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Johanna Kasin Lemlech

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PREFACE

Through the years, I have often wondered why it is that educators are so thick-skinned. We accept responsibility for performing much more than is humanly possible; yet, when newspapers bombard us with messages about school inefficiency, capricious use of public funds, teacher callousness, and teacher ineffectiveness, we never respond. No professional group has as low a self-concept as educators have; probably, this is the reason the public can hurl so much abuse, so fearlessly.

Of course teachers are accountable, but for what?—certainly not for many factors that students bring to the classroom door: attitudes, language, social class, ethnicity, intelligence. These factors affect the students' ability in school, and teachers have no control over them. But teachers do have control of their own professional expertise. A teacher can be held accountable for instructional expertise in specific areas of competence. A first-grade teacher should be held responsible for educational theory and methods of teaching reading to first-grade students. Within that specified segment of the curriculum, the teacher is responsible to the public for professional performance.

Affecting the teacher's instructional expertise is the way in which the teacher manages the classroom. Several recent research studies of teacher effectiveness have noted that the classrooms of successful teachers look almost like magic shows because students seem to change activities and move about so smoothly, almost automatically. In these classrooms, the teachers have mastered specific techniques for planning an optimal number of meaningful activities, for anticipating potential problems, and for creating an enriched, inviting environment. The students in these classrooms appear to know what is expected of them; they seem satisfied with their own progress, and they know what to do when they need assistance. The formula seems to be teachers who, while monitoring the students' progress and anticipating learning or behavioral problems, are able to provide meaningful options matched to students' learning needs.

The goal of this book is to assist teachers with their classroom preparation by describing classroom management procedures and by suggesting ways to work with students and other adults to create learning environments and to develop effective classroom instructional practices. Examples of suggested practices are fictitious; however, all of the suggestions, ideas, checklists, and exhibits included within the text have been verified with experienced teachers and by classroom research studies of effective teachers.

Teachers are leaders who influence students; as such, they need self-confidence, self-respect, status, and control of themselves and their environment. The teacher's professional responsibilities include human relations skills to work with students and coordinate the activities of other adults within the classroom. When teachers feel comfortable with their personal preparatory efforts such as lesson planning, arranging the instructional environment, and preparing record-keeping devices, they are able to consider those other dimensions of teacher behavior which affect their leadership role and their interactions with students and other adults.

Part I has been divided into three chapters. Chapter One defines classroom management, and it specifies some significant teacher behaviors synthesized from current studies of teacher effectiveness. Modeling theory and suggestions for managing problem situations in the classroom conclude the first chapter. Chapter Two discusses the management of group behavior and suggests tactics with a new group of students. Mainstreaming to normalize the classroom, individualization, peer tutoring, and dealing with group discipline problems are also featured in this chapter. Chapter Three details feedback techniques to detect problems and to monitor progress. Checklists, sociometric techniques, student diaries, and teacher observation forms are all specified in this chapter to provide teachers with guidelines for record-keeping.

Part II extends the teacher's leadership role to include involving parents in school programs, guiding the work of other adults in the classroom, and teaching as a member of a collegial team. Chapter Four examines some of the problems that inhibit communication between parent and teacher, and suggestions are made to initiate positive contact and interrelationships. Chapter Five focuses on the teacher's leadership role in organizing and directing the activities of other adults in the classroom.

Creating an appropriate learning environment is the focus of Part III. Chapter Six presents the rationale for using learning centers to differentiate instruction and procedural steps for implementing a centers' approach. Chapter Seven suggests more than 40 different ideas for the development of learning centers.

Part IV is divided into three chapters. Chapter Eight presents a model teaching unit to introduce the planning components for curriculum development. Organizing for instruction, assessing learning needs, and grouping students are all considered in this chapter. Chapter Nine deals with the teacher as a model of school success behaviors. Questioning tactics and specific management routines that affect classroom performance are also emphasized. Chapter Ten concludes the book by asking the professional to self-evaluate teaching performance. Self-

appraisal tools are provided for the beginning or practicing teacher to facilitate professional growth. Plans are suggested to assist the teacher in improving teaching skills.

This book suggests a number of methodological approaches, record-keeping devices, and organizational routines along with suggested teaching behaviors. The book is intended as a resource for the beginning teacher as well as for the practicing professional. The book was motivated in part by my own fifteen years of teaching experiences in the public schools and by the questions about classroom management that were raised by my students at the university. The examples are derived from my own experiences in the schools and from the insights a mother gains while listening to her children's experiences.

JOHANNA KASIN LEMLECH

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Part I WORKING WITH STUDENTS

There are many myths circulated by both lay and professional people about classroom control and management, many of which are concerned with teacher control of the classroom. Part I of *Classroom Management* emphasizes positive behaviors of successful teachers as opposed to stereotyped behaviors. Chapter One focuses on teacher behavior and goals for student behavior. Chapter Two enlarges the perspective by considering the management of group behavior, and Chapter Three suggests means to monitor students' progress.

The following questions are considered in these chapters: Why is it when a successful teacher stands in the classroom doorway, the students immediately hush and prepare for work? Why is it that some teachers can cast a glance at a misbehaving child and the student immediately modifies his behavior? How does it happen that in some classrooms students move from activity to activity without fuss or disruption? How do effective teachers ensure students' progress toward appropriate learning goals?

Chapter One

Teacher Behavior

How can we judge the worth of a society? . . . If the children and youth of a nation are afforded opportunity to develop their capacities to the fullest, if they are given the knowledge to understand the world and the wisdom to change it, then the prospects for the future are bright.*

Classroom management textbooks typically address themselves to the teacher's role as disciplinarian. Some of these textbooks point out the many roles of the teacher, which range from counselor to bookkeeper to policeman, and then with funny stories and cartoon figures, they implore the beginning teacher to "start out mean and hard," "don't crack a smile the first week," and "be vigilant." But in this textbook, the emphasis will be on the teacher's potential as an instructor and as a model of desirable behavior. Although countless books have been written about the many roles that teachers perform, in fact, there is only one role that a teacher is employed for and is expected to fulfill: the instructional role. This role demands specific skill competencies, such as diagnosing problems, prescribing objectives, providing assistance, reinforcing needs, assessing competence, and reteaching.

WHAT IS CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT?

The summer was almost over, and Julie Kramer sat at the breakfast table with a thoughtful expression on her face. Her family exchanged knowing smiles, recognizing that faraway look; Julie was thinking about teaching.

"Julie, you've been teaching for seven years now. Why do you worry so much about going back to work?"

"I'm not worried per se, Herb, but I have many things to prepare. You can't just walk into a classroom the day school opens and expect things to take care of themselves."

"What do you prepare, Mom? Give us a for instance!"

"During the summer, classrooms are normally cleaned, tables polished, walls and floors scrubbed. All the furniture will be stacked in the middle of the room. I've got to decide how I want to arrange the furniture for my new class. To make that decision, I have to think about grouping, classroom interaction, and the special learning centers I want in my room.

* Urie Bronfenbrenner, *Two Worlds of Childhood*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1970, p. 1.

I need to think about access to textbooks and the other instructional materials that I use and about traffic patterns in the classroom."

"Why is that so difficult?"

"Well, what would happen if I decided to move our kitchen table closer to the refrigerator?"

"That's easy. We would have trouble walking into the kitchen and the table would be in the path of the sink and the stove."

"OK, what would happen if I moved our table up against the wall?"

"We would all have to sit on one side and we couldn't see each other when we wanted to talk."

"That's right, Craig, and the same things happen in classrooms. You need to consider walking patterns, exits, classroom rules, discussion circles, reading groups; all of the normal daily routines and activities."

"Why don't you just arrange your classroom the same way each year?"

"Many teachers do. But I find that when I teach a new grade level or think about different children, I have different needs in my classroom that require new arrangements to improve classroom life."

Stewart Jackson unconsciously whistled a tuneless melody as he polished his shoes. "Yep, gotta get some classroom instruments," he thought to himself. "Got to go visit the 'teacher' store. Time to get a move on!"

Stewart began to make a list of what he would buy and what needed to be refurbished to prepare for the new school year. His "buy" list included: chopsticks, a tonette, and a guiro for music; a learning center kit; some new pictures and an idea book for science activities. He would also need some sandpaper for sand blocks (also for music), new Petri dishes for science experiments, and a soroban (the Japanese abacus) for math.

"But my real problem," he thought to himself, "is developing some new resource units. I'm not going to get caught again in the trap of having to rely totally on textbooks. This year textbooks are going to be a resource, not a bible!"

"This year is going to be different," Midge Brady thought. "By golly, I'm going to really keep track of the kids this time. When I have a parent conference this year, I'm going to be so prepared I'll be able to refer to my records and say some really specific things about learning progress. Let's see now, I need to record oral participation, group work, homework assignments, peer tutoring, reading skills, mathematics concepts, social studies. . . ." Midge began drawing charts, making diagrams, and listing skills for the information she sought about each child's progress.

While these three teachers are fictitious, they are similar to many of the teachers who teach over 34 million elementary children in the

United States. Julie Kramer, Stewart Jackson, and Midge Brady recognized the need for advance preparation before entering the classroom door or beginning the new school year. Julie was concerned about classroom interaction and the classroom environment. Stewart Jackson was thinking about new instructional materials and the need to prepare resource units to facilitate lesson planning. Midge was determined to organize record keeping devices to report and monitor learning progress. Each of these preplanning components increases the likelihood that the teacher will feel confident, comfortable, and on top of the situation in the classroom.

Classroom management is the orchestration of classroom life: planning curriculum, organizing procedures and resources, arranging the environment to maximize efficiency, monitoring student progress, anticipating potential problems. The classrooms of successful teachers often look like magic shows because students seem to glide from one activity to the next. The teachers' behavior appears effortless and slick. In these classrooms, the teachers have mastered specific techniques for planning an optimal number of meaningful activities, for anticipating potential problems, and for creating an enriched, inviting environment. The students in these classrooms appear to know what is expected of them; they seem satisfied with their own progress, and they know what to do when they need assistance. The formula seems to be teachers who, while monitoring the students' progress and anticipating learning or behavioral problems, are able to provide meaningful options matched to students' learning needs.

RESEARCH AND READINGS

Kounin, Jacob S. *Discipline and Group Management in Classrooms*. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1970, p. 63.

Kounin defines successful classroom management as "producing a high rate of work involvement and a low rate of deviancy in academic settings."

Some classroom problems represent unexpected happenings: Johnny left his arithmetic book at home and is unable to do his seatwork; it has suddenly begun to rain and the children cannot go outside for physical education; Brad and Sue are having an argument; the film that you were expecting did not arrive; the achievement tests are for the wrong grade level and you now have two hours of classroom time to account for. These realities of classroom life necessitate managerial and teaching skills that go beyond typical lesson planning. The teacher needs not only a "bag of tricks" for the unplanned time that suddenly materializes but also group process skills—for working with students

and other adults—and management techniques—for dealing with people, equipment, supplies, actions, and inaction.

The key to successful classroom management is *preplanning*. It is not enough for the teacher to engage in lesson planning. To be successful, the teacher must also think about avoiding common classroom occurrences that motivate misbehavior. The best-planned lesson will fail if the teacher forgot to provide appropriate instructions, or to give resource information, or to decide what to do with finished papers. Each of these pitfalls can motivate inappropriate classroom behavior that will make the difference between productive and nonproductive learning.

How Does Classroom Management Affect Student Behavior?

The story told below by the author's sixth-grade daughter is typical of the many classroom incidents that occur frequently because teachers virtually ask for them.

Our class isn't usually like this, but she [the substitute] was acting so nasty and saying such stupid things. So we decided to have a pencil drop; and at a certain time, we did it. So she said, "Ha, ha! That's very funny; I hope you're enjoying yourselves."

We had never thought of doing anything else, but then she said, "Well, now that you've had a pencil drop, I suppose you're going to have a book drop."

So-o-o everyone just kind of looked at each other and lots of kids just started dropping their books on the floor.

The substitute teacher was not only predicting group misbehavior, she was directing it. Misbehavior is contagious, and teachers who consistently have disciplinary problems in their classrooms may be lacking classroom management skills. In studies of classroom management, Kounin (1970) concluded that discipline directed at an individual and overheard by others affects the listening audience as well as the individual. An angry outburst by the teacher can cause emotional conflict and a lack of conformity from the observing and listening group of students, even though they were not the target of the initial warning. To prevent contagious misbehavior, effective teachers constantly monitor their classrooms and literally catch a disruption before it occurs. Some examples of teachers anticipating and handling potential misbehavior occur in the latter portion of this chapter.

What Are Some Key Ideas for Working with Students?

The "Checklist for Working with Students" contains some of the key ideas discussed throughout Part I. It is designed to assist the reader

Figure I-1 CHECKLIST FOR WORKING WITH STUDENTS

IN YOUR CLASSROOM,		YES	NO
1.	Are all children encouraged to set personal goals?		
2.	Do all children have the opportunity to choose some work and leisure activities?		
3.	Are all children allowed to assist one another?		
4.	In seating children in the classroom, are all children favored?		
5.	Are all students praised as frequently and for the same purposes?		
6.	Are all students provided with nonverbal behavioral clues such as smiles, eye contact, friendly pats, understanding looks?		
7.	When misbehavior occurs, are all students subject to the same amount and type of criticism?		
8.	When asking students questions, are all students provided with content clues if they fail to respond?		
9.	Is student-to-student interaction encouraged?		
10.	Is group placement in your classroom changed frequently?		
11.	Does group placement reflect a variety of teaching purposes?		
12.	Are different instructional strategies utilized when a child (children) has (have) failed to learn?		
13.	In planning an instructional strategy, have you focused on the individual in the group?		
14.	During a discussion, are all students called upon?		
15.	During a discussion, are all students given time to respond?		
16.	During a discussion, are all students encouraged to initiate a new line of thinking or to ask a question?		
17.	In small-group work, do all children have an opportunity to be both leader and participant?		

to organize for purposeful reading. Before responding to the checklist the reader is urged to think about all of the students in the classroom and to consider sex, race, social class, high and low achievers.

POSITIVE TEACHER BEHAVIOR: WORKING WITH STUDENTS

In the past several years, educational researchers have begun to look at classrooms, teachers, and the teaching process and to ask such questions as: Does it make any difference which teacher a student has? Can student progress be positively associated with specific teaching acts?

Although we know intuitively that there are successful and less successful teachers, or effective and less effective teachers, how can we differentiate between them when observers can never agree on the criteria for good teaching? For instance, through the years there has