss concerns they may have. If parents chose not to come, the teacher can get caught up on work.

**9.** Organize an event where family members are invited to participate in something at the school. This event could be in the evening, weekend, or during the day. The event could be about an academic subject or just an opportunity to have fun with the families.

### **Reflection**

After reading this guidebook, it may be beneficial to reflect on the management techniques that you have acquired through new insight and awareness. It is important to analyze the management practices used in your classroom and reflect on areas that could use improvement. Appendix D contains a chart to assist first year teachers in studying what type of methods and procedures they wish to promote and accomplish in their classroom. The topics include: Rules and Procedures, Consequences, Rewards, and Assistance. It might be beneficial for novice teachers to discuss their reflections with veteran teachers who are respected in the area of management.

### **Summary**

There are many variables that contribute to effective classroom management. It begins with intentionally organizing and designing the ambience of the classroom. When a classroom is set up systematically, it positively affects students' demeanor, traffic flow, volume level, and interaction with others in the room. Establishing expectations and procedures is another factor in classroom management that starts on the first day of school. It is crucial for students to know what is expected of them, so they have the

potential to excel in class. Another variable in effective classroom management is to engage students in learning by methodically planning and organizing academic lessons. In addition, teachers need to build relationships with their students. A sales person once said, “You can’t make people angry and sell them something at the same time” (Fay & Funk, 1995, p. 20). This statement is true for teachers as well. Teachers cannot consistently oppose or argue with students and then expect students to cooperate with them. The best teachers are the ones who generate a positive rapport with their students. Another variable in classroom management is making sure students know the rules and consequences for their actions. Teachers need to handle discipline creatively by offering students’ choices, while setting limits. Positive reinforcement is another way of gaining cooperation, while teaching students how to strive for self-satisfaction. Building an effective, well-managed classroom also includes building relationships with parents. With their involvement, behavioral and academic goals can be reinforced at home. When these variables are implemented, students’ social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development are also enhanced (Horsch, Chen, & Nelson, 1999). Teachers have a complex job that is demanding; however, it can also be a highly rewarding endeavor. Henry B. Adams said, “A teacher affects eternity; he can never tell where his influence stops.” With the proper methods, skills, attitude, determination, and passion, teachers can make an incredible difference in young peoples’ lives.



## Chapter Summary

In this chapter, the researcher presented a guidebook for first year middle school teachers containing numerous techniques and strategies that affect classroom management. Teaching is a complicated and ambitious endeavor. However, it can be a highly rewarding venture. With the right methods, skills, attitude, determination, and passion, teachers can make an incredible difference in young people's lives. In Chapter 5, the researcher discusses the completed project.

## Chapter 5

### DISCUSSION

The purpose of this project was to develop a guidebook on classroom management for first year teachers. In order to do this, it was important to study the history of education, theories on educational philosophy, and human development theories to help readers grasp how educators currently view classroom management. As a first year teacher, it is crucial to establish a well-managed classroom so that effective and efficient learning can be achieved and career satisfaction can continue to increase. The guidebook includes practical ways to accomplish these goals.

#### Contribution of the Project

The researcher provides readers with sufficient information in the review of literature section that represents the history of education and philosophies on human development and learning. Also, it is this researcher's opinion that the guidebook, located in Chapter 4, provides teachers with essential information and realistic strategies that can be used in developing an effective classroom management system.

#### Limitations to the Project

Although the guidebook is informative and applicable, there are two significant limitations. The main limitation is lack of personal experience in classroom management on the part of the researcher. Without firsthand wisdom on daily classroom management, the researcher had to completely rely on the professional literature on the topic. The

other major limitation was lack of first hand observation time in classrooms. To observe classrooms from the very beginning of the year to see how teachers establish and uphold their management systems would have greatly enhanced the guidebook.

### Peer Assessment

The classroom management guidebook was given to three teachers for review and assessment. They provided valuable feedback and insights for ways to further improve the project. They all agreed that the guidebook is a helpful tool for first year teachers. One teacher even requested a copy of the guidebook to give to her existing and future student teachers. One suggestion for improving the content was to add a section on teaching students how to monitor their own behavior. One reviewer found the information on building relationships between teachers and students to be extremely significant. It was also suggested to add the topic of avoiding power struggles to the section on defining rules and consequences. An art teacher who reviewed the guidebook noted that she has three rules in her classroom: A = Attention, R = Respect, and T = Try. By creating the acronym “ART” and limiting the number of rules, her students remember the rules more easily. This is congruent with the guidebook’s discussion of defining rules in the classroom. Two teachers recommended that students should call home to their own parents when they are continuously defiant or disruptive instead of having the teacher call, as the guidebook suggested. One teacher has the students tell their parents what they did and what they will do in the future. Finally, all the teachers believed that consequences should not be put off too long because students will forget why they are being punished. Effective classroom management is an ongoing process. This author

believes this project has encouraged her to focus on developing her own management skills when she begins her career as an art teacher.

### Recommendations for Future Research and Study

It is the recommendation of this researcher that firsthand experience on establishing effective classroom management would enrich any future research and study. The researcher would like to draw from her own experiences and share that knowledge with others. Another recommendation would be to interview and observe other teachers, veterans as well as novices. There is much to learn from direct analysis and examination. Another recommendation is to focus on one or two areas of management. If the researcher concentrated on further developing specific topics on this subject, the information might provide more depth and benefit to readers.

### Project Summary

Learning how to establish a well-managed class is a complex and highly involved process, but extremely important for new teachers to grasp and develop. When students are in a well-organized and cohesive environment, the learning process is improved. Career satisfaction also increases when teachers are able to make a difference in students' lives. This project was designed to assist first-year teachers in building a foundation for effective classroom management. The main goal of the guidebook is to present material that is helpful and realistic to implement in any classroom setting. Albert Einstein once said, "It is the supreme art of the teacher to awaken joy in creative expression and knowledge." When effective classroom management is consistent, immeasurable learning opportunities are possible.

## REFERENCES

- Braun, S. J., & Edwards, E. P. (1972). *History and theory of early childhood education*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- Burke, K. (1995). *Managing the interactive classroom: A collection of articles*. Arlington Heights, IL: IRI/Skylight Training and Publishing.
- Crain, W. C. (1985). Chapter seven: Kohlberg's stages of moral development. *Theories of development* (pp. 118-136). Retrieved June 26, 2006, from <http://faculty.plts.edu/gpence/html/kohlberg.htm>
- DeVries, R., & Kohlberg, L. (1987). *Constructivist early education: Overview and comparison with other program*. Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.
- DiGiulio, R. (2000). *Positive classroom management* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.
- Edwards, C. H. (1997). *Classroom discipline and management* (4th ed.). Wiley: New York.
- Ellis, N. (2006). *One-room schools holding on in rural America*. Retrieved June 19, 2006, from <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=5064420>
- Evers, W. J. G., Gerrichhausen, J., & Tomic, W. (2000). *The prevention and mending of burnout among secondary school teachers*, 1-44. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 439 091)
- Fay, J., & Funk, D. (1995). *Teaching with love and logic*. Golden, CO: The Love and Logic.
- Gianneschi, M. (2006, April 6). *Teacher education endorsement program proposals in linguistically diverse education: Colorado State University at Pueblo and Regis University/college*. Retrieved September 25, 2006, from [http://www.state.co.us/cche/agenda/agenda06/aug06/CSUP\\_Regis\\_LingDiverse.pdf#search=%22800%20hours%20of%20teaching%20in%20Colorado%22](http://www.state.co.us/cche/agenda/agenda06/aug06/CSUP_Regis_LingDiverse.pdf#search=%22800%20hours%20of%20teaching%20in%20Colorado%22)
- Glasser, W. (1988). *Control theory in the classroom*. New York: HarperPerennial.
- Graziano, C. (2005, February/March). Schools out. *Edutopia*, pp. 38-44.

- Gutек, G. L. (1986). *Education in the United States: An historical perspective*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Horsch, P., Chen, J., & Nelson, D. (1999). Rules and rituals: Tools for creating a respectful, caring, learning community. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 81(31), 223-227.
- Kronowitz, E. L. (1999). *Your first year of teaching and beyond* (3rd ed.). New York: Wesley Longman.
- Lall, G. R., & Lall, B. M. (1983). *Ways children learn*. Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas.
- Lefrancois, G. R. (1992). *Of children: An introduction to child development* (7th ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- Loevinger, J. (1976). *Ego development*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Brass.
- Mayer, F. (1966). *A history of educational thought* (2nd ed.). Columbus, OH: Charles E. Merrill.
- Mooney, C. G. (2000). *Theories of childhood: An introduction to Dewey, Montessori, Erikson, Piaget, and Vygotsky*. St. Paul, MN: Redleaf.
- Morrison, G. S. (1990). *The world of child development: Conception to adolescence*. Albany, NY: Delmar
- Nakamura, R. M. (2000). *Healthy classroom management: Motivation, communication, and discipline*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning.
- Neufeldt, V. (Ed.), & Guralnik, D. B. (Ed. Emeritus). (1988). *Webster's new world dictionary* (3rd ed.) New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Ozmon, H., & Craver, S. (1976). *Philosophical foundations of education*. Columbus, OH: Charles E. Merrill.
- Pulliam, J. D., & Van Patten, J. J. (1999). *History of education in America* (7th ed.). Columbus, OH: Prentice Hall.
- Santrock, J. W., & Yussen, S. R. (1992). *Child development* (5th ed.). Dubuque, IA: Wm. C. Brown.
- Walsdorf, K. L., & Lynn, S. K. (2002). The early years: Mediating the organization environment. *Clearing House*, 75(4), 190-194. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. EJ 646 865)

Wikipedia (2006). *Kohlberg's stages of moral development*. Retrieved June 26, 2006, from [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/kohlberg%27s\\_stages\\_of\\_moral\\_development](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/kohlberg%27s_stages_of_moral_development)

Wikipedia (2006, July 13). *No Child Left Behind Act*. Retrieved July 18, 2006, from [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/No\\_Child\\_Left\\_Behind\\_Act](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/No_Child_Left_Behind_Act)

Wong, H. K., & Wong, R. T. (2005). *How to be an effective teacher: The first days of school*. Mountain View, CA: Harry K. Wong.

## APPENDIX A

### Getting to Know the Student Handout



## Getting to Know You

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Class period: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Write down 8 words that best describe you? \_\_\_\_\_
2. When you have free time, what do you like to do? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What is your definition of friendship? \_\_\_\_\_
4. What are your favorite hobbies and sports? \_\_\_\_\_
5. What career do you want to have when you become an adult? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Write down 2 goals you want to accomplish this school year? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. What are your favorite and least favorite academic subjects? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. What types of books do you enjoy reading? \_\_\_\_\_
9. What is something you know the most about? \_\_\_\_\_
10. What is something you want to learn more about? \_\_\_\_\_
11. What is the most interesting place you have traveled to? \_\_\_\_\_
12. Where in the world would you like to travel? \_\_\_\_\_
13. If you could meet a famous person, dead or alive, who would that be and why? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
14. What are your strengths? \_\_\_\_\_
15. Complete these statements:  
I learn best when \_\_\_\_\_  
Sometimes I think \_\_\_\_\_  
During the school year I hope to \_\_\_\_\_  
During the school year I am dreading \_\_\_\_\_

APPENDIX B

Time-Out Journal

# Time-Out Journal

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Class period: \_\_\_\_\_

1. What classroom rule did you choose not to follow and why? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

---

1. Why was your behavior considered inappropriate? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

---

3. What should your punishment be? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

---

4. What are you doing to do next time? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

## APPENDIX C

### Parent Questionnaire

# *Parent Questionnaire*

Parent's/Guardians' names \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Student's Birthday \_\_\_\_\_

My child is: ☐ Right-handed ☐ Left-handed

Words that describe my child are:

☐ Introvert ☐ Extrovert ☐ Responsible  
☐ Conscientious ☐ Other

What does your child like most about school? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What does your child like least about school and/or what subjects does your child struggle with? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What goals do you have for your child this year? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What types of consequences work best at home? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What are your child's responsibilities at home? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Are there any concerns you or your child have pertaining to school?

Please feel free to include information regarding seat assignments, distractions in class, peers, etc. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Please list all the special strengths, abilities, and talents your child possesses.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX D

### Classroom Management Style Chart

For further information regarding the Classroom Management Style Chart,  
contact the author at [joyeaster@comcast.net](mailto:joyeaster@comcast.net).

APPENDIX E

Supplemental Reading



## SUPPLEMENTAL READING

- Breaux, A. L. (2003). *101 "Answers" for new teachers and their mentors: Effective teaching tips for daily classroom use*. Larchmont, NY: Eye On Education.
- Bullough Jr., R. V. (1989). *First-year teacher: A case study*. New York: Teachers College.
- Burke, K. (1995). *Managing the interactive classroom: A collection of articles*. Arlington Heights, IL: IRI/Skylight Training and Publishing.
- DiGiulio, R. (2000). *Positive classroom management* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.
- Fay, J., & Funk, D. (1995). *Teaching with love and logic*. Golden, CO: The Love and Logic.
- Glasser, W. (1988). *Control theory in the classroom*. New York: HarperPerennial.
- Hardin, C. J. (2004). *Effective classroom management: Models and strategies for today's classrooms*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Horsch, P., Chen, J., & Nelson, D. (1999). Rules and rituals: Tools for creating a respectful, caring, learning community. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 81(31), 223-227.
- Kronowitz, E. L. (1999). *Your first year of teaching and beyond* (3rd ed.). New York: Wesley Longman.
- McCarthy, E. J. (2002). *Classroom Management inservice for educators with emphasis on classroom meetings*. Denver, CO: Regis University.
- Nakamura, R. M. (2000). *Healthy classroom management: Motivation, communication, and discipline*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning.
- Partin, R. L. (2005). *Classroom teacher's survival guide: Practical strategies, management techniques, and reproducibles for new and experiences teachers* (2nd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Professional Educators Publications, Inc.
- Paston, H. S. (1973). *Learning to teach art*. Lincoln, NE: Professional Educators Publications.

Podsen, I. J., & Denmark, V. (2007). *Coaching and mentoring first year and student teachers* (2nd ed.). Larchmont, NY: Eye on Education.

Saphier, J., & Gower, R. (1997). *The skillful teacher: Building your teaching skills*. Acton, MA: Research for Better Teaching.

Wong, H. K., & Wong, R. T. (2005). *How to be an effective teacher: The first days of school*. Mountain View, CA: Harry K. Wong.