

Classroom Management Philosophy

Jocelyn Bergquist

University of Mary

Author Note

This paper was prepared for EDU 301 - Classroom Management, taught by Ms. Loni Miller.

### Abstract

This paper's broad topic is classroom management. This paper will look more closely at the topics of a classroom management plan, the first day of school, procedures and consistency, and guidelines and expectations. Classroom management is not limited to the four topics named, although the topics are big portions of classroom management. It is important to note that not all tools and techniques will work and not all are appropriate for every teacher. Teachers must remember to keep an open mind, implement what works best for their own classrooms, learn from failures, and build off of successes.

Classroom management is how a teacher organizes and maintains his/her classroom. Unfortunately, classroom management is all too often overlooked and untaught, which results in teacher frustrations, stressful school years, inefficient use of time, and student misbehavior. Four important parts of classroom management are a classroom management plan, a first day of school plan, procedures and consistency, and guidelines and expectations, and when integrated together, a less stressful and more efficient school year prevails.

### Classroom Management Plan

According to Harry K. Wong and Rosemary T. Wong (2014), authors of *The Classroom Management Book*, classroom management “constitutes the provisions and procedures necessary to establish and maintain an environment in which instruction and learning can occur” (p. 5). According to Dr. Ruby Payne (2006), American educator and author, in order to achieve an orderly classroom, a teacher “must think of [his/her] classroom as a system, and [he/she] must manage it as a system” (p. 1). Therefore, a teacher must create a detailed classroom management plan. A plan consists of such items as classroom procedures, a first day of school script, strategies, expectations, and a discipline plan. Teachers who have a well prepared classroom management plan can expect to have a “safe, positive, and consistent environment where teaching and learning can take place” (Wong & Wong, 2014, p. 24). With a classroom management plan, teachers will be less stressed and students will know exactly what they need to do.

The classroom management plan should be implemented on the very first day of school for long term benefits. Part of the plan is having a “First Day of School” section prepared. Knowing exactly how to welcome students and what to say will greatly aid a teacher in making sure the first day of school goes smoothly.

### The First Day of School

The first day of school is full of excitement for both teacher and students. To help a teacher with nervousness, a complete “First Day of School Plan” can be prepared. This plan includes a script of exactly *what* a teacher needs to address on the first day of school and exactly *how* a teacher wants to explain checklist items.

The first day of school buzzes with activity as there is much information to be given by teachers and received by students. Wong and Wong (2014) present the suggestion of creating a first day of school checklist and packet (p. 20). A checklist includes all of the items a teacher wishes to discuss, and a teacher can refer to the checklist throughout the class time for assistance. A first day of school packet is for the students to take home. The packet may include such items as the class syllabus, an introductory cover letter, a supply list, acknowledgement receipt for return with signature, and so on (Wong & Wong, 2014, p. 20). Having all these items on a checklist and prepared for the first day will be far less stressful and chaotic for the teacher.

In addition, the first day of school may be *the* most important day of the school year, and so it is important that a teacher addresses everything he/she wishes to and communicates what he/she needs to his/her students clearly. Wong and Wong (2014) advise teachers to create a script of exactly what a teacher is going to say on the first day of school (p. 19). A script includes how to pronounce the teacher’s name and how students are to address him/her, how the classroom has been organized, and can even go so far as to include how a teacher wishes to explain his/her classroom procedures.

### Procedures and Consistency

Procedures are an integral part of the classroom management plan. According to Robert Marzano (2003), educational researcher, classroom procedures “vary in different classrooms, but

all effectively managed classrooms have them” (p. 13). Procedures are consistent, and students thrive on consistency. Students come to know what they can expect in a classroom, which creates a safe and trusting environment that is conducive to learning.

Wong and Wong (2014) describe classroom procedures as “the tasks students must do to increase their chances for learning and achieving” (p. 6). Procedures explain how students are to do something such as enter the classroom, hand in papers, pass in papers, head papers, and so on. A teacher must thoroughly teach students exactly how he/she expects procedures to be performed. There are three basic steps to teaching procedures: teach, rehearse, and reinforce (Wong & Wong, 2014, p. 48). (For a list of procedures and how they are to be performed, see Appendix 1).

Because procedures are done repeatedly in exactly the same step-by-step format, a sense of consistency is created. Students thrive on consistency because they know exactly what to expect, which allows for a sense of safety to settle in. When students feel they are in a safe environment, learning can dramatically improve. Consistency also allows students to be responsible because students know what they are supposed to do and so they can take the initiative to do what is expected of them.

While procedures are important for establishing consistency and student know-how, procedures are not the only consistent aspect of a classroom management plan. Classroom guidelines and expectations also greatly contribute to classroom stability.

### Guidelines and Expectations

Guidelines are a less harsh and more positive way to say rules. Too often teachers try to give many very specific rules to try and address all behavior they expect students to have. Sources recommend having only a few general guidelines in the classroom because a “single rule

addresses a wide range of expected behaviors” (Marzano, 2003, p. 13). Having only about three to five general guidelines is also a number that students can remember. A teacher must remember that guidelines need to be referred to as necessary and unfollowed guidelines need to be address and taken care of consistently. To make sure a teacher is prepared to address students who have not followed guidelines, a teacher must take time to thoroughly prepare a discipline plan. (See Appendix 2 for an example of classroom guidelines.)

A discipline plan is a step by step approach to how a teacher is going to address students who do not follow the classroom guidelines. A discipline plan allows for consistency and fairness, and a teacher and students will always know the steps taken when a guideline is broken. Teachers should take care to “explain both the rule itself and the reason behind it to the children” because doing so helps children understand why a rule is needed and therefore, accept the rule (Marzano, 2003, p. 16). (See Appendix 3 for an example of a discipline plan.)

While a teacher can have classroom guidelines, a teacher can also have classroom expectations. Expectations should be clearly communicated to students so that students know exactly what a teacher wishes of them. Payne (2006) explains that students want and need high expectations, although teachers should be careful not to have unreasonable expectations (p. 9) In addition, teachers must set the same standards for all students, which allows for consistency and fairness.

Classroom management may seem like an overwhelming and complex subject. However, once it is broken down into smaller parts, it is really a step-by-step manual to success. Teachers who employ the strategies of a classroom management plan, a first day of school plan, procedures and consistency, and guidelines and expectations are setting their classrooms up for less stressful and more successful school years.

## References

- Marzano, R. J. (2003). *Classroom Management That Works: Research Based Strategies For Every Teacher*. ASCD: Alexandria, VA.
- Payne, R. (2006). *Working With Students: Discipline Strategies for the Classroom*. Aha! Process: Highlands, TX.
- Wong, H. K. & Wong, R. T. (2014). *The Classroom Management Book*. Harry Wong Publications: Mountain View, CA.

## Appendix 1

**Procedure: Going to the Bathroom**

- Without speaking, raise 3 fingers
- I will nod and acknowledge you to leave
- Quietly and without disruption, sign the hall pass book and exit
- Re-enter classroom quietly and without disruption

**Procedure: Entering the Classroom**

- Quietly and with hands to yourself, walk in to the classroom
- Sharpen pencils if you need to
- Turn in any homework or notes and take a seat at your assigned seat
- Begin working on the bell ringer assignment
- If you are not in your seat by the time the bell rings, you are tardy

**Procedure: Collecting Papers**

- Place your paper on top of the stack before laying the stack on the desk to your right
- The student sitting in the last seat of the last row will pass the collected papers to the student sitting in front of him/her
- That student places the stack of collected papers on top of the papers received
- Once all papers have reached the student sitting in the front seat of the column, I will take the papers

**Procedure: Pink Slip**

- If you do not have your homework, you have to fill out a Pink Slip
- Fill out the Pink Slip and turn it in to me before leaving class
- You will be expected to turn in your late homework the following class meeting time

**Procedure: Guideline Infraction Notice**

\*\*Let students know that following the guidelines will result in a stress-free environment.

\*\*Sincerely tell students I appreciate their hard work.

- I hand guideline infraction notice to the student
- I will fill in the offence
- I ask the student to see me after class
- The student reads the guideline infraction notice
- The student signs the guideline infraction notice
- The student gives the guideline infraction notice back to me
- We talk about the offense and guideline infraction notice after class
- I write in the results of a conference

**Procedure: Heading of Papers**

- Place on all of your papers!
- At the top left of your paper, write your first and last name
- Underneath your name, write the period number
- At the top right of your paper, write the assignment title



- Underneath the assignment title, write the date

**Procedure: Absence**

- Visit the Absent Basket
- Retrieve your “While You Were Out” folder
- Remove all papers—they are yours and leave the absent folder in the absent basket
- You have 2 days for every day you were absent to complete your work!
- Sign the homework notebook in the absent basket
- Make-up tests: Wednesday 7 a.m.

**Procedure: Scheduled Checkout**

- Please let me know as you enter the classroom
- Quietly rise your hand to get my attention
- Pack your materials and leave at the scheduled time
- For emergencies, quickly get my attention and I will assist you

**Procedure: Attention Getter**

I will . . .

- Stand in front of the class
- Raise my hand
- Wait for everyone to be quiet

**Procedure: I’m done! Now what?**

- Work on unfinished assignments for this class
- Read your “choice” book
- Start working on tonight’s homework
- Work on homework for other classes **ONLY IF** you are done with everything for this class

**Procedure: Excused Tardy**

- Enter quietly
- Place excuse in the basket on my desk – you do not have to tell me why you were late
- Take your seat
- Begin working on what the rest of the class is doing – it is your responsibility to catch up on missed materials

**Procedure: Unexcused Tardy**

- Enter quietly
- Sign the detention list located by the door
- Take your seat
- Begin working on what the rest of the class is doing – it is your responsibility to catch up on missed materials

**Procedure: Classroom Discussions**

- Please participate

- I want to hear what you have to say
- Make all questions and comments relevant to the current discussion
- If your questions is off topic, write it down and ask later

**Procedure: End of Class—2 Minute Warning**

- The teacher dismisses you, not the bell.
- Do not start packing up prior to the bell.
- Wait until the teacher finishes and officially dismisses you with, “Have a nice day!”

**Procedure: Substitute Teacher**

- If the substitute teacher writes your name down, you are going to detention
- You are to act like the substitute teacher does not even need to be in the room
- I will communicate to you exactly what you need to do

## Appendix 2

**Classroom Rules**

1. Treat each person in this room with dignity and respect.
  - a. Think before you speak
  - b. Maintain personal space
2. Be in your assigned seat and working on the assigned bell work when the tardy bell rings.
3. Bring ALL books and materials to class AND take them with you when you leave.
4. Follow directions the FIRST time they are given.
5. Follow ALL classroom procedures and the handbook guidelines.

**Special Guideline:** This classroom is a “No Whining Zone.” That means that there will be no whining for any reason. Everything that I do is in your best interest, so please respect the “No Whining Zone” this semester.

## Appendix 3

**Discipline Plan****Documentation: Guideline Infraction Notice**

\*non-confrontational way of communicating to the student that they are doing something wrong or they are off task.

## Procedure:

- I hand guideline infraction notice to the student
- I will fill in the offence
- I ask the student to see me after class
- The student reads the guideline infraction notice
- The student signs the guideline infraction notice
- The student gives the guideline infraction notice back to me
- We talk about the offense and guideline infraction notice after class
- I write in the results of a conference

**Consequences for not following guidelines:**

1<sup>st</sup> Consequence - Warning and Documentation

- in the form of the Guideline Infraction Notice

2<sup>nd</sup> Consequence - Action Plan, Parental Contact, Detention

- Form
  - I first identify the problem
  - then the student writes what is causing the problem
  - then the student takes the form home and has a parent or guardian help them come up with a plan for how they're going to fix the problem
  - then the student brings the form back to me
- Parental Contact
  - I also call home
  - I record on the Parent Call Log
    - Date of call
    - Time of call
    - Result of call
- Detention
  - 30 minutes
  - Friday ONLY

3<sup>rd</sup> Consequence - Disciplinary Referral

\*ALL the documentation to attach to the referral

- I fill out a disciplinary referral and attach:
  - Copy of Guideline Infraction Notice
  - Action Plan
  - Parent Call Log

- Teacher Monitored Detention

---

\*\*\*Severe Clause – Any student who fights, damages school property (this includes property of the teacher and other students), or is disrespectful (as defined by the teacher) will be sent to the office IMMEDIATELY.

## **Ms. Bergquist's Action Plan**

**1. What's the problem?**

**2. What's causing the problem?  
(Please list the factors)**

**3. What plan will you use to solve the problem?**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Student Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Parent/Guardian Signature**

## Guideline Infraction Notice

**Please correct your behavior**

**Please return to task**

**See me after class!**

**Signature** \_\_\_\_\_

**Offense** \_\_\_\_\_

**Conference results** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_