

7 Helpful Tips for Effective Classroom Management

By Jim Matthews

Achieving productive educational results should be every teacher's desire, and the only way to accomplish this is the teacher's ability to manage the behavior of their students. Both new and experienced teachers struggle with disruptive behavior, and many teachers complain about not possessing effective methods to handle those problem situations. Also, many teachers tend to overlook the good things in their students (even the disruptive ones). Many students are potential leaders and can be a tremendous advantage in helping you manage your classroom. This article will provide you with seven tips to better prepare for effective classroom management.

1. Notice your students.

One of the most important parts of managing your classroom is to notice your students—know what you're dealing with. How can you fix a problem if you don't know anything about what's causing it? Identify students who might have a potential to be disruptive and **relate to them**. If a student seems like he might be troublesome, find a way that you can communicate to him—a way that he knows you notice him. In doing so, he will see that you are trying to reach out to him. Identify "unofficial" leaders. Leaders can be very helpful in helping you keep the classroom disciplined. When a student becomes disruptive, a leader might say something for you without all the discipline coming directly from you. Also, identify the "loaners" and relate to them. Many students have low self-esteem and think nobody notices them. You will gain great respect from lonely students by connecting with them. Let everyone know how vital they are to your organization. Notice them. Use love and logic.

2. Use positive reinforcement.

Don't forget that we all want to be noticed for our good characteristics. If the good in a person is not recognized, then the bad will—their qualities will be identified in one way or the other. Positive reinforcement is used to manage behavior by giving something to a student to make a behavior happen again. That "something" that you give to students can be as simple as a

compliment, or you can have reward incentives. Either way, students respond well to positive reinforcement. You need to do this in order to encourage positive behavior in addition to discouraging poor behavior.

3. Don't be afraid to call parents.

Never be afraid to call home. Almost 100% of the time you will find cooperation on the other end. Many times the parents just aren't made aware of a situation, and then once the student gets in trouble, the parents become upset. Contact parents early—the sooner the better. Poor behavior is like cancer—it will only grow and spread throughout the entire group. When contacting parents, begin by saying "I wanted to know if you could help me with...," and then describe the issue and say "Whatever you can do at home will help the entire class." Relate it all back to respect so that it doesn't seem like you have a personal dislike for the student, but rather it's a problem for the class.

4. Have student present during parent conferences.

Always have the student present whenever possible during a conference with the parents. Doing so ensures that everything is taken care of right then. Work out a plan for student improvement. Give the student an assignment on improving behavior and doing things that will help the class.

5. Use rewards and incentives.

It can be very beneficial to have rewards or incentives for hard work and class cooperation. It can keep them working as a team and utilize positive peer pressure.

6. Take advantage of resources.

Use the multitude of online resources to help you with classroom management. Check out the following websites in addition to our website for great tips on becoming a better teacher:

- www.teachers.net (Harry Wong)
- <http://712educators.about.com/od/discipline/tp/disciplinetips.htm>
- <http://www.theteachersguide.com/>
- www.proteacher.com
- www.honorlevel.com/techniques

Check with your school counselors. Read their folders in the front office. You would be surprised at the amount of materials and effective interventions available there. Another great resource is the education section of your

favorite bookstore. You can find many inspirational materials available. Invest in yourself and you will be so much happier with teaching. Take a portion of your day to build yourself up by learning.

7. Be fair and be consistent

Keep in mind that there are **group discipline** techniques and **individual discipline** techniques. Don't get the two mixed up, or your class may turn on you. Avoid being labeled as "unfair." Last but most certainly not least, **be consistent**, no matter what your discipline program is. The easiest way to lose control is to be unprepared and inconsistent.