

CHAPTER NINE

CLASS MANAGEMENT

Learner-centred teachers must be strong classroom managers. They train their students to transition from one task to another quickly, easily, and orderly. They teach, practice, and maintain daily routines so that students know what to do throughout the day. They maintain high standards of conduct in the classroom.

****Technique #65 Establish Routines**

There is nothing more important at the beginning of school year than establishing routines – how students enter and leave the classroom, how to line up, how to ask permission to use the bathroom, how to raise their hand to speak, how to work with partners, how to work in a group, how to work silently or quietly and all of the other daily routines in a class. Establishing these routines through practice and enforcement creates a safe and orderly learning environment. These routines often need to be revisited throughout the year in order to maintain high standards of conduct.

****Technique #66 Consequences – Fair, Logical, Consistent**

When students misbehave, teachers are often faced with choices. Do I send the student to the headmistress or discipline master's office? Do I use some form of punishment in the classroom? Do I contact the parent? For less serious offenses it is important that the consequence is **quick** with the aim of helping a student learn from the mistake, holding them accountable and returning them to the learning activity as soon as possible to avoid lost learning time. For example, a teacher might simply say, "Amina, you need to stop talking with Rose." The consequences also need to be **logical and incremental**. That is to say, they should fit the offense and start from a less severe consequence to more severe steps if the offenses are repeated. If Amina continues talking with Rose, the teacher could tell Amina to move her chair and sit next to Felix. Teachers also need to be **consistent and fair**. Students should be treated equally, such that any student, not only Amina, is reminded not to talk to her neighbor during the lesson. Finally, teachers need to gauge the effectiveness of disciplining students publically versus talking with them privately. When disciplining students in front of the class, learner-centred teachers often maintain a firm voice with controlled emotions and when finished continue teaching as if nothing had happened. This conveys a message to the other students that their learning is important and that the teaching and learning will continue as usual.

**** Technique #67 Silence Signals**

In active learning classrooms, students are talking with partners and other students during different parts of the lesson. It is critical that teachers use effective silence signals to quiet the classroom. There are many signals for silencing students including chants, clapping sequences that students repeat, simple commands to listen, and other techniques. What follows are some examples of silence signals.

“If You Can Hear Me Clap Once”

The teacher says in a regular voice, “If you can hear me clap once.” Then s/he waits to hear the class clap in unison one time. If students are still talking, the teacher says “clap your hands two times” and waits for silence. If any student is still talking, the teacher says “I can still hear someone talking” and then waits for silence. If necessary, any student who continues to talk can be identified by name and told to stop talking. Stopping and waiting between claps lets students hear the room get quiet and encourages the remaining students who are talking to stop.

Clap, Clap, Clap

This silence technique uses a simple clapping sequence started by the teacher and joined in by the students. Once the teacher stops clapping so do the students and there should be silence. Again, the teacher waits to hear the silence between claps and can clap again if necessary.

3, 2, 1

The teacher raises his hand and stretches out his five fingers. He then slowly says “Five”, then lowers one finger and says “Four”, and then lowers one finger and says “Three,” and so forth. By the time the teacher has only one finger left in the air and says “One,” the students should be silent.

Give Me Five

The teacher put his or her hand in the air and says “Give Me Five”. Then he or she waits until all of the students have their hand in the air and waiting silently for instructions.

Class, Class, Class ... Yes, Yes, Yes

The teacher says class, class, class in any voice he or she wishes – regular voice, funny voice, whisper voice or some other voice and then the students say in unison “yes, yes, yes” in the same kind of voice used by the teacher. When they finish saying yes, the students are silent.

****Technique #68 Everybody Does It**

The “Everybody Does It” strategy is critically important for maintaining high standards and expectations in the classroom. So, when doing a silence signal, the teacher waits until every last child has stopped

talking. Teachers can say “I am looking for 100%” or “this sounds like 100%” to let students know that even in classrooms with large numbers of kids, every student is held accountable. The same is true for directions and routines. Learner-centred teachers establish high expectation for 100% of their students. No excuses. No exceptions. They set the tone with a firm and warm approach. They avoid yelling at students and instead send a clear message to students that this is how we do it in our classroom.

****Technique #69 Firm Voice and Square Up**

Learner-centred teachers often use a strong, firm voice when disciplining or redirecting students. They also square up and face the misbehaving student, particularly when addressing more serious behavior problems. It is very important for teachers to keep their emotions under control as much as possible and deliver their message in a firm, no nonsense approach that conveys a message that misbehavior is unacceptable in this classroom.

****Technique #70 3/5/1**

This strategy is used during independent work time when the teacher moves around the room to reinforce the lesson concepts and monitor student works. The teacher begins with a 3-minute explanation of what the students are expected to do during the work period. Once the teacher observes that all students have started to work on the assignment, he or she circulates around the room to help students. Then the teacher helps a student (or students) for around 5 minutes. After that he or she stops to monitor the whole class for 1 minute to ensure that all students are working and engaged. Then the teacher goes back to help individual students for 5 minutes and then stops for 1 minute to monitor the whole class or to comment on the common misconceptions observed in groups. This is repeated throughout the independent work time. This technique is designed to help teachers balance individual student assistance with whole class monitoring. If a teacher spends too much time and attention helping one or two students and other students get off task, this can cause problems.