

Managing the Troops
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Classroom management can be the determining factor in a new teachers decision to continue teaching, an older teachers decision to retire and any teachers decision to spend time after the school day with an aspirin or relaxed personal time.

For beginning teachers, classroom management skills allow them the time and energy to learn the curriculum, interact with peers, have an opportunity to adapt to the school norms and culture and focus on teaching.

A young teacher, familiar with popular music and dressing in current styles, may be perceived by students as a new playfellow. Classroom management skills allow a teacher the freedom to enjoy the company of students while at the same time, maintaining an appropriate student-teacher relationship.

The following classroom management techniques are classroom proven and will be effective at any grade level. The underlying and most important theme in all management techniques is consistency. Without consistency any style of classroom management is doomed to failure. When first initiating a management technique, it may have a forced feeling and the teacher may feel as if the technique requires constant attention, however, with regular, consistent use and familiarity, this feeling will pass and the technique will become second nature.

While implementing these techniques, there are bound to be questions and concerns. Please feel free to contact me with any questions you may have. <mailto:HealthyR@socal.rr.com>

Many of the following techniques were inspired by and adapted from "Assertive Discipline by Lee Cantor. I highly recommend this book and encourage attendance at one of the Assertive Discipline Training workshops.

Names on board:

I strongly suggest that all beginning teachers use this technique alone or in conjunction with other management ideas. This technique, when used consistently, is almost guaranteed to provide any desired classroom control.

Develop a list of rules. This list should be no more than 5-7 classroom behaviors. This list may (and many believe should) be developed with your students. Make sure that two of the rules are:

FOLLOW ALL SCHOOL RULES and FOLLOW ALL DIRECTIONS.

These two rules will make it possible for you to keep order even if a student is not breaking one of the more specific rules on the list. Once the list is developed, have every student copy it and keep it in their notebook. For K-8 you may wish to have the rules signed by both parent and student.

Tell the students that any time, any student breaks a rule, their name will be written on the board. Additional incidents will result in a check by their name for each occasion of misbehavior. Develop a set of consequences based on the following suggestions. The consequence your students consider the worst should be the 5th consequence and the first MUST be a warning only.

Name on board	warning only
One check	standards
Two checks	detention
Three checks	phone call/note home
Four checks	referral to counselor

Follow through with every student in the room, including the best and worst students. Make no exceptions, be consistent and you will find that most students will behave for the rest of the class-time once their name is on the board, as long as they are convinced that you will follow through with the punishments if they continue to misbehave.

If you are outdoors with the students, a portable white board, purchased cheaply at craft or hardware store will work just as well.

You may wish to give the entire class a reward if there is ever a day without names on the board.

Marbles in a jar

This is a positive reinforcement technique and can work in both the classroom and outdoor settings.

Put a large class jar on your desk, or in some other prominent place in the classroom. Every time the students are behaving in a way that pleases you, that shows hard work or good citizenship, drop some marbles in the jar. The loud sound of the marbles hitting the glass jar are a reminder of the reward for good behavior.

Tell the students when the jar is full (or at a specific point) they will be rewarded with a party, or free time, or no homework for a week, or whatever you think will please your class.

Never remove marbles, simple point out that if they would simply (fill in appropriate behavior) for example; work quietly, you would be able to add to the marble jar.

In Physical Education, the jar can be brought out for roll and added to if all students are dressed. During class time the teacher can call out marble additions and drop them in during locker room time. For example; "Great job of following directions, 5 marbles for the class!"

Character on a string

This is a positive reinforcement technique and works in a classroom setting.

Select a cartoon character that is well know and popular with your students. Perhaps Winnie the Pooh for young children and Bart Simpson for the older crowd. Allow the students to select.

Draw or copy the character on heavy paper, cut the character out and laminate. Run a piece of string diagonally across the classroom high

above the student's heads. Hang the character on the string with a bent paper clip. Using a yardstick, "whack" the character along the string, forward for good behavior, back for bad behavior.

Tell the students when the character makes it all the way across the room, they will be rewarded with a party, or free time, or no homework for a week, or whatever you think will please your class.

For multiple classes, have paperclip tags representing each class to clip on the string as a reminder from day to day of where their character was last seen. This can also lead to competition among the classes. The class that gets the farthest in a week, or goes across the room the most times in a grading period will receive some extra special reward.

Sticker / stamp folder

This is a positive reinforcement technique and works in a classroom or outdoor setting. This technique is for individual, positive reinforcement.

Give each student a file folder or peachy or require them to supply their own. Purchase a large quantity of stickers or buy several stamps and an inkpad.

Every time a student is doing ANYTHING that you are pleased with, put a sticker or stamp on their folder. Have the students keep the folders on their desk and carry stickers or stamps with you at all times.

Tell the students that if their folder is ever filled up (one side, both sides, your choice) they will be rewarded. Select a reward that is meaning full to the students. You may also laminate the folder for the student, once it is filled up it is very attractive.

For an outdoor class, place all the students' names on a large chart. Put the stamp or sticker beside the students name. The students may look at the display whenever they wish and once a student has a specific amount of stamps or stickers they can be rewarded.

Group / class reward

This is a positive reinforcement technique and works in a classroom or outdoor setting. It is used when students work in assigned groups.

Name each group and write those names on the board. Whenever the group, or members of the group, is doing well, write an amount of points next to their name. I have found using increments of 5 to be easiest to keep track of. I have also given 10 points for doing a class job and 20 points for wearing the school shirt on Fridays. Develop a system that works for you, your students and your school.

At the end of each class, note the total for the entire class and note which group in each class had the most points. Announce the totals weekly.

Let the group in each class with the most points have a small reward at the end of each week and at the end of each grading period let the class with the most points have a "large" reward.

This type of reward system encourages the class to work together to gain points while competing against other "anonymous" classes.

Rewards; types and reasons

Reward the students for:

behaving well

completing work

getting cleaned up or prepared to work in a timely manner,

returning homework

following directions

doing assigned classroom jobs

assisting the teacher

being nice to each other

following the rules

almost anything else that helps your classroom to be a happy and productive environment.

The rewards you select should be within your budget as well as be something the students would enjoy.

Candy is by far the least expensive, but may conflict with your ideas of a healthy lifestyle.

Using your school supply budget for pens, pencils and erasers can be an easy source of no-cost prizes.

Another "free" prize is a pass that allows a bathroom trip, a get out of homework pass, 5 minutes of free time pass, skip a test pass, etc.

A "good" note home to the parent is often highly desirable to the students.

A catalog called the Oriental Trading Company can supply extremely reasonable small prizes if you are able to spend some money. ([HYPERLINK http://www.orientaltrading.com](http://www.orientaltrading.com)

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Check with the local fast food restaurants for special student coupons.

Ask a local merchant to supply prizes for your classroom.

A large reward may be a teacher purchased pizza party or ice cream party.

(Buy a cheap freezer at a thrift store to keep in your classroom and the ice cream party will be the best and cheapest type. You can also ask to use the cafeteria freezer.)

And finally: manage with consistently and in a hands-on manner. Students need your direction and interaction in order to learn the rules you need to have a happy, productive classroom. Be an active manager in the beginning and you will find that you have more time to teach once you have established your management system.