

Maintaining Classroom Discipline



Be friendly.

Keep your classroom orderly.

Get to know your students.

Make learning fun.

Don't use threats to enforce discipline.

Avoid arguing with students.

Let students know you care.

Develop classroom rules.

Establish a plan with consequences outlined.

Notice good behavior.

Give reasonable assignments.

Be fair to your students.



Asking Effective Questions

Establish an expectation that all questions require a response.

Teach students what constitutes an appropriate response for various types of questions.

Use brief questions using specific language.

Avoid yes or no questions that encourage guessing.

Ask...pause... call on individuals.

Increase the waiting time for more complete or correct answers. Students need time to think and formulate answers correctly.

Provide feedback for student responses.

Incorporate the student response when restating the response.

Encourage multiple responses from the class.

Use questions that allow students at various levels to respond throughout the class period.



Communication Tips

Email

- *Ask parents for **email** addresses at the beginning of the year.
- *Save as an individual address and in a group address.
- *Communicate the little accomplishments and concerns.
- *Keep emails short and concise.
- *Reread your note before sending. Check for misinterpretations.
- *Send out newsletters to all parents.
- *Use face-to-face conversations or phone call for serious concerns.

Phone calls

- *Develop a checklist for **phone calls**.
- *Identify yourself and make sure you are talking to the legal guardian or parent.
- *Explain why you are calling.
- * If you are calling with a problem, state it clearly. Discuss the behaviors that need attention.
- *Give possible solutions to the problem.
- *Listen to parents for additional information and suggestions.
- *End the call politely.
- *Let parents know when and how they can contact you.
- *Document the phone call and include it student files.

Written Communication can be used on a regular basis to keep parents informed.

Music Classroom Survival Tips

SUBMITTED BY CHERYL MCINTYRE

Choose music that is not so difficult but will be fulfilling to rehearse first. They need to experience musical success early.

Locate programs from previous concerts to determine expected difficulty levels and types of repertoire the group is capable of performing.

Take time to inspect the music inventory before school begins.

Set the calendar for the year. Inform students and parents about all dates at the beginning of the year.

Choose concert attire early in the year and inform students and parents.

Decide how daily routines will look: seating chart, attendance, music distribution

Determine policies for performance and absences.

Decide what the consequences of misbehaviors in your classroom will be. Be sure they are line with district expectations.

Arrange piano tunings at appropriate times during the year.

Be prepared to “sell” each piece by exploring text, giving background information about the composer, highlighting rhythmic, melodic, or harmonic aspects of the piece.

Think before you speak.

Get plenty of rest and water.

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

I have always wished that I'd had more guidance in classroom management before I began my teaching career. I still consider it a major issue for anyone entering the field today. What a difference it would have made in my first year of teaching!! I would like to share some of my own thoughts with you concerning this area. It is a never ending concern that you will always deal with as long as you remain in the classroom. Strategies will change over the years, as will the demands of the classroom, and we all need to stay current in this area.

The general music classroom is a unique setting. Usually, there are no desks for the students to sit in to hold them in their own space, and they have nothing in their hands to keep them occupied. Even the band teachers have an advantage over us as their students have an instrument to stay focused on. And quite often, students tend to have the attitude that the music room doesn't need to be as structured as the regular classroom they have just left. Beginning/New teachers need to do extensive research *before* the start of the school year regarding management/discipline methods that can be employed in the classroom. MENC has several publications available for members/nonmembers concerning management. Decide which method would fit your teaching style, be thoroughly familiar with its workings, and use it from *day one*. Be consistent in its use. Also, don't be afraid to visit with your principal about their school's behavior policy. For instance, the current system I teach in has what they call "Communication Slips". These are pre-printed forms that have various issues listed that can be marked with a check and sent home for the parents to sign and return, keeping them informed of what's happening at school.

Years ago, I was attending a music workshop, and the leader gave us this suggestion—have as few rules as possible in your classroom, and keep them visibly posted at all times. These are the four that I have come to consider as highest priority in my classroom:

0. Everything we do in music class, we do TOGETHER (you must participate)
0. Stay in your own space
0. Only one person speaks at a time
0. Do not touch or play instruments until you have permission from the teacher

Random thoughts on how to survive as a music teacher

Submitted by Linda Green, Sioux Falls Public Schools

Kids need:

- 1) consistency in all areas
- 2) clear, concise directions
- 3) compassion and kindness

Students must know you respect them and expect them to succeed.

Students will live up or down to whatever your expectations are of them.

A good teacher is not the sage on the stage, but the guide on the side.

Learn the very subtle art of motivation with humor. It is a very powerful motivator.

Never, never, never use sarcasm. It only creates an atmosphere of antagonism.

The pacing of your speech and of the lesson is very important. Too fast and they won't understand; too slow and they will be bored. The correct speed is different with every lesson every day. You will learn how to "read" the students and their response to you, although that is a difficult and vague thing sometimes.

Allow yourself to get to know your students by the little things that make each of them unique. Everyone needs to know they have special gifts to offer the group.

If you don't allow yourself to fail (and quite miserably sometimes) you will never learn the wonderful feeling of success.

Success isn't permanent and failure isn't final. Remind yourself of this often.

Take risks, but think through them first if you can. Plan ahead of time how you will handle the challenges that will arise.

Good lesson plans teach to all the learning styles, but they don't have to teach to them all in every part of every lesson. Don't run a well-paced lesson into the ground by covering all the bases and boring the class.

Learn when to stop talking and allow the learning/teaching to soak in. Sometimes the best teaching moment is the silent space when the teacher closes their mouth and lets the learner process the lesson objectives. Realize that "teacher talk time" isn't always the best learning time for students.

Always have a "bag of tricks" ready so any lesson can have a Plan B. Anything, truly anything, can happen during class. Fire alarms, students getting sick, seizures, a lost CD, a spider on the floor, broken recorders, a broken copy machine, you name it, it will happen to you when you least expect it.

Music, by its very nature, appeals to the higher intelligences and makes it easier for the learner to tie the "loose ends" of learning together. Learn how to use this to your best teaching advantage.

Don't pass up the chance to "feed the souls" of your students by giving them music to sing and play that will allow them to see, feel, or hear beauty. Every age level needs to interact with the affective domain within themselves.

I've always thought one of the best parts of teaching is that everyday is different. When you think you're bored and having just another same old day, something happens to make it more interesting.

Before you open your mouth in anger at a child, think about one good thing you can say about them. (This is sometimes tremendously difficult.) Words of thoughtfulness can hit deeper than anything else. Try to see things from their perspective and you might find an ally instead of an enemy.

Sometimes there is no other recourse than to send a child to the principal's office. Don't take it as the ultimate failure, but do examine why the situation happened and what you might have done differently. But don't end the altercation there. Make contact with the parents by having the child talk to them with you. This sends a more positive message than the alternatives.

Don't pass up the opportunity to give a child specific praise. It takes only seconds of your time and can give a child hope for a lifetime. The risk-return rate for that investment is too good to pass up.

Take every opportunity to tell parents what is good about their child. They need the encouragement and you will have an ally when the rough times come.

Learn to work a crowd and learn to think on your feet.

Save your voice and sanity by maintaining your health. Defend your quiet time to the utmost. Learn to restore yourself in healthy, positive ways. Teaching is hard, hard work, and musicians, by their very nature, overextend themselves and try to be all things to all people.

Learn to say NO.

Try to remember to look into the eyes of every student when they are with you. They will know you care about them individually when they know you have made an effort to seek them out.

Remember that within every student lives an adult who will someday grow up and have vivid memories of you first as a person and then as a teacher.

Because we work with voices, we are teachers who work closer to the heart than any other teacher.

A person's voice is indescribably precious to them. Even if it is not what we might label a "good" voice, it is what that person uses to express themselves to the world. By nurturing whatever voice they share with us, we are giving them additional means of interacting with others.

Keep in mind that even the quiet people need to be heard.

God put the larynx in between the head and the heart so we would have to use both to sing.

Life in a school building is simply no good if you don't have respect for your principal, friendships with your co-workers, and appreciation for you students. If the fit between you and your job isn't right, keep looking for a correct one.

They don't care how much you know until they know how much you care.

Be gentle with yourself when you need to be.

Did you ever think this job could be so exhausting?
Did you ever think it would be this much fun?

DGF High School

Teaching Tips

February 2008

1. When working with a student who has difficult behavior, it is important to give that student a clean start every day. Don't carry over behavior issues from the previous day. It's important to start fresh, and be happy to see them even if you have to fake it.

2. Only one unnecessary question per day/per class period is allowed.

An example of an unnecessary question would be: "What page are we on?"

Questions such as: "Why is it only a half step and not a whole step?" would be a NECESSARY question.

3. My newest organizational tip is to color code the worksheets/hand outs for each choir. At Semester time, I was driven crazy by all white hand-outs, reviews, test, etc. Concert Choir is green. 9th grade choir is yellow. (Go Bison). And Guitar Class is orange.

4. Downtime Activity - I put two words on the board (storm caused, team rode, dogs barked, etc.), and the students add adverbs, adjectives, phrases, causes, etc. to make an expanded sentence.

5. STUDENT MOTIVATION

It seems more students today are living in the present and think of their future as tomorrow or next week. Without instant gratification for their

efforts fewer students seem to be self-motivated to strive to do well in school. These same students however, often have very high quality-of-life expectations when they enter the world of work or begin a profession. It appears that many students have missed the link between educational success and career success.

A significant part of my discipline involves career exploration. I have found that student participation/motivation is enhanced by sharing observations of a brighter glimpse of their future more so than the gloom and doom associated with failure. Students often set high expectations or lofty goals for their futures. In my classroom I can provide **positive** and **realistic** outcomes to encourage students to begin to work and strive for higher academic achievement to reach their goals. A student's dreams can be our biggest ally in realizing student motivation.

6. Word of the Day

Each day we review a vocabulary word relevant to what is happening in the student's environment. For instance, tomorrow's word is - caucus. We go over the definition and use it in a sentence. The students have a notebook for new vocabulary words. After discussion, they write a sentence using the word of the day. The last week of the month, we review all the words for that month.

7. Classroom management: Keep students engaged in work - no down time where they can cause discipline problems. Have a small core set of rules for behavior and stick to them. Be consistent and fair.

8. When having a whole class discussion, I have the students raise their hands and call on each other (rather than being called on by me). Students actually listen to each other (!!), and I can facilitate, rather than dictate, the conversation.

9. NOTEBOOK/JOURNAL

- GOAL(S):**
- A. Reasons for using a notebook.
 - B. Writing skill.
 - C. Grading method.
 - D. Study guide.
 - E. **MOST IMPORTANT** - Develop an understanding of the importance of personal health and life skills.

REQUIREMENTS:

- A. Thumbprint - each notebook will have the students thumbprint stamped in it. The thumbprint shows the individual uniqueness of ones self.
- B. Notebook entries - weekly activities.
 - 1. Monday's log - **Health Attitude**. Each student will write a poem, dream, or statement about what they are pleased or unhappy about in daily health behaviors.
 - 2. Friday's log - **Health Goal**. Each student will write about a health skill that they have learned through

out the week that needs to be changed, worked on, or added to health behaviors they already have.

C. Notebook - strive to make sure that students use their notebook for daily note taking for class and follow the goals stated for its usage.

10. Schedule time to spend working with/learning the new technology (and even the old technology!). It has the capability to make you more efficient! The key is to write the training into your schedule. Opportunities that I am aware of include attending one of the monthly training sessions (dates and topics are sent out via email), or taking advantage of one-on-one training that has been offered in the past. Simply taking 5-10 minutes and using the "Help" on a program can also answer many questions you may have. Beth is also very helpful if you call her and ask a question (sorry Beth...)! Once you have the training, practice, practice, and file those helpful handouts in a technology binder!

11. I have a cup with tongue depressors in it . . . on each stick I have written the essential items which they need to bring with them to class each day [covered textbook, pen & pencil, AR book, notebook . . .] Students are responsible for reminding me to draw sticks during the class period [or they don't get the points] . . .

I spot them 220 [5 points a day] daily points at the beginning of the quarter . . . If they don't have the item drawn, they lose 5 points . . . they lose an additional 5 points for tardies, bad behaviors . . .

3rd & 4th quarter = 3 points a day . . .

My daily points are only 15% of the final grade so it doesn't actually make a big negative difference but for those kids who are responsible on a regular basis . . . it helps to "round" their grade up at the end of the quarter when they are scrambling for extra credit points.

12. Routine... the kids know that general routine each day... therefore they know whether I am here or not what format each day will bring...

Accountability...they are always responsible for themselves... without exception...

Leaders...putting them in leadership roles...choosing teams, explaining rules

Jean Lopez

13. For test reviews, I either create a Jeopardy board in PowerPoint or I use the on-line review games on a website that come with my textbooks. I use the "Eggspert" buzzer (for up to 6 players) so I don't have to rely on me to call on the first raised hand I see. I can either take 6 students at a time to read review questions while the rest of the class reviews questions online individually or in pairs OR put students in 3 teams and review all at once.

Beth Tollefson

14. Some of the students I work with like to create control battles which creates a stressful classroom environment. I try and give my students choices within limits. According to Jim Fay and David Funk's Teaching with Love & Logic, "Offering many tiny choices to students sets up an

environment in which students feel a sense of healthy control, which makes them less likely to be defiant or resistive."

Here are some examples of choices:

"Would you rather study in a group or by yourself?"

"You may choose to journal first or get started on your reading."

"Would you like to choose your partner today, or should I choose for you?"

"Would you like to call you parent and let them know what happened, or should I call you parent?"

"You can read your book in your seat, or you can get comfortable around the classroom."

15. For my ninth-grade *Geography* classes, I use the first five minutes of the period for daily writing. Topics are either germane to what we are studying (What do you like best about living in a humid continental climate?) or based on current events (Are you as excited about Hillary Clinton becoming president as I am?). I do this because freshmen have the MCA writing test in the spring and this allows them a little time every day to practice their writing (remember, teaching reading and writing isn't just the English Department's job!!). During this time I take attendance and check in

16. Rubistar - find this site on the Internet. The site is for designing rubrics to help in grading. For those types of assignments, this is a great tool.

Puzzlemaker - this is a great tool for making a variety of puzzles - particularly vocabulary study or studying term.

Shakespeare Side by Side - this is tool that is probably for English teachers only, but I found this book at Barnes and Noble. On one side of the page is the original Shakespeare text. On the opposite side is an updated version of the text. I use it for some of the complex scenes that I know students will have trouble understanding. It's a good deal for some students.

Citation Machine or Son of Citation Machine - great for trying to work through citing sources - both MLA and APA styles.

Finally, any time I can employ a game for reviewing. My students respond well to Jeopardy style games for reviewing. I know Paul M. uses this regularly. It takes a little while to set up, but it works well.

17. I have to color code everything. Example: In Per. Finance everything is green. (it reminds me of money or the color your textbook). The student's assignment folders, class assignments on the whiteboard, and my resource folders are all green. The students can even coordinate their notebooks, folders, or binders the same color. It is the only way I can keep track of everything.

18. Discipline: The Greatest Killer of Teachers

By William J. Rush

19. The greatest teacher in the world cannot teach unless good classroom discipline is maintained. Likewise, a good disciplinarian does not necessarily make a good teacher. Although none of the following principles is new how many of them do your teachers apply?

- Learn all you can about previous school experiences of your students (but do not let this information bias you).
- Be prepared for class. Ten seconds of idle time can develop into 10 minutes of problems.
- Make your assignments reasonable and clear.
- Be a good and neat dresser, be businesslike, and be friendly.
- Be prepared for the unexpected (whatever it may be).
- Keep rules to minimum - basic rules are needed, but many rules have no real purpose.
- Be consistent (for 180 school days)
- You're a fool if you punish the entire class for the actions of a few.
- Never say anything to a student in front of a class that you would not say in the presence of his or her parents.
- Never, never, never humiliate a student in front of others.
- Students have plenty of buddies. Don't be a buddy; be a teacher.
- Don't be afraid to apologize.
- Use the telephone. Let the parents work with you.
- Never argue with a student in front of the class. The odds are 25 to 1 that you'll lose.
- Believe it or not - don't see and hear everything.
- Be enthusiastic - it's contagious.
- Don't be a screamer. A barking teacher does nothing but make noise.
- Don't make study a punishment. You cannot motivate a student to "learn a punishment."

Think about that statement.

- Know your students' hobbies, interests, problems, friends, etc., and show a sincere interest in these things.
- Keep administrators informed when dealing with problem students.

William J. Rush is principal, Wilbur Watts Middle School, Burlington, N.J.

20. STAY CURRENT and RELEVANT

I find it very useful to relate all the material I am teaching to current societal tendencies. I always try to ask myself - "Why do I want my students to learn this, and how can I make it interesting?"

Advanced Make-Up Work

****Please let me know at least 3 days in advance.****

Talk to me before or after school, or during lunch. Not during class!!

1. Name:

2. Date(s) you will miss:

3. Reason:

4. Any quizzes or tests missed?

5. If yes, when will you make them up? Specifically list the date and time.

6. Any lesson or worksheets you're going to miss?
 - o If yes write them down and I will provide the worksheets or notes for you before you leave?

****Please sign your name below**

Student Signature

Note: Failure to make up the assigned work you missed by the date will result in **NO CREDIT** given.

Tony Soderberg

Returning from an Excused Absence

****You have N+1 days to make up your work.****

Talk to me before or after school, or during lunch. Not during class!!

1. Name:

2. Date(s) you missed:

3. Reason:

4. Any quizzes or tests missed?

5. If yes, when will you make them up? Specifically state the date and time.

****Please sign your name below**

Student Signature

Note: Failure to make up the assigned work you missed by the date will result in **NO CREDIT** given.

Tony Soderberg

Helpful hint for students - I always talk to them about the school days and weekend days they have been given to complete their work. That they need to consider how long it takes to complete each part of the assignment and that they need to plan for the completion of the work. They need to look at their schedule and plan time for working. If they can't do it all one night they need to spread out the work so that they give themselves enough time. Waiting and then telling me they didn't have enough time is their decision. They need to become a better student by using their time wisely.

Before the assignment is due I try to ask them how many have started the assignment. Did they plan for it or will their weekend plans take residence?

Organizational tip - I have to make myself a list and than prioritize so that I don't allow the little things to get in the way. What HAS to be finished first! Or, which one is the most important.

Classroom management - I always tell myself that what I permit, I promote. If I don't want to send the message to my students that their behavior is ok. Than I'm the one that has to make sure it changes!

Shelli Fenske

Biology/Anatomy/Environmental Science:

1. Students play bingo by having cards with scientific terms and I draw out slips of paper with common descriptions or terms.
2. The students do research and see a video on an environmental topic. Later in the week, teams are formed and we have a debate on the specifically chosen topic. They must have an opening statement, information to back up their viewpoint, and a closing statement.
3. Selected students work as lab assistants helping elementary students do a cell lab.
4. Students do an extra credit lab at the beginning of the year which involves them looking up specific organisms may be studied during the year. The students are in pairs and have to match up the organisms on the list with the correct slide.
5. A scavenger hunt is done at the end of the year as a recap to the Biology course. Items are listed with specific point values that they can bring in and earn up to 100 points. It's a hands on review of topics we covered and items we did not have time to get through.

Mike Anderson

Teaching tip: I allow students one pass per quarter. I have a folder at the front of the room in which they must sign out when they use their one pass. This limits interruptions.

Pat Reider

Name _____ Class Period _____

Article Review

- Name of Article:
- Date:
- Author and Page Number of Article:
- Briefly state the main idea of this article (using a minimum of 3 sentences):
- List three important facts that the author uses to support the main idea:
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
- What information or ideas discussed in this article have also been discussed in class or other readings that you have done?
- List any examples of bias or faulty reasoning that you found in the article.
- List any new terms or concepts that were discussed in the article, and write a short definition.

Amanda Bagne

After I have taught and re-taught a grammatical concept in Spanish I ask a small group - say 2 or 3 - to explain it to the class from the front of the room, using the board with examples. I usually do this instead of ME re-presenting it again for review. I then ask annoying questions. It helps them get a better/different look @ the concept.

Catherine Olsen

(If they do, they lose their recorder/turn to play for the rest of the class period)

I also have an incentive program in place to encourage the students to be responsible for their own behavior. Each class has a small, laminated sticker chart on the wall. But I use a wet erase marker to put an “X” in the box so they can be used repeatedly. When a class comes into my room, I have two tally marks on the marker board. If the class as a whole is interrupting my teaching, a tally mark is erased. If they still have one or two tally marks left on the board at the end of class, then I mark an “X” in a box on their class chart. I give them a free day after they have filled ten boxes, and they then have a choice of watching a music related video or playing music learning games on their next visit to my room. It’s interesting that some school systems I have taught in did not need such a program in order to maintain a positive learning environment. Each one is different and we will always need to make adjustments accordingly. Whatever plan you come up with, I feel it is imperative that you use a positive approach in dealing with behavior rather than punitive.

Definite seating arrangements are a must in your classroom. I have the students in K-4 sitting in a circle on the floor. Fifth and sixth grade students sit on chairs. It has worked well for me to seat the older students in alternate groupings of two girls, two boys, etc. Since the students are in my classroom for only an hour each week, I keep the same seating arrangement for an entire quarter before changing. Unless, of course, you need to solve an immediate problem! I never let the students choose their own spots to sit.

In conclusion, here are some more suggestions from my own experiences that I hope will help in establishing a well managed classroom and make your job much more enjoyable:

1. Establish a definite student routine for entering and leaving your classroom
2. Until you have a better idea of how much can be accomplished in one class period, always have MORE than enough material to fill the class time
3. Keep humor in your classroom
4. Never humiliate a student in order to stay in control--preserve their

pride and self-esteem

5. Be the first to admit to your students when you've made a mistake—it's not a weakness, it's a show of strength!
6. Have all needed materials ready when a class enters your room. Start the lesson as soon as possible! Be assertive.
7. Give sincere heed to students' suggestions
8. It is better to deal with a student one-on-one when having serious behavioral issues, than to debate in front of the entire class. Ask them to stay after class or take them out into the hallway, still in full view of the remaining students in the classroom

Please remember that it takes time to get yourself established in a new school setting. I can't stress enough how important it is that YOU are fully prepared before you meet your students for the first time. As the students become more familiar with your teaching and expectations of them, you'll be amazed at their growth in musical knowledge and skills! ***Be persistent.***
Be consistent.