

# Classroom Behaviour Management: The Basics



Much has been written on behaviour management theory and we all have our own educational values and teaching styles, however, there are certain principles which we could call "the basics". I like the following ten principles as offered by McDaniel (1), as good basic guidelines for teachers to effectively manage student behaviour in the classroom.

1. " The focussing principle: in effect, get everyone's attention before beginning the lesson. This may require a louder voice, a raised hand, or a bell; then the instruction can begin in a calm quiet voice.
2. The principle of direct instruction: this means getting the students on task quickly and keeping them on task consistently. One technique is to clearly state the assignment, the directions and the time constraints.
3. The monitoring principle: keeping a constant check on student performance and behaviour. This means the teacher circulates among students and makes frequent personal contacts.
4. The modelling principle: good teachers set an example for their students. Teachers who are courteous, well organised, enthusiastic and patient tend to encourage similar characteristics in students.
5. The cueing principle: non verbal reminders about behavioural expectations, such as a raised hand for silence, index finger to lips for a group of gigglers, or hands on hips for attention.
6. The principle of environmental control: a teacher can enrich, restrict, enlarge or simplify the classroom environment, according to the student's needs. A bored class may need enrichment; overstimulated students may need a simplified environment.
7. The principle of low profile intervention: student behaviour should be managed as discreetly and as unobtrusively as possible, avoiding direct confrontation and public encounters with disruptive students.
8. The principle of assertive discipline: this means higher profile but non-hostile intervention. Assertive discipline is a combination of praise and limit setting.
9. The I-message principle: this results in clear communication between teacher and students, either by making specific requests as in "I want you to..." or by communicating feelings as in "I feel frustrated."
10. The principle of positive reinforcement: this means "catch 'em being good"; ignoring minor misbehaviour while praising good behaviour."

(1) Thomas R McDaniel, A Primer on Classroom Discipline: Principles Old and New. Converse College, Spartanburg, South Carolina, USA. Phi Delta Kappan, Vol 68, No. 1, September 1986.

**This document is an excerpt from the 'Behaviour Management Toolkit' by David Koutsoukis**

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