

Managing Classroom Procedures



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“Success depends upon previous preparation, and without such preparation there is sure to be failure” (Confucius).

Complex human endeavors, especially those involving other people, often require wellmanaged facilities, resources, and procedures in order to increase the probability of success. Classroom teaching is no exception. Teaching content is only one part of a teacher’s instructional role. The effective teacher recognizes a need to invest time in preparing for noninstructional duties such as enforcing discipline, monitoring students, managing resources, and communicating with parents. Classroom resources designed to aid learning can be assets that are also sources of frustration and disruption if not managed well. Charlotte Danielson (2011) asserts that “experienced teachers have all necessary materials at hand and have taught students to implement routines for distribution and collection of materials with a minimum of disruption to the flow of instruction.” In well established and functional routines, students are empowered to act independently, protect valuable instructional time, and promote learning. Essential activities such as attendance taking, collection of permission slips, handing in homework, and putting away materials can be achieved in minimal time when students know what is expected and behave according to a wellestablished routine.

Transitions between activities within the elementary classroom and movement between classes in secondary schools consume time that is unproductive for student learning. Transitions, of course, cannot be entirely eliminated but may be conducted efficiently with clear, simple instructions in order to minimize time loss. The effective teacher is able to satisfactorily close one activity before launching another and can ensure that students are conscious of the remaining time available for a task. Harry and Rosemary Wong (2013) advocate for a management plan that includes clear procedures for transitioning phases such as entering and leaving the classroom, collecting and returning assignments, forming groups, and locating directions for activities.

Information Alignment

Materials presented in this eBook align with the following:

Module Questions

- How can seamless transitions in the classroom enhance student learning?
- How can the effective performance and management of noninstructional classroom duties improve the flow of instruction?
- How can the use of student-regulated classroom strategies improve the learning environment and impact student learning?

Learning Outcomes

- Explore a variety of transition methods that efficiently and effectively connect activities.
- Investigate how to manage noninstructional duties such as handling materials and supplies.
- Explore facilitation strategies that foster student-led routines and enhance procedures for classroom management.

Topic Focus

- Creating Transitions in the Classroom
 - Transition Rules
 - Teaching Transitions
 - Noninstructional Transitions
- Performing Noninstructional Duties
 - Handling Materials and Supplies
 - Enforcing Classroom Management/Discipline
 - Monitoring Students
 - Communicating with Families
 - Record Keeping
 - Emergency Situations
- Fostering Student-led Routines
 - Involving Students in the Creation of Classroom Rules and Routines
 - Empowering Students to Self-regulate and Lead

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At time of publishing, all of the website information was accurate. Due to the nature of the internet, some of the website information may have changed or become unavailable. Please see the references section of the corresponding online module for the most up-to-date information.

Creating Transitions in the Classroom

Like all dynamic events acted out by groups of people, smooth classroom transitions do not happen by chance. Jones (n.d.b) describes a lesson transition as “perhaps the most concentrated example of classroom management during the entire school day.” Effective teachers need to exert effort and employ strategies in order to seamlessly utilize quick lesson transitions.

High school teachers pressured by the need to cover a battery of content may feel reluctant to allocate precious time for transitions and procedures within the inherent time limitations within the typical rotating high school schedule. Harry and Rosemary Wong (2007) are very clear in stating that “procedures transcend all grade levels and all academic subjects. Classroom management applies to ALL teachers.” Procedures are essential in the high school classroom. Students entering and leaving the room, gaining the teacher’s attention, and collecting and distributing papers are just a few examples of processes that work most effectively with welldefined and understood procedures.

Transitions between activities represent potential sources of classroom mismanagement. Structured transitions are more likely to operate successfully. Waxler (2007) suggests some techniques for transitioning between phases of a lesson. The use of an audible signal is one possible means of attracting student attention. Students may be taught to recognize a familiar signal, such as a beeper or phrase of music, that tells students to cease their current activity and await a new instruction. The same familiar signal is used each time a transition is required. Students are better able to follow instructions that are specific. Qualifications (such as a precise time limit of one minute) to follow a direction serve to help students to understand what is expected. Further clarification may be provided by adding key data such as relevant page numbers, time limits, or resource lists on the board. Checking for understanding of directions may be achieved by asking one or two students at random to repeat or explain the directions to the rest of the class. The students’ answers both add a repetition of the teacher’s instructions and confirm understanding for the other students as well. Modeling is another effective technique and teachers can use it in order to clarify a set of instructions. Physically showing which part of the room to find a resource or how to secure the cap on a marker pen is more effective than a purely verbal instruction. Waxler reminds us that effective teachers ensure that an engaging classroom session is distinguished by a variety of activities. Handinhand with a variety of activities is the inherent need for smooth transitions.

Transition Rules

Transitions are conducted with more efficiency and less fuss when students understand expectations and are shown how to commence tasks and clear away materials without undue distraction or delay.

Jones (n.d.b) describes how valuable instructional time may be wasted as a result of slow transitions between activities. Simple transitions such as storing away personal folders can take as long as five minutes. Thirty seconds should be sufficient time if students choose to act with a sense of urgency. Jones advocates that teachers initiate a bonus system to reward the class if transitions are completed quickly. The experienced teacher is able to estimate a reasonable time allocation for the efficient transition of tasks that need to be accomplished, such as handing in work, picking up scraps of waste paper, or distributing math manipulatives. The class is informed of the bottom line minimum amount of time needed and then given double or three times that length of time to get the job done. The incentive lies with students knowing that a quick finish earns bonus time. Surplus time is added to a displayed chart and accumulated for weekly treat activities chosen by students. Peer pressure prevails when the reward is applicable to the whole class. In this way, the teacher is able to operate using a set of transition rules, move on quickly to the next activity, gain instructional time, and simultaneously assume a benevolent role in the eyes of students.

Transitions between activities are regular, everyday events in the classroom that require clear and consistent expectations for student behavior. Harry and Rosemary Wong (2005) posit that “a smoothrunning classroom develops when the teacher has the ability to teach procedures.” Telling the students what to do is insufficient. Procedures need to be explained with the help of modeling, practice, and reinforcement. Reteaching of expectations may be necessary until procedures become routines.

Teachers are further encouraged to use visual cues that teach and emphasize routines to students, enabling them to operate with a degree of independence (Scholastic, n.d.). Visual displays in the form of posters, noticeboards, or screen projections remind students what to do at the start of the day when arriving in the classroom, unpacking their bags, and planning their schedule for the session. Parents of younger children are involved in daily routines when they see notices indicating plans for upcoming field trips or the need for special equipment such as athletic shoes for later in the week.

Teaching Transitions

Nonverbal communication includes the use of hand gestures, body postures, and voice tones. Aids to communication include the use of symbols on flash cards, a few bars of music, or distinctive sounds. Miller (2008) maintains that matching of verbal and nonverbal messages helps to “preserve relationships and gain compliance in the classroom” and recommends that teachers should be trained in nonverbal message skills. Visual cues may be used to emphasize verbal instructions. For example, students may be told to finish a task in five minutes and be given the visual cue of holding up a hand with five digits. The teacher may simultaneously point to and look at the display board while giving a verbal instruction to the same effect. A nonverbal visual instruction such as an appropriate hand gesture may be more effective than words as an intervention to make the lesson flow. Word signs printed on cards provide an alternative to verbal instructions. Cards with words for commonly used instructions such as “quiet,” “walk,” and “sit,” enable the teacher to change student behavior without adding more noise to the mix. Some teachers use symbols or pictures (see Figure 1) in place of words to convey a message. Like other techniques for giving directions, visual cues must be practiced before students will respond automatically.



Figure 1. Visual cues for well done, reading time, and stop the activity.

Teachers are acutely aware that students have limited attention spans. Factors such as age, personal interest in the topic of study, environmental distractions, nutrition, and individual difference may all play a part in student engagement. Most teachers would agree, even in higher education, that instruction using shorter phases of instructional time is more effective in retaining student engagement. A review by The Teaching Center at Washington University in St. Louis (2013) of the research findings of Bunce, Flens, and Neiles, indicates that much of the historical research, frequently used to support the notion of the 10 to 15 minute attention spans for higher education students in lecture situations, is imprecise in terms of indicators and measurement. More recent research conducted about the use of clickers to record the times students drifted off task indicates that “attention lapses are frequent, but brief.” Typical findings were that students lost concentration for one or two minutes after each period of 5 to 9 minutes. Furthermore, periods of inattention became more frequent as the extended period of instruction progressed. The notion of chunking sessions of instruction with changes of activity each 15 to 20 minutes, or shorter periods in early childhood, appears to be consistent with research findings and with classroom anecdotal experiences.

Noninstructional Transitions

Transitions involve routines that are used to improve the efficiency and harmony of the classroom. Entering and leaving the classroom, attendance taking, storing materials, waste disposal, turning in work, evacuation and lockdown drills, and switching tasks are all examples of classroom activities that can be shaped into routines (Stronge, Tucker, and Hindman, 2004). A positive classroom climate is enhanced by routines that provide students with clear guidelines and the security of knowing how aspects of the day will unfold. Teachers who invest time in establishing routines at the start of the school year are able to devote more time to instructional tasks that promote student learning.

Many teachers shun the traditional method of roll call for taking attendance. Alternative methods of attendance taking may offer a better utilization of instructional time, routines that enable students to operate with greater independence, and still fulfill the required need for a class registration. Variations that are possible with simple and easily obtainable resources include systems in which students place their own name tag on a magnet board, mark on a display chart, or use popsicle name sticks. Lunch preferences may be incorporated in the same count. Such systems should have the common characteristics of enabling registration and a learning activity to run simultaneously, and provide a rapid attendance count for the teacher to transpose to a paper or online gradebook.

Weber (2011) offers a technique especially applicable to senior students and newly introduced classes that combines roll call with an opportunity to build class community, set a relaxed and positive climate, and learn about individual characteristics of students. Instead of just answering present, students voice their short reply to a question of the day. Exemplar questions are “state a fact about our class; tell us where you were born; name something that makes you grouchy; describe the perfect breakfast; give the class a word of advice.” A variation may be used when readings are assigned as homework in preparation for the class. In this case students set the stage for the class by replying to the roll call with a chosen word or short phrase that represents a term or concept from the reading.

Performing Noninstructional Duties

The effective teacher recognizes the need to prepare the ground, so to speak, before seeding and harvesting instructional content. Students, their families, and resources and materials need to be effectively managed in order for the class to operate smoothly. Bathroom breaks, paper distributions, cleaning up paints and brushes, attendance checks, and messages home are just a few of the tasks that must routinely be accomplished by students and the teacher before the real business of academic instruction can be effectively be accomplished. The pragmatic teacher is willing to invest time and energy in order to teach students expectations and to buy into routines that will ultimately help them learn and provide more time for learning.

Handling Materials and Supplies

Classrooms operate more efficiently when students are taught procedures and strategies to manage classroom materials and resources. The effective teacher develops a classroom culture in which students take care of materials and contingency plans are in place for times when students forget to bring essential equipment. Some strategies to use when dealing with student materials and homework are summarized below:

- Parents can be supportive if given a list of essential materials and are encouraged to check student bags.
- A peer buddy system can both provide support when materials are forgotten and develop responsible attitudes with reminder from the buddy.
- A list of necessary materials, both written on a board and posted on a Web site.
- Verbal reminders at the end of the day from the teacher or buddies serve to reinforce student preparedness.

The teacher is able to reduce interruptions and time spent dealing with small problems by adopting appropriate preparatory strategies (Intervention Central, n.d.).

The Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network (PaTTAN) Web site provides a number of recommendations for supporting disabled students by ensuring that “supplementary aids and services should be available to all students who need them.” Support should be extended in “a manner that avoids stigmatizing students.” Teachers should ensure that classrooms are provided with any appropriate lowtech learning aids such as sticky notes, highlighter pens, calculators, digital clocks and personal bookbags. Classroom layout may need adaptation for students with individual needs. Furniture layout, individualized furniture, wheelchair access, acoustic and lighting needs are all factors that the teacher needs to consider. Teachers and students need to recognize that some rules and procedures, such as those for clearing away resources, may need adjustment in order to accommodate students with individual needs (Inclusive Practices, 2012).

Routines are enabled and reinforced by orderly classroom layout and organization. The designation and clear labeling of storage areas serve to improve the smooth running of a classroom by enabling independent student activity. The distribution of and accounting for resources, and tidying away after activities, need to be acknowledged and addressed. Stronge, Tucker, and Hindman (2004) suggest simple but effective measures such as “colorcoding folders, establishing fixed locations for lab supplies, [and] maintaining folders for students to pick up missed work after being absent.” A wellordered system, that includes extra copies of resource sheets for students who were absent and spare pencils for students who forget their equipment, can screen the teacher from a multitude of unnecessary questions and tasks, and more importantly, redirect the teacher’s time to student learning.

Enforcing Classroom Management/Discipline

Robert Bencker, a Connecticut teacher, recognizes the value of classroom management techniques that seek to “prevent small problems from escalating into big ones” (Starr, 2010). Greeting students individually at the start of the day serves to create a rapport and establish a positive classroom environment. Potential problems such as students bringing undesirable or prohibited materials, or arriving at the door with a negative attitude, may be intercepted and addressed calmly and individually before they can escalate and emerge later as disruptive situations. When monitoring students minutebyminute, Benker recommends a number of simple techniques including the use of:

- Eye contact
- Movement around the room
- Proximity to restless students
- Quiet reminders
- Redirection of a student’s attention

- Humor
- Positive reinforcement
- Directed question

The overriding objective for the teacher is to maintain control without confrontation.

Seating arrangement, in terms of spatial arrangement of tables and allocation of individual student places, has a direct impact on classroom management and discipline. Teacher allocation of seating, or free choice of seats by students, are two possible extreme strategies that may be adopted. Some teachers argue that students react positively when given the freedom to select their own seats and neighbors.

Fred Jones (n.d.a) recommends that teachers assigns seats. Students may be tempted to seat themselves in positions where greater distance from the teacher and closer proximity to a negative mix of peers makes them more likely to stray off task. Some students benefit from being close to the teacher, or in direct line of sight. Teachers are able to check students' work, offer individual encouragement and support, and exercise tighter control when the arrangement of tables permits the teacher to walk freely around the room. Students that need support in order to maintain engagement will benefit from closer proximity and supervision from the teacher.

Monitoring Students

The teacher monitoring of students may be considered both in terms of recording academic progress throughout the year and the continual supervision and oversight needed in order to verify that students are staying on task and working positively with peers. The School Improvement in Maryland (n.d.) Web site advocates for teachers to develop monitoring plans that address the ongoing success of student learning. Such a plan is integral with instructional planning and begins with the question "what do I want my students to know and do?" The process of monitoring, in the form of evidence from assessment results, anecdotal records, and formative feedback, informs the teacher about the progress of individual students and the class as a whole. Finally, the information gathered will enable the teacher to develop a plan of intervention for some students or for the class as a whole.

Communicating with Families

Administrators generally communicate information that is either schoolwide or districtwide with families. Typical school announcements include published calendars, curriculum guides, newsletters, and schoolinitiated family consultation meetings. Schools have a legal obligation to provide documentation that informs families of their legal rights and expectations.

Communication with families from teachers at the whole class level enables families to be informed about classroom curriculum plans and their ensuing details. Families are encouraged to become involved in their children's learning when they have ready access to information about topics for the semester, either as handouts, on a Web page, or by email. Specific advice on learning activities that are suitable for direct involvement of family members enables students to benefit from added support at home. Valuable support for the forgetful or disorganized student is on hand when families are aware of daily routines such as bringing required equipment (e.g. pens, pencils, PE clothing) to school. Teachers of younger students often elect to post information about routines or weekly plans outside the classroom door. Family members may conveniently read notices and remain informed when they drop off and pick up students at the end of the day.

The Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network (PaTTAN) recommends a number of strategies for classroom teachers to ensure that families are included as a valuable asset in furthering student learning. Families should be "contacted at least once during every marking period." Teachers can build up an accurate profile of individual students by asking questions about a student's interests, motivational triggers, and academic and social strengths. Invitations for family members to attend school events or to offer voluntary support are effective channels to support student learning by engaging the family (Communicating With Parents, 2012).

Communication from the teacher about individual students conveys the underlying and reassuring message that each student is cared for and valued. At the start of the school year, especially from elementary class teachers, an introductory letter or phone call to the families of each student is a great way to create confidence and initiate a mutually supportive relationship between school and home. Most parents want and appreciate regular and ongoing feedback about student academic progress and personal attitudes. When a student is underperforming or experiencing behavior problems, the effective teacher will find ways to balance negative reports with positive news. Parents look for some good news in order to keep the home/school relationship positive and maintain a belief that improvements are possible and likely for their child. Contact and dialogue with the family informs the teacher about students' needs and the opportunities offered by their home environment. Personal knowledge enables the teacher to incorporate tasks that may better address students' interests and improve engagement in study. Teachers' responses to family concerns or inquiries are instrumental in benefitting the student by maintaining a positive relationship between home and school. Responses should be timely, professional, and in language that is readily understood. Any promised resulting actions should be realistic and followed through to a conclusion (American Federation of Teachers, 2007).

Record Keeping

The efficient teacher maintains written records that form a reliable profile of the progress of each student in the class. Springer, Alexander, and PersianiBecker (2011) present a model of student gradebooks that provide "evidence of student growth" and show "patterns of weakness or improvement." Accurate record keeping assists the teacher in making data driven observations about student progress and enables decisions about appropriate modifications to instruction. Records can include samples of student work and student reflections. The information recorded is used to initiate meaningful discussions with families and colleagues about student progress.

Teachers in the U.S., working in any public school or private school that benefits from federal funding, should be aware of the requirements of The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), as it applies to the confidentiality of grades and progress reports. Care is needed to ensure that such information is not revealed, even in a casual comment, without the permission of the student's family. Communication of grades and reports must be accomplished in a secure and private manner. The procedure for returning student work or communicating grades must ensure anonymity for each student.

Records or checklists may be kept in a paper gradebook or electronic alternative. Permission notes, family acknowledgment slips, records of telephone calls, money receipts, return of health forms, contact details, and many other administrative tasks may also fall within the responsibilities of the teacher. Accurate records, including attendance, ensure that professional communication is in place with families, and the potential for embarrassing situations caused by incorrect information or miscommunication is minimized.

Teachers may use anecdotal records to monitor student's academic progress and behavioral issues. Narrative may include notes from inclass observations, checklists of student accomplishments, and self evaluations or logs composed by students. School or district requirements for student academic report cards may guide the teacher in prioritizing and gathering grades and academic data over the reporting period.

Emergency Situations

Emergency situations such as fire evacuations require an additional attendance check to ensure that all personnel are safe and accounted for at the assembly point. A paper attendance record may be the most reliable medium for emergency situations when power loss, breakdown of digital communications, and confusion are likely scenarios. Many schools elect to routinely keep an up-to-date, printed version of the daily student roster near the door where the teacher or substitute can quickly pick it up during an emergency exit.

Audio announcements, delivered using appropriate protocols over wholeschool classroom public address systems, will be of high importance and are likely to require an immediate and precise response. Messages may concern lockdowns, evacuations, early closures, and other emergency situations. Teachers cannot afford any compromise in insisting that students automatically stop what they are doing, are silent, and listen to the contents of the message. Younger students especially need modeling and practice in order to behave appropriately when an authentic message is transmitted.

Amico (2012) stresses the need for a plan that minimizes the occurrence of ad hoc requests for bathroom breaks. Teachers should, as a prerequisite, be aware of any students with documented medical conditions that require more frequent trips to the bathroom or nurse. The daily classroom plan should include a reasonable frequency of routine bathroom opportunities. Younger students may need direct reminders to use the bathroom when they do have appropriate breaks. A displayed schedule of recess times, visible alongside the clock, enables students to plan accordingly. There could be times during hot weather when more fluids are consumed, that the teacher initiates extra bathroom opportunities, a table at a time. Ultimately, unscheduled requests need to be considered in context. Frequent requests to leave the room from one student may warrant a quiet conversation to discover if there is a medical or other problem. The professional teacher treats all requests respectfully and avoids creating a culture of fear. A variety of classroom cultures are promoted by teachers in different schools. Some teachers may establish a routine in which older students are free to leave the room and go to the bathroom without asking, as long as they are not interrupting a presentation or discussion. In every case, the teacher needs to establish what is acceptable and provide students with the security of knowing how they should behave.

Fostering Student-led Routines

Teachers possess generous yet finite availability of time and energy to be used during their day in the classroom. A proportion of that precious human resource must be invested in classroom management routines and procedures that indirectly influence the quality of learning. Student learning is promoted with the planning of appropriate instructional outcomes, wellchosen assessments and associated activities, and the provision of feedback and support for groups and individuals. When students are coached and encouraged to take a lead and accept responsibility for routine activities, the teacher finds more time available to promote academic progress.

Involving Students in the Creation of Classroom Rules and Routines

Students accept and embrace consistently and fairly applied rules and routines if they understand their purpose. The best rules and routines make students feel comfortable and secure. Rules are more acceptable to students when they are involved in their creation and implementation. Shalaway (n.d.) explains how to present a set of five or six suggested rules as a starting point for elementary or middle school students. Students are then able to consider the sample set of rules and contribute suggestions in order to modify and take ownership of the wording. The final rules, created in collaboration with students, are phrased in ageappropriate and easily understood language. Additionally, students agree on a set of consequences for noncompliance. The following examples are suggestions for starting possibilities:

- Treat others as you would like to be treated.
- Respect other people and their property.
- Laugh **with** anyone, but not **at** anyone.
- Be responsible for your own learning.
- Come to class on time.
- Do not disturb people who are working.

Shalaway recommends that the final rules be posted prominently in the classroom and sent home as copies to families.

Empowering Students to Self-regulate and Lead

One of the greatest faculty lounge compliments about the effectiveness of a teaching colleague is the observation that their class functions equally effectively with a substitute teacher. The empowerment of students to take responsibility for their own learning results in an autopilot effect with sustained learning when the regular teacher is not present. Selfregulated students, who lead their own learning, enable the teacher to redirect their time away from lowlevel classroom instructions in favor of supporting students with deeper academic feedback and support.

Hernandez (2011) advocates for students to be allocated simple classroom tasks such as distributing and collecting resources. The strategy saves teacher time, creates participation opportunities for students, and develops reallife skills such as listening to and following instructions. Familiar daily routines, such as ABC's or writing the day and date, may be led by students on a rotating basis. Daily attendance recording is another opportunity for students to participate by using a marker to indicate their daily presence on a laminated attendance chart. Pairwork activities are a great way to extend responsibility to students when they read aloud or listen to their partner reading. Management by students of personal study folders ensures that papers are filed away responsibly and are reliably retrieved when next needed.

According to Zumbrunn, Tadlock, and Roberts (2011), the process of selfregulated learning “assists students in managing their thoughts, behaviors, and emotions in order to successfully navigate their learning experiences.” Selfregulated learning skills help students to develop a repertoire of effective learning strategies and habits. A range of factors are known to control the ability for students to selfregulate.

- **Reflection** is an important facet of student selfmonitoring. Reflection includes the evaluation of strategies and selfimposed goals selected by the student to complete an assignment. Students need to actually learn and practice some of the selfregulated processes that empower independent learning. Zumbrunn et al. offer other examples of relevant learning processes including “goal setting, planning, selfmotivation, attention control, flexible use of learning strategies, selfmonitoring, appropriate helpseeking, and selfevaluation.”
- **Planning** a goal, selecting associated strategies, and estimating the time and resources needed, are aspects of selfregulated learning.
- **Attention** to selfmonitoring enables students to keep on task with instructional outcomes in mind. Teachers can control the classroom environment and routine in order to reduce distracting stimuli and include short breaks that are synchronized with expected attention spans.

- **Help-seeking** behaviors, when constructive, enable teachers to respond by providing students with timely and understandable academic feedback. Opportunities to resubmit work or prepare draft stages enables students to make tangible use of help and feedback.

Teachers should be aware that students are inclined to revert to familiar and sometimes ineffective learning strategies when faced with new situations. Teacher monitoring, encouragement, and feedback may give the confidence needed for students to try out and persevere with new approaches. Accomplished students develop a growing repertoire of learning strategies. Teachers can encourage the development of independent learning strategies by scaffolding tasks, modeling new strategies, and giving practice and encouragement.

Distel (2010) considers strategies for dedicating an uninterrupted phase of teacher time and attention to a small group activity. Low level interruptions, such as requests for pencils or procedural clarifications, can easily break the flow of instruction within the target group. Students can alternatively be taught to rely on their peers for support and advice. Distel suggests that students are required to ask up to three nearby peers for help in solving a problem before the teacher is approached. The strategy described has other advantages. In addition to enhancing the instructional effectiveness of the teacher, students develop a sense of group responsibility and are empowered to help each other with learning problems. When a student is unable to resolve a problem after asking three peers, they need a protocol for seeking teacher help. One such strategy is to use a can of popsicle sticks with printed students' names. The student is able to quietly place their name stick on the teacher's table, knowing that support would be coming at the earliest convenient moment.

Students need to recognize occasions when immediate interruption is necessary, encouraged, and required. Early in the school year, discussions are needed in order to help students develop a sense for recognizing situations in which immediate interruption is the correct behavior. Students may suggest examples such as fires, intruders, blood injuries, and illness that warrant urgent medical attention. These discussions further empower students to self-regulate and lead with minimum distraction to the class.

Conclusion

Classrooms have no magic charms that enable them to run themselves, nor do groups of students know how to behave productively unless given clear and specific expectations. The good news is that teachers are able to, and need to, impose structure on the operation of the classroom physical environment as well as manage the activities of the students within that classroom. Although teacher experience and personality are part of the equation for success, the techniques for operating an effective classroom may be learned from books, mentors, and a willingness to try out new ideas. Successful instruction emerges when the teacher is able to channel time and effort into the academic pursuit of teaching. Early on, in the relationship between the teacher and the class, a high proportion of time should be devoted to setting procedures and routines as well as optimizing the physical layout of the classroom. The positive payback comes later. With the class running smoothly, students feel secure and understand the expectations for learning. The opportunity for the teacher to maximize the proportion of time given directly to the growth of students' learning is then evident.

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