Second Edition

Classroom Management

Creating a Successful Learning Community

Paul R. Burden

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Paul R. Burden
Kansas State University

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Preface

This second edition of *Classroom Management* has been written to guide teachers and prospective teachers as they develop a vision for creating a positive classroom community, with the involvement and cooperation of the students. Fundamental principles of classroom management and discipline are presented along with ways to involve students in the creation of their learning environment.

The book is a scholarly synthesis of the research base on classroom management and discipline, yet is written and formatted in a way that is easy to read, understand, and apply. It carries a practical, realistic view of teaching with the content being organized in a logical, sequential order. The content is applicable for teachers at all levels—elementary, middle level, and high school.

INTENDED AUDIENCE

This book is especially appropriate as the sole book for an undergraduate course on classroom management and discipline or for a seminar on student teaching or professional development. It may be used as a supplementary book to another textbook in educational psychology or teaching methods courses. Additionally, the book may be used in graduate classes, seminars, and staff development programs for inservice teachers. The book may be seen as a handbook for future reference due to its comprehensive coverage of the issues and its use of lists, tables, and figures for recommended practice. The information provides a foundation for decision making.

ORGANIZATION

The content of *Classroom Management: Creating a Successful Learning Community,* is divided into five sections. Section 1, *Developing a Foundation for Classroom Management* (Chapters 1 and 2), considers issues related to creating an environment for a community of learners, the dimensions of classroom management, misbehavior, and various models of discipline. Section 2, *Preparing for the Start of the School Year* (Chapters 3 and 4), examines ways to prepare for the school year, organize your classroom, and work with parents. Ways to select standards for appropriate behavior through the use of rules and procedures and ways to establish a cooperative, responsible classroom are examined in Section 3, *Developing Expectations for Student Behavior* (Chapters 5 and 6).

Section 4, *Managing and Facilitating Instruction* (Chapters 7, 8, and 9), highlights ways to motivate students to learn, techniques to understand and work with diverse students, and strategies to manage lesson delivery. Finally, Section 5 on *Addressing Behavior Problems* (Chapters 10, 11, and 12) provides detailed guidance for ways to provide situational assistance and use mild and moderate responses when misbehavior occurs. This last section also examines ways to deal with challenging students.

SPECIAL FEATURES

Classroom Management: Creating a Successful Learning Community has several important features that make it both instructor and reader friendly.

- *Outline of chapter headings and subheadings.* Each chapter begins with an outline of headings and subheadings to serve as an advance organizer for the chapter content.
- *A list of objectives.* Each chapter begins with a list of objectives to identify expected reader outcomes.
- *Classroom Decisions.* Several Classroom Decisions are placed in each chapter to engage the reader in the content and to consider the application of the content. Each Classroom Decision includes several sentences describing a classroom situation concerning an issue in the chapter followed by a few questions asking the reader to make decisions about the application of the concepts.
- *Teachers-In-Action.* Several Teachers-In-Action features are included in each chapter to provide descriptions by real elementary, middle school, and high school teachers about ways they deal with particular topics addressed in the chapter. These teachers come from all parts of the country and all different community sizes. There are 50 of these features in the book, and there is an even balance for the elementary, middle, and senior high school levels.
- *Creating a Learning Community.* Several chapters have this feature, which presents a concept about a challenging issue presented in the chapter followed by a series of questions asking for resolution of the issue in an effort to build a successful learning community.
- *A list of main points.* At the end of each chapter, a list of major concepts is provided to serve as a summary of the significant issues.
- *Discussion/reflective questions.* Several questions are included at the end of each chapter to promote discussion in a seminar, classroom, or workshop where a number of people are considering the chapter's content.
- *Suggested activities.* Supplemental activities are suggested at the end of each chapter to enable the reader to investigate and apply issues addressed in the chapter.
- *References.* All citations made in the book are included in a reference section at the end of the book to show the source of the research base.

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Many people provided support and guidance as I prepared this book. A very special acknowledgment goes to my wife Jennie and children Andy, Kathryn, and Alex. Their support kept my spirits up when deadlines were pressing, and their understanding during my absences while preparing the content enabled me to complete the project.

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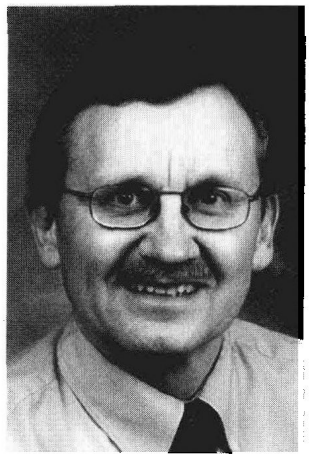

Paul R. Burden is an assistant dean and professor in the College of Education at Kansas State University, Manhattan, where he has supervised student teachers and taught courses on teaching methods, classroom management and discipline, foundations of education, and instructional leadership. Previously, he was a middle-level science teacher in Buffalo, New York, and later earned his doctoral degree at the Ohio State University. He received the College of Education's Outstanding Undergraduate Teaching Award at Kansas State University in 1999.

His recent publications include *Countdown to the First Day of School* (2000, National Education Association), *Powerful Classroom Management Strategies: Motivating Students to Learn* (2000, Corwin Press), *Methods for Effective Teaching* (Allyn & Bacon, 2003), as well as *Establishing Career Ladders in Teaching* (1987, Charles C. Thomas Publishers). From 1986 to 1987, he served as the editor of the *Journal of Staff Development*, a quarterly journal sponsored by the National Staff Development Council, and has presented over 70 papers at regional and national educational conferences in addition to authoring 15 articles and four book chapters. He has been a presenter at over 40 staff development programs and currently serves as a reviewer for several journals.

Married with three children, Dr. Burden enjoys traveling with his family and working on genealogy. He can be contacted at Kansas State University, 261 Bluemont Hall, Manhattan, Kansas 66506; (785) 532-5550; burden@ksu.edu.

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Chapter 1

Understanding Management and Discipline in the Classroom

CHAPTER OUTLINE

A COMMUNITY OF LEARNERS

WHAT IS CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT?

Order in the Classroom

Domains of Classroom Management

UNDERSTANDING MISBEHAVIOR

Misbehavior in Context

Causes of Misbehavior

Types of Misbehavior

Degrees of Severity

Preventing Problem Behaviors

DETERMINING YOUR MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

OBJECTIVES

This chapter provides information that will help you:

- Describe the role of classroom management in creating a learning community.
- Determine what constitutes order in the classroom.
- Identify the domains of responsibility for classroom management and discipline.
- Identify the causes of student misbehavior.
- Identify types and degree of severity of misbehavior.

What do award-winning teachers do that make them so popular and successful? Do they jazz up the curriculum in some way? Do they use especially creative instructional approaches? Do they warm up to the students as if they were their own children? Do they add some magic or sparkle to the classroom experience? The answer is probably a little of each of these suggestions. But it likely goes deeper than that.

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Successful teachers are often very effective managers of the classroom environment. they create a positive learning community where students are actively involved in their own learning and the management of the classroom. They organize the physical environment, manage student behavior, create a respectful environment, facilitate instruction, promote safety and wellness, and interact with others when needed. All of these issues relate to classroom management. The main objective is to create a positive learning community, and then to take steps to maintain that positive environment by guiding and correcting student behavior.

A COMMUNITY OF LEARNERS

Over the years, the way teachers have gone about instruction has changed as more is known about the nature of teaching and learning. In recent years, more emphasis has been placed on building learning communities in the classroom because students appear to be most successful in that environment. Problems with student misbehavior are also minimized in an environment where students are actively involved in their classroom and their instruction.

A learning community is designed to help all students feel safe, respected, and valued in order to learn new skills. Anxiety, discomfort, and fear are incompatible with the learning process, and make teaching and learning difficult. Successful classrooms are those in which students feel supported in their learning, willing to take risks, challenged to become fully human with one another, and open to new possibilities.

With the increasing diversity in classrooms, the need to create supportive classroom communities becomes even more important. Teachers must identify community building as a high priority if we are to have classrooms that include diverse students and make them welcome, appreciated, and valued members of the classroom environment. Actions can be taken to build an inclusive classroom learning community (Baloche, 1998).

In *Because We Can Change the World*, Sapon-Shevin (1999) identified five characteristics of learning communities:

1. *Security.* A safe, secure community allows for growth and exploration. A nurturing community is a place where it is safe to be yourself, take risks, ask for help and support, and delight in accomplishments. A safe environment helps protect students from distractions and disruptions that interfere with the learning process.

2. *Open communication.* In a cohesive environment, there is open communication. All forms of communication—oral, written, artistic, and nonverbal—are encouraged. In safe, accepting environments, students' individual differences and needs are openly acknowledged. Students share freely what is happening, what they need, and what they are worried about. Since all students have the right to feel safe, for example, this communication should be encouraged to address the concerns.

3. *Mutual liking.* In supportive classroom communities, students are encouraged to know and like their classmates. Opportunities are provided for students to interact with one another, and students are given many chances and strategies for learning to see and say nice things about classmates.

4. *Shared goals or objectives.* Cooperative communities are those in which students work together to reach a shared goal or objective. This can be achieved with whole-class projects where students work toward a goal while interacting and supporting one another.

5. *Connectedness and trust.* In learning communities, students feel a part of the whole. They know that they are needed, valued members of the group. They know others are depending on them to put forth their best effort. Trust and connectedness mean sharing the good things as well as any concerns or problems.

To create a learning community, teachers often plan lessons designed to involve students in cooperative learning activities. These activities seem to have three elements that are critical to their success: face-to-face interactions, a feeling of positive interdependence, and a feeling of individual accountability (Johnson, Johnson, & Holubec, 1994). In addition, it is necessary to teach students social skills and to process group functioning for these learning activities to be successful.

Teachers also need to arrange the physical environment for instruction, guide and correct behavior, and create a supportive classroom. All of these responsibilities for creating a learning community relate to classroom management.

WHAT IS CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT?

Classroom management involves teacher actions to create a learning environment that encourages positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation.

Several key questions come to mind about classroom management. How can the physical environment be organized? How can the school year begin effectively? What rules and procedures are appropriate? How can students be held academically accountable? How can appropriate behavior be encouraged and supported? How might order be restored if there are disruptions? How can class time and instruction be managed effectively? How can the safety of students be assured? All of these issues are part of classroom management. Before discussing the areas of responsibility in classroom management, the issue of order in the classroom is examined.

Order in the Classroom

A learning community needs to have order for students to be successful. *Order* means that students are following the actions necessary for a particular classroom event to be successful; students are focused on the instructional tasks and are not misbehaving. Establishing and maintaining order is an important part of classroom management.

It is useful to distinguish the difference between off-task behavior and misbehavior. *Off-task behavior* includes student actions that are not focused on the instructional activities, yet would not be considered to be disruptive or be defined as misbehavior. Off-task behavior includes daydreaming, writing notes or doodling, or not paying attention. *Misbehavior* includes behavior that interferes with your teaching, interferes with the rights of others to learn, is psychologically or physically unsafe, or destroys property (Levin & Nolan, 2000). Classroom order is threatened by misbehavior. *Discipline* is the act of responding to misbehaving students in an effort to restore order.

There are several important issues concerning order.

1. *A minimal level of order is necessary for instruction to occur.* Order can be established for instruction by actions such as selecting rules and procedures, encouraging and reinforcing appropriate behavior, reacting to misbehavior, and managing instructional tasks. With many students off-task, instruction cannot occur.

CLASSROOM DECISIONS

Teachers often have special procedures and behavioral guidelines for times when students work in small groups or in a lab setting. Suppose that you are dividing your science class into small groups to examine and test a number of rock and mineral samples in various ways. How might your decisions about guidelines to maintain control be affected by the age level and maturity of the students? How might you need to monitor students differently to maintain control in small groups as compared to whole-class instruction?

2. *Student involvement in learning tasks is affected by order in the classroom.* An effective classroom manager places emphasis on managing the group rather than managing individual students. When there is order in the classroom, then individual students can become engaged in the instructional tasks.

3. *Student cooperation is necessary in establishing order.* Order in classrooms is achieved *with* students and depends upon their willingness to be part of the sequence of events. Students in a learning community want to cooperate because they see the benefits for them.

4. *Expectations for order are affected by a number of classroom variables.* Teacher expectations for order may vary depending on factors such as the type of instructional activities, the maturity level of the students, the time of day, the time in the lesson, and the particular students involved. For example, a teacher may not enforce a certain rule at the end of a class period when students are gathering their books and materials in the same way as when a discussion is underway in the middle of the class period.

Domains of Classroom Management

There are several domains of responsibility for classroom management and discipline (see Table 1.1). An effective classroom manager handles the following seven areas of responsibility.

1. *Select a philosophical model of classroom management and discipline.* A number of educators have proposed certain models of classroom management and discipline, such as teaching with love and logic, cooperative discipline, discipline with dignity, and assertive discipline (see Chapter 2). These models reflect various philosophical views of student development, teaching and learning, and classroom management. Viewing these proposed models on a continuum, they range from low teacher control to high teacher control.

These theoretical models are useful to teachers because they offer a basis for analyzing, understanding, and managing student and teacher behavior. With an understanding of these varied theoretical approaches, you can assess your position on these issues and then select a philosophical model that is consistent with your beliefs. The techniques you use to manage student behavior should be consistent with your beliefs about how students learn and develop.

Table 1.1 Domains of Responsibility for Classroom Management and Discipline

Classroom management involves teacher actions to create a learning environment that encourages positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation. An effective classroom manager handles these areas of responsibility:

1. Select a philosophical model of classroom management and discipline.
2. Organize the physical environment.
3. Manage student behavior.
4. Create a respectful, supportive learning environment.
5. Manage and facilitate instruction.
6. Promote classroom safety and wellness.
7. Interact with colleagues, parents, and others to achieve classroom management objectives.

2. *Organize the physical environment.* The way the desks, tables, and other classroom materials are arranged affects instruction and has an influence on order in the classroom (see Chapter 3). To create an effective learning environment, you will need to organize several aspects of the physical space. First, you will need to arrange the floor space by the placement of student desks, the teacher's desk, bookcases, filing cabinets, tables, and activity centers. Second, you will need to decide how to store a number of materials, including textbooks and resource books, frequently used instructional materials, teacher supplies and instructional materials, equipment, and infrequently used materials. Finally, you will need to decide how to use bulletin boards and wall space. Decisions in all of these areas will determine how you will organize the physical environment for teaching and learning.

3. *Manage student behavior.* Guidelines are needed to promote order in the classroom and to provide a conducive learning environment (see Chapter 5). Rules and procedures support teaching and learning and provide students with clear expectations and well-defined norms. This, in turn, helps create a safe, secure atmosphere for learning.

Rules are general codes of conduct that are intended to guide individual student behavior in an attempt to promote positive interaction and avoid disruptive behavior. Procedures are approved ways to achieve specific tasks in the classroom, such as handing in completed work or sharpening a pencil.

When misbehavior occurs, teachers need to respond in an effort to get the student back on task and to maintain order in the classroom. A three-step response plan is discussed in Chapter 11, including providing assistance to get the student back on task as the first step, followed by the use of mild responses such as nonverbal and verbal signals, and then ending with moderate responses such as withdrawing privileges or changing the seat assignment. Special approaches are often needed to deal with challenging students (see Chapter 12).

To establish order, you must teach, demonstrate, establish, and enforce classroom procedures and routines at the start of the year. Successful classroom managers hover over activities at the beginning of the year and usher them along until students have learned the work system.

4. *Create a respectful, supportive learning environment.* There are many facets to creating a favorable learning environment, but it is vital for a positive learning community.

TEACHERS IN ACTION *Establishing Rules for Controlling Conduct*

Beatrice Gilkes, high school computer science teacher, Washington, D.C.

To help maintain control in the classroom, I ask my students to discuss realistic expectations for all persons in the classroom, including myself, that will help lead to the students being successful. Next, we discuss and select specific rules of behavior that affect maximum learning success in the classroom. Throughout this discussion, we emphasize three key words—love, respect, and commitment. We then commit ourselves to these rules, and their recommendations for penalties are included in the agreement. Students place this list of rules in their notebooks. This approach to getting a commitment from the students about classroom conduct has been effective for me in 40 years of teaching.

First, teachers can take a number of actions to establish a cooperative, responsible classroom by developing positive teacher-student relationships, promoting students' self-esteem, and building group cohesiveness (see Chapter 6). These actions will help create an environment where students feel valued and comfortable, thus setting the stage for teaching and learning. Second, teachers can focus student attention on appropriate classroom behavior by helping students assume responsibility for their behavior, maintaining student attention and involvement, and reinforcing desired behaviors (see Chapter 6).

Third, a comprehensive plan can be developed to motivate students to learn, involving decisions about instructional tasks, feedback and evaluation, and academic and behavioral expectations (see Chapter 7). Finally, teachers can be most effective in creating a respectful, supportive learning environment when they have an understanding of the diverse learners in their classroom (see Chapter 8).

5. *Manage and facilitate instruction.* Certain factors in a lesson have a bearing on classroom order, and teachers need to take these factors into account when planning lessons (see Chapter 9). These include decisions about the degree of structure of the lesson, the type of instructional groups to use, and the means of holding the students academically accountable.

There are also certain actions that teachers often take at the beginning, middle, and end of a lesson that affect the order of the classroom. These include actions such as taking attendance, giving directions, distributing materials, handling transitions, summarizing the lesson, and preparing to leave. Collectively, these instructional management skills help manage and facilitate instruction while also influencing classroom order.

6. *Promote classroom safety and wellness.* Students need to feel physically and emotionally safe before they can give their full attention to the instructional tasks. Strategies used to manage student behavior, create a supportive classroom, and manage and facilitate instruction all contribute to classroom safety and wellness. In addition, teachers sometimes need to take actions to solve problems and conflicts that threaten classroom order and the learning environment. For that reason, it is helpful to have a set of tools such as dealing with conflict resolution and anger management to solve problems (see Chapter 10),

Students who are considered difficult or challenging may threaten the sense of safety and wellness in the classroom. Their actions may cause other students to take guarded or even confrontational actions in response to difficult students. For that reason, teachers need to be prepared to deal with challenging students in constructive ways (Chapter 12).

TEACHERS IN ACTION *Well Planned Instruction Helps Maintain Order in the Classroom*

Sherry Bryant, middle school social studies teacher, Rochester, New Hampshire

If you want order, then be overplanned and organized. Keep students busy and involved. Have things planned for students who finish early. I find it's easiest to have things for them to work on memorizing (the states, capitals, location of the states, etc.). Another thing the students enjoy doing when they finish their work is getting a set of numbered index cards on which I have written questions about what we have learned this year. There is an answer sheet with it, and they can quiz themselves or turn it into a game with other students. They also can read the books displayed that tie into the topic we are learning about.

Be prepared so that you can stand at the door and greet them as they enter the room, letting them know that you're glad they are there and that you are ready to have a good day with them.

I find it useful to have a folder for each class with the materials in it that I will need for that class. I do weekly plans and have all the materials for the next week run off and organized before I leave for the weekend.

7. *Interact with colleagues, parents, and others to achieve classroom management objectives.* Working with parents is another means to help maintain order in the classroom (see Chapter 4). When the parents and teacher communicate and get along together, students are more likely to receive the needed guidance and support and will probably have more self-control in the classroom. In addition, teachers may need to consult and interact with colleagues and others when difficulties occur with classroom management and student behavior.

UNDERSTANDING MISBEHAVIOR

Even with an effective management system in place, students may lose interest in the lesson and get off-task. You must be prepared to respond with appropriate strategies to restore order. To provide a context for your decision making in this area, you should first understand misbehavior in context, the causes and types of misbehavior, and the degree of severity that is exhibited.

It is important first to recognize that the best way to deal with discipline problems is to avoid them in the first place. You should develop challenging, interesting, and exciting lessons and treat students with dignity and respect. If misbehavior then occurs, you can consider the guidelines and principles presented in Chapter 11 for dealing with inappropriate behavior.

Misbehavior in Context

Students who are off-task are not performing the planned instructional activity. They may be pausing to think about an issue, daydreaming, or doing other things that are nondisruptive but prohibit them from being engaged in the instructional activities. Students who are off-task need to be addressed differently than students who are purposely misbehaving and interfering with the academic activities.

You may need to intervene to stop the misbehavior. Recognize that your decisions about interventions are complex judgments about the act, the student, and the circum-

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